



Improving Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa (Directions in Development)

Arvil V. Adams, Sara Johansson de Silva, Setareh Razmara

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Sub-Saharan Africa has millions of nonfarm workers engaged in small and household enterprises outside formal wage employment, constituting the informal sector. Previously seen as a pool of surplus labor expected to be absorbed by future industrialization, this sector has instead become a persistent feature of the region's economic landscape, and accounts for a majority of new jobs created off the farm.

Expanding the sector's potential as a source of employment for the region's growing workforce and improving its productivity and earnings are priorities for poverty reduction. This book examines the role played by education and skills development in serving these priorities.

Improving Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa looks at how formal education, technical and vocational education and training, apprenticeships, and on-the-job learning shape employment and earnings in the informal sector in five African countries. These countries-Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Tanzania-together account for one-third of Sub-Saharan Africa's population of nearly 900 million, and of the nearly 36 million nonfarm workers in those five countries, 7 out of 10 work in the informal sector.

The importance of this book is its quantitative assessment, using household surveys, of the relationship of different sources of skills development to the sector in which one works and to one's earnings. The book also examines a set of economic constraints to skills development and offers an insightful approach to improving employment outcomes, including examples of successful interventions taken from the five countries and elsewhere.

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