A cross-sectoral examination of equity and access data

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This paper reports the results of a research project designed to examine access and equity issues from a cross-sectoral perspective. The research was undertaken for NCVER during 1999 by the LifeLong Learning Network, University of Canberra.

From a review of cross-sectoral data the authors argue that the greatest restrictions to participation are likely to be experienced by those who are from low socio-economic backgrounds or who fail to successfully complete secondary education (ie. the poor and low skilled)

The significance of low socio-economic status and low skills development during the school years as predictors of later unemployment and social alienation leads the writers to conclude that equity programs should be targeted more effectively at these social groups. To do this governments need to develop uniform, non-intrusive methods of identifying those of low-socio economic status in administrative data collections.

In the past equity strategies have been developed by each sector in isolation. There is now a strong case for a more comprehensive approach that ensures genuine pathways to employment both for young people moving from education and training to employment and for older people needing to upgrade skills in order to move into new areas of employment.

There is also a strong case for greater cross-sectoral coordination in the collection of data on equity outcomes. Suggestions are made for improving the current data collections across the sectors.

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