IF NO ONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND:

FACING THE POLICY CHALLENGES OF INCREASING THE QUALITY AND REACH OF EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

CHALLENGE TWO: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

THE CHALLENGE IN CONTEXT
Among the many reflections that have occurred since the attacks of September 11, 2001 have been the renewed realizations that the world is highly interconnected and that attention to the world's poor must be high on the economic agenda. Although there was great optimism twenty years ago, the record of the rich nations in raising the developing world to a minimal level of well-being has not been a shining one. "In 1983, The World Bank predicted that developing nations' average gross domestic product would grow 3.3 percent a year over 15 years. In fact it barely grew at all."[57] Poverty remains shocking and about a third of the world lives on the equivalent of $2.00 per day. "In 1820, the richest country had only three times as much income per person as the poorest; today, the richest nation has 20 times the income."[58]

"Economic growth" is an important economic and philosophical approach to meeting the world poverty challenge, but economists have long been divided about what drives "growth". In the 1980s, The World Bank advocated that countries to which it lent funds adopt such reforms as free trade in order to bolster competition, deregula-tion in order to spur free markets to allocate resources, and restrained government spending to control inflation. The rate of success of these policies has been called poor, although from one point of view this was mostly because the Bank lent money whether the reforms were instituted or not. When nations adopted the reforms, this view maintains, the nations did fairly well. [59] Critics of the emphasis on market policies to stimulate economic growth, such as Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist at the World Bank, suggest that economic growth is affected by a wide array of factors including education and the quality of financial institutions. The philo-sophical divide also slides over into workforce development with the debate, to be noted later, over the differing development emphases on 'livelihoods' and 'jobs'.

From a global perspective, clearly millions are currently being left behind and left out of the world's workforce. One situational analysis of the workforce situation delineates the breadth and the depth of this challenge (or more accurately a crisis).

Another analysis offers hope. An international research project in 2001,[61] using the tracer study methodology noted previously, has evaluated the further education and employment experiences of

THE WORKFORCE SITUATION

- **Nearly 150 million people in the world today are unemployed.**

- **a billion (roughly 30 percent of the world's labor force) are unemployed or have such low level jobs that they cannot support themselves or their families.**

- **3 billion people try to survive on two dollars a day.**

- **About 1 billion young people are in some form of school in today, or they should be in school, about to enter the labor market at unprecedented rates between and 2015. Right behind them; another 1.5 billion youth.**

- **Only 10 percent of these youth will live in countries where there are jobs for them (at the present time).**

- **All of these (youth) challenge the capacities of the educational systems of developing countries, already bursting at the seams, unable to cope.**

- **How will they earn their livelihoods?[60]**

secondary school leavers and university graduates in four African countries: Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Over 5,000 graduates and school leavers were interviewed. The university sample was drawn from graduates in a variety of occupational areas who left their national universities in 1980, 1987, 1994, and 1999. A representative sample of Form Four school leavers in 1990 and 1995 were also traced.

The study showed that despite increasing concerns about unemployment among university graduates in much of sub-Saharan Africa, nearly all the sampled university graduates in the four survey countries were in training–related wage employment in late 2001. Only between one and three percent of the university graduates were unemployed and looking for work. The incidence of wage employment among the 1990 school leavers, however, was much lower, with only half in wage employment in Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Tanzania. The figure was over 80 percent in Malawi. It was also estimated that between 10 and 38 percent of the terminal school leavers were in full-time self-employment in mid-late 2001.[62]

The researchers concluded that the employment outcomes were better than expected but that there are still "enormous challenges of educating and utilizing secondary school leavers and university graduates in an efficient and effective manner in low-income African countries." They cautioned that "given the paucity of new employment opportunities in the formal sector, much more needs to be done in order to ensure that both of these groups are better prepared for productive self-employment, especially in high-growth and higher skill activities." Importantly for the future direction of efforts in education, the researchers also concluded "that improving the overall quality of higher and secondary education is also absolutely crucial."[63]

A nation can be directly measured by the current prospects of its youth.

John F. Kennedy

The global challenge of the workforce crisis is both a threat and an opportunity.

The threat is complex and multifold. It is, as described earlier, both Jihad vs McWorld (Barber) and The Lexus and the Olive Tree (Friedman). The elements of the threat, whose foundation is poverty, are reflected in the unrest at world economic and trade forums, and include:

- the policymakers' decreasing power to control what happens inside their borders in terms of information, capital and technology;

- the kinds of economies that are wanted;

- who gets to participate in the new economies; and

- who benefits and who bears the costs.

Poverty is also linked closely with social and political unrest, genocide, environmental degradation, discrimination against women, and decreasing levels of health. Wars in turn are being transformed from superpower confrontations to local community wars[64] or terrorist attacks where a "victory" response is nebulous and long-term.

The opportunity comes with the dramatic pace of the changes in the world today—costs of communication are dropping rapidly, political borders are disappearing, and economies are becoming increasingly interdependent. Capital, technology, and information flow freely in an out of national boundaries. This puts "unique pressures on developing nations, while simultaneously creating vast opportunities to realize higher levels of prosperity for their citizens if they can find ways that help their citizens participate in productive economic activity;"[65] in essence, workforce development.

Workforce development is therefore a key part of the response to the economic challenge and, before proceeding to review it in practice, it is important to clearly understand what is meant by the term. A strategic definition of workforce development is "developing the skills of a nation's citizenry through a process of lifelong learning at work, in schools and community-based settings; a process that helps people with skills that allow them to earn livelihoods in local, regional and global markets."[66]

CRITICAL ISSUES

Meeting the challenge of economic growth and workforce development continues to be difficult. The situation has been likened to moving from "Teflon to Velcro." The benefits of the unimpeded flow of capital, information and technology are slipping away from those without capacity and therefore a goal is to adapt quickly to help the benefits hold fast within each country.[67]

A variety of critical issues therefore face economic growth and workforce development initiatives. These include:

- how to fulfill a set of prerequisites or needs that lead to competitive success;

- how to address a basic set of "disconnects" in developing nations;

- how to most accurately view

the world of economic development: through "jobs" or "livelihoods;" and

- for USAID, how to achieve a set of "breakthroughs" in overcoming obstacles to workforce development;

Responding to the globalization phenomenon will require initiating pressure internationally for the adoption of certain common standards in the workplace, the development of standards for those who will be competitively trained, and the adoption of competitive local standards. If a goal is to contribute to competitiveness through workforce development as measured by productivity and increased employment and employability, then there will be a need for:

- a more transparent and flexible labor market, with clear market signals and greater ability to respond to global industry trends;

- more portable skills through certification systems;

- greater efficiency in skills acquisition;

- more variety in training solutions;

- institutionalized articulation of competitive workforce needs by industry and training providers.[68]

ADDRESSING THE DISCONNECTS

In order to fulfill these needs a number of basic "disconnects" on the demand and supply sides as well as the linking mechanisms between them have to be addressed. Table 4 delineates these disconnects and responses.

BREAKTHROUGHS

For USAID, there is a need for "breakthroughs" to overcome the workforce development obstacles. Suggestions include:

- Holistic approaches that are adopted to respond to issues at both the top and the grass-roots levels;

- Missions that should have more flexible money, not earmarked;

- Involvement of all stakeholders;

- Public works programs created that in turn create jobs;

- A long-term instead of a short-term view of workforce development.

LIVELIHOODS

Finally, it is important to note here, and briefly deal with, an issue that is critical because it focuses on a key word appearing repeatedly in the strategies and the initiatives on workforce development. That word is livelihood. It is not a word to be taken in passing or lightly since con-

Table 4

II

The economic growth and work-force development challenge is profound and daunting. It is "our choice." [79] It is our choice to do nothing about the coming tide of unemployed youth and adults. It is also our choice to seize the opportunities represented by globalization to help countries build their societies (and economies) "by skilling their human resources–the only truly competitive advantage that's sustainable over time." IF workforce development is our choice, THEN the second option–skilling international human resources–must be chosen with clarity of direction, resolve, and a strong foundation of resources.

Ten Types of National Capacities
The Capacity to Set Objectives: based on an understanding of the national and local contexts, requires sound data and information about current needs and targets vulnerable groups.
The Capacity to Develop Strategies: requires a clear prioritization of needs, an understanding of the processes that can contribute to meeting them, and the development of meaningful benchmarks to determine progress.
The Capacity to Draw Up Action Plans: based on an agreed strategy, requires a detailed listing of required actions, identifies the parties involved in carrying them out and a clear timetable.
The Capacity to Develop and Implement Appropriate Policies: requires design of policies and methodologies for effective and accountable policy implementation.
The Capacity to Develop Regulatory and Legal Frameworks: requires adapting national laws and regulations for compatibility with relevant local conventions.
The Capacity to Build and Manage Partnerships: requires full and constructive consultation among key stakeholders (based on appropriate incentives) to secure commitments by the organizations and entities to be involved in the implementation of the action plan.
The Capacity to Foster an Enabling Environment for Civil Society: the success and sustainability of development initiatives require the participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly the more vulnerable.
The Capacity to Mobilize and Manage Resources: requires a quantification of the resources (human, financial and other) that are needed for implementation and requires that these resources be mobilized and put at the service of the plan.
The Capacity to Implement Action Plans: requires that those responsible for carrying out every part of the plan be appropriately selected, that they be aware of their responsibilities, and know to whom they are accountable for performance.
The Capacity to Monitor Progress: requires that people and mechanisms be put in place to enable the measurement of agreed benchmarks and indicators; provides for feedback to ensure that objectives and strategies are adjusted so that progress is realized and sustained.
Stephen Browne. Developing Capacity Through Technical Cooperation: Country Experiences United Nations Development Programme/Earthscan Publications 2002, 4.

CHALLENGE THREE: HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

THE CHALLENGE IN CONTEXT

As with all the challenges, it is essential to begin with clarity of definition, and capacity development requires this. The term capacity development, as differentiated from capacity building, has been referred to as a long-term process that encompasses many stages, including building capacities and ensuring ownership and sustainability.[80] Capacity itself has also been viewed as occurring in two dimensions–human resources and organizational functions–with capacity-building involving human resources development and organizational engineering. When reference is made to the public sector, institution building is used. Capacity is defined as "the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives."[81] Browne, writing for UNDP, also differentiates between three levels of capacity: individual capacity, institutional capacity, and societal capacity ("the opening and widening of opportunities that enable people to use and expand their capacities to the fullest").[82] Amartya Sen, as noted earlier, emphasizes the importance of "development as freedom:" freedom to develop human capabilities to dream, reflect, and make choices.

There has been an increasing call to emphasize (or re-emphasize) the linkages between goals and the development of national capacities. One proposed set of general goal/capacity linkages, albeit in the engineering mode, is shown below.

CRITICAL ISSUES

Training is a facet of capacity building (and, as such, usually short-term) rather than capacity development. Training has long been regarded as a panacea for the ills of organizations, including educational organizations, around the world. That it has not been that panacea has not surprised many practitioners, including those in the training field, but it has also eluded many in international and development education. Training people, especially using didactic methods, and then dumping them back into organizational environments to wallow once again in the problems that continue to exist, has been counter-productive. Institutional change is also required. On-the-job training that involves committed mentoring, or training that takes a more comprehensive view of organizational development, including a sense of ownership by trainees and performance improvement objectives, offer more viable training alternatives to the millions left behind. For these reasons, broad terminology such as human capacity development provides greater value and utility in its inclusiveness.

Training does not take place in an institutional vacuum. As Thompson (1995) has observed, "training alone will not convert a conventional, technically-oriented, bureaucratic institution into a more people-centered, learning-oriented, strategic organization".[83] In order to have a lasting impact, training has to be linked closely to a variety of internal change processes—changes to an organization's working rules. Thompson's view of training refers not to simple classroom-based teaching and instruction but rather the creation of interactive learning environments and continuous learning opportunities…becoming 'learning organizations'[84]…to use the parlance of organizational change guru Peter Senge and his classic, The Fifth Discipline.[85]

For training to have any impact at all, it must be one of an array of elements that comprise a social learning process, and be integrated into a program of human capacity development; an idea acknowledged by the coupling of human capacity development and training in many international development institutions. To paraphrase the oft-told parable: "if the only tool you have is a saw, every problem will look like it should be cut into small pieces."[86] The problems, however, require making connections among a varying set of human capacity development processes and responses.