

## Work History

David Atchoarena is Program Specialist Team Leader at the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning where he is in charge of the Unit for Higher Education and Specialized Training. Holder of a PhD in Economics, his competencies focus particularly on the analysis of politics and educational systems, the financing of technical and vocational education and training, and the analysis of the labor market. Since his joining the IIEP in 1991, D. Atchoarena has coordinated numerous research programs dealing with technical and vocational education and training as well as informal education, lifelong learning, and education and training in rural areas. Prior to working for the IIEP, D. Atchoarena was official representative at the National Agency for the Development of Lifelong Education (ADEP, Ministry of Education, France). He is the author or co-author of various works in his fields of competency. He recently published the following:

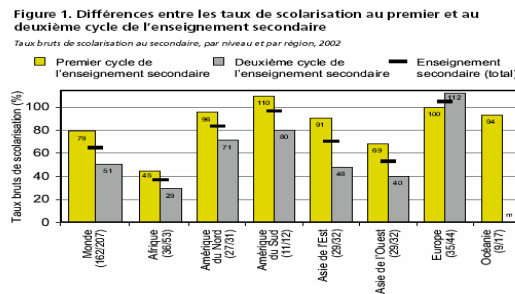
- (with André Delluc). *Revisiting technical and vocational education in sub-Saharan Africa*. 2002. IIEP, UNESCO publishing.
- (with Paul Esquieu). *Private Vocational Education in sub-Saharan Africa*. 2002. IIEP, UNESCO publishing.
- (published with Lavinia Gasperini), *Education for rural development. Towards new policy responses*. 2003. FAO, IIEP, UNESCO Publishing.

## Abstract

**Objectives and efficiency of the solutions selected in countries experiencing major economic and social difficulties; ideas for the future of Sub-Saharan Africa**

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the question of the development of short third-level vocational training needs to be addressed in a special way. In a difficult budgetary context, a commitment to Education for All limits the room for manoeuvre in respect of third-level education, and notably where reputedly-costly professional training is concerned. Moreover, the still-bleak employment situation means that demand for third-level graduates is weak. The imbalance between job offers and the outflow of graduates from university often spells relatively high unemployment and underemployment among young graduates. However, despite the depressed jobs market, social demand for higher education is growing, both for demographic reasons and because of the insufficient, yet palpable, progress of Education for All. On the offer side, higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa is often characterised by studying conditions which have been rendered grossly unacceptable by the pauperisation born of years of budgetary austerity.

It should also be pointed out that, in the region, technical and third-level training are generally appendices of the educational system. In most cases, those receiving technical training represent only a tiny percentage of the total number of pupils in the underdeveloped secondary-school system, as is shown by the gross access rate at that level (29% of pupils reach higher secondary education – see fig. 1).



In the Africa region, school life expectancy does not exceed 7.8 years (Table 1), and the gross access rate is estimated at 8% for third-level education (2002/2003). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the average time spent in higher education exceeds one year in only one country – South Africa. Third-level access rates are, therefore, very low, and this is particularly true where vocational training is concerned.

**Tableau 1. Espérance de vie scolaire moyenne en années, par région 2001/2002**

	Espérance de vie scolaire moyenne en années		Nombre d'années d'enseignement supérieur	Enseignement supérieur / Education totale (%)
	Primaire - secondaire	Primaire - supérieur		
Afrique	7,6	7,8	0,2	3
Amérique du Nord	11,2	14,3	3,1	22
Amérique latine	12,1	13,7	1,6	12
Asie	8,9	9,9	1,0	10
Europe	12,4	15,4	3,0	19
Océanie	12,4	...	...	...
<b>Monde</b>	<b>9,3</b>	<b>10,8</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Institut de statistique de l'UNESCO, *Recueil de données mondiales sur l'éducation 2004*.  
Notes: Les données se rapportent à 2000/2001 pour 38 pays et à 1999/2000 pour 7 pays. Les moyennes régionales sont pondérées en fonction du nombre d'enfants approchant de l'âge d'entrée à l'école primaire (5 ans).

Nevertheless, the growing demand for third-level education, coupled with graduates' insertion problems, has, in many countries, led to a corresponding growth in vocational third-level education.

In this context, the development of third-level vocational training in Sub-Saharan Africa has posed a number of strategic challenges and questions, including:

- How can this movement tie in with the changes occurring in the jobs market in rural and other areas?
- How should the private offer be addressed? How can incentives, regulation and control be handled, and what measures are required in terms of equity?
- How can the efficiency and effectiveness of third-level technical-education establishments be optimised (rationalisation of the offer; statutes and management of establishments, partnership with industry; diversification of activities; choice between initial and continuing training, etc.)?