SOME REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract – The article stresses the significance of anti-poverty oriented rural development for developing countries and the need to identify the educational implications of such a strategy. Some of the assumptions derived from contemporary experience in development, and in particular rural development, which are vital for understanding and formulating the role of education, are presented and analysed. The indicators used in the measurement of anti-poverty rural development bring clarity to the concept of interlinking development and education in concrete terms. Some features of education for rural development are discussed and the significance of four areas of educational activities underscored, namely, primary education, functional literacy, human resources development and education related to the world of work. The article is concluded by stressing the need for establishing firm linkages between educational and developmental infrastructures with special emphasis on nonformal education and its flexibility of approach.


Résumé – L’auteur de cet article met en évidence la signification du développement rural envisagé comme une lutte contre la pauvreté dans les pays en développement et il souligne la nécessité de découvrir les implications de l’éducation dans une telle stratégie. Il présente et analyse quelques-unes des inductions tirées de l’expérience contemporaine du développement, en particulier du développement rural, indispensables à la compréhension et à la formulation du rôle de l’éducation. Les indicateurs utilisés pour mesurer le développement rural anti-pauvreté apportent aussi une clarté au principe de conjugaison de l’éducation et du développement en termes concrets. Ensuite l’auteur examine quelques traits de l’éducation pour le développement rural, mettant l’accent sur l’importance de quatre zones d’activités éducatives, à voir,
The Meaning of Rural Development

After the Second World War and with the weakening of colonialism, there was a great rise of expectations in the newly independent Third-World countries. The development of technology whipped up expectations still further. A new movement of community development started gathering momentum in the 1950's in many Asian countries and subsequently spread to other regions. In the 1960's, enthusiasm about the impact of community development programmes in rural societies started waning. At the same time, another movement of agricultural extension, stemming from new seed technology, started gaining ground. In the wake of a world-wide food shortage, this movement was widely welcomed and named the 'Green Revolution'. Production and technology began to get the upper hand. As a result, with rising production, the marginal and small farmers and share-croppers were reduced to landless labourers through transfer of land. Increased mechanisation (in the name of modernisation) made the landless labourers more marginal, swelling the influx of rural people into the cities and creating enormous tensions and problems. In many countries, to protect the small farmers, farmers' cooperatives or associations were beginning to be formed during the late 1960's (there were also other types of co-operatives existing). With this, the movement of rural development gradually started. In spite of very useful experiences gained in many countries, the situation had still not very much improved for the small farmers, who constituted the majority in many countries. New institutions were also gradually captured by the big farmers and landlords and so the lot of the small farmers remained the same, or even deteriorated; and the efforts of land reform in many countries failed to deliver the goods.

The lessons learnt from these experiences are generally accepted now. It became evident that most past efforts towards community or rural development had by-passed the rural masses, especially the rural poor. It was recognised that drastic changes would be necessary in social and economic institutions if development was to serve those who needed it most. Rural development has now come to imply an integrated process, in spite of the traditional categorisation of ministries and their functions in national governments. It has come to be recognised that development cannot be achieved by imposition from the top, and that people's active participation and decision-