

WHAT ROOM FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN 'POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION'?

A VIEW FROM THE DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

A background Paper produced for the Paris meeting of the Working Group for International Co-operation in Skills Development, 13-15 November 2007¹

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Introduction and summary

This particular Working Group meeting promises to be substantially concerned with meanings, concepts and terminology, if we are to go by its title and the introductory note to the agenda.² The Working Group has always paid special attention to shifts in the discourse of development agencies. And it may not be widely remembered that it has even changed its own name over the years! The first four Working Papers of the Group (1996-1999) came from a body that called itself the Working Group for International Cooperation in Vocational and Technical Skills Development.³ In 2000, it began calling itself by its present name, the Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development. These apparently small shifts in terminology continue nowadays. Thus a briefing paper for DFID (2007) carried the title *Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)*,⁴ and also in 2007, Swiss Development Cooperation's most recent policy on education and training is called *SDC Strategy for basic education and vocational skills development* (SDC, 2007).

The original concern that lay behind the title of this Workshop was whether as agencies began to focus some of their attention beyond primary, or beyond basic education, in response to the dramatic numbers of youngsters completing the first cycle, they might come to assume that the natural next step was principally secondary education. Even if agencies used the wider terms, post-primary or post-basic, might it be that country pressures would translate these to mean secondary school expansion? What might happen to TVSD?

This brief review of the place of skills, life skills, TVET and skills development in the most current education policies of some 13 agencies,⁵ as well as in the World Conference in Jomtien, World Forum in Dakar, and in the Targets and Goals of the OECD DAC and the UN, would suggest that, in its different titles, technical vocational skills development is still very much in evidence. Indeed for a whole series of agencies, including some not mentioned in this review,⁶ basic education and some version of TVSD are both very evidently on their agendas.

¹ This paper looks at the agency dimension of this question, while a parallel paper by Robert Palmer looks at the question from the perspective of some 10 countries in Africa and Asia.

² The paper does not seek to cover how the terms, in their different meanings, translate into proportions of actual support for these domains at the field level. This could be a valuable future study, but almost certainly these patterns, for any single agency, would differ by region, and even by country.

³ Copies of all the 11 Working Papers of the WG are freely accessible at <http://www.norrag.org/wg>

⁴ TVSD is intended to marry the well-known older terms, Technical and Vocational, with the newer term, Skills Development.

⁵ There are a number of agencies, and not least the ILO, FAO and the European Training Foundation (ETF), which are not discussed here, since their mandate specifically covers work skills, agricultural skills or vocational education and training (VET).

⁶ This would include of course the European Commission, as well as China's aid to vocational and technical education.

The conceptual challenge, however, is to assess what is the coverage of the terms agencies use to refer to skills, post-primary, TVET or post-basic. Thus, many agencies and probably most ministries of education may use post-primary in its regular sense to refer to junior and senior secondary education. A few others may be exploring whether post-primary education can be used to cover a wider range of provision, both formal and nonformal. Similarly TVE and TVET are used to refer narrowly to the regular provision of vocational secondary education, but the terms can be expanded to cover some of the other main sites of technical and vocational provision, beyond schools, at the work place, both formal and informal. One reason agencies and one or two governments have adopted skills development, or vocational skills development is precisely because it can refer more easily to multiple sites of provision. The same distinction, we shall see, applies to the regular use of post-primary education versus the expanded notion of post-primary education, and thus, by extension, post-basic education.

We end our review, appropriately, with one of the bodies, ADEA, that has been responsible for putting post-primary education to the fore in the name of one of its own Ad Hoc Working Groups, including making it the overall title for its Biennale in May 2008. It would certainly appear that there is a great deal of room for technical and vocational education within the framework of the Biennale as planned. In fact in all three major thematic clusters of the Conference, there is explicit attention given to TVET (Kronner, 2007). Whether ADEA's attempted expansion of the concept and framework of post-primary education, to include formal and nonformal provision, will work, in the sense of translating into wider usage at the country and agency level, remains, for now, an open question. Education systems are notoriously conservative, and parents, children and communities hold on to what they think of as the meanings and original significance of words like 'grammar', 'baccalaureat', 'apprenticeship', or 'skill', long after there have been political attempts to expand, replace, revise or modernise them. We suspect, therefore, that it will be easier for formal TVET to continue to find its place within the traditional use of post-primary education than will the expanded and more complex concept, skills development, be able to find situations where there is a substantially expanded concept of post-primary education in place. In other words, we suspect that the wider concept of skills development will be adopted more rapidly than the wider conception of post-primary education.



Room for Skills within the Expanded Concept of Basic Education?

It is hard to believe that it is already 17 years since the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in Jomtien in March 1990 so effectively sought to get adopted its expanded vision of Education for All (EFA) by developing an inclusive definition of basic education. It is often forgotten that Jomtien did not set education targets as the OECD DAC was to do in 1996, or the Dakar World Forum and Millennium Summit did in 2000. Rather, and arguably more appropriately, Jomtien suggested that 'Countries may wish to set their own targets for the 1990s in terms of the following proposed dimensions' (WCEFA, Framework for Action, 1990:3). There then came the six major suggestions for the expanded vision of basic education: early childhood; universal primary education; high levels of learning achievement in primary; adult literacy; essential skills required by youth and adults; and increased use of mass media and of new and older communication technologies to spread knowledge, skills and values.

A concern in this background paper for the Working Group is particularly with the outcome of the World Conference which included 'essential skills required by youth and adults' as one of the suggested dimensions of EFA. In a sense, the Working Group is asking in 2007 whether some of today's newish agency terminology of 'post-primary education' or 'post-basic education' is as inclusive as the World Conference sought to be with its term, 'basic education'. We are not assuming that the inclusion of these six items meant that they were

subsequently adopted by development agencies or national governments. Indeed, the sixth item on the Jomtien list signally failed to be adopted in any substantial way. And from as early as the Jomtien Conference itself, certain agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank had made it clear that for them the priority follow-up would be in the area of primary schooling.⁷

But the drafters of the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action had worked hard to get their expanded concept of 'basic education', or 'basic learning needs' accepted. Illustrative of this was the fact that the term, 'basic', was used 166 times in just 37 pages, whilst 'primary' was only used 13 times. This is not to say that the Jomtien documents were somehow sidelining the contribution of primary schooling. Indeed, they made it quite clear that '*The main delivery mechanism for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling*' (WCEFA, Declaration, 1990: 6), but they went on and made it equally clear that there was, in addition to primary school, a whole other world of learning: '*The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems*' (Ibid). And it is this other world of learning that they principally illustrated with the word 'skills'.

The Jomtien *Declaration and Framework for Action* used 'skills' in a series of different ways, which is entirely possible in English, but is not necessarily as straightforward in other languages. In a single, crucial paragraph, illustrating the diverse basic learning needs of youth and adults, they could refer to 'knowledge, skills, values and attitudes' which cover potentially a whole range of cognitive skills and competencies. They could also talk about 'essential knowledge and skills' which contrasts knowledge with skill. In addition, they could recognise that 'Literacy is a necessary skill in itself, and also the foundation of other life skills'. But they could distinguish between these several uses of skill and another, by going on immediately, in the same paragraph, to note that: 'Other needs can be served by: skills training, apprenticeships, and formal and nonformal education programmes in health, nutrition, population, agricultural techniques, the environment, science, technology, family life...' (WCEFA, Declaration, 1990: 6).

It is interesting also when it comes to the *suggested* goals and targets of the World Conference, and to the target which is probably of closest interest to many members of this Working Group, 'skills' are used in this target along with the term 'education and training' in the context of improved 'employment and productivity':

Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity. (WCEFA, Framework, 1990: 3)

Thus, the World Conference used the word 'skills' in many of its different senses. Given its combining of 'skills training, apprenticeships, and formal and nonformal programmes', it should be clear that its approach to this suggested target covered not just formal skills, and not just nonformal skills, but both. In other words, its usage of skills was quite close to the notion of 'skills development' today, even though that term was not yet in 1990 in common agency usage. Equally, its use of the relatively new term 'life skills' was rather similar, covering both formal and nonformal skills.⁸

⁷ See *Norrag News* 8, 1990, Special Issue on What happened at Jomtien? For an account of agency reactions.

⁸ The Framework for Action summarised the 6 suggested targets on the following page, and there it used the phrase, 'basic education and life skills training for youth and adults'. The deliberate use of the phrase 'education and training' in several key places in the Jomtien documents deliberately makes the point that training is part of basic learning needs.

It is a point of interest that though ‘skills’ and ‘training’ are used fairly often in the Jomtien documents, they did not use the word ‘secondary’ at all. Despite this, there is a sense in which they pioneered the current use of basic education to include some element of secondary by their judicious phrasing of the suggested primary education target:

‘Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered “basic”) by the year 2000’. (WCEFA, Framework, 1990: 3)

But they too anticipated some of the problems that we shall face in this paper by leaving somewhat unclear where the upper frontier of basic education actually stood. The Preamble to the *Declaration* stated:

Recognising that sound basic education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy and capacity....(WCEFA, Declaration, 1990: 3)

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the Jomtien documents did not cut out secondary and higher education and focus only on basic education. They confirmed in the *Declaration* that higher education was part of an essential enabling environment for basic education:

Societies should also insure a strong intellectual and scientific environment for basic education.⁹ This implies improving higher education and developing scientific research. Close contact with contemporary technological and scientific knowledge should be possible at every level of education. (WCEFA, Declaration, 1990: 8)

But it happens too often in the use by policy-makers of key documents that it is the summary goals and targets that are seized upon, and not the surrounding explanatory text. So, despite the clear health warnings attached by Wadi Haddad, the Executive Secretary of the Inter-Agency Commission of the World Conference, the notion that countries should ‘set their own targets’ by making use of the six *suggested* dimensions was not noted, and instead the suggested dimensions were very widely assumed to be the agreed Targets of the Jomtien Conference.

Narrowing the Scope of Basic Education in the Development Targets and Millennium Goals

It is by now well-established that the expanded Jomtien vision of basic education was substantially narrowed into the two education goals of the International Development Targets (IDTs) by the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 1996. The crucially important document, *Shaping the 21st century: the contribution of development cooperation* (OECD DAC, 1996) made clear in its title and contents that, despite the rhetoric about country ownership,¹⁰ the global targets for education were constructed in Paris.¹¹ The new targets focused on just two aspects of education: universal primary education (UPE) by 2015

⁹ It was particularly members of the World Conference International Advisory Committee from Latin America who insisted that higher education and research were necessary complements of basic education; see *Norrag News* No 7 (March 1990).

¹⁰ As a basic principle, locally-owned country development strategies and targets should emerge from an open and collaborative dialogue by local authorities with civil society and with external partners, about their shared objectives and their respective contributions to the common enterprise. (OECD, 1996, p. 14)

¹¹ See King, 2007, ‘Multilateral agencies in the construction of the global agenda in education’ *Comparative Education*, vol. 43, no. 3. August.

and progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women by the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005. Unlike Jomtien, there was no mention of skills, nor of training, let alone higher education. Even basic education was not mentioned, and there was no discussion of post-primary levels of education.

These two IDTs would, in four years' time, be re-confirmed as two of the World's Millennium Development Goals.

The Dakar World Forum on Education (WEF) for All re-affirms but revises Jomtien

Despite the narrowing of what would later be claimed as the world's agenda for education after the Millennium Summit in 2000, there was an opportunity, just 10 years after Jomtien, for the agencies, and particularly UNESCO, to revisit the agenda of the World Conference, which had meanwhile been so dramatically shrunk to just two items. As just mentioned, these were UPE by 2015, and gender equity in primary and secondary education by 2005. As with Jomtien, we shall look particularly at what happened to the relation between the basic education coverage in Dakar and the conceptualisation of skills, both formal and nonformal.

As far as the scope of basic education was concerned, Dakar did not improve on Jomtien, nor did it use as judicious and context-specific a measure of basic education as had the World Conference.¹² Thus, 'secondary' was used only once in the *Framework for Action*, to refer to the Goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education; and it was therefore implied that the reach of basic education included secondary. But it was only in respect of what has come to be regarded as the most problematic Dakar Goal (Number 3) that there was further mention of secondary.¹³

This was Goal whose aim was intended to re-affirm the suggested Jomtien Target of: *Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity.* (WCEFA, op.cit. 18).

In Dakar this read as follows: *Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.* (WEF, 2000: 2)

Where Jomtien had suggested, by referring to training, skills, employment and productivity, that these essential skills could be both formal and nonformal, Dakar's use of 'life skills' left the scope rather uncertain. However, the *Expanded commentary on the Framework* added a very interesting twist to this particular goal, which made it reminiscent of Jomtien's insistence on the need for higher education to complement basic. The *Expanded commentary* added that 'No country can be expected to develop into a modern and open economy without having a certain proportion of its work force completing secondary education. In most countries this requires an expansion of the secondary system' (WEF, 2000: 13). This first commentary on the implications of Goal 3 is intriguing by its very strong link of the Goal to secondary education expansion. But the second comment, which is principally about the risks and threats to young people from HIV AIDS, pregnancy, drugs etc suggests that 'life skills' in the Dakar text means social and personal awareness skills.

But it is the third comment on the Goal which links its application particularly to 'those who drop out of school or complete school without acquiring the literacy, numeracy and life skills

¹² Only the Dakar *Framework for Action* (6 pages) was agreed at the Forum, while the *Expanded Commentary on the Framework for Action* (16 pages) was done by the World Education Forum drafting committee, during the month *after* the conference had ended.

¹³ But the use of 'secondary' was only in the *Expanded Commentary*, after Dakar, not in the *Framework*.

they need' (WEF, 2000: 13). It suggests there should be a range of options for continuing their learning, and to 'help them become active agents in shaping their future and develop useful work-related skills'(ibid). It is interesting that work-related is preferred to work skills, as this former could certainly suggest a lighter approach to skills development.

So the commentary links Goal 3 at one level to the formal secondary school system, but with no mention of formal skills training. And for school drop outs and completers without functional literacy, numeracy and life skills, a range of provision is encouraged but one that seems to point to nonformal skills acquisition. This failure of Dakar's Goal 3 to deal adequately with Jomtien's treatment of 'essential skills' is one reason why the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) team have found it difficult to achieve a satisfactory focus for Goal 3, and why other commentators have also found difficulty in dealing with its implications for monitoring.¹⁴ In one way, the problem can be traced to the use of life skills, which some agencies, such as the World Bank,¹⁵ the ILO and DFID hardly use at all, and others such as UNICEF find useful.¹⁶

The Millennium Development Goals affirm the OECD DAC Targets, not the Dakar Goals or Jomtien's Suggested Targets

Just five months after Dakar, on 6–8 September 2000, world leaders attended a further global summit, this time to debate and affirm the Millennium Declaration. In New York there were far more heads of state than at Jomtien or Dakar, and the Millennium Declaration was far more ambitious in its coverage than the declarations at these earlier education summits. It is often said that this Summit approved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The truth is, rather, that the Summit merely approved the Millennium Declaration, which contained a very much wider set of resolutions than the eight Millennium Goals. The latter were finally agreed within the UN bureaucracy quite some time after the heads of state had departed New York. By the time they were agreed, they were much narrower than the scope of the Millennium Declaration, and much more complex, in the sense that there were now 8 Goals, 18 associated Targets, and no less than 48 indicators.

When all was said and done, the MDGs were, despite all the discussions around the Millennium Declaration, virtually the same as the IDTs. One of the 6 IDTs had been divided into two, reproductive health services had been removed, and HIV/AIDS had been added, along with a catch-all Goal 8, 'Develop a Global Partnership for Development'. Intriguingly, the 7 Goals that involved actions in the south all had time-lines, while the resolutions and targets relating to the north did not.

What had happened to the Six Dakar Goals of just 5 months earlier? In the best tradition of rapidly changing agency priorities, these had been shrunk back again to the two education IDTs of 1996. The achievement of free and compulsory primary education of good quality of the Dakar text was back to merely achieving universal primary education. Gender equality and the empowerment of women were retained from the DAC Report, including the retention of the impossible and illogical 2005 date. All the other 4 Dakar Goals were left aside. Thus

¹⁴ The Working Group on Skills Development discussed in Hong Kong in February 2007 the failure of the EFA GMR process, so far, to develop a volume around Skills in the way that had been done so effectively for early childhood, literacy, gender and other Dakar Goals. Hoppers (2007: 3) has termed Dakar Goal 3 'nebulous' in comparison with its Jomtien equivalent, and Atchoarena has asked whether the satisfactory treatment of EFA and skills development is not 'the weak link in the Dakar Framework' (WG agenda for Paris, November 2007 workshop).

¹⁵ 'Life skills' is used a good deal in the *World Development Report 2007*, but not in key documents such as Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa

¹⁶ As a historical note, it can be added that it was UNICEF that was largely responsible in Dakar for getting the term, 'life skills', accepted in the Dakar *Framework for Action*.

the Millennium Summit, and the subsequent MDGs made no substantial contribution to the relationship between EFA and the complex and diverse world of skills development.

It is difficult to be sure what these arcane processes say about the status of different multilateral organizations, but it is hard to avoid concluding that UNESCO, in particular, was not able to secure in the negotiations either the range of its concerns with basic education or the specific conditions, such as education of good quality, when it came to translating these into global targets. These requirements merely got 'lost in translation'.¹⁷

Multilateral and Bilateral diversity in shaping the relationship between basic education and skills development¹⁸

World Bank¹⁹

Just a year after the Jomtien World Conference on Education For All, the World Bank produced a highly influential policy paper on Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VTET). Much better resourced, and drawing on a much wider base of expertise than either the Jomtien or Dakar documents, it succeeded in substantially reconceptualising the range and scope of vocational and technical skills in a pattern that has influenced many subsequent reports (World Bank, 1991).²⁰ But for our purpose, it was important both for the positive contribution it made to the relationship of 'skills development'²¹ to basic education, and also for the negative impact it had on one aspect of that relationship.²²

Although the Policy Paper made no reference at all to the World Conference of 1990,²³ it had a very powerful chapter on 'Strengthening primary and secondary education'. Drawing on the Bank's own research on the impact of primary (and secondary) education on cognitive skills, as well as on craft skills, trade skills, productivity and incomes, both for the formal and informal sectors, and in a much sharper statement than anything contained in either the Jomtien or Dakar documents, the Bank proclaimed its principal proposition about the relationship of school to skill:

The most cost-effective use of public resources to improve the productivity and flexibility of the work force is thus investment in general education at the primary and secondary levels. In addition to generating broad benefits to society, general education directly increases worker productivity and increases the access of the poor and socially disadvantaged groups to training and wage employment. (World Bank, 1991: 9)

¹⁷ 'Lost in translation' is used following Jonathan Jansen's discussion 'Lost in translation: Researching education in Africa' lead paper at ESRC/CAS workshop on the 'Methodological challenge of researching education and skills development in Africa', CAS, May 21 2004. Published by CAS in 2005.

¹⁸ There is a useful section of Atchoarena's study on TVET for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs that covers bilateral and multilateral donor support to TVET (Atchoarena, 2007).

¹⁹ I am grateful to Arvil Van Adams for discussion of some of these issues.

²⁰ It dealt with public school-based VTET, public training centre-based VTET, enterprise-based VTET in both the formal and informal sectors, private for profit and private non-profit training. These six locations of skills were powerfully revisited in the Bank's *Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2004), in *Skills development in India* (2006b), and in the ADB (2004) *Improving technical education and vocational training: strategies for Asia..*

²¹ The policy paper frequently used the term 'skills development' which had not been used in the Jomtien documents.

²² We are not concerned in this paper with the position the 1991 paper took on the role of private provision of VTET. See further King (2004), and the BMZ (2005).

²³ The policy paper does however draw on the Bank's own primary education policy paper of 1990, which was actually presented in draft at Jomtien.

In other words, making ordinary schools good is a better way of improving work force skills than making schools technical or vocational. Hence the Bank's position on school and skill is that you don't need to make the school curriculum technical or vocational for school to contribute to skill.

The critique of diversified secondary school curricula, which the Bank itself had strongly supported from 1963 to 1979,²⁴ was made compellingly in 1991, but it goes back to Wadi Haddad's²⁵ review of diversified schools in 1979 and to the World Bank's excellent *Education Sector Policy Paper* of 1980 for which he was primarily responsible (King, 2003). Essentially, the criticism concentrated on the inadequate levels of skill achieved in such schools, their high unit cost, the challenge of securing appropriate teachers, and the lack of evidence that they had any particular impact on student aspirations, and therefore on the labour market (World Bank, 1991: 32).

Essentially the same position was adopted by the Bank's paper on Secondary Education in Africa [SEIA], *Choices for secondary education and training in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (World Bank, 2007). It critiqued vocationalisation on the same grounds as the earlier Bank papers in 1991 and in 1979/80, and it also critiqued the option of separate vocational schools. It argued that the case against integrating traditional vocational in the regular secondary school programmes was 'backed up by a well-documented body of international experience and research'. In other words, for Africa, 'Attempts to introduce vocational (or practical) subjects in schools in Sub-Saharan Africa have largely failed (Lauglo and Maclean, 2005)' (World Bank, 2007: 46). While arguing against vocationalisation at both lower and upper secondary education, the SEIA report also suggests that specialised institutions with close links to employers are the best location for vocational and technical education. Such institutions will often be run by private or by autonomous agencies or by ministries other than the Ministry of Education (World Bank, 2007: 127). Intriguingly, the same World Bank volume argues that most OECD countries are moving away from costly, and often out-of-date, specialised training at the secondary level (World Bank, 2007: 117). It is also noteworthy that the SEIA study in its chapter 3 on the 'Lessons from International Experience' pays no attention, in its discussion of Asia, to the very substantial role of separate vocational secondary schools within secondary school provision.

However, the general World Bank (2005a) study on *Expanding opportunities and building competencies: a new agenda for secondary education* hardly supports the proposition that OECD countries are mostly moving from specialised training at the secondary level. Indeed, it argues that though there is some movement away from institutionally distinct secondary vocational schools, 'most countries still have such arrangements' (World Bank, 2005a: 85). Clearly, according to the Bank, there continues to be room for technical vocational skills development in post-primary education world-wide. Indeed, in a rather nice revisiting of the old debate about vocationalisation, the authors note that 'the curriculum issues today involve not so much how to impart vocational content to secondary graduates as how to add basic vocational content to the general curriculum' (ibid).²⁶

²⁴ The Bank supported almost 80 projects that sought to diversify secondary education. Unusually, the 1991 World Bank policy paper admits that the Bank supported this modality heavily.

²⁵ It is interesting that Wadi Haddad played such a key role in 1979-80, as well as in 1990.

²⁶ The authors note that there is an ongoing reconceptualisation of which school subjects are 'vocationally relevant', including science, mathematics, English and philosophy, and they thus echo the same point made very much earlier by Foster (1965) and King (1971). The position of the Bank's 2005 paper is thus rather different from the position it adopted in 1995, which obliged Claudio da Moura Castro to comment as follows: The latest World Bank paper says that vocational and technical education is best imparted in the work place (World Bank 1995).

This may be true but the paper should have mentioned that *no* industrialised countries – without a single exception – actually follow this World Bank prescription. All industrialised

The *World Development Report (WDR)* does not exactly confirm the message of the 2005 report on secondary in relation to vocational skills. Unusually for the World Bank, the *WDR* gives a good deal of attention to ‘life skills’, and even argues that ‘Inculcating life skills in schools is the surest way to enhance the capabilities of young people’ (World Bank, 2006a: 16). Indeed, it talks a great deal about skills at different levels, and provides a useful definition of the different kinds of skills it is engaged with. Thus, there is a lot written about the ‘basic skills’ required in primary and junior secondary, by which it means ‘the set of minimal abilities needed for further learning, work and life, including numeracy and literacy and basic levels of behavioural skills such as perseverance, self-discipline and self-confidence’ (World Bank, 2006a: 71). And, of interest to this workshop, it even talks quite a lot about ‘postbasic skills’ at the upper secondary and higher education levels, by which it means ‘thinking skills, higher order behavioural skills (decision-making skills, teamwork, the ability to negotiate conflict and manage risks), specific knowledge applied to real-life situations, and vocational skills’ (ibid.). As can be seen from these illustrations, the softer behavioural skills are more central to the *WDR*’s use of skills than more traditional vocational skills. In fact the *WDR* even goes so far as to argue that ‘building behavioural skills for school, work and life’ is ‘the ignored side of skills development’ (World Bank, 2006a: 72; King, 2007b).

It is difficult not to reach a conclusion in respect of these several recent reports²⁷ from the Bank that they don't sufficiently engage with or satisfactorily incorporate the huge amount of analytical work that went into the Bank’s 1991 and 2004 studies on skills development.

UNESCO

As the UN agency specifically concerned with education and culture, it should not be surprising that historically UNESCO has been more concerned with school- and post-school-based technical and vocational education than with technical and vocational training. Indeed, the first International Congress on the Development and Improvement of Technical and Vocational Education it held (in 1987 in E. Berlin) was on TVE rather than TVET. And although the Second Congress, in its Recommendations (UNESCO 1999b), had the title of TVET and TVE,²⁸ the term TVE was used many times more often than TVET (UNESCO, 1999a). Indeed, one of the key recommendations of the Congress for the future was ‘that the Director-General of UNESCO, in close collaboration with the ILO, develops a common concept of **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** to guide the UNESCO strategy for the twenty-first century’ (UNESCO, 1999b: 17; emphasis in the original). Despite this aspiration to use the new language of TVET, the *Revised recommendation concerning technical and vocational education* (2001) of three years later still used the discourse of TVE, and the Section responsible for this area in UNESCO headquarters continued to be called the Section for Technical and Vocational Education right up to 2007.

But in view of this WG’s interest in the scope of post-primary education in relation to skills development, it will be important to note that UNESCO’s *Draft Programme and Budget, 2006-7* has a specific section on ‘Supporting Post-Primary Education Systems’ (UNESCO, 2005a: 47). We shall return later in this paper to ask whether the notion of an expanded

countries offer massive quantities of training away from the work place. This includes US, Germany and Japan. It is distinctly misleading for the Bank to tell developing countries to do something that no developed country has done. (Castro, in *Norrag News* 19, 1995)

²⁷ This lack of integration is also true of the *Education Sector Strategy Update (ESSU)*, which is not discussed here (World Bank, 2005b).

²⁸ As can be seen in the title page of the *Recommendations*, the title of the document referred to TVET and the name of the Conference referred to TVE!

‘post-primary education system’ will be adopted, but for the moment we should merely note that UNESCO’s goals for this domain at present are quite demanding and also quite opaque:

The aim of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme will be to assist Member States in integrating “livelihood skills” development in basic education in line with EFA Goal 3 and aligning TVET with the tenets of the Bonn Declaration²⁹ to contribute to sustainable development’. (UNESCO, 2005a: 47)

It is not clear, as they are not defined, whether livelihood skills are the same as life skills, but integrating these in basic education in line with the Dakar Goal 3, we have already noted, might be rather challenging. As for aligning TVET with the Bonn Declaration, this too is a massive task as can be seen from the relevant paragraph in this Declaration:

Given the scale of the task and the complexity of the conditions in which action must be taken, we ask that particular priority be given to TVET initiatives that alleviate poverty, promote equity, especially in relation to gender, arrest the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, support youth in crisis, support rural communities and people in excluded groups, encourage north-south and south-south cooperation and assist the development of countries in transition and those in and emerging from crisis and conflict. These TVET initiatives are pivotal to human-centred sustainable development. (UNESCO, 2004: 2)

Despite these challenges,³⁰ UNESCO remains convinced that there needs to be convergence between life skills and work skills; or, in Matura’s words, that there are two sides to ‘skills development’, in both general and vocational secondary: ‘The question of skills development for entry into the labour market is not simply an issue for technical or vocational secondary education, but also for general education – not least because solid, broad-based knowledge and generic skills, such as the ability to communicate and engage in teamwork, form the basis of all essential work tasks’ (UNESCO, 2005b: 13).

Having looked at the historical project, at Jomtien, of containing essential skills for young people and adults within the new concept of basic education and training, and the challenges to that conceptualisation from the IDTs and the MDGs, as well as from the Dakar Framework, we have then noted how the World Bank dramatically expanded its own conceptual framework for skills development in 1991, and how that has been added to, but also revised in its later policy work. UNESCO’s mandate to set standards in the skills domain has been conditioned by its own tradition of work in education rather than training. As we move now to examine selectively the contribution of bilateral agencies to the challenge of securing versions of skills development within the scope of their support for post-primary and post-basic education, we shall see that they too have been influenced both by their own comparative advantage as bilateral agencies, as well as by the evolving international agenda of ‘basic education’ and ‘skills development’. Arguably, both these terms, though they have a few well-known uses at the country level, are still more part of a donor discourse than of national policy.³¹

²⁹ See UNESCO, 2004, for the Bonn Declaration on ‘Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability’.

³⁰ For an extended analysis of ‘The role of UNESCO in supporting and promoting technical and vocational education and training in the Asia-Pacific region’ see King, 2007c.

³¹ In India Gandhi’s promotion of ‘basic education’ in the 1930s and Singapore’s use of Skills Development in the 1980s are just two examples. See also South Africa’s use of skills development in Palmer, at this Workshop.

*DFID (Department For International Development)*³²

Like a number of other agencies, DFID (ODA at the time) used the occasion of the Jomtien conference to show-case and partly rethink their own education policy (ODA, 1990). Along with support to other levels of education, 'skills upgrading' was noted as 'extremely important'. Partnership with British institutions and with British expertise and comparative advantage was visibly evident throughout the document written for Jomtien. By 1999, with the advent of a new Labour Government in May 2007, there had been a dramatic change. More than any other bilateral agency, Britain's new development agency, DFID, seized on the recently launched International Development Targets (IDTs) of the OECD DAC, and hence Universal Primary Education and gender equity, in the education arena, and made these central to one of a new series of Target Strategy Papers (DFID, 2001). DFID was nevertheless aware that these two bald education targets could not represent 'the totality of individual and national aspirations, needs and goals' (ibid.,10). They were also aware that there was an evident tension between the language of priority to primary and the increasing recognition of the importance of a sector-wide approach, and even a cross-sector approach.³³ A sector-wide approach clearly implies going 'beyond primary', as in Jomtien, to early childhood, adult literacy and to 'basic skills training' (ibid., 8). In other words, a genuinely sector-wide approach to education implies room for skills development, whether in DFID's thinking, or in the case of this present Workshop, But there is an inescapable tension which DFID had noted between giving priority to the education IDTs and securing an appropriate sector-wide stance.

Equally, DFID, preferring to call a spade a spade, has had difficulty with the language of 'life skills', and with the vagueness of terms like 'beyond primary education', preferring 'post-primary education' with its reference to higher levels of formal schooling. It is also very aware of the need to communicate clearly with its partners in plain English. In an interesting illustration of this, which is also directly relevant to our present Workshop, the then Secretary of State intervened personally in 2006 to change the title of a Briefing Paper from 'Beyond Primary Education' to 'The Importance of Secondary, Vocational and Higher Education to Development' (DFID, 2006a; 2006b).

It is of course precisely because of DFID's very strong priority for primary education (rather than basic education in the Jomtien sense) since 1997, that DFID now uses 'post-primary' in preference to 'post-basic' to mark something of a shift in emphasis.³⁴ But it is probably the case that despite secondary and vocational having been secured in briefing papers (DFID, 2006a; 2007), and implicitly in DFID's strong support to SWAPs and direct budget support, there is, unlike Switzerland to which we now turn, still very little direct support to technical and vocational skills development in DFID's current portfolio.

SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation)

SDC certainly has room for skills development in its concept of basic education, which includes pre-primary, primary, and increasingly lower secondary, as well as nonformal education, following the definition of basic learning needs from Jomtien. But to an extent that is unusual amongst development agencies, it has stood for a long time³⁵ for the essential

³² I am grateful to David Levesque and Steve Packer for their discussion of ODA and DFID publications, and modalities, in education.

³³ This is evident in phrases like 'Developing an integrated, sector-wide approach to primary education' (DFID, 2001: 24).

³⁴ 'Post-primary' is used 16 times in just 5 pages in DFID 2006b. See further David Levesque's discussion of post-primary, post-basic and skills development in his contribution to this meeting (Levesque, 2007). See also the latest DFID publication in 'Researching the Issues' series: *Educating out of poverty?* for an interesting discussion of the way some countries have, perhaps strategically, adopted the donor discourse of 'basic education' in order to secure financial support for lower secondary education (Palmer et al. 2007: 3-4).

³⁵ Since at least 1994 when its sector policy for Vocational Education and Training marked a break with the earlier focus on high level technological centres of excellence

complementarity of basic education (BE) and vocational skills development (VSD). This is particularly clear in its new 'Strategy for basic education and vocational skills development' (SDC, 2007). Indeed, instead of having two separate strategies for education and vocational education, as before, it now has a single strategy paper covering both. SDC sees these two parallel dimensions as part of the fundamental human right to education. In addition, rather than seeing the MDGs as merely relating to UPE and gender parity, Switzerland conceives of VSD as contributing to MDG 1 (poverty reduction) and MDG 8 (reduction of youth unemployment), and both BE and VSD as supporting all the other MDGs.

In terms of our Workshop's focus on post-primary, the short strategy paper (6 pages) makes the point on no less than four occasions that the focus of basic education also goes 'beyond primary education'. But 'post-primary', 'post-basic', and 'post-secondary' are all used quite precisely to point to different ways in which BE and VSD go beyond primary. In particular, VSD can be justified on occasions as relating to post-basic (i.e. beyond lower secondary) since VSD has two objectives – the educational goal of preparation for life and work, and the more economic goal of 'competitiveness in dynamic and globalised contexts' (SDC, 2007: 4).

SDC acknowledges the value of sector programme support and direct budget support but notes the danger that these potentially remove donors from an awareness of ground realities in the field. Thus there is clearly room for skills development in this approach, and also particular modalities for supporting tertiary education and research. In addition, like the World Bank (2005b)'s *Education Sector Strategy Update (ESSU)*, SDC is aware that there is scope for considerable cross-sectoral synergy between education and other development sectors.

*BMZ/GTZ*³⁶

Germany, like Switzerland, sees itself as having had a long tradition of supporting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as well as having developed policies for support to basic education since Jomtien. It has of course also had a distinguished record of support to higher education through a variety of instruments. In 2004, the German Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ) produced a new statement of its support to *Basic education for all as an international development goal* (BMZ, 2004). Then a year later it produced a further strategy paper on *Technical and vocational education and training and the labour market in development cooperation* (BMZ, 2005). There is no question, therefore, of there being no room for skills development in Germany's post-primary or post-basic education strategy. Of recent spending, no less than a third went to basic, a third to TVET, a tenth to tertiary and the remaining 20% to more, general sector policy and reform (BMZ, 2004: 19).

With this particular history of support for TVET, Germany, like Switzerland, sees itself in a specially strong position for promoting 'the greater integration of vocational training within the scope of donor coordination' (Ibid. 24). Perhaps naturally its basic education policy employs the term 'basic education' more than three times more often than 'primary education', thus pointing to a coverage of basic learning needs that is reminiscent of what we noted in the Jomtien documents.

It is the 2005 strategy linking TVET and labour market policy measures which breaks new ground by pointing to possible synergies when employability is encouraged by the TVET interventions, and active labour market policy measures encourage the greater matching of supply and demand (BMZ, 2005: 6-9). As for the modalities of TVET, it is a good illustration of what we termed, at the outset, the expanded version of TVET; the strategy covers formal sector training, including initial, post-secondary, and work-place related, as well as, on occasions, training via the general education system. It also connects with training

³⁶ I am grateful Klaus Jahn, Elisabeth Baehr, Julia Schmidt, and Manfred Wallenborn for insights into these policies and strategies.

for the informal sector, but linked with business and financial services for micro and small enterprises. There is also a readiness to consider TVET for different labour market segments, whether rural and subsistence conditions, or more industrial and dynamic. Though the range of these TVET locations may seem as broad as the World Bank's, the strategy is keen to distance itself from what it sees as the Bank's belief in the superiority of market forces in TVET provision. By contrast, German strategy assumes that much of its involvement in TVET provision, since this links to a stronger civil society, can be regarded as a public good.

Germany is perhaps also unusual in having within GTZ a relatively new section on Post-primary Education. This is separate from the section dealing with TVET, both formal and nonformal, but it covers a great deal of the levels of formal and nonformal education, including transitions between levels, and even pre-skills training for TVET. So there certainly doesn't seem to be a lack of room for an expanded coverage of TVET alongside Germany's basic and post-basic education provision.

*USAID*³⁷

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) employs a different terminology, 'workforce development', for what is widely called TVET or TVE in other agencies. Within their new development framework, this objective falls more within the Economic Growth side of the framework, whilst basic education and higher education fall within the Investing in People dimension of the framework. That said, the most recent (2005) USAID education policy statement, *Education strategy: Improving lives through learning*, carries two objectives which are remarkably close to the World Bank's *Education Sector Strategy Update (ESSU)* of that same year. Objective 1 is 'Providing equitable access to quality basic education' and this can include 'flexibility beyond primary education', offering the possibility for instance of providing 'both basic education and specific job skills' (USAID, 2005: 8). Objective 2 might almost anticipate the topic of this Workshop as it is entitled: 'Beyond basic education: enhancing knowledge and skills for productivity' (Ibid. 11). Nor are these just 'critical thinking skills needed to be productive'; they also involve 'workforce development: improving job skills and readiness' (ibid.). Indeed, it is clear from the examples given of workforce development, that there are parallels with BMZ's active labour market policies, through involvement in supportive labour legislation, tax regimes, and improved use of training funds. But there is the possibility of direct support to workforce skills training, in certain situations.

All of this sounds very positive, but it should be remembered that the great bulk of education funding goes to basic education (75%) along the lines of the six Dakar Goals, and much of the rest to higher education. There is very little left for workforce development within education despite the very positive policy rhetoric. This is leaving aside, of course, what goes to workforce development through the economic growth channel. There is also apparently the expectation that USAID's sister agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, will put more money towards TVET in the years to come.

*JICA*³⁸

From an historical tradition where JICA was reluctant to support basic education on the grounds that external donors should not be involved with a level of education so fundamental to the culture and identity of 'recipient' countries, it has moved since 1992 to a readiness to support the full range of basic education, but especially support to formal primary and lower secondary (in terms of enrolment, quality and gender parity), and to nonformal education, as well as to education management (JICA, 2005). Within its support to nonformal education,

³⁷ I am grateful to Greg Loos for his comments on education, TVET, and workforce development within USAID's education and training policy.

³⁸ I am indebted to Okitsu Keiichi and Tanaka Kaori for their help with understanding current JICA policies and guidelines on basic education and TVET.

JICA has covered traditional literacy and numeracy skills, life skills and a measure of practical skills training:

Non-formal education can offer adults and out-of-school children who could not fully benefit from school education, the opportunity to acquire literacy and numeracy skills, practical knowledge and skills for decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking in social life, as well as effective communication skills. Furthermore, non-formal education can be effective in imparting practical knowledge and skills needed in life (i.e. life skills), such as vocational training, health education, environmental education, or AIDS education, etc. (Ibid. 2)

But even before basic education became more salient, JICA had had a policy of supporting both technical and vocational, as well as higher education, and that continues.

JICA does not use the expanded discourse of ‘post-primary’ and ‘post-basic’ in its general guidelines for basic education or those for Sub-Saharan Africa. But it has long worked for the improvement of quality through teacher training improvement, especially in the areas of maths and science in many different countries. So there is no question of there needing to be a case made for working ‘beyond primary’.

Their TVET guidelines are currently being revised, but it can be seen from this brief summary below that, beyond the basic education dimension of skills, there is a very full range of possibilities:

In our TVET guideline, we include post primary and post secondary education, including vocational training, technical education and non formal basic skills training. Our activities in TVET are focused mainly in post primary education.

Here are our main approaches in the TVET sector;

*Human resources development in industry approach

- Institutional building and establishment of an organizational framework of the TVET sector
- Establishment of a collaborative relationship with industry
- Improvement of quality in training delivery

*Expansion of opportunities for livelihood improvement approach

- Delivery of basic skills and knowledge necessary for work through training
- Strengthening the framework of training delivery (Tanaka, Kaori to Kenneth King, 2.11.07)

*AFD*³⁹

The AFD (Agence Française de Développement) is particularly charged with responsibility for both basic education and technical/vocational training. There is no doubting the interest AFD is taking in the latter, as it has even set up an international group of TVET experts (GEFOP) to provide better documentation on the domain.⁴⁰ Like a number of other agencies just mentioned, it too has put together a sector policy for these two areas (AFD, 2006), since it is particularly in the pressure to expand access to the post-primary level that they are seen to be crucial. But there is a recognition in respect of vocational training at the post-primary level that this is currently a weak link in public policy. Interestingly, the plans to make this whole sector more coherent include better orientation both to work in the formal **and** informal

³⁹ I am grateful to Richard Walther for his help with insights into training for the informal sector.

⁴⁰ GEFOP, established in 2005, looks particularly at the following countries: Thailand, Vietnam, South Africa, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Senegal, but also at Germany, Spain, France and UK.
www.gefop.org

sectors.⁴¹ But there is very clearly room, even now, for an expanded version of TVET in AFD's thinking about post-primary education. Of the four sub-themes mentioned for this focus area, no less than three are directly concerned with aspects of TVET policy (Ibid. 35).

NETHERLANDS⁴²

What is suggestive for our meeting concerned with whether there is 'room for skills development' in post-primary education is that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has thought the whole area of TVET sufficiently important that it has commissioned a large study on *Strengthening institutional and technical aspects of TVET in the Netherlands partner countries* (Atchoarena, 2007). This was charged to look, quite specifically at work orientation and vocational education at post primary education levels in the school system, and professional training, both pre-employment and on the job. The Ministry is currently very actively involved in working on the follow-up to this study, and may well ask the Working Group for feedback on one of the initiatives that is being considered.

KOICA

Rather than focusing exclusively on so-called traditional donors, it may be worth noting just how significant in South Korea's International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is the support to vocational as well as IT training. Like Japan's rationale for supporting science and maths education overseas, on the grounds that these elements were crucial in their own industrialisation, KOICA also explains that the 'important role vocational training centres had during Korea's economic development' is one of the reasons it is sharing its know how and knowledge with many partner countries. Some 40 vocational training centres have been provided in all during the period 1991-2005. Skills development covers more than the traditional vocational skills, however; a good deal of attention is also paid to the construction of Information Technology (IT) Centres, in order to increase the number of IT experts and IT technicians, to help narrow the divide between developing and developed countries. Paralleling the strong focus on overseas training for development also evident in China and Japan, South Korea has trained over 2000 participants in technical and vocational courses since 1991, about 10% of its total of 21,000 trainees in that period.

AusAID

The recent (May 2007) education policy of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) called *Better Education, a Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Education* covers vocational and technical education (VTE) within its two broad priorities: 'improving the relevance and quality of education, including in vocational and technical education, so that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for life and productive employment' (AusAID, 2007a: 1). It is noticeable that vocational and technical education, along with English language teaching, are picked out for assistance because they are fields in which Australia claims to be 'an international leader' (Ibid. iii). Australia has always had a large tertiary education scholarship programme, but since 1996 it has supported education systems overseas with an emphasis on primary and secondary education, and vocational and technical education. AusAID is quite explicit that their plans to expand opportunities for those who have completed a full primary education involve both secondary education and vocational and technical education. The discourse of post-primary and post-basic being explored by the Working Group is not used at all in this education policy paper. Nor is there any discussion of VTE for the informal sector; the objective is to reform the formal structures and orientations of VTE, and improve employability by raising skills to international standards. As part of this process, the new Australia-Pacific Technical College

⁴¹ AFD's Research Department has directly encouraged some very current comparative work on training for the informal sector, since it is a 'sector that dominates the economies of the developing world' (Walther, 2007: 9). Note particularly the title: *Vocational training in the informal sector. Or how to stimulate the economies of developing countries?*

⁴² I am grateful to Chris de Nie for comments on current Dutch development initiatives on TVET.

will be part of a response to VTE being identified as one of three specific regional needs in the Pacific (Ibid. 28). At the secondary level, the preferred modality proposed is that VTE be integrated into the secondary school curriculum (AusAID, 2007b: 3).⁴³

*ADB*⁴⁴

The timing of the AusAID policy for aid in education coincides very closely with a major report on *Skilling the Pacific*, a study being finalised for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (Johanson et al, 2007).⁴⁵ It would appear to take a very different view from the AusAID (2007b) paper on such matters as the crucial importance of training for the informal sector,⁴⁶ and on the vocationalisation of secondary schooling in most situations.⁴⁷ However, the ADB report, like the AusAID policy, makes virtually no use of the terminology of post-primary and post-basic.

*AfDB*⁴⁸

The African Development Bank's most recent education policy paper has been available since 1999, but currently the Bank has been developing sub-sector policies, for example, in higher education science and technology. They are considering also TVET and mid-level skills policy. Like several other agencies we have mentioned, the Bank has had a double strategy of support to basic education and to middle and higher level skills. However, it sees the lower level as also encompassing basic knowledge that is both general and technical. Equally, it expects that what it terms the 'middle level skills' can be achieved both through the education sector, and through other relevant sectors such as agriculture, industry and trade. Within Education, it sees 'the expansion and improvement of the quality of formal basic and upper secondary education, with curriculum enhancement in both general and technical subjects' (AfDB, 1999: iv). Interestingly, this report doesn't use the language of post-basic or post-primary, except on one occasion, where it notes that girls are under-represented in industrial skills in vocational training institutions at this level (ibid. 13).

Revisiting and expanding the concept of post-primary education and post-basic education: ADEA

Having reviewed briefly the current positioning of TVE or TVET in a number of agency policies, both bilateral and multi-lateral, it may be useful to look at one last source of evidence about the expanded conceptualisation of post-primary education before concluding with some final comments. ADEA (the Association for the Development of Education in Africa) is not strictly speaking a donor agency at all, though its origins go back to the mechanism called Donors to African Education, set up after the very influential if controversial World Bank paper on *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* (World Bank, 1988). But over the years since it became ADEA, its Secretariat at IIEP, biennial conference, and

⁴³ 'that the most effective secondary schools TVET model is that TVET be integrated into the secondary curriculum, so that students gain both TVET skills and general education and certification' (AusAID, 2007b: 3).

⁴⁴ I am grateful to Richard Johanson for information about *Skilling the Pacific*.

⁴⁵ Richard Johanson was team leader. With Van Adams, Johanson was responsible for the influential *Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2004), and also was the main drafter of *Improving technical education and vocational training: strategies for Asia*, (ADB, 2004).

⁴⁶ In the first of its main conclusions, the study argues that 'Training for the informal sector has to become the top priority' (Johanson et al 2007: 6).

⁴⁷ 'Investing in 'vocationalisation of secondary education' is not supported by this review' (Ibid.6).

⁴⁸ I am grateful to Andre Komenan for information about the Bank's past and current policy development plans.

series of some 15 Working Groups linking African ministers with particular donors have made a regular, valuable contribution to policy development in education in Africa.

One of the most recent Ad Hoc Working Groups is directly relevant to the topic at this meeting, since its title and terms of reference relate directly to post-primary education, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Post-Primary Education (WGPPE). It saw its remit as working across the domains of secondary education and skills development, since it was experts from these two fields who came to its first technical meeting in Edinburgh in April 2005 (ADEA, 2005). The adoption from an early stage of the guiding principle that their approach should be 'holistic and integrated' suggested they should look across the range of educational experience at the post-primary level, and also carry out case studies of good practice in post-primary education in Africa. Their rationale, some two and a half years later, retains an advocacy role for 'greater coherence in the many different models and forms of post-primary education'. Their profile on the ADEA website claims the WG would identify both promising and ineffective practices in Africa, South Asia, Latin America and other regions in order to draw lessons from them, and thus be able to promote 'post-primary education models and a data base' (ADEA website, 2007b: 3).

The Terms of Reference for this ADEA Ad Hoc Working Group also clarified that tertiary education lay beyond its remit, while its central focus lay on secondary education and skills development. It was also mandated to encourage greater connection between formal and non-formal education.⁴⁹ It has not been possible to review any outcomes of the WGPPE's search to identify models of good practice, as these are not yet publicly available but it is a mark of progress that the forthcoming major biennial conference of ADEA as a whole is dedicated to the concept of 'Post-Primary Education'. And for that purpose a 'Working Definition of Post-Primary Education' has been developed (ADEA, 2007a; Kronner, 2006) and a series of conceptual briefings have been developed which may assist our analysis of how skills development finds room within the notion of post-primary education.

The original notions of integrated and holistic are confirmed in this working definition, but the ambitions and coverage of the term, post-primary education, are expanded with the Biennale in mind. It now clearly encompasses learning in school, out of school and at work, and it covers both life-skills and the skills associated with TVET:

4. Post Primary Education is All-Inclusive

Post Primary Education includes:

- All forms of learning, e.g. non-formal
- All modes of delivery, e.g. distance learning, apprenticeship
- All types of settings, e.g. community schools, work sites

5. Post Primary Education is Holistic

Post Primary Education includes:

- Traditional "General" Secondary Education
- Development of life skills and key competencies
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ADEA, 2007a).

This process of conceptualisation of post-primary education had been taken much further in a longish note drafted by Hoppers (2007b) on post-primary education and training (PPET). This is quite explicitly aimed at the Biennale in terms of its principal purpose. But it now uses the acronym PPET, and following the terminology of Jomtien, the paper talks about the need of 'an expanded vision' of PPET for Africa, as a basis for policy and development work.

The concept note usefully interrogates the difference between PPET and post-basic education and training (PBET), and correctly judges the latter to be a wider concept, since it could include the full range of post-basic locations, and not just focus on the group who have

⁴⁹ There is, of course, a separate ADEA Working Group concerned with Nonformal Education.

completed primary school. The advantages claimed for PBET are seen to be particularly relevant to many African countries where the median primary school completion rate is 55%. Thus PBET would cover the needs of the age-group more effectively than PPET whose starting point might be assumed to be a primary school leaving certificate. Clearly the terminology of PBET could be used to cover the many nonformal forms of learning, many of them complementing primary rather than following it.

Having made this useful point about the reach and rationale of PBET as compared to PPET, Hoppers then goes on to suggest that both PBET and PPET need to be ‘informed by a vision frame that considers the entire field of education and training, both horizontally and vertically’ (Hoppers, 2007b: 5).⁵⁰ This seems to minimise the important issue of PBET having a fundamentally different starting point than PPET. Be that as it may, a further issue of considerable complexity is added to the mix when Hoppers argues that some consideration of the enabling and disabling environments for PPET will prove to be essential in order to understand the relationships between the various programme domains of PPET and the labour market/world of work.⁵¹

The concept note, however, finds itself systematically expanding the vision and coverage of the traditional sub-sectors such as junior secondary education (JSE) and TVET. Thus the ‘JSE level’ turns out to cover a whole range of groups which are of JSE age-range, but don’t have the previous education experiences to qualify for JSE. Obviously this significantly alters and expands the meanings associated with JSE.

Similarly with TVET, there is an attempt to expand the concept and coverage in line with the holistic and inclusive approach of the WGPPE. This means that the term has to carry a whole series of additional meanings:

It needs to incorporate not only the formal institutions, but also the totality of other structured arrangements that provide young people and adults with a learning experience that develops competencies for the world of work, whether as pre-employment or as further skills development while working, institution-based or work-based, off-the-job or on-the-job training. (Hoppers, 2007b: 13)

This attempt to expand the meanings of TVET leads to a position where all kinds of structured learning needs of young people, whether met in informal apprenticeship or at work, may be termed TVET.

Again, this may be understandable, given the particular approach and purpose of this conceptual paper, but the deliberate expansion of the usual meaning of TVET appears to neglect one of the main reasons why the term ‘skills development’ has increasingly come to be adopted, especially by agencies.

Concluding remarks

The problem with the attempted expansion of the regular meanings of TVET, post-primary or JSE level is the same for all of them. It is this: that unless some new terminology is adopted, many, and especially professional, constituencies, will continue to use the terms in their traditional time-honoured ways. The success of Philip Coombs (Director of the IIEP) in getting the term, ‘nonformal education (NFE)’, adopted, almost 40 years ago, was that he provided a new phrase for a range of learning that was not adequately covered by ‘adult education’ or ‘out of school’ education at the time. But it is worth noting that when nonformal education enthusiasts sought to include under NFE a whole series of activities and practices in other ministries such as agricultural extension, or small business development, this was

⁵⁰ Doubtless, the concept note requires an expanded vision of PPE if all the different working groups of

⁵¹ The CAS (Edinburgh University) study has argued similarly in its chapter on ‘education, training and enabling environments’ in Palmer et al (2007).

resisted.⁵² There are perhaps lessons in this NFE experience for the current attempt to expand dramatically the meanings of PPE.

So if we go back to the title of this current workshop, “What room for skills development in ‘post-primary education’?”, we might want to argue that skills development has been selectively adopted over the last ten years precisely because it was a much wider term than TVET, covering all the different locations where work (and life) skills can be acquired. From this perspective, we would want to claim that there is no difficulty with stating that there is room for TVET in post-primary education (in their regular meanings), but currently the term, post-primary education, has not been sufficiently expanded satisfactorily to cover the many other learning sites of skills development. Whether the ADEA Biennale in 2008 will help to legitimate a much wider expansion in the meaning of the term, post-primary education, is a moot point. But logically, it would be easier to argue that there was room for ‘skills development’ within the wider term, ‘post-basic education and training (PBET)’, than within PPE. I suspect that for a long time to come, it will be easier to accept that regular TVET can continue to find room within regular PPE than can skills development find an expanded version of PPE within which it can take up residence.

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⁵² For an account of this episode in the expansion of the NFE concept, see King (1976), ‘Minimum learning needs for the Third World. New panacea or new problems’.

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