

# School-to-work transition in Europe and the approach to work-based training



**Survey on transition systems in 9 European countries  
(BG - DE - IT - MT - PT - RO - SE - SLO - TR)**

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership Project 2015 – 2017  
'Work-based training in the school-to-work transition process'  
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## Foreword

The Strategic Partnership "Work-based Training"<sup>1</sup> has come together in order to examine the various national school-to-work transition processes of the participating countries and the different work-based learning approaches accordingly. Public schools, private vocational training centers and other educational institutions from 9 European countries set up the Erasmus+ project in order to exchange expertise on work-based training as well as to highlight examples of good practice. The overview at hand is the result of a survey carried out in the months October to December 2015 as first project activity. It reflects the different national settings on the school-to-work transition processes in the countries.

### What is the background of the research?

European countries undertake complete different attempts to bring young people into the labour market when finishing schooling. This had led to the fact that nowadays Europe is a rag rug of various school-to-work transition systems stretching from pure school-based vocational preparation to strict work-based apprenticeship systems. Meanwhile it is commonly understood that countries with a more work-oriented vocational preparation approach are doing better regarding the integration of the young generation into work and society facing a significant lower unemployment rate.

At the present, Austria, Denmark and Germany are the countries in Europe with a strong dual apprenticeship system in which theory is taught in educational institutions and practical skills are acquired at the workplace in a company. In consequence, these are the countries with a relatively low youth unemployment rate - whereat of course the general economic situation also contributes that young students find their way to the job sector after finishing their schooling. On the other hand, there are countries where learning in the workplace and an apprenticeship system is virtually unknown and which face high unemployment among young people.

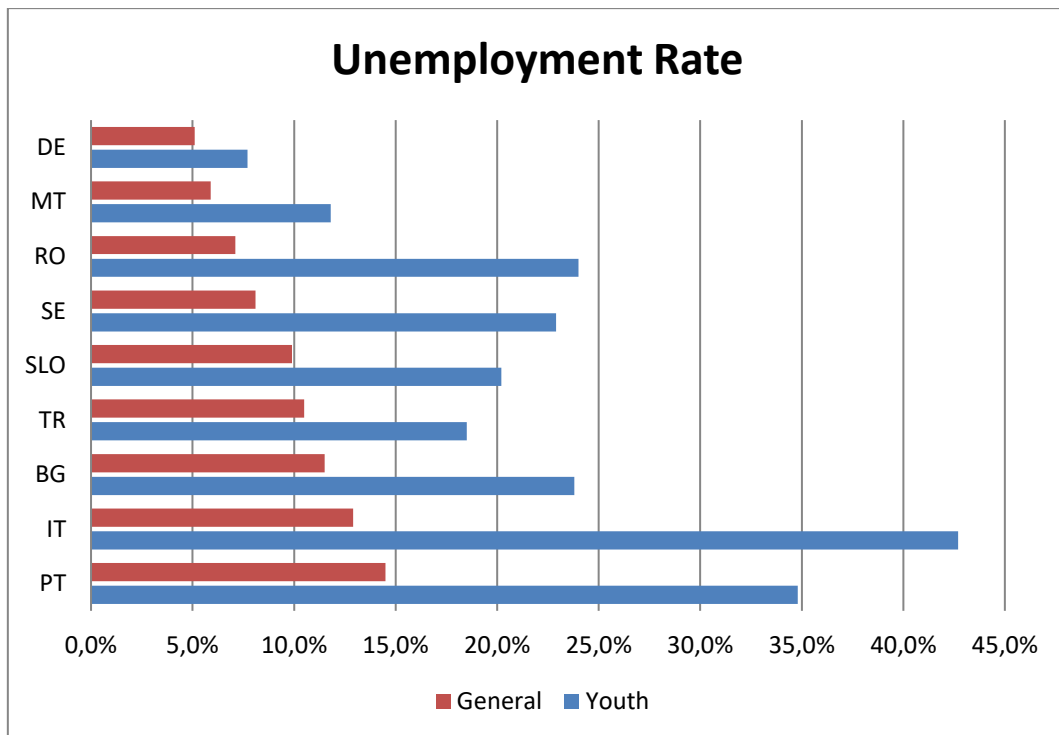
And yet, it is disastrous to notice that – regardless the national institutional setting concerning the transition between education and the labour market may be – in every single European country the youth unemployment is significantly higher than the average unemployment rate, sometime doubling the value. The following diagram shows the unemployment rate among the general population and the youth in those countries represented in the WBT partnership project. The figures are taken from the Social Inclusion Monitor Europe<sup>2</sup> and date from 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> Work-Based Training in the school-to-work transition process (WBT), Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership 2015-17, Grant Agreement no. 2015-1-DE02-KA202-002447

<sup>2</sup> Schraad-Tischler, Daniel: Social Justice in the EU – Index Report 2015, Bertelsmann Foundation (Ed.), Gütersloh 2015, page 36-37.

Unemployment figures for Turkey are taken from <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/medas/?kn=72&locale=tr>



*The unemployment rate among general population and youth*

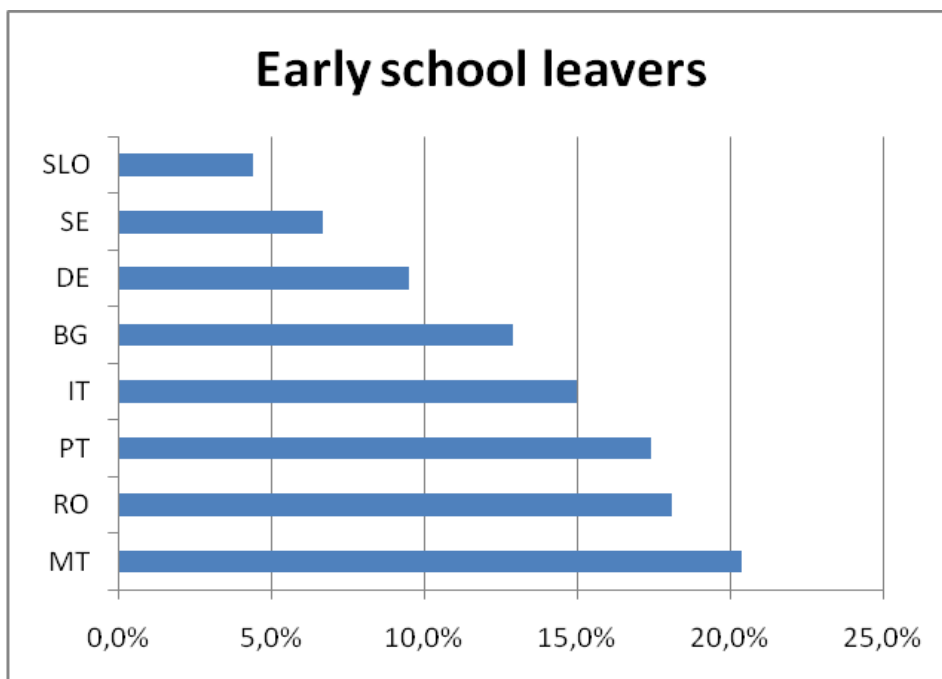
To fight unemployment among the young generation the European Union has made vast efforts to promote work-based learning and a company-based apprenticeship system among European member states. Meanwhile an European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA)<sup>3</sup> has been established and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) as European reference centre for policy-makers has published numerous research papers and country reports on that topic.

But even though it is seen that a stronger work-orientated approach has to be followed when aiming to bring young people into the job, it is also recognized that the countries have to find their own way in transforming their school-to-work system in direction to a vocational apprenticeship setting. It is seen as not workable just to transfer the system from one country to another, for example to export the German Dual System to other countries by 100%. The re-known German Bertelsmann Foundation recommends instead the careful transfer of components of the system<sup>4</sup>.

Besides, while Germany is doing quite well as far as the unemployment of the average young learner concerns it is just middle-rating when looking at integration of so-called disadvantaged young people. As it can be seen from the diagram below the rate of early school leavers in the partner countries ranges from 4% to more than 20%.

<sup>3</sup> European Alliance for Apprenticeships, <http://ec.europa.eu/apprenticeships-alliance>

<sup>4</sup> Euler, Dieter: Germany's dual vocational training system: a model for other countries? Bertelsmann Foundation (Ed.), Gütersloh 2013



*The rate of early school leavers in partner countries<sup>5</sup>*

The figures reflect the fact that a high proportion of young people (up to every fifth) do leave schooling without a formal degree, most likely failing in receiving a proper vocational qualification and in entering the labour market.

As far as Germany is concerned, these young drop-outs will also fail in entering an apprenticeship in a company. But in case they are lucky to do so, at the latest they will fail in passing the exams. Thus the dual system does not really help in reducing the number of those who break off and drop out the system.

The overview at hand reflects the situation in the partner countries and documents the transition between education and the labour market. Special focus is laid though on the situation of disadvantaged young people aiming in illustrating how work-based training approaches can help to improve the situation of these young people by leading them to sustainable learning success and a proper vocational qualification.

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<sup>5</sup> Schraad-Tischler, Daniel: Social Justice in the EU – Index Report 2015, Bertelsmann Foundation (Ed.), Gütersloh 2015, page 30.

Figures in the report are referring to EU member states. Turkey is not included in the diagram due to lack of data.

### VARIATION IN SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION IN BULGARIA

The macro analysis of the report „Mapping youth transition in Europe“ (Eurofound 2014), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg) revealed that certain events in young people’s transitions to adulthood, such as leaving home and becoming parents, are strongly associated with the economic independence achieved with a successful school-to-work transition.

In the ‘Eastern European’ and ‘Mediterranean’ models, difficult and problematic school-to-work transitions are associated with very slow and late transitions to independence and autonomy.

In general, countries with a higher integration of school and work, through apprenticeship programmes or through effective combination of education and early labour market experience, display a smoother and quicker transition from school to work.

Bulgaria’s transition from state socialism to market capitalism:

- led to changes in the education system (decentralization, liberalization and privatization)
- had impact on school-to-work transition (more risk and uncertainty, decline in employment, social exclusion)

Since 2007, when Bulgaria became a EU member state, the process and experience of transitioning from education to labor market has significantly changed for Bulgarian youth. EU enlargement provided more options for making this transition. Emigration became one of the possibilities for young people to find a job, provide an income for themselves, and gain independence from their parents.

Current Situation:

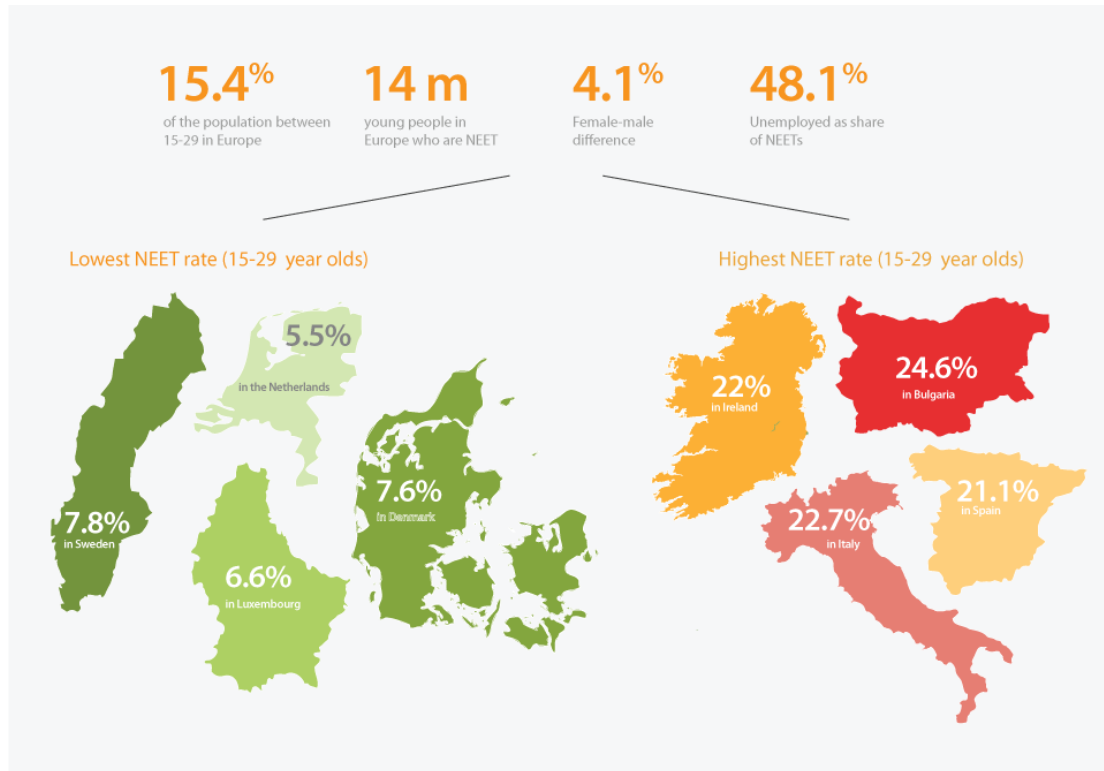
- Bulgaria Youth Unemployment Rate: 21.30% in Aug ‘15 ( General Unemployment Rate – 9,30%)
- population decline of working age worldwide

High unemployment and structural barriers for entry into the labor market can be considered among the factors increasing the significance of emigration and job searching abroad as a strategy for young Bulgarians to begin an independent life.

This is similarly suggested by the migration survey data collected in parallel with the last Census in 2011. According to the survey, 22% of youth, age 15-19, reported traveling abroad for work as a reason for leaving the country. Among those aged 20-39, the percentage is three times higher-62%.

One in five young people in Bulgaria is not engaged in any form of employment, education or training. Hence, the country is among the EU countries leading the unflattering ratings for the numbers of young people outside the educational, social and labor systems.

According to the late sociological study, commissioned by UNICEF, on the NEETS phenomenon (\*NEETS young people not in employment, education or training): out of 750,000 people at the age of 15-24 in Bulgaria, 170,000 (22%) belong to this risk group. For comparison, the average NEETS rate among EU member states is 12,9%.

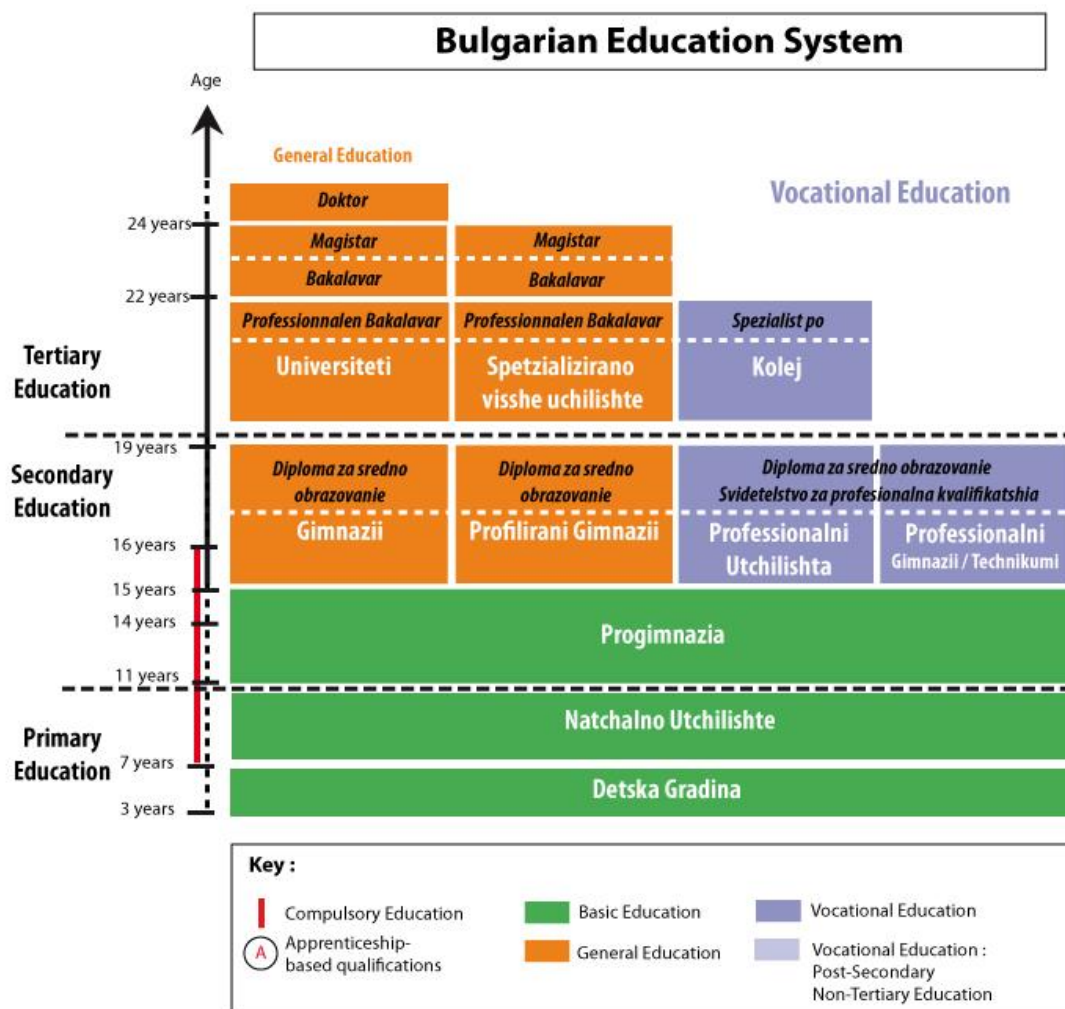


*Rates of NEETS across Europe, Eurofound's Report on NEETS - Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*

## How are young people being prepared?

Vocational education in Bulgaria at secondary level is available through the vocational-technical schools and the technical schools. The vocational-technical schools offer three years of training upon completion of 8<sup>th</sup> grade and five years of training upon completion of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Both lead up to a diploma of specialized secondary education.

Additionally, these schools offer other forms of training, such as evening courses, external or on-site training in order to enable students at the age of 16 and above to acquire qualification. Presence at the evening courses is obligatory, while the organization of the other forms of training is student's responsibility.



*Bulgarian Education System (© Onisep / Elise Veteau)*

## Legal framework for and governance of traineeships

The laws on secondary vocational and higher education distinguish three types of traineeship:

1. Practice: production internship in secondary vocational education. The term 'praktika'(practice) used in the secondary vocational education system (from 9th to 12th grade or to the 13th grade) means a 'production' traineeship. It offers access to a real production process and on-the-job training. The Professional Education and Training Law (PETL), in force since 1999, regulates the production traineeship as experience which is acquired in real working environments: production units, enterprises, companies, banks, etc., depending on the nature of the profession being mastered, as well as the specific needs for training in that profession. The practical (and if necessary the theoretical) training during the production traineeship is regulated by the curriculum for the respective profession.
2. Curricular internships (stages) in higher education: the curricular internships (stages) are elements of the academic curriculum of students in higher education. In compliance with Art. 20 of the Higher Education Law (HEL, in force since 1996) higher educational establishments enjoy



academic freedom to determine the curriculum, as well as to organise the process for training and traineeship.

3. Traineeship as initial or additional vocational training or as a part of an apprenticeship: adults can complete a production traineeship, organised through the Labour offices, which is carried out either after or during:

- initial or additional vocational training (could be combined with literacy courses);
- apprenticeship (on-the job-training).

Traineeships and apprenticeships of adults are also regulated by the Employment Law (in force since 2001) as elements within the programmes and measures applied to the labour market.

### **Legal provisions regarding traineeships**

There are two main aspects of traineeship which are regulated by law: the duration and the remuneration.

#### *Duration of Traineeship*

The duration of the production traineeship in the secondary vocational education and training system is determined by the *Law for Vocational Education and Training*. It has been laid down in the curricula as compulsory vocational training with a specified volume of hours in the last stage of the training.

For secondary vocational education, after finishing 11<sup>th</sup> grade, the traineeship lasts two weeks (60 hours) while in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> grades it lasts for 124 hours, that is 184 hours in total over the course of an ISCED II and III level professional qualification.

For higher education, the duration of the traineeships (stages) is determined by the State Educational Standards and they are specified by the curriculum for the subject.

#### *Remuneration*

There is no specific law or other separate legislative act that deals with remuneration for traineeships. Young people aged 16 years old or above, who have signed an employment or civil contract can receive payment. A trainee hired by a company concludes contracts for the period of the traineeship (according the Labour code) and receives small payments.

Furthermore, there are provisions for travel, food and overnight expenses for school students if the traineeship is held at a different location to the student's school. Special health insurance is also included in the terms.

Traineeships as Part of Education and/or Labour Market Entry And Integration for Youth In Bulgaria, the vocational education and training system consists of more than 400 vocational high schools, secondary schools and colleges in which about 180,000 students are trained.

#### *Secondary Education*

In vocational education *the traineeship is an ingredient of the obligatory vocational training.*

It is carried out during the last two years of the education period, and the number of hours is included in the compulsory employment of teachers. The traineeship is controlled by a teacher and a specialist from the production unit and it ends with an assessment which is entered in the secondary education diploma, as well as in the certificate for the vocational qualification.

### **How does the Dual System work?**

Legal Basis: according to the current Professional Education and Training Law (PETL), the Vocational Education and Training System includes:

1. Professional orientation, professional training, and professional education;
2. Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences.

Professional training includes:

1. Basic professional training – acquiring basic professional qualification or specific professional competences;
2. Continuous professional education – improving on already acquired professional qualification or specific professional competences.

Professional training provides the required educational minimum for secondary education and for the attainment of professional qualification.

Professional education can also be carried out through apprenticeship programs in companies (dual education). Dual education is a form of partnership between vocational schools, vocational colleges or vocational education centers and one or several employers. The partnership includes:

1. Practical on-the-job training;
2. Instruction at a vocational school, a vocational-technical school, a vocational college or an education center (State Gazette, issue 61 '14).

According to Act №1 on the Conditions and Procedure for Implementation of Education Through Work (Dual Education)<sup>6</sup>, the institutions, authorized to provide vocational education and work training (dual education) are:

1. Vocational-technical schools;
2. Vocational schools;
3. Vocational colleges;
4. Vocational education centers.

According to article 3 of the Act №1, work training (dual education) includes:

1. Practical training in real work environment and
2. Education in one of the above-mentioned institutions.

The number of Centers for vocational training is increasing, in 2013 there were 908 of them, 2,40% more than in 2012. For a considerable number of unemployed people being included in vocational

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<sup>6</sup> Effective 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015, issued by the Ministry of Education and Science

training program at such a center is an opportunity for equal participation on the job market, and for the ones already employed – to keep their jobs. (ref. 5).

Conclusions:

- The Dual system of vocational education is in a preparation process at regional level and will be introduced in pilot sites during the 2015-2016 school year.
- According to the revised *Law on Vocational Education and Training* (end of 2014): learning through work (dual training) is a form of partnership between the vocational school, college or vocational training center and one or several employers
- Through the Dual system "mentors" in the business sector will be trained.

### What works?

1. As part of Bulgaria's National Programme for Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training a number of projects are implemented, based on the public private partnership principle, with enterprises which provide opportunities for learners to improve their practical skills through apprenticeships in different companies. In 2010, 22 partnerships were financed and 1348 students were provided with an opportunity for practical training in enterprises.
2. A newly established cluster "dual vocational training" exists as part of the German-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bulgaria (since 01.01.2015)
  - Theoretical training will be conducted in five German-Bulgarian vocational training centers on the territory of the country;
  - Education "through work" will be carried out at the request and expense of companies that engage and provide internship placements for the students.
3. The Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre State Enterprise (DBBZ) was established in July 2011 with amendment to the Employment Encouragement Act, by virtue of which five Bulgarian-German vocational training centres (DBBZ) in Pazardzhik, Pleven, Stara Zagora, Smolyan and Tsarevo are transformed from second level spending units to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy into a legal entity DBBZ State Enterprise pursuant to Art.62, par. 3 of Commercial Law.

Main objective of DBBZ State Enterprise is to increase employment opportunities for the unemployed and/or persons facing unemployment through vocational guidance, training and further training according to the needs of the economy.

DBBZ State Enterprise inherited the good traditions of three successful Bulgarian-German projects on vocational training of adults (1992-2010), within which five Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centres were constructed and put into operation and which have a significant contribution to the development of the vocational training for adults in Bulgaria. At the beginning of its activities in the period 1995-1999/2000 all three DBBZ in Pazardzhik, Stara Zagora and Plevan offered young people a two-year vocational training on the principle of Germany's dual system of vocational ed-

education and training, which was very successful among the participants in it and the employers - partners of the centres.

### **What are the advantages, what are the drawbacks?**

- According to the “Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria 2015-2020”: introducing the dual system (system for learning “through work”) will help limit the number of people dropping out of the educational system and decrease youth unemployment.
- Action Plan of the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education for the period 2015-2020 exists, its main objective is: bridging the gap between vocational education and training and the business needs and a smooth transition between school and the workplace.

The successful labour market integration of young people with a low education level proves to be one of the most serious challenges for the youth employment policy of the country. It is also a factor which could prevent the youth emigration.

It is expected that young people with limited social /educational resources will also find it difficult to integrate into the labour market of a foreign country. This creates the double challenge of young people with inadequate resources and human capital with compromised opportunities. This youth is not able to find a stable first job neither in Bulgaria, nor abroad.

### **How is it done?**

The Bulgarian government has launched a number of different anti-crisis programmes aimed at increasing younger generations’ participation in the labour market. These programmes have mainly been financed by the European Social Fund (under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, HRD OP) and supplemented from the state budget. Among these schemes, we consider the following to be of particular interest:

1. A new apprenticeship programme where people with low levels of education and school leavers receive an allowance, as well as the companies that employ them. The allowance covers their salaries and contributions for a maximum of 12 months.
2. A new work placement programme through which job opportunities are open for fresh university graduates.
3. In parallel, a programme ‘Creation of Employment for Youth Through Provision of Opportunities for Internships’ has also been launched. This programme is aimed to facilitate the transition from education to employment by providing job opportunities for young people under 29 years of age who have graduated from secondary school or hold a university degree but lack professional experience.
4. Special funding was made available for training young employees. The expected number of employees to be trained was over 62,000.
5. Encouraging part-time work by revising the rules regulating this type of atypical work.

It is hard to evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes, but the ILO document cited above argues that:

*'Activation strategies for example, become less effective when labour demand is weak and less vacancies are available. It may even, in a context of shortage of jobs and persisting skill mismatches, have limited effect on reducing unemployment and inactivity but rather contribute to a further increase of poverty. The collapse of job openings and hiring is a substantial challenge and longer term driver of unemployment. In recognition of this situation, the OECD has recently recommended to shift some of the focus on the "work-first" approach to activation to "training-first strategy", particularly for those at risk of long-term unemployment.'* (ILO, 2011, p. 47.)

Other evaluation aspects:

- Formal criteria for evaluation of the results and efficacy of the programs (mostly quantitative);
- Lack of regular surveys among the participants in the programs and a lack of quality-based evaluation of the effectiveness of the provided services;
- Low levels of motivation among participants in the programs due to lack of individual approach;
- Lack of coordination among the responsible institutions – training institutions, service-providers at the labour market, employers;
- Lack of dissemination channels for good practices and lack of transparency.

## **How are disadvantaged young people doing in the Dual System?**

Special needs education in Bulgaria: There is a network of state-run boarding schools to support and educate physically or mentally disadvantaged children. The priorities in this area are still pending. Among them are: the creation of a legal framework for funding, development of alternative forms of education, establishment of a system of school preparation for the integration and socialization of the children with special needs, implementation of programs for integrated educational forms and individual training, etc.

## **WORK-BASED TRAINING APPROACHES AT RESC PLEVEN**

### **Support measures**

#### ***Competence Assessment***

Competence Assessment is an instrument from the field of personnel management, allowing an individual and objective assessment of persons, relating to existing or less strongly developed competences. It gives recommendations for the possible professional development of this person, depending on existing potentials and given frame conditions.

Competence Assessment enables the participants to get a clear view on themselves, to plan a realistic future, based on this, and to build up motivations in order to face new professional challenges through existing competences and personal resources.

The course of Competence Assessment is divided in three phases. The design of the phases depends on the objectives of the participant and his/her level of education. The First Phase (Need Analysis) consists of the first conversation between the participant and the Competence Assessor. The concrete aim of the Competence Assessment is defined together.

In the Second Phase (Examination Phase) all relevant and necessary information, dates and facts are collected and included in a Competence File. Additionally, the File contains a psychometric and behaviour analysis of the personality traits of the participant.

In the Third and last Phase (Assessment and Synthesis Phase) all information that has been collected is precisely analysed and the results are discussed between the Competence Assessor and the participant. The so-called Synthesis paper is handed over as a concrete result. It is completed by a jointly created Action Plan.

60% of the participants make a decision to either continue their education or to attend training courses.

### ***Rickter Model Implementation***

In the frame of the project EUROPEAN CENTER FOR YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP the Rickter model for assessment and soft skills development has been adapted and applied to a group of 300 young people on the labour market in the Region of Pleven. Most of them with low education level of 8<sup>th</sup> grade on average.

After conducting 300 assessments, using the Rickter Scale and generating 300 IMS reports, as well as online consultations carried out on a specifically tailored online platform on the project website [www.jobsinovations.com](http://www.jobsinovations.com), the outcomes that have been achieved are as follows:

- 83 – started work on the primary labour market
- 17 – involved in employability programmes
- 38 – involved in training and achieving qualification

Total impact - 46 %

### **Providing other assistance opportunities**

1. Youth work – organizing a variety of project activities (since 2008) in the framework of the *Youth in Action* program. The projects and initiatives aimed at providing opportunities for inclusion for young people from disadvantaged groups.

Some of the projects:

- “The Building of the Babel Tower”, Multilateral Youth Exchange 2009;
- “Hello Europe”, Multilateral Youth Exchange 2009;
- “EuRoma 2010”, Project of participative democracy of young people;
- “Together for a Europe without discrimination”;
- “SENSEation”, Project of participative Democracy for young disadvantaged people 2010-2011;

- “Forget the differences”, Transnational Youth Initiative Eco-art workshops, organized in cooperation with Association “Development of Personality and Human Communities” 2010-2012.

## 2. Hosting and promoting projects for individual mobility

- Increasing motivation through mentoring;
- Supporting the development of organizational skills and competences; social skills and competences;
- Awareness-raising and motivation on the subject of mobility in Europe.

## 3. Trainings on the topics of Motivation, Soft skills, Adaptation to the labour market, Entrepreneurship, Decision-making; promotion of key competences and action competences.



*Young student in a work-based training scheme at RESC Pleven*

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### THE GERMAN SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROCESS

The German transition process is known as the "dual apprenticeship system" in which theory is taught in educational institutions and practical skills are acquired at the workplace in a company. After finishing compulsory general education, the majority of young people start an apprenticeship in a company in order to learn professional skills and to enter the job market afterwards. Apprenticeships are thus part of the formal educational system and help to integrate young learners into society and the labour market.

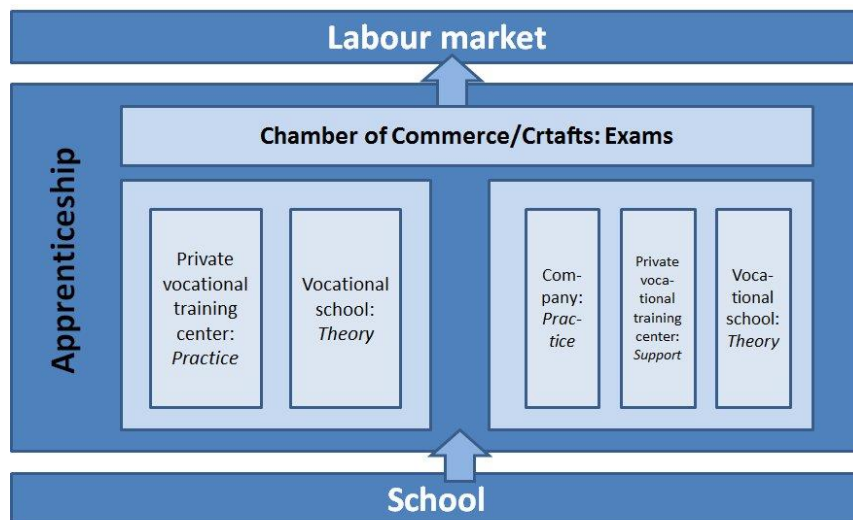
#### How are young people prepared?

Vast efforts have been made in recent years in order to prepare schools in Germany in giving appropriate vocational advice to young students and to offer vocational preparation to the students. For instance, each secondary school in Northrhine-Westfalia nowadays has a coordinator for vocational orientation called "**StuBO**" who is responsible for organising all activities related to vocational orientation and preparation at the school. These activities combine lectures on different professions, a competence analysis for all students, short-time internships in companies or training centers, informative talks with employers, job application trainings, the installment of a job orientation bureau, the offer of individual vocational advice and alike. The activities oftentimes are done in cooperation with private vocational training centers, the local Agency for Employment as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Crafts. They help in giving professional advice and finding the right apprenticeship place in a company. In consequence, the young learners nowadays have a better understanding of the job market and a clearer picture of the profession they want to take up after schooling.

#### How does the Dual System work?

Given that the student has got an idea of his future career path and that he passed successfully the application process, the young learner usually enters the apprenticeship. He then finds himself in the role of an ordinary worker signing a contract with the company, getting paid at the end of the month, receiving a payroll and paying taxes. Normally, he is at the workplace three times a week and goes to the vocational school the other two days. At his workplace he learns all the professional skills needed in his job, sometimes under 'real conditions' meaning that the product he works for is needed in the production process and waits for delivering to the customer. At the school he is taught the theoretical background combining general as well as profession related subjects such as mathematics, German, social studies and for instance electronics, programming, technical drawing etc for technical professions.





*The German dual system of apprenticeship*

The learning output is monitored both by the company and the vocational school. But the overall learning success is guaranteed by the Chambers of Commerce and of Crafts as external partners whose interim and final exams are to be passed by the apprentice. The exams exist of theoretical as well as practical parts. Without passing the exams and without the corresponding certificate of apprenticeship the student will not be allowed to work in his chosen profession. But once he has passed successfully, he is seen as skilled worker facing easier access to the labour market and better payment in comparison to the unskilled worker.<sup>7</sup>

### **What are the advantages, what are the drawbacks?**

It is obvious that the system with the two columns of learning places, the school for theory and the company for practice learning, secures a great deal of closeness to the labour market. Practice is not just learned under the artificial conditions in a classroom, but mostly under real job conditions with product deliveries and deadlines, thus sharpening competences as accurateness, effectiveness, reliability, capacity for team work and others. This again assures the young learner a relatively safe access to the labour market when finishing the apprenticeship. This is surely one of the reasons (besides the general economic situation) that Germany is doing quite well in respect of youth unemployment with a rate of under 10% in comparison to other European countries where an apprenticeship-based transition process is unknown facing a rate of 20% to 40% and even higher<sup>8</sup>.

On the other hand, there seem to be a lack of communication between the two partners of the dual apprenticeship system, the company on the one side and the vocational school on the other. Theory and practice learning are widely parallel running processes, seldom linked to each other. Thus, the young learners hardly understand why a certain subject or topic has to be learned, com-

<sup>7</sup> It has to be mentioned that besides the Dual System there exists an apprenticeship which exclusively takes place in a school. This applies for only a few professions in the medical and care sector.

<sup>8</sup> Schraad-Tischler, Daniel: Social Justice in the EU – Index Report 2015, Bertelsmann Foundation (Ed.), Gütersloh 2015, page 37

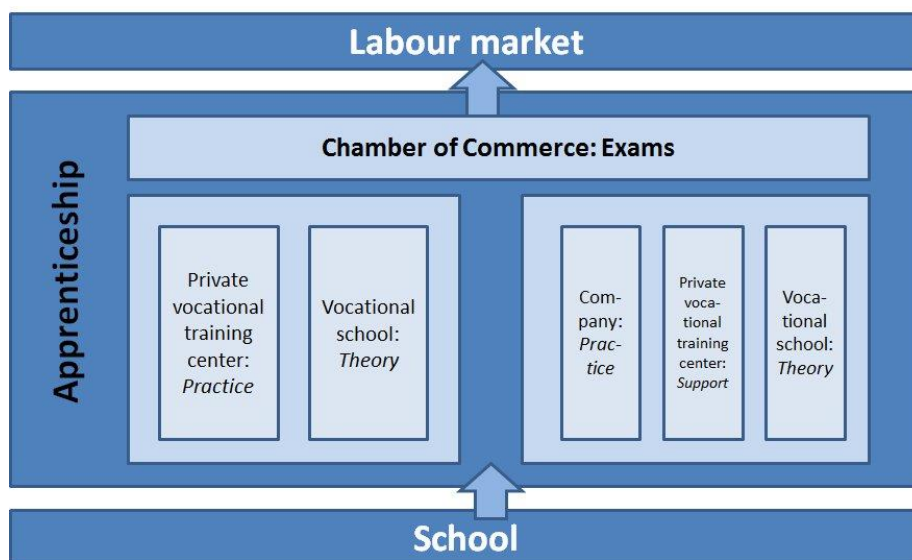
plaining "that it has nothing to do with the work I am doing". If this applies to the ordinary learner, how much more are disadvantaged learners, those with reduced learning abilities, affected by the lack of tooting between theory and practice learning? This leads to the question how the disadvantaged young learners survive in this system.

### How are disadvantaged young people doing in the Dual System?

The principle of dual learning places in the vocational preparation process has a long tradition in Germany - officially fixed for the first time at the end of the 19th century. For many years, there was the focus just on the ordinary learner who is fit enough to manage to learn theory and practice simultaneously in 3 to 3,5 years of apprenticeship and to pass the exams at an external body afterwards. It was not before the 1960s when the public took notice of the fact that a growing number of young students dropped out the system because there were good in working with their hands but not so well in abstract learning and adopting theoretical know-how. Politics reacted in installing special apprenticeships of 2 years time with reduced requirements to the theory to be learned.

In the 1980, when the economic situation worsened and even more young people did not find their way to the labour market because only the best were taken by employers, a special apprenticeship system was installed, the so-called off-the-job training for disadvantaged young people<sup>9</sup>.

The off-the-job training system is a publicly financed apprenticeship in order to secure a formal vocational training for disadvantaged young people. As in the regular Dual System, the student is doing an apprenticeship with signing a contract and receiving monthly payment. The difference is that the employer is not a company but a private vocational training center which is reimbursed by the local Jobcenter or Agency for Employment.



*The off-the-job system of apprenticeship*

<sup>9</sup> The German terminology is "Berufsausbildung in einer außerbetrieblichen Ausbildung (BaE)", Model A "Integratives Modell", Model B "Kooperatives Modell"

There are two ways of publicly financed trainings: In model A the vocational training center is fully playing the part of the company. The apprentice gets skilled in own workshops, learns the practical know-how he needs for his profession and receives additional support. As in the regular Dual System the vocational school is responsible for the theory learning and the Chambers of Commerce and of Crafts for the testing of the apprentices. In model B the vocational training center also acts as the employer but reduces its role in giving additional learning support to the student. As in the regular system, the practice learning is done in a company and the theory learning in the vocational school.

The additional support given by the vocational training centers is crucial for the learning success of these young people. At the end, they have to pass the same examinations at the Chamber of Commerce as all other apprentices have to do. The pay is that they will receive the same certificate of apprenticeship as their colleagues and that they get the same chances for entering the labour market.

## **WORKED-BASED TRAINING AT ZIB**

Since many years ZIB and its former partner organisation 'Gesellschaft für berufliche Bildung' are working with disadvantaged young people, characterized by the lack of a formal school degree and a vocational qualification often facing learning difficulties, a difficult family situation, drug abuse, mental health problems and alike. As a private training center we offer vocational preparation and the off-the-job type of apprenticeship to them. Ever since we are searching for ways to lead these young people to a lasting learning success - and finally to a formal qualification - by tying theory and practice learning in our workshops and classrooms. One method which reveals good results in producing learning success even to slow learners is what we call 'project-based learning'.

### **Project-based learning**

Learning often happens by-the-way when one is not prepared to it or don't expect it. This effect has to be made utilisable when working with disadvantaged young people whose skills and capabilities lie to a greater extent in practical work rather than abstract learning. As a rule, they are stamped by learning failure in school and negative learning experiences in the past. As a result they have built-up persistent learning barriers which stand in the way to new unprejudiced learning experiences. Following, learning has to take place preferably without noticing it.

As an example we might look at a young learner who dropped out of formal school or passed with bad results and who now finds himself in vocational training course. If the math teacher asks him for a percentage calculation, most likely the student will refuse to collaborate since he has got the feeling that he failed to learn that in the past, thus he will not be able to learn it now. But if, on the other hand, a trainer in the wood-working shop guides the same person in minimizing the waste when cutting out the correct shape of the loudspeakers which he could take home after completion, the same young learner may find him-/herself able to make the correct percentage calculation without even thinking about it. It shows that old learning blocks due to various learning failures in school can be broken or corrected when the stimulus applied is effective and appropriate.

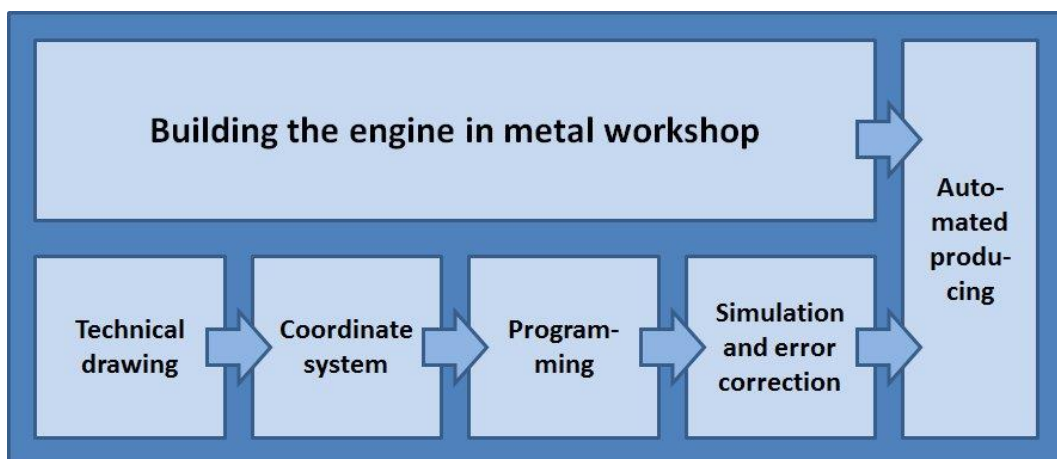
Following, we introduced many small-scale projects in our workshops where theory and practice learning went hand in hand, may it be the manufacturing of candlesticks or key fobs, the painting of geometric figures in a subway<sup>10</sup>, the production of Christmas cards, the fabrication of a tool case and so on.

### CNC project "Coconut"

Encouraged by the success of the small-scale project-based learning approaches we developed a more ambitious project with computerized manufacturing in the metal workshop. The challenge was how to lead young learner with learning difficulties to more complicated matters such as to programme a Computer Numerical Control machine (CNC). The fact was that our students often times were confronted with computer controlled machines when doing an internship in a company. But for a long time we were reluctant to prepare them to more complicated math-based learning matters since the instructors in the workshop kept on saying "they even don't know how to use a pocket calculator accurately – how could they to write a computer programme?".

Finally, the team composed of teachers, instructors and educators started to develop an integrated project where the teaching in the classroom would directly be related to the ongoing work in the metal workshop. The idea was to build together a little CNC model machine in the workshop whereas in the classroom all learning matters necessary for programming the machine should be taught. The project "Coconut" was born.

Accordingly, the main steps of the project were (1) to build the machine, (2) to write a programme, (3) to run a simulation and do the error correction and finally (4) to produce workparts automatically. But before the programming could be done some other learning matters had to be controlled, such as Technical Drawing and the handling of the coordinate system, first in the two dimensions of the X and Y-axis, later on with the extension of the Z-axis in three dimensions.



*The different stages of the project*

For all it was most astonishing how motivated our young students engaged in the project and how eager they were to write a workable programme and to get the machine running. There was not

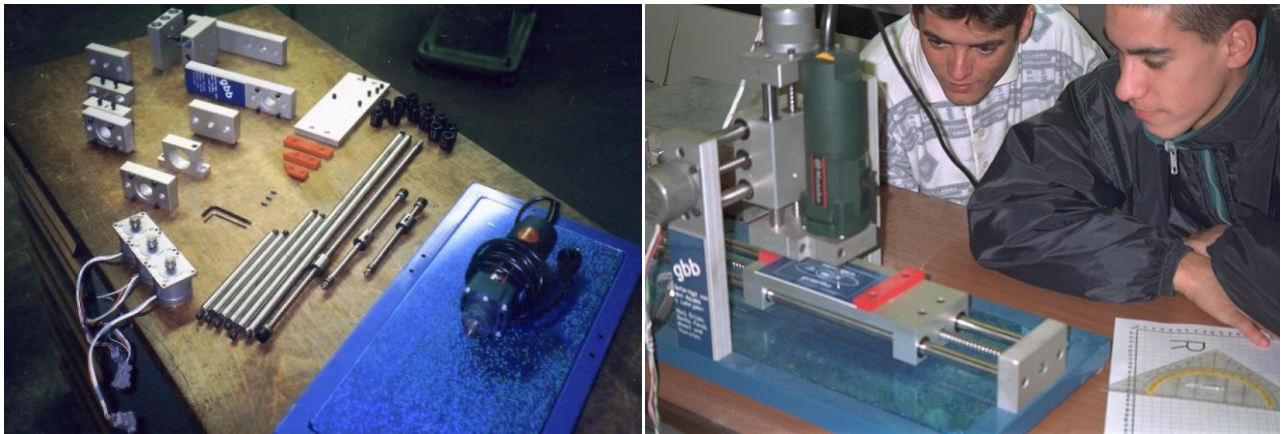
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<sup>10</sup> This project was made possible in cooperation with the city of Solingen guided by a known local artist.

one student who did not have a presentable product to show at the end. Far away from being an expert in CNC technology, the students got an idea of what it needs to write a computer programme and to get the machine doing what it was supposed to do.

All those of the team who were skeptical at the beginning had to admit that even slow learners can be brought to the final learning target if the motivation is great enough and the whole process is transparent and understood. Besides, it is crucial that theory and practice learning has to go hand in hand so that the student understands why certain things has to be done and to be learned.

By the way, the project was that successful that for many years we had a well-functioning exchange programme with a Spanish vocational training center which sent its students to Germany in order to lead them to CNC techniques whereas our students completed a welding course in the labs in Spain.



*From parts to the product: The CNC-project "COCONUT"*

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### THE ITALIAN TRANSITION SYSTEM

In the past few years the Italian regulatory framework related to the school-to-work transition system has followed two different directions, with the aim of widening the range of opportunities for young people to develop, within an educational path, competencies and skills immediately applicable in the labour market.

These two directions are:

- to increase and stabilize the “*alternanza scuola-lavoro*” (literally: alternation of school and work, a kind of work-based learning);
- to reform the apprenticeship, in particular, the type for gaining vocational diploma or qualification.

Differently from the European interpretation, in the Italian contest the apprenticeship doesn't comprehend all typologies combining and integrating school education with trainings in companies. Apprenticeship and *alternanza scuola-lavoro* differs significantly from each other, as it will be clearly explained, but they are both expressions of the same vision and share a common need: surpassing the traditional division of education and work and helping young learners to integrate into society and labour market.

Furthermore, the *alternanza scuola-lavoro* offers by law working experiences to all students of upper secondary schools while apprenticeship involve only those students that express a specific interest towards this opportunity, presenting an individual request subscribed also by parents in case of minors.

Before any further explanation, it is useful to briefly illustrate how the Italian education and training system works.

Divided in pre-primary school, first cycle of education, second cycle of education and higher education, the system is a full-time education, compulsory and free for 10 years for all children between usually 6 and 16. It begins with the first cycle, which includes primary and lower secondary education. This cycle takes 8 years: five years of primary education and three of lower secondary education. On completion of the cycle, a diploma is given as a result of a State examination (Lower secondary school leaving diploma - EQF level 1). The second cycle of education includes pathways of various durations, divided into two main branches: Upper secondary education, under the competence of the Ministry of Education, taking 5 years, and Vocational Education and Training under the competence of Regions, taking 3 or 4 years. Within the second cycle, at the age of 15, students complete their compulsory school period and receive a Compulsory education certificate (EQF level 2) and then continue to fulfil the right/duty to education and training. Under the current educational law the right/duty to education applies for 12 years, from 6 to 18, or until the student obtains a vocational qualification by the age of 18. The right/duty to education and training can be fulfilled also in the regional VET system or in apprenticeship programmes aimed at obtaining a

VET qualification. There are three types of Upper secondary schools: Licei, Istituti Tecnici, Istituti Professionali (Licei, Technical Institutes, Vocational Institutes). There are different types of Liceo that offer a wide range of pathways: artistic, classical, human sciences, linguistic, music and dance, scientific. Technical and Vocational Institutes also offer a wide range of specializations and options in the Economic and Technological sectors (technical schools), in the Services and Industry and Crafts sectors (vocational schools). All Upper secondary school paths lead to a Diploma (Upper secondary education diploma - EQF level 4), upon successful conclusion of a State examination. An Upper secondary school diploma is the minimum requirement to enter Higher Education programs.

### **WORK-RELATED LEARNING PROGRAMS (*Alternanza scuola-lavoro*)**

The *alternanza scuola-lavoro* (ASL) is a didactic methodology that reflects a change in the vision of the entire Italian education and training system, that has been sequential for long time, leaving the working experience mainly after at the end of the schooldays. The difficulties in entering the labour market and the high percentage of youth unemployment over the last years have forced institutions to look for more effective models and find different solutions. The German example of the “dual” system is at the base of this methodology, where theory is taught in educational institutions while practical skills are acquired at the workplace in a company. In particular, ASL allows students from 15 years-old onwards to alternate working and learning periods following paths that are carried out under the responsibility of the school or the training institution. The young learner legally remains a student and the working experience do not represent any business relationship set in a labour contract.

Firstly introduced by law in 2003<sup>11</sup>, this methodology has been a minor aspect of the Italian education system, often ignored, since most recent years: in July 2015, the new law “Reform of the national learning and training system and mandate to reorganise the legislative framework” (L. 107/2015, so-called “The Good School”) reintroduces and boosts the *alternanza scuola lavoro*.

The work-related learning paths become compulsory to students of the last three years of upper secondary level schools, fixing their duration with a greater number of hours than before: 400 hours for Technical or Vocational Institutes and 200 hours for Licei.

These paths include activities to be carried out inside the school, as orientation, training meetings and learning modules to prepare for the internships and the internships themselves to be conducted in the hosting organizations. The law also widens the working sectors of the hosting organizations involved: not only private companies of the commercial, industrial, craft and agricultural sectors, but also professional boards, public bodies, museums and archaeological sites (mainly in the Southern part of Italy which is less industrialized), other public or private institutes which operates in the cultural heritage and activities sectors, artistic and musical sectors, environmental heritage and sport promotion sectors.

Internships can be realized during the academic year or during the interruption of the didactic activities (e.g. summer holidays). They can also be carried out in other countries or in Virtual Training

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<sup>11</sup> Law 53/2013.

Companies (virtually created within the school with the support of a real company and a company tutor), a kind of laboratories where to experience all specific functions of a company.

Schools and hosting organizations sign specific agreements and, at the end of the paths, students get a Certificate of attendance, a Certificate of the acquired competences and education credits.

To support the Law 107/2015, during the next few months two new tools will be implemented:

- Rights and Duties Bill of the students during the work-related learning path;
- National Register for the work-related learning: a connecting tool to ease the encounter between hosting organizations and schools/institutes, hosting organizations are divided by Regions.

## Drawbacks

Most recent data before this new law show that only 43,5% of the Italian schools have activated work-related programs, involving about 200.000 students (less than 11% of the total). Companies are approximately 55.000 and the duration of the paths lasts 97,9 hours on average (25,7 in school and 72,1 outside).<sup>12</sup>

As these new rules on ASL have been issued so recently, numbers are still to be recorded and advantages or drawbacks are still to be really experienced and analysed.

Nevertheless, some weaknesses can be already identified.

The lack of remuneration for the working period (curricular internship) is the most obvious one, particularly for disadvantaged students, who are usually less motivated than others. For them, school is often perceived mainly as a cost both in terms of money (books, transfers,...) and time/opportunities (missed earnings from other alternative activities). Without contemplating the future possibilities offered by investing on instruction and culture, they are more interested in possible current salaries instead of future ones.

This top-down approach of imposing methodologies and tools by law can generate, if not really agreed and shared by those who have to implement it, different attempts of circumvention: the compulsory hours of internships can be forced to be realized only during holidays to protect the number of full-time teachers and the traditional organization of the didactic programs; without any financial support, hosting organizations could be much less than what is needed and internships would take mainly the form of Virtual Training Companies or be organized only in Public Bodies.

### A concrete example: VET Centres and FOR.MA. experience

Born by law in 2003 at the same time as ASL methodology, Vocational Education and Training Centres (IeFP) under the competence of Regions can be considered the educational tools closest to the labour market for their shorter duration and the highly work-oriented nature of their training paths.

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<sup>12</sup> Data published by INDIRE Annual Report. Emmanuele Massagli, *La novità culturale e la sfida operativa dell'alternanza scuola lavoro della Buona Scuola*



From the academic year 2010-2011, Vocational Schools only offer five-year-long cycles programs, structured on the scheme 2+2+1 years, while Vocational Education and Training Centres offer the possibility of a Qualification (after the third year) and a Diploma (after the fourth year). Thus, young people are sooner ready to access to the labour market but they still have the possibility to study further to attain higher levels of education. VET Centres provide also a better capacity of preparing students to perform jobs that professional world consider necessary, as they are more linked to regional economic-manufacturing system and territorial needs.

Concerning contents and methods of education and training, 3 and 4 years paths in VET centres have a more practical nature and better adhere to working aspects without renouncing to an adequate basic cultural education: the three-year-long pathway is aimed at promoting the acquisition of knowledge and technical and vocational skills required by the labour market, as well as literacy, numeracy, scientific, technological, historical, social and economic skills, which are essential to train young people to build their own future as full-fledged citizens.

Mainly for this reason, these centres offers a better support to students that scarcely fit with theoretical training, preventing and reducing school dropout by creating flexible career paths, which can re-motivate, strengthen and guide young people.

FOR.MA. is a Vocational Education and Training Centre of the Lombardy Region, located in Mantova. It runs different courses, in particular in the catering and aesthetic sectors, training young students that want to become waiters and cooks or hairdressers or beauticians, with a training path that each academic year lasts 990 hours.

The training programs are based on the competencies and skills the student need to acquire to execute a specific job. Competencies are divided into 2 different types: basic and technical.

Basic competencies comprehend: language area (Italian and English languages), historical-social-economical area (history/geography, economy/jurisprudence/civic and social education), mathematic-scientific-technical Area (maths, science, IT). The total number of hours dedicated to acquire these basic competencies varies from 35% up to 45% and gradually decrease from the 1° to the last year.

Technical-professional competencies comprehend: laboratory and professional safety, quality and professional safety, workplace hygiene, professional theory (it depends on the vocational path), accounting and marketing. The number of hours dedicated to acquire these basic competencies varies from 55% up to 65% and it also comprehends internship that gradually increase from the second to the last year. Students usually find easier to acquire them because of their practical application.

In VET centres technical-professional competencies are considered the main objective of the training, a kind of “core business”, while basic ones are relegated to a secondary role. Still necessary, basic competencies are often taught stressing their link with professional skills, in order to motivate and help students: subjects of Italian and English lessons can be related to typical situations faced by specific professional profiles.

Vice versa, practice can provide support to basic cultural knowledge.

Concerning the training path to gain cook qualification, for instance, when students learn new dishes to realize the daily menu, they experience the recipes applying quantities of ingredients to the number of persons they are cooking for: an effective way to practice some mathematics bases. Another example: during the training to become a professional hairdresser, students learn proportions while preparing the chemical mixtures for hair colours or geometry while experiencing new haircuts.

The training path also comprehends laboratories for remedial, support and enhancement (L.A.R.S.A.): all students, with difficulties/didactic gaps or not, find specific help over the year for 30 hours.

Curricular internships start from the second year with 200 hours, while during the third and fourth years last 250 hours. Companies are chosen among the centre database or suggested by the student's family. An individual training program is given to the company and a company tutor is identified. Internships can be continuing or alternating with the classroom lessons. FOR.MA. VET centre is preferring the first typology, in order to help student concentrating on technical-professional competencies.

The working experience with professionals different from their school teachers provide students with new methods and points of views, helping their capacity of discernment and personal reinterpretation.

The main problem experienced by students during internships is related with relationships. If the student is very shy or have problems in establishing relationships, his/her working experience in the company will be largely affected by it. The importance given by the company to interns can also have serious consequences on the job training. It happens very often that students complain for the lack of relevant activities for the development of their technical skills: if a student in an aesthetic training path is given only the opportunity to bend towels and sweep floors from the beginning to the end of the internships, thus the job experience will face problems.

## **APPRENTICESHIPS**

Differently from the working experience made within the contest of the *alternanza scuola-lavoro*, the apprenticeship<sup>13</sup> is a labour contract with a training purpose. Thus, it differs from other forms of learning that integrate "on the job" trainings as it is regulated by obligations among the parties that come from national and regional laws and that define specific aspects as student-worker placement, salary, insurances, etc.

It reflects a point of view overturning: the didactic organization of the educational path within the company is considered an "internal" activity, while the "external" training is carried out in schools/training centres. The apprenticeship contract gives the enterprise the opportunity to employ and train new personnel at convenient costs. In return for these advantages, the employer has to provide a professional training to the apprentice and pay for his activity. The apprentices

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<sup>13</sup> The apprenticeship contract has been regulated by different laws, the latest of which is the "Legal regulation of employment contracts and revision of the norms on jobs" (L.81/2015), so-called "Jobs Act".

earn a regular wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills; meanwhile they are involved in a training programme that is provided both by the enterprise and off-the-job by a training centre or a school/university. The contract of apprenticeship can be stipulated by private companies belonging to all sectors. Contracts with public bodies are still to be regulated. When the enterprise takes on an apprentice, an individual training plan (Piano Formativo Individuale) has to be defined, fixing the training path of the apprentice. The apprenticeship contract allows the enterprise to employ and train new personnel at convenient costs, as both salary and taxes burdens (social security and insurance contributions) are reduced.

Apprentices' wages are decided by the collective agreements. There are two main methods:

- as a growing percentage of the salaries of the qualified workers;
- in accordance with the salary of the workers at the insertion level (100%), considering that apprentices are inserted two level lower to the one they will gain at the end of the apprenticeship period.

The "formal" training provided by schools, training centres or even universities is funded by public authorities, Ministry of Labour and Regions. Regions are in charge of the regulating the job profiles and training standards of the apprenticeship.

In Italy, there are three types of apprenticeships:

- apprenticeship for gaining a vocational qualification or diploma;
- occupation-oriented apprenticeship;
- higher education and research apprenticeship.

Among them, the first (mainly) and the third ones are the most relevant to this discussion: they are considered an Italian version of the German dual model. The apprenticeship for gaining a vocational qualification or diploma involves young people from the age of 15 years wanting to fulfil the right/duty to education and training through a work-based experience – to the age of 25 years that can be enrolled for all the fields of activity. This contract lasts three years (professional operator qualification) or four years (professional diploma of technician).

The new law "Jobs Act" reserves particular attention to this type of apprentice: differently from the past when it was limited to the qualification or diploma of regional VET institutions (IeFP), it now adds the possibility of gaining a diploma given by upper secondary schools (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of vocational or technical schools). It becomes also a way to obtain a certificate of superior specialization of the vocational paths.

The duration of the training "external" to the company cannot exceed the 60% (2<sup>nd</sup> year) or 50% (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years) of the school time as regulated by law. The individual training plan has to be designed by training institution. In 2013 the percentage of this type of apprenticeship was very low (2,4%), mainly developed in the Northern part of Italy (91%)<sup>14</sup>. In Emilia Romagna Region there are 2 possible training modalities to gain a professional qualification, depending of the student age. If the apprentice is under 18 years-old, he should follow 1000 hours of training (650 in the

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<sup>14</sup> ISFOL XV Survey.

company and 350 outside), while if he/she has already reached the age of majority training hours decrease to 400 (at least 100 hours to be outside the company).

The occupation-oriented apprenticeship involves young people aged between 18 and 29 years old. It allows gaining a qualification based in the collective contracts. Its duration is generally up to three years, five years for the craftsmanship. The individual training plan (Piano Formativo Individuale) has to be designed by the company. This is the most developed form of apprenticeship, covering more than 95% of all apprenticeships.

The higher education and research apprenticeship is a complex form of apprenticeships, permitting to fulfil many purposes. It involves young people aged between 18 (or 17) and 29 years old who want to:

- take a higher technical education diploma or university degree (3 years long or specialistic, master or Ph.D) that could be obtained through a full time education programme as well;
- enter the regulated profession through a work-based experience within a labour contract with all its advantages;
- get a job and become a researcher in the private industry sector.

Before the “Jobs act” this apprenticeship also gave the opportunity of gaining an Upper Secondary School Diploma, from this year linked to the 1° type of apprenticeship.

This apprenticeship has not a fixed duration, but it is decided upon the single project and certification to be gained among all the partners involved, that normally comprise at least a school or university and an enterprise. The individual training plan (Piano Formativo Individuale) has to be designed by training institution.

## **Drawbacks**

In 2013 apprentices in Italy were about 450.000, mainly of the second type (the occupation-oriented apprenticeship) and in 3 sectors: services, manufacturing and building. During 2014 new hirings increased (+4,4%), while at the beginning of 2015 there has been a small decrease due to new regulations.

Over the last 10 years, many laws concerning the apprenticeship have been approved at national and regional levels. Introducing continuous changes often applied in non-homogeneous manners, these laws increased confusion, both in students and companies, instead of supporting the apprenticeship diffusion. Thus, it still fails to become the primary channel for entering the job market.

Even if the changes introduced this year by the “Jobs Act” are still to be evaluated, there are some general drawbacks that can be already individuated.

The lack of clearness, especially concerning the 1° type of apprenticeship, led families not to consider it as a real opportunity to enter the labour market, and students that, at school, were unwilling to study, often became student-workers unwilling to study and work.

The insufficient organization of training activities is another weak point. Concerning the first type of apprenticeship, companies are also discouraged by the time needed for the external training: in a labour market system mainly characterized by small and medium enterprises, a small company would unlikely bear that one of its few workers will not be available for some days a week. If ever, qualified apprentices with less training needs (2<sup>nd</sup> type) would be preferred.

### Examples

We haven't found examples of the first and third type of apprenticeship in our local area, the most relevant ones to this overview. This confirms their low diffusion and the consistency of the above mentioned drawbacks and weak points.

Nevertheless, there is a very peculiar example of apprenticeship that, even if it is only at an initial-experimental phase, it is worth mentioning as it also combines the *alternanza scuola-lavoro* methodology.

From the 2014-2015 academic year, students attending the 4th or 5th year of upper secondary schools could start experimental paths for the realization of training period in companies which comprehend the apprenticeship for high education.

During that academic year, 145 students attending the 4th year of seven Technical Schools (electrical and electrotechnical sectors), have started a training path and working experience with Gruppo ENEL.<sup>15</sup>

The company, through its long experience of 2<sup>o</sup> type of apprentices, has identified as critical the inadequate correspondence between the academic preparation of the young graduate apprentices and the company's technical needs. Thus, the intention is to move up the acquisition of technical competencies and operative capacities coherent with the company's demands and to fasten the professional path enhancing the school education and training.

The experimental program<sup>16</sup> links the working experiences made to gain technical diploma to the apprentice: in the first two years the students follow a training path to gain the Technical Diploma and be inserted in a working contest, the third years students become apprentice of the occupation-oriented type.

The company itself chose the students, avoiding possible family's complains to the schools. Before the beginning of the academic year, selected students received a transverse training in the company premise on specific issues like company structure and safety rules. During the academic year, students were in the company only one day per week (called "Enel-day") for a total amount of 242 hours. When in the classroom, the adaptation of the school programs to this working experience mainly concerned the duration of didactic units. In some case technical didactic programmes underwent to some changes while programmes on basic competencies remained untouched. Activities to support students with difficulties and/or gaps in technical preparation were organized by schools. During summer holidays students were occupied 5 days per week.

After only one year of experimentation only some partial and temporary data can be analysed and evaluated.

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<sup>15</sup> Born in Italy, Gruppo ENEL is an energy multinational and one of the leading integrated global operators in the gas and electricity sectors, in particular in Europe and Latin America.

<sup>16</sup> The experimental programme here explained started before the latest laws were established, without an adequate legislative framework. The definition of the implementation rules requested the emanation of a specific Inter-Ministerial Decree (n.473/2014) followed by an Agreement among the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Regions and Enel.

Among the outcomes can be listed the high number of students that have accomplished this first year with better results than their equivalent in the same type of schools. The positive influence on students has also involved an increased consciousness on the importance of a solid basic and technical preparation to successfully enter the job market, which intensified their motivation on studies and strengthened their sense of responsibility on the training path.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR INTERNSHIPS**

There is also a third way to find support for entering the job market.

Distinguished from curricular internships which are working experiences within a training path that follows the *alternanza scuola-lavoro* methodology extracurricular internships aim at facilitating professional choices, allowing the acquisition of professional skills and supporting the inclusion or re-inclusion in the labour market.

Regulated by the Regions, they are addressed to all who has accomplished an educational qualification no more than 12 months before<sup>17</sup>.

Compared to apprenticeships, whilst sharing the common aim to help the work inclusion of young people through a training experience in a job context, extracurricular internships are different as they do not imply any employment contract. They don't represent a business relationship but only a training experience to be developed in a company with a minimum of training hours. In Emilia Romagna Region, for these type of internship it is foreseen a minimum monthly allowance of no less than € 300,00.

An agreement has to be stipulated between the hosting company and the organization that promotes/support the internship and an individual training programme (*Progetto Formativo Individuale*) must establish the learning targets.

In order to verify that the targets have been accomplished, at the end of the internship the acquired knowledge and skills will be documented and assessed. All interns started after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 will end with the competence certification, financed by the Region and supplied by licensed institutions.

## **THE ROLE OF B-TYPE SOCIAL COOPERATIVES FOR WORK-BASED TRAINING AND EMPLOYABILITY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

*Although it can't be properly included among institutional work-based training opportunities in Italy, it's important to mention the role played by B- Type social cooperatives in WBT of people with disabilities or socially disadvantaged.*

According to national Law 381/1991 "type B" social cooperatives bring together permanent workers and previously unemployed people who wish to integrate into the labour market. Their objective is to integrate disadvantaged people into the labour market. The categories of disadvantage

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<sup>17</sup> In Emilia Romagna region there are also other two types of internships: working inclusion/ re-inclusion internship (addressed to redundancy workers, unemployed or unoccupied persons) and internships for disabled or people with disadvantages.

may include physical and mental disability, drug and alcohol addiction, mental disorders and problems with the law. In type B co-operatives at least 30% of the members must be from the disadvantaged target groups. In 2007 in Italy there were 2.419 B-type cooperatives associating 65.022 members.

B-type cooperatives can be considered as the paramount vehicle to strengthen the employability of disadvantaged people through work-based training activities in Italy. There are many good practices focusing on different sectors: from recycling, to hospitality; from catering to agriculture.

#### Example

“La locanda dei girasoli” (Sunflowers Inn) is a best-practice in WBT of young persons with Down-syndrome. Located in Rome, this social cooperative has launched a WBT programme in the catering field targeting 10 unemployed young persons diagnosed with intellectual disability.

The programme includes:

- 20 hours of orientation to assess participant’s skills and understand their motivation to join the programme;
- 194 hours of class-room training (using cooperative learning and experiential learning methodologies) aimed to get the qualification of commis de cuisine and commis waiter;
- 406 hours of guided practical work experience at the “Locanda dei Girasoli” restaurant in Rome, a restaurant managed by the Girasoli cooperative with the aim to offer work opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities.

[www.lalocandadeigirasoli.it](http://www.lalocandadeigirasoli.it)

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### THE MALTESE TRANSITION SYSTEM

Vocational education is provided in Malta by the two main State colleges, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), offering about 170 courses a year from level 1 to 6 on MQF, and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), offering about 20 courses per year from level 2 to 6.

Besides these two colleges, the state-run Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) – set up in 1990 and also acting as a public employment service – manages VET in the form of active labour market policies (ALMP) and other services for the unemployed. ETC is also involved in implementing the Maltese youth guarantee scheme, and offers a number of employment and training schemes which target youth participation in the labour market: youth champions; enhancing employability through training; traineeships; work trial scheme and the work and training exposure scheme.

Apprenticeship Schemes for VET are, however, the main paths to drive the school to work transition in Malta and are based on the dual system where the apprentice follows a training programme at vocational educational institution while concurrently also carrying out on-the-job training at a place of work. Through apprenticeship students acquire competence while they obtain a realistic view of the world of work. This experience, together with the theoretical training leads to a number of nationally recognised qualifications certifying competence in a particular occupational area. Over 85% of those completing an apprenticeship successfully are engaged in full-time employment subsequent to their apprenticeship whilst some of the others have even set up their own business.

### APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is responsible, in Malta, for the administration of the Apprenticeship Schemes in collaboration with MCAST and ITS, who provide the theoretical learning component. The Corporation is responsible for providing a training placement, monitoring the student's progress and also carrying out a number of monitoring visits during the apprenticeship year to make sure that the training provided by employers meets requirements set.

ETC's responsibility includes:

- Marketing of schemes with prospective participants and parents;
- Issuing call for applications;
- Promoting the apprenticeship schemes with prospective apprentices and employers;
- Assisting persons who wish to embark on an apprenticeship to find a suitable training placements;
- Providing assistance to organizations wishing to sponsor apprentices;
- Monitoring the on-the-job training of apprentices;



- Co-ordinating the trade testing process of apprentices on completion of their apprenticeship.

ETC is also in charge of the formal validation through the Journeyman's Certificate which gives recognition of competence in the particular area of specialisation.

Apprenticeships aim to provide a bridge between the theoretical knowledge acquired from a VET institution and the practical relevance acquired through experience at an employer's establishment. An analysis conducted by the ETC indicates that the present system is beneficial both for the employer and the student. As a Study by the European Commission affirms, *"Apprenticeship-type schemes facilitate rapid school-work transitions for students in comparison to exclusively school-based VET schemes: the combination of theoretical and practical skills acquired in enterprises is regarded as useful both for enterprises and for VET students, considering that training contents are closer to enterprises' needs, students get in direct contact with companies and many of them remain after the apprenticeship period. Also, apprenticeship-type schemes provide a very strong signal for detecting skills shortages identified by enterprises"*<sup>18</sup>.

At policy level, the apprenticeship is recognized in Malta as one of the best successful ways of ensuring employability and a smooth school to work transition for youths from initial VET to the labour market. This continued support for apprenticeship is noted also in the National Reform Programme of 2013 which stated Government's intention to peg the current apprenticeships to the Malta Qualifications Framework. In addition, there is a commitment in the National Employment Policy for Malta to also participate in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in order to develop high quality apprenticeship-type training and excellence in work-based learning in VET.

Notwithstanding the positive results obtained in the last years, it is acknowledged that the time is ripe for reviewing the Maltese apprenticeship system with the aim of formulating a scheme which is more responsive to the labour market requirements. Moreover, further effort will be made to ensure that young people are engaged in sustainable employment following the completion of the scheme.

## Types of apprenticeships

There are two main types of Apprenticeships offered in Malta: the Technical Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) and the Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS).

### 1. The Technical Apprentice Scheme (TAS)

In the Technical Apprentice Scheme (TAS), the apprentice obtains an occupational competence at technician level (level 4 according to the Malta Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors). The apprentice will thus, as is specified in the MQF for level 4 qualifications, on completion of training, have the competence to supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work. The Journeyman's Certificate at Technician level is awarded on successful completion of the TAS apprenticeship. Apprentices receive re-

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<sup>18</sup> European Commission, Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union (2012)

muneration during their apprenticeship which is paid by the employer and supported by the Government, and varies with increased years of study.

## 2. Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)

In the case of ESTS, the apprenticeship leads to a trade or skill at craftsman level (level 3 according to the MQF Level Descriptors). At level 3 on the MQF, on completion of the training the apprentice will be able to take on agreed responsibility for completing complex tasks, and interacts with the immediate environment and in defined actions at one's own initiative. The Journeyman's Certificate at Craftsman level is awarded on successful completion of the ESTS apprenticeship.

The apprentice, the employer (also known as the sponsor) and the ETC enter into a contractual agreement stating the rights and obligations of all parties during the apprenticeship. Apprentices are obliged to attend at a vocational educational institution to acquire the underpinning knowledge (off-the-job training) related to their sector. Public and private sector firms provide the on-the-job training, the latter employing the largest number of apprentices in both schemes.

Type of Educational Programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED Level/ orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school-based and work-based training	Average duration of Studies	Transfer to other pathways
<b>Technical Apprentice Scheme (TAS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agricultural Technician</li> <li>▪ Aircraft Maintenance Technician</li> <li>▪ Building Services Engineering Technician</li> <li>▪ Computer Engineering Technician</li> <li>▪ Computer Network &amp; ICT Support Technician</li> <li>▪ Construction Technician (Construction Design / Civil Engineering / Land Surveying / Quantity Surveying)</li> <li>▪ Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technician</li> <li>▪ Industrial Electronics Technician</li> <li>▪ Jeweler/Silversmith</li> <li>▪ Laboratory Technologist</li> <li>▪ Mechanical Engineering Technician (Plant / Design &amp; Manufacturing / Mechatronics / Operations &amp; Maintenance)</li> <li>▪ Motor Vehicle Engineering Technician</li> <li>▪ Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician</li> </ul>	ISCED Level 3	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	A number of days during the week are at work and the rest of the days following vocational education and training	3 years	Entry into the labour market or self-employed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Software Developer</li> <li>▪ Stone Heritage Technician</li> <li>▪ Telecommunications Technician</li> </ul>					
<b>Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beauty Therapist</li> <li>▪ Commis Chef</li> <li>▪ Commis Waiter</li> <li>▪ Electrical Installer</li> <li>▪ Hairdresser</li> <li>▪ Mechanical Fitter</li> <li>▪ Motor Vehicle Mechanic</li> <li>▪ Painter and Decorator</li> <li>▪ Plasterer</li> <li>▪ Plumber</li> <li>▪ Printer</li> <li>▪ Restaurant/Bar Operations</li> <li>▪ Stone Heritage Craftsperson</li> <li>▪ Stone Mason</li> <li>▪ Tile Layer</li> <li>▪ Vehicle Body repairer / Spray Painter</li> <li>▪ Welder and Fabricator</li> <li>▪ Woodworker</li> </ul>	ISCED Level 3	Vocational Skills and underpinning knowledge	A number of days during the week are at work and the rest of the days following vocational education and training	3 years	Entry into the labour market or self-employed

*Information on existing types of education IVET programmes as apprenticeship<sup>19</sup>*

## Advantages and drawbacks of apprenticeships schemes

The main strength of apprenticeships in Malta is the high success rates in employment for young people. In 2010, the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) and Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS) resulted in 91% of applicants being placed with an employer following completion. In September 2012, out of those who did not pursue further studies after completing their apprenticeship, 85% were in full-time and 7% in part-time employment. According to a 2013 Eurobarometer survey 84% of Maltese respondents who had completed a traineeship stated that the traineeship helped them to get a permanent job. Apprenticeship, thus, can be considered to have been successful in providing employment opportunities for young people and the safest bridge for the school work transition.

However, there are areas which still need attention in order to improve apprenticeships:

- Apprenticeships are limited to only two qualifications levels (3 and 4) and thus there can be the extension of apprenticeships to higher and lower levels of qualifications;
- Apprenticeships can be extended to a wider range of courses offered locally in VET. The courses with apprenticeships have reflected historical traditional apprenticeship sectors but there is potential to consider extending the courses and sectors where there can also be apprenticeships;

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<sup>19</sup> Source: Cedefop, *VET in Europe – Country Report, ReferNet Malta, 2010*

- Every year there are limited apprenticeships placements. This means that greater efforts need to be made to attract more employers to offer sponsorships to young people in training;
- Quality assurance in work-based learning, whether in parts which are academically accredited and those which are not needs attention such that a good quality work-based learning experience is assured to all.

While continuing to be successful in ensuring young people a smooth school-to-work transition, the number of apprenticeships on offer in Malta remains small compared to the number of young people in training. There is thus need to widen apprenticeships in number, sectors and qualifications level. However, there is also the need to invest in developing quality assurance frameworks which ensure that young people have good quality work-based learning in preparation for the world of work. This would not only help the young people themselves, but also contribute to make Malta more competitive in today's economic world.

## **OTHER FORMS OF SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION**

In Malta there exist, both within VET as well as Tertiary Education, other forms of work-based learning than apprenticeship where students are required to spend a period of learning time at work. These take place in teacher-training, healthcare sector, medicine, pharmacy etc. at tertiary education. There are also non-apprenticeship VET courses e.g. in care where students also spend time at the work place. Students in both VET and Tertiary education are also encouraged to participate in work placements abroad through participation in mobility programmes such as the Erasmus+ Programme. The Employment and Training Corporation also has initiatives where it offers work placements or traineeships to job seekers (to all unemployed, among them young people) to facilitate their transition into work.

### **Work exposure scheme (WES)**

The Work Exposure Scheme (WES) is intended to provide young job seekers with initial hands on training that help them to obtain the knowledge, skills and competence required to find and secure employment. From an employers' perspective the scheme is also intended to help them find suitably competent employees. From a corporate perspective the scheme helps the ETC to activate job seekers, by providing them with the knowledge, skills and competence required to find and retain employment. The Work Exposure Scheme provides young people with an opportunity to obtain firsthand experience of work in the calling of their choice. This model also helps the learner to build up on confidence and facilitates transition into employment. This Scheme is offered in line with the needs of the labour market, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with the requests made by employers wanting to participate in the scheme. The duration of the WES is 12 weeks and a participant is to report to the place of work for an average of 20 hours /week. Whilst following the Work Exposure, participants are paid a training allowance, which is calculated on the National Minimum Wage by ETC.

## **Work trial scheme (WTS)**

The objectives of the Work Trial Scheme (WTS) are two-fold, serving both the requirements of the employer who offers to train the work exposure participant and the needs of the unemployed jobseeker. The ETC grants 50% of the national minimum wage per week for the duration of the scheme towards the participant. Placements can be for a maximum of 12 consecutive weeks. The work experience is based on a 20 hour week (4 hours a day) in all cases. This scheme is addressed to jobseeker aged 16-24 who never worked (i.e. new labour market entrants with no job experience in their field of job preference.); youth aged 16-24 with previous work experience not in line with their respective job preference; graduates and other persons who completed their studies and never worked in their field of study. The benefits for the participants are: recent practical work experience (putting knowledge into practice) related to their course of study or job preference which can be added on to their CV; re-build and upgrade their skills and competencies in line with the needs of the labour market and re-gain confidence on the workplace and build up their self-esteem; awareness of the responsibilities, competencies and duties required to integrate on the work place.

## **THE TRANSITION INTO WORK FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE**

Specific service provided by ETC, including Work Exposure Schemes (WES) and mainstream training programmes, are available to all young persons in disadvantaged situations. However, the Inclusive Employment Services are specifically designed in Malta to help disadvantaged young people who have a harder time finding work. The services are addressed to the followings target: individuals with disability and learning difficulties; young people with lack of a formal school degree and a vocational qualification; former substance abusers; former young prison inmates; other young people with different social, family, mental problems and alike.

For all the listed groups, ETC provides:

### **Training Courses**

Ad hoc training courses are organised for disadvantaged young people. These are tailor made to accommodate the particular needs of the target and include specialised training through cooperative agreements ETC has with other training organisations dealing specifically with disadvantaged people and at risk of job exclusion.

### **Job Coaching and Learning Support Assistance**

Should an individual need further assistance during training or during the early stages of employment, the ETC team also provides coaching and individual support to continue to facilitate the transition into work. The ETC assistance does not stop upon finding a work to the disadvantaged young person involved.

The ETC Employment Advisors work with these specific targets to create a Personal Action Plan. This is done through close collaboration with other specialised organisations who offer counselling and additional services complementary the ETC work.

Former substance abusers receiving rehabilitation can participate in a specialised programme which offers both training as well as work exposure opportunities thus enhancing employability, facilitating entry into the labour market and helping these young persons to retain their employment.

## SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION INITIATIVES IN MALTA

Table 2 shows the list of the main school-to-work transition initiatives adopted by the Employment and Training Corporation in cooperation with MCAST, ITS and specialised training organisations dealing with disadvantaged young people at risk of work exclusion and their respective outcomes.

INITIATIVES	OUTCOMES
Personal Action Planning and Profiling (PAP)	Personal Action Planning was adopted as a standard procedure and all youths registering with the Corporation were placed on a PAP within the first month of registration. Between September 2007 and December 2012 a total of 5319 new personal action plans for young people were developed. These were supplemented by 23431 personal action plan reviews.
Youth Start Initiative (YSI)	Implemented mainly through Jobsearch Seminars, Jobskills Courses, Motivation Seminars and Job Clubs. Between September 2007 and December 2012, more than 2959 young people participated in the Job Search, Job Skills and Job Club measures.
Jobsearch Facilities (JF)	Offered through various facilities including ETC's Website online facilities such as the CV upload, Vacancy Auto mailer, Vacancy Direct Free phone, Job Banks, Job Centres, Open Days, employment and training fairs and recruitment days.
Job Experience Scheme (JES)	JES was offered as an ESF programme under the Single Programming Document 2004-2006. A total of 847 young persons participated in the scheme through the project. 78% of the participants successfully completed the full duration of the scheme placement. 36% of the participants were in employment on successful completion of the scheme.
Active Youth Scheme (AYS)	AYS was offered to youths placed with NGOs. This scheme was initially offered for a longer period of time (i.e. 6 months) and youth underwent a placement of 30 hours a week. Therefore an amended version of the Active Youth Scheme (AYS) & the Private Sector Placement Scheme (PSPS) was implemented under the ESF 72 Job Experience Scheme. 103 youths utilised the AYS between 2008 and 2009. The Private Sector Placement Scheme (PSPS) was an additional scheme launched in 2009. Private sector employers were eligible for participation and through this scheme participants worked 30 hours per week for up to 12 weeks. A weekly allowance equivalent to 75% of the minimum wage was provided. 119 youths utilised the PSPS between 2008 and 2009. Until December 2012 a total of 1370 youths participated in both the AYS and PSPS schemes.
Employment Aid Programme (EAP)	The Employment Aid Programme (EAP) was launched in 2009 and remained operational until the end of 2013. The Programme involved the award of a grant to employers whenever they recruited persons coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Young people aged 16 to 24 were eligible under one or more of these target groups. Until December 2013 a total of 1686 youths participated in the EAP.
Youth Employment Programme (YEP)	The Youth Employment Programme (YEP) was officially launched in March 2010. Until December 2012 a total of 6257 young people made use of the YEP initiatives. Through YEP the ETC launched the Youth Days, developed a new dedicated youth website <a href="http://www.youth.org.mt">www.youth.org.mt</a> which offers an online chat within one of the YEP team members and a blogging facility for youths. YEP facebook and twitter pages were

	<p>launched, and also a YEP TV programme series was aired on national television and uploaded on you-tube. The YEP guidance services provide career guidance services including occupational therapy services and the services of a psychologist free of charge. Various workshops, information session and visits were organized.</p>
Employment of Minors Programme	<p>Some minors are exempted from school to pursue a job. ETC endeavours to attract these young persons to attend evening courses to supplement their knowledge and skills. Legal Notice 440 of 2003 'Young Persons Employment Regulations' established a number of criteria related to the conditions of employment and the health and safety of Young Persons and Children at the place of work. Through the ESF 3.60 YEP the ETC carried out information sessions and workshops with young persons identified as being at risk of leaving school early. During these sessions, the ETC aimed to bring about greater awareness on the growing needs of the Maltese labour market and informed youth about various options available to them including the take up of relevant short courses.</p>
Employability Programme	<p>In 2009 ETC launched the Employability Programme, partly financed through the ESF. Training opportunities were provided through this programme and were taken up well by the young people. More than 120 different training programmes, ranging from basic skills to job skills courses, IT, hospitality and trade training programmes to advanced training programmes were offered. The ETC launched for the first time in 2011, the Training Subsidy Scheme through the Employability Programme. This scheme was intended to provide financial assistance in the form of a training grant, payable to individuals who were either job seekers or employed and were interested in obtaining a Higher Education qualification at EQF/MQF level 5 and level 6 in an area related to Digital Media or Financial Services. From the launch of the Programme till the end of December 2012, the number of young persons who participated amounted to 10932.</p>
Training Aid Framework (TAF)	<p>The Training Aid Framework (TAF) was launched in 2009 and was closed in June 2012. Since the launch of the scheme the TAF unit received over 5,500 applications, out of which over 4,420 were accepted for processing and out of these, 3,800 were eligible against which a Grant Agreement was signed. From data collected at application stage, the number of trainees covered by the TAF applications is estimated at around 48,000. Although the actual successful completers are determined at reimbursement stage, sample data has shown that the percentage of youth trainees participating under the scheme amounts to approximately 22% of the full population which would amount to approximately 10,560 trainees between 15 and 24 years of age at reimbursement stage.</p>
Review of Training Programmes towards certification	<p>ETC has held discussions with Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) with the aim of obtaining accreditation for existing and new courses organised by the ETC. These courses were either developed internally or internationally recognised in which case the MQC level rating was sought. Two such programmes were those dealing with the provision of basic skills. Basic skills programmes at EQF/MQF level 1 and Level 2 dealing with the eight key skills were developed. Once approved, these will be promoted amongst young job seekers who lack a valid school leaving certificate. Besides programmes dealing with basic skills the ETC sought MQC's recognition for most of its other programmes that are aimed to provide knowledge, skills and competence in trade and non-trade related areas.</p>
Basic Employment Training (BET)	<p>It is ETC's policy to provide a second chance to those who come out of mainstream education with low qualifications. The BET is currently being offered under the new flexible initiatives offered through the employability programme – The Basic Skills Training.</p>

REACH	ETC continued to work with secondary schools to provide alternative solutions to students with high school absenteeism. This is modelled on the REACH programme which was carried out in the Maltese area of Cottonera. This programme addressed the risk factors leading to absenteeism and encouraged young people to remain within the education system.
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*List of school-to-work transition initiatives by the Employment and Training Corporation and outcomes<sup>20</sup>*

## **THE “MY WOW” PROJECT**

The “My WoW” (World of Work) Project involved entrepreneurship training programmes and school-based “mini-enterprises” with the aim of developing entrepreneurial skills and mind-sets among youth. The project was funded by the Entrepreneurship through Education Scheme 2013 offered by the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment and the Ministry of Education and Employment.

Problem addressed: Malta has the second highest rate of early school leavers (22.6%) among European Union Member States. This has repercussions not only on unemployment, but also on poverty and social exclusion. Malta’s National Curriculum Framework (2012) suggests that some learners drop out of formal education because they are demotivated by academic challenges and see school as boring.



*Young students in a work experience in Malta*

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<sup>20</sup> Source: Malta Ministry of Education and Employment, National Youth Employment Strategy, 2015



**Approach:** The students targeted by this project were 13-year-old boys attending Form 2 (8<sup>th</sup> year of mandatory schooling) at St. Ignatius College, Boys' Secondary School in Handaq, Malta. 58 students participated in the project, of which 35 were identified as "low achievers" through their academic records. The My WoW Project aimed to address the problems of demotivation by offering students a different learning experience aimed at making school more enjoyable while developing entrepreneurial knowledge, attitudes and skills through hands-on experience. The educators involved in the project first received training designed to build their own entrepreneurship skills and mind-sets and to enable them to transfer and nurture them among their students. The students then received entrepreneurship skills training, after which they participated in a school-based mini-enterprise where they designed, crafted and sold a variety of hand-made greeting cards. The students' training offered an introduction to entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, followed by a work-based workshop on creative thinking, teamwork, and trust-building. The students' sessions took place once a week during a time slot reserved for extra-curricular activities.

**Impact:** 30 of the 35 low academic achievers (who would be more prone to dropping out of school) completed their participation in the project, with the majority participating enthusiastically and stating that they had discovered new talents, improved self-confidence, and learned important business-related skills. The educators also reported positive outcomes: they indicated that the project had a positive impact on the students in terms of promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship qualities, boosting the students' self-confidence and commitment to goals, raising awareness of the skills and knowledge required to develop a business, and raising awareness of self-employment as a possible career option.

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### THE PORTUGUESE TRANSITION SYSTEM

In Portugal, the VET dual system has existed since 1984, within the initial alternance training system, of dual certification, enshrined in the legal framework of apprenticeship.

The system was amended twelve years later and has undergone pedagogical and organizational changes in order to adapt to the existing changes in education and training as well as in the labour market. However, its nature, principles and purposes have remained the same as defined in its initial constitution.

This system has emerged as an alternative to initial training with its own pedagogical identity and a specific role to play in the context of education and training, in the qualification and certification of the early school leavers.

Exclusively subject to the authority and supervision of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (*Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional – IEFP*), the apprenticeship system has, since its inception, as a system of education and training, acknowledged the companies as a privileged space for training where a significant part of the learning process takes place.

The Ministry of Education has adopted its own models as the Vocational Courses (*Cursos Profissionais* - secondary level education), Education and Training Courses (for young people and adults), and, recently, Vocational Courses (*Cursos Vocacionais* - basic level education).

#### How are young people prepared?

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity are responsible for the organization of information and career guidance services.

The National Qualifications Agency, (body answerable to both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity), is responsible for the following information and guidance activities:

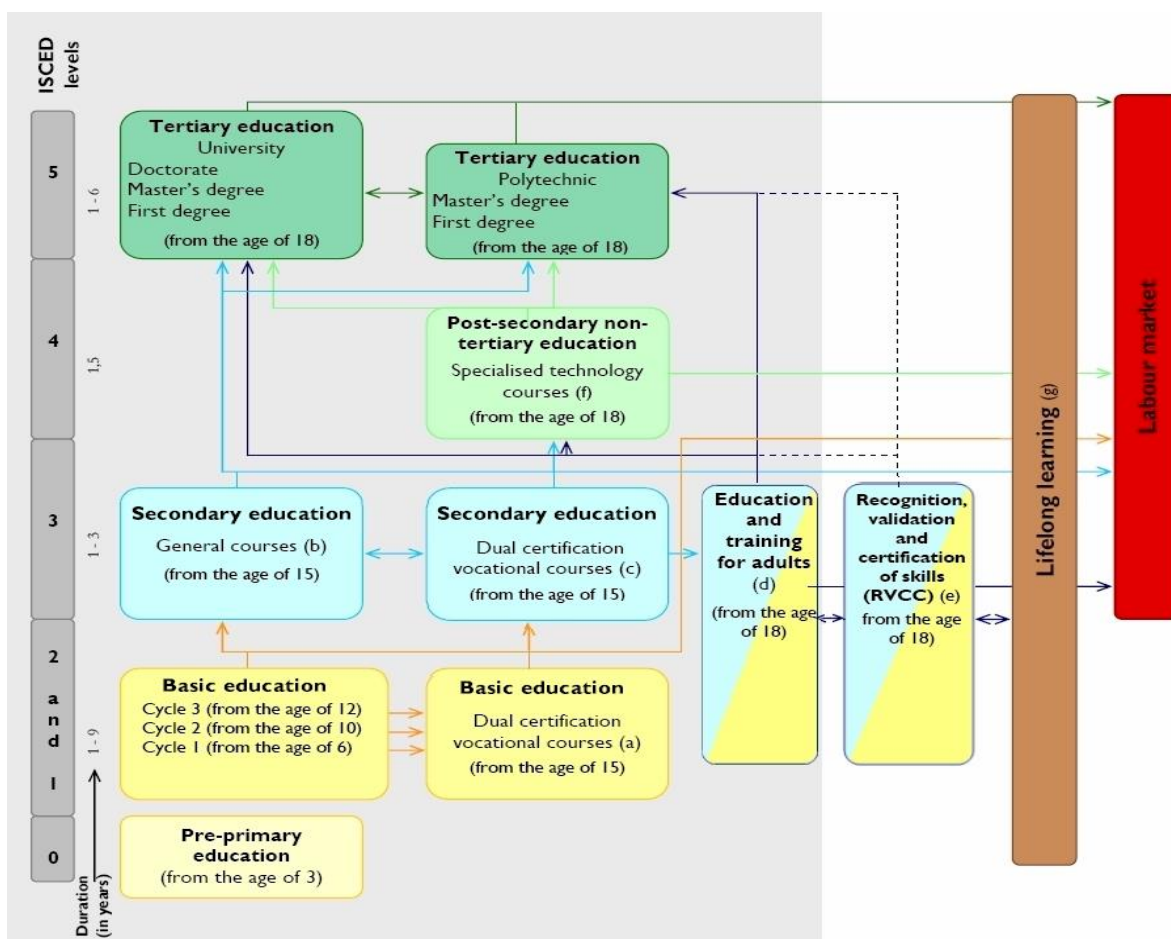
- a) Ensure the proper functioning of an integrated system for provision of vocational training;
- b) Promote the exchange of technical tools;
- c) Encourage the development of combined training activities for guidance professionals;
- d) Ensure the dissemination of territorial and sectoral assessments, related to the labour market. The schools' psychology and guidance services, New Opportunities Centres (*Centros de Novas Oportunidades*), public services for employment and other bodies accredited by the competent authority develop information and guidance activities for qualification and employment.

Career guidance is not included in the basic education curriculum. However, in the lower secondary education and, especially, in the last year of secondary education (9th grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education), the students can attend extra-curricular programmes of career guidance, organised by their school's psychology and guidance services. Any student can voluntarily attend these 15-25

hours programmes. The Ministry of Education’s psychology and guidance services provide access to specialised services of educational support which guarantee a pedagogical intervention, individually or in group, and which assist young people in decision making throughout schooling pathway, thus fostering the development of their personal identity and the elaboration of plans for their personal life. Both the specialists in educational guidance and teachers play a key role in monitoring students, in presenting alternative school pathways, in cooperating with other social and educational support services, and in concluding protocols between school and different services, companies and other actors of the local community. The psychology and guidance services also play a significant role since they identify and monitor problems which may arise during the learning process; they enhance the trainees’ self-esteem through psychological support and study guidance; they implement transition strategies for the working life. They encourage students in the basic education, upper secondary and recurrent education levels; they provide trainings for trainers; they develop «lifelong learning» skills and attitudes.

### How does the Dual System work?

The following diagram illustrates the Dual System in Portugal:



Vocational education and training system in Portugal<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Source: DGERT, 2007

- (a) Includes apprenticeships and education and training courses for young people who have not completed basic education.
  - (b) Includes courses in the sciences and humanities (science and technology; social and economic sciences; social and human sciences; languages and literature; visual arts).
  - (c) Includes vocational courses, apprenticeships, education and training courses for young people, technology courses and specialised art courses.
  - (d) Includes education and training courses for adults, leading to dual certification – academic ability and basic level and secondary-level qualifications.
  - (e) System that provides adults with recognition, validation and certification of basic-level and secondary-level skills and leads to a qualification.
  - (f) Specialised technology courses allow people to pursue their studies, with training being accredited as part of the tertiary education course to which the holder of a diploma in specialised technology is admitted.
  - (g) Includes continuing training leading to skills that can be recognised under the RVCC system.
- Pre-primary education; Basic education; Secondary education; Post-secondary non-tertiary education ; Tertiary education; Lifelong learning; Labour market.

The Portuguese system is compulsory and lasts twelve academic years. It begins at the age of 6 and ends at the age of 18) and comprises 2 primary education cycles (1st and 2nd cycle of basic education) and 2 secondary education cycles (3rd cycle of basic education and secondary cycle), corresponding to the lower secondary and upper secondary education, starting at the age of 12.

The basic education provides general education, vocational training and dual vocational training, and the upper secondary education offers two possibilities: general courses in sciences and humanity, vocational courses (*cursos profissionais*) and dual vocational courses (*cursos vocacionais*).

The vocational education (*ensino vocacional*) is lower secondary education level (3rd cycle of the basic education), secondary and post-secondary non tertiary education level. It starts at the age of 13 and each vocational training cycle lasts from 1 to 3 years. It is comprised in the educational system and in private vocational schools, as well as in the universities and Polytechnic Institutes.

There is, in the Portuguese education and training system, dual certification vocational training courses (Education and Training Courses – *Cursos de Educação e Formação* - CEF) for young people who have completed the first two years of education (2nd primary cycle) or who are attending the last year of this cycle. These courses lead to a level 2 qualification, in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The lower secondary education (3rd cycle of basic education) offers dual certification vocational training courses (CEF) from 1 to 2 years, and dual vocational training courses (*cursos vocacionais*), structured in modules and from age 13 and up. It leads to a level 2 qualifications (NQF) and gives access to the general education, to upper secondary vocational education and then to tertiary vocational education.

The secondary education offers: dual certification vocational training (CEF) to young people from 15 years old, lasting from 1 to 2 years; 3-year vocational courses (*cursos profissionais*), composed by sectoral courses leading to a level 4 qualification (in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the vocational education (*ensino vocacional*) which was introduced in the academic year of 2014/2015 (pilot experiment). This training enables progression to higher levels.

In Portugal, upper secondary vocational courses and post-secondary non tertiary vocational courses are defined by the NQF. We have Dual Vocational Education and Training for the post-secondary non tertiary education (Specialised technology Courses – *Cursos de Especialização Tecnológica* – CET, with a level 5 qualification in accordance with the NQF) and for the tertiary education, insofar as the requirements concerning the access to university are complied. These education and training modalities are targeted at young people that have completed the lower secondary education (3rd cycle of basic education).

The Apprenticeship System is addressed to young people under 25 who have successfully completed the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education or recognised equivalent and who don't have any secondary education qualification. This system is divided into modules and lasts 2 years and enables to pursue studies at a higher level. The post-secondary non tertiary vocational training consists of one-year specialised technology courses (CET) for young people between 18 and 19 as well as for young adults aged 23 or over, leading to a level 5 qualification in accordance with the National Qualification Framework (NQF). These post-secondary trainings are regulated by the level 4 qualification, in most of European countries, particularly in the analysed countries, in accordance with the International Standard Classifications of Education ISCED/CITE, set up in 1997 and in 2011 and which became effective between 2014 and 2015.

### **What are the advantages, what are the drawbacks?**

In Portugal, the current youth unemployment rate is particularly high. This situation affects young people with different levels of qualification: degree holders and also many master's degree holders, even young people that have not completed the 12th grade.

The system focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, through operational or practical activities, by combining theoretical knowledge with the skills developed at work, in partnership with companies (learning spaces) and adapting the trainees' skills to the real market labour needs.

The work-based training is essential to increase the youth responsibility, discipline, compliance with the rules, autonomy, working habits, and motivation.

However, the increase of this training supply has financial obstacles and, in a rate as high as the German rate it could represent the increase of unemployment rate.

The vocational training supply may lead to less prestigious educational and professional pathways, since “the consolidation and the sustained development of a diversified secondary level of education and training, articulated, qualified and capable of attracting the demand, without creating socially stigmatised pathways” has failed.

In this context, the companies' responsibility and their consequent participation have decreased, jeopardizing the quality of the work-based training. As a result, the work-based training period is often pedagogically underused and the level of articulation between both training environments is fading.

The interest of the companies tends to decrease since there is no financial support. Indeed, they have become the “substitutes” of the educational system with little benefits.

Due to social mobility, the majority of young people choose to pursue general education studies in order not to be stigmatised as losers.

### **How are disadvantaged young people doing in the Dual System?**

Vocational schools are generally privately run and are the result of an agreement between the Ministry of Education and other partners (public or private bodies), which provide vocational training, within the educational system. These courses are essentially secondary level courses (10th, 11th and 12th grades). To attend them, the students are expected to have completed the 9th grade or recognised equivalent. These courses last 3 academic years and their successful completion leads to a diploma equivalent to the regular secondary education diploma as well as to a level 3 vocational qualification certificate. The vocational courses graduates can pursue their studies at university level.

In Portugal, the apprenticeship system is essentially targeted at first time job seekers, of both genders, who are not concerned by legal provisions concerning compulsory education, preferably under 25 and who are seeking an alternative route to enter the working life, while gaining an academic and vocational certification. The apprenticeship or alternance training system, a specific programme, run by the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (*Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional* - IEFP/MSST), was intended for young people with a 6th or 9th grade diploma and has become an alternative for young people who have left school and want to enter the working life, without any qualification level. The alternance training system, which covers three components: socio-cultural, scientific and technical training as well as practical training in a work environment, leads to a dual academic certification (diploma of completion of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education or certificate of completion of secondary education) and vocational certification (certificate of professional aptitude (level 1, 2, 3 or 4, depending on the trainee’s profile on entry) and enables trainees to pursue their studies at a higher level. It is a training process developed in alternance between the Vocational Training Centre which provides socio-cultural, scientific and technical training, and usually the practical training – and the support body for school-work alternance which provides the practical training in a work environment.

These courses normally last 3 years and are based on the alternance between a training centre and a company (“pre-apprenticeship” courses have been developed for young people with less than 6 academic years, leading to a level 1 vocational qualification). An apprenticeship contract is drawn up between the trainee and the training bodies (Coordinating Bodies and Support Bodies for school-work alternance). This contract does not imply employment and terminates on completion of the training scheme. It shall be legal and written and stipulates the rights and obligations of each party. The apprenticeship system is strategically significant within the framework of education-training-employment policies, since it is a strongly established instrument, at local and regional level, that can make a decisive contribution: - the increase of vocational and academic qualifications of early school leavers; - the reorientation of many young people towards vocational

training pathways, enabling the emergence of a body of new highly qualified professionals who will match the companies needs, in particular SMEs' needs of specialised middle managers, in order to enhance their competitiveness. The training courses workload does not exceed 1500 hours per year or 35 hours a week. The timetable covers hours for any training component and is established through common agreement, between the Apprenticeship Coordinating Body and the other training bodies, from 8am to 8pm, except exceptional cases approved by the IEFP. The holiday period lasts 22 working days per training year, without loss of income supports. The duration of training depends on the type and level of the training courses.

The Apprenticeship National Committee (*Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem*) is a tripartite forum which intervenes at a national level in the strategic orientation and in the System monitoring. There are apprenticeship regional committees in the autonomous regions of Madeira and the Azores. The curriculum contents and the training programmes of the Apprenticeship System are defined by pedagogical teams specialised in different professional sectors. They are consolidated and validated by experts indicated by Ministries, Social Partners and other actors, in the framework of the Apprenticeship National Committee (*Comissão Nacional de Aprendizagem*). The programmes development also implies the identification of practical activities to be performed by the Trainees in the companies, in order to strengthen the acquired skills. The apprenticeship represents one of the initial training forms of the national systems of Education-Training-Employment. These three facets – vocational qualification, academic progression and work experience – enable young people to access university education.

Other initial trainings also contribute to facilitate young early school leavers' transition to working life, especially those who haven't completed the basic education. These trainings also ensure a dual certification (academic and vocational). They are, for example, the socio-vocational training (leading to levels equivalent to basic education 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle and a level 1 qualification) and the education-training for young people (which grants equivalence to 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education and to a level 2 qualification).

In the framework of the Agreement on Employment, Labour Market, and Education and Training Policy (*Acordo sobre Política de Emprego, Mercado de Trabalho, Educação e Formação*), the Government and Social Partners, have decided to create conditions for young people, aged 16 to 18, who have entered the labour market with no vocational qualification, so that they can both get this qualification whilst working. The introduction in the contract of a clause which states that part of the working time should imperatively be allocated for training, not lower than 40% of the total working time, will lead to level 1 or 2 qualification profiles, depending on the trainee's profile on entry.

Specialised technology Courses (*Cursos de Especialização Tecnológica - CET*) were created in 1999. They provide post-secondary training and are aimed at, among other purposes, promoting a training pathway that integrates qualification and employability goals. These courses also enable people to pursue their studies. CETs lead to a diploma in specialised technology (DET) and to a level 4 vocational certificate. CETs also enable to obtain a certificate of Professional Aptitude (CAP) issued in the framework of National Vocational Certification System (*Sistema Nacional de Certificação*

*Profissional* - SNCP). Actually CETs are only targeted to people who have successfully completed a secondary-education course or recognized equivalent and to people who have a level 3 vocational qualification. However, legislation provides for the possibility to access these courses on the basis of the recognition of capacities and skills acquired through work experience. CETs can be provided by accredited bodies, which provide level 3 vocational training, and secondary level education or equivalent (public, private or cooperative bodies that provide secondary education, public or private vocational schools, vocational training centres, or other bodies). These bodies have to be acknowledged by the Joint Decision of the Ministries of Education, of labour, Solidarity and Social Security and by the Minister who is responsible for the economic activity aimed by the training. A DET enables young people to go to university education through a special competition, after having gained work experience in the specific training field.

## **WORK-BASED TRAINING APPROACHES AT ESPROMINHO**

Esprominho has been providing Vocational Courses since 1989. In these courses, the duality between education/training and the world of work is thinner than in an Apprenticeship Training context.

Despite the fact that the contact with the companies is shorter (420 hours in company in 3100-hour training course), Esprominho's experience has been, until early this century, marked by young people who are characterised either by school failure in the regular educational system or school dropout, willing to access a different form of education. Although many of them have decided to attend a vocational course to avoid or to leave the regular educational system, there are more and more young people who really choose the vocational training pathway. The reduction of the time spent in the companies was compensated with training in a simulated work context.

The vocational system (*sistema vocacional*) recently introduced in the basic education level doesn't envisage a big amount of work based training. It is more an opportunity for public schools to place students with a very weak school performance, in the private system, in training courses where they are supposed to find a vocation. The concept is interesting; however this system only admits young people with many grade retentions, with few socio-cultural and technical skills, who are hostile to or disconnected from school. The courses practical component is less than 420 hours in the 2-year courses. The school is given the possibility to provide this component in a work-based simulated context but inside school. It is perfectly understandable that, due to the students' age and due to their limited capabilities and skills, schools prefer to keep them in the school rather than placing them in companies. The school has become a place to educate the students who are forced to remain in the educational system until the age of 18.

Due to the unsuccessful experiences of the preceding vocational courses (*cursos vocacionais*) and other subsystems, dual systems credibility has been seriously undermined, which has warded off many students and their families who wanted to have a legitimate social, cultural behavioural and economical mobility.

Secondary education vocational courses (*cursos vocacionais de ensino secundário*) recently introduced in the education system have a significant amount of training hours in companies (1400



hours in a 3000-hour course of 2 years). Furthermore, young people can access the course even having experienced only one grade retention. Since the minimum age to enter these courses is 16, the current experiences have proven that they have potential, although many students' serious lack of skills. However, for its success to be guaranteed, the school will have to keep/maintain:

- high levels of socio-educational monitoring;
- high levels of organization and learning monitoring;
- an excellent monitoring in the companies;
- a huge effort in order to persuade companies to host trainees and to get involved in the educational and training process although they don't receive any financial support;
- a motivated and strong pedagogical team.

### **Investigation-action as a methodology**

Our most valuable experience over the past 25 years has been based on valuing the concept of investigation-action as a methodology for the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Most of our students tend to reject the classical teaching models and the school itself.

Whilst learning in work-based training, we are teaching them through the companies. It doesn't matter if they "do" rightly or wrongly, we just want them to "do" and, thereby, the students are placed at the heart of the process. The teacher/trainer/educator will be the one observing in order to help him organize and improve learning, to foster the innovation of the student identity which will be reflected in his future social and working life.



Our students are generally disadvantaged young people with fewer opportunities, due to their cultural background or due to financial reasons – the severe crisis Portugal has faced the last 5 years had devastating effects. Many of these young people are now living in single-parent families and many families had to emigrate. Thus, the school is these students' unique comfort zone and last chance to improve their life. The school is a place where they can learn and, for some of them, have a decent meal as a consequence of the "ashamed poverty" existing in Portugal.

We have learnt that to increase education success, we have to invest in case studies, in simulated work-based training, non formal education, European projects, work-based training, and a final exam to assess theoretical and practical knowledge.

It is necessary to talk with young people who have learning difficulties so that they can see the world differently and in a better way in order to provide them more tools to improve their future.

The thousands of initiatives that we have carried out throughout more than two decades have revealed that we only reach success by persistently combining these positive factors.

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### THE TRANSITION PROCESS FROM SCHOOL TO LABOUR MARKET IN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF THE ROMANIAN ECONOMY

#### General aspects of the Romanian economy

The transition process of the Romanian economy began suddenly and was accompanied by the disintegration of the former political and economic system. In terms of Gross Domestic Product per capita, Romania was one of the poorest countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Also, Romania's economy has been one of the most agrarian economies in Europe. Completely isolated from the informational point of view, Romania had a fully centralized economic system. The beginning of the transition was chaotic, especially because of the complexity of integrating the foundations of democracy and market economy. Internal problems, instability, political corruption or lack of appropriate reforms have led to a difficult restructuring and privatization process.

#### Factors that greatly influence the labour market

The trends and vulnerabilities of the Romanian labour market between 1991 and 2009 compared with those of other European Union member states were influenced, in a major way, by the 1989 Revolution, the European Union accession in January 2007 and the Global Economic Crisis that began in 2007. The three events have profoundly marked and still mark the Romanian labour market evolution and labour market integration of young people in Romania.

#### Economic context

By 2000, Romania had registered a very uneven transition, especially due to the discontinuity of political reforms.

Since 2000, there has been a continuous growth both in terms of Gross Domestic Product, and the Gross Domestic Product per capita. Reform efforts have been made in terms of joining the European Union. Efforts have increasing since 2004, when the European Council confirmed the decision of Romania's accession in 2007. Based on the internal progress made towards accession, the Romanian economy underwent a long and irregular price liberalization in the period 1990-1999, the annual inflation reaching very high levels. Romania has been involved in a process of gradual disinflation, which has helped to reduce the inflation rate below 10% in 2004.

Romania's economic growth can be explained mainly by increasing the domestic consumption of goods and services and also by increasing foreign investments.

Romania's economic growth gave the first signs of fragility immediately after joining the European Union. The compliance with the European standards has degraded the economic activity at the beginning of 2007. However, the economic growth continued in 2008 fueled by the growth of consumption expenses and rising the public deficit. Between 2008 and 2009, the expenses for the final consumption of households (an important factor of the Romanian economic growth) have

gone down significantly, leading partially to the economy deterioration in 2009, especially since the country has been unable to invest in labour and capital. Between 2008 and 2009, the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product went from plus 7.3% in 2008 to minus 7.1% in 2009. In 2008 and 2009, the budget deficit has grown rapidly, reaching 8.6% in 2009. The public debt rose sharply between 2008 and 2009 (from 13% to 24%) being still low compared to other European countries (for instance, for France, the public debt was 78% of the Gross Domestic Product in 2009). The crisis continued in 2010, so that between 2009 and 2010, the Gross Domestic Product decreased by 2.6%.

## **The labour market in Romania**

The labour market in Romania has changed dramatically during the economic transition. One of the main features was and is the reduction of the number of the employed population. Enterprise restructuring has led to job losses which were not compensated by creating new jobs. A pronounced process of population aging can also be noticed. Romania also recorded a significant migration (including temporary emigration), which led to a shortage of workforce. Migration has been and is one of the major weaknesses of the Romanian labour market because of a lack of skilled labour. A consequence of the economic transition in Romania has been the movement of some workforce which remained jobless to informal work types. Despite strong economic growth in recent years, informal employment in Romania continues to exist and even grow in some periods. Informal work exists mainly in agriculture (in the form of subsistence farming), but also in the sectors: construction, trade, home services, transport, health and education.

The accession of Romania to the European Union in 2007 had a positive impact on the attractiveness and competitiveness of local businesses. In 2007 and 2008, the employment rate has improved slightly, and emigration and informal employment were declining. However, the economic and political crisis that affected Romania in 2008-2009 stopped the Romanian labor market recovery. Romania is among the European states with the lowest employment rates (58.6% in 2009).

Between 2008 and 2009, employment decreased by 1.3% (a decrease of 125,000 jobs). The decrease was small, but the phenomenon expanded in 2009 and 2010. Industry was the sector most affected by the decline in employment, a decrease of 7%. Changes in real estate occurred. In constructions there resulted a decrease of 3% of jobs between 2008 and 2009. In contrast, employment grew by almost 2% in services. Regarding the employment rate of women, Romania is not better ranked (52.5% in 2008). In the case of Romania, women have been and are affected by the crisis, employment decline being more accentuated for female population than for males (1.6% for women compared to 1.1% for men).

Romania is above the European average in terms of employment levels among people with a high level of education with an employment rate 26% higher than the total employment and 42% higher than the employment of people with low education.

Regarding the type of the employment contract, the proportion of the population employed with fixed-term contract of employment was only 1.3% in Romania. The crisis has had a negative effect on this type of contract, registering a decrease of 21% between 2008 and 2009.

In Romania, for the first time in over ten years, unemployment increased: between 2008 and 2009 from 5.8% to 6.9%.

### **Discriminating factors**

The discriminating factors for those who are looking for a job include: gender, age or level of education. In Romania the unemployment rate was higher by about 2% for women than for men, with an increase of around 1% for both sexes from 2008 to 2009. The unemployment rate by age shows that young people aged between 15-24 face greater difficulties than the grown-ups in finding and keeping a job. It is interesting that in Romania the economic crisis has had a greater impact on the people with a high level of qualification than on those with low qualifications. The unemployment rate among people with a high level of education rose by 1.3% in 2009 compared to 2008, while the unemployment rate among those with a low level of education rose by only 0.5% in 2009 compared to 2008.

### **Population decrease**

Romania's population decline from 22.45 million inhabitants in 2000 to 21.46 million inhabitants in 2010 is due to the falling birth rate, aging population and massive emigration. The impact of migration on the labour market in particular and on the Romanian economy in general was all the more important as this phenomenon happened especially among young people and moreover, it often occurs among those with a very good training. The human resource, the most important for the long-term and sustainable development is insufficiently exploited and preserved.

### **Final migration**

Regarding the final migration (with change of address), from the work conducted by the National Institute of Statistics it results that from the year 1990 to 2008, 404,396 Romanian people took up residence abroad. Because much of the Romanian emigration has not occurred in an officially framework, these values are greatly undervalued. Approximately 40% of Romanian ultimate migrants chose Italy as the country of destination, 11% the USA and 10% Hungary. Regarding the definitive immigrant profile, 75% of them were under 40 and 55% were women. In recent years labour migration, temporary or circular, has become the most important component of Romanian emigration.

### **Informal work**

A consequence of the transition period in Romania was to transfer a significant part of formal work (following the massive restructuring that took place in the industry) to form informal employment, emigration permanent or temporary (as described above) or even to inactivity (discouraged people which have become inactive).

## **THE STRATEGY TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION TO THE LABOUR MARKET**

The elaboration of a strategy to facilitate the transition to the labour market constitutes a strategic tool useful for learning - teachers, responsible persons and practice counselor-, but also tutors of the partner companies, providing them with information about the training objectives, supervision and assessment of students' training for better integration into the labour market.

The European employment policy stresses the importance of the knowledge society based on investment in human capital and education for the economic development. Based on this guideline, it is necessary to invest in human capital through education and training in order to acquire skills necessary for work performance at work place, to expand and improve investment in human resources by increasing access to internships appropriate to the educational specialization. In this way, it is ensured the attractiveness, the openness to the needs of the economic environment and the high-quality standards for students' training, strengthening the employment directives promoted in the European Union supported by the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs.

The specific objectives of these strategies pursue:

- to identify the main ways of facilitating graduates' insertion in the labour market;
- to present the role of the organization of traineeships;
- the analysis of the efficiency of career counseling activities;
- to identify the main characteristics of education and training activities.

This strategy supports people and organizations interested in developing students' practical skills to facilitate their insertion in the labour market.

The actions aimed at the transition from school to work facilitate the insertion of graduates into the labour market. The education provided through professional training that starts with primary education and continues to higher education is required to be supplemented by practical training in companies, specialized programs for students, various workshops and trainings etc., organized in partnership with enterprises in the real environment. The development and provision of guiding and counseling services will complement the above actions, thus helping to ease the transition from school to work, and the change of status of a graduate student with the employee status. It aims at preparing future graduates to meet future labour market requirements and those of the future employer, by developing the skills and abilities required by them, which are so much needed for the labour market integration and adaptation to the employee status.

Following the difficulties of insertion identified to exist in the labour market after graduation, it is very useful to develop learning situations at the work place, carried out before graduation, providing advice and guidance, mentoring and assistance before work integration, as part of the transition process from school to work. A special attention should be given to those students who want to become employed in various companies, and which require the development of specific skills that are not covered by school curricula, but which are absolutely necessary for entering into the labour market. Their absence leads to early dropping out of the workplace and to the increase of the number of unemployed youth, which is undesirable. This skill deficiency must be covered by

acquiring flexible skills and which give job security, and to help reduce fluctuations and the decreasing of the increasing trend of long-term unemployed people.

Strategies to facilitate insertion in the labour market can be developed at different levels:

- on national scale;
- at the institutional level, by teaching institutions and other agents which exist in the market;
- at the individual level, by teachers and students.

The guidance operation that outlines the strategy to ease the transition from school to work for students may include in particular the following:

- Support offered to organize internships and practical training for students;
- Development and provision of guidance and advice to support the transition from school to work;
- Development of continuous type training activities (training courses, summer schools and workshops to help with skills development), with the involvement of business partners;
- Support offered for active partnerships between universities and companies;
- Monitoring the insertion of graduates into the labour market.

## Organizing internships

Practice at the work place has, first of all, an educational purpose. For students undergoing vocational programs, the main aim is naturally that of expanding and valuing the occupational competence in accordance with the objectives qualification / specialization that they follow.

Practice in the workplace can do this as follows:

- Providing learning opportunities that cannot be obtained easily in the classroom;
- Obtaining the exercise in a working environment where pressure and working methods are real, not simulated;
- Observing and benefiting from coaching with experienced staff;
- Obtaining feedback on how their skills rise to the level expected at work, finding such aspects where improvements are needed;

In addition, the practice in the workplace can achieve educational goals beyond those related to a particular vocational program. It can be very useful for students because they can:

- develop ideas about the career they want to have, seeing exactly what the jobs where do they train involve;
- become familiar and develop personal skills required for any job - managing time, listening to instructions, health and safety precautions, and key skills such as teamwork, communication, etc.

The agreement is based on the activities that the student will perform and, associated with this work, the training standards (competency units) that the student aims to achieve, or which will be his/ her aim at work trying to achieve them during the time spent in the company / institution. At

the school level, taking into account the existing curriculum, and also the students' level of knowledge and skills as they resulted from teaching activities (theoretical component of the course and the applied seminar for the subjects that also have this applicative side included in the education curricula), the following aspects will be pursued:

- issues which cannot be learned by students satisfactorily completing only theoretical component and which require the existence of some practical applications to be understood and used by students in their future professional activity;
- complementarity: theoretical learning - application by emphasizing certain parts of the curriculum and adapting them to the students' needs.

Tutors need to be informed on the students' level of theoretical training, this does not refer to the performance level of the student, in terms of theoretical training pertaining to the responsibility of the schools, but to the level of application of knowledge by students, to their ability to practically use the information provided during the courses.

However, it is not recommended to include too many goals or objectives, too complex ones since the first training phase, but they should be included gradually, taking into account the interests expressed by students and the difficulties they encountered etc.

It is necessary for tutors to be informed of their role regarding:

- student assessment,
- the influence that they, as practitioners, can have in forming a vision of a certain field for those students whose practical training will be coordinated by them.

## **Organization of career counseling activities**

Career counseling programs have a dual purpose: to facilitate to the student the knowledge of the occupations content, preparing and facilitating self-knowledge in order to identify suitable occupations in accordance with the students' aspirations and individual characteristics.

In order to implement a counseling program, it is necessary to start from the needs of the beneficiaries the program. For this, it is necessary to identify first who the ones who need to receive guidance and counseling are, the identification of beneficiaries can be achieved both through input from teachers or parents and by beneficiaries' own proposal.

At the stage of identifying needs, tools can be developed, such as an interview guide (if there are necessary resources to organize interview type meetings with beneficiaries) or questionnaires (which may apply in some individual or group meetings or even at distance).

Based on preliminary results obtained through these steps, the program will analyze in depth the beneficiaries' specific counseling need.

The counseling program will be based on developing a career plan. For this, an important step is filling in a worksheet that can include a brief introduction on identifying barriers that may block the activity of career planning and needs' assessment. The most important component of the worksheet is to identify occupations the beneficiary wishes to have, favorite school subjects, oc-

cupational interests, work values, exploring opportunities, making decisions and formulating a career plan.

At the end of the counseling activities, to get feedback from students, it is important that they should complete an assessment questionnaire to identify strengths and weaknesses of advisory activity.

### **Development of training and workshops**

It is necessary to motivate students to participate in training or workshop type actions organized in partnership with business representatives. The partners of faculties / departments in the real environment can organize discussions, seminars, thematic workshops on their current activities and carried out projects, sparking the students' interest and familiarizing them with organizing the activity in that specific company. At the same time, they may consider presenting the projects and their results in newspaper news, in various conferences, meetings, official meetings, courses.

The training type meetings aim at developing certain skills and competencies for students participating in these activities. So, besides core competencies in various fields of science and effective application of theoretical concepts learned throughout the study semester at the professional level we should also take into account building skills such as teamwork, entrepreneurship skills / to take the initiative and language skills. In terms of social and personal plan, it is desirable that these activities develop communication skills, the ability to interact with others and individual motivation.

Thematic workshops and trainings can be held at the partner entity headquarters, with the participation of trainers, managers, company managers and advisers. The presentations include question and answer sessions, small group discussions and practical exercises / case studies.



*Young students in a workshop a "Grigore Moisil" Technological High School*



The main result of these activities is intended to be the practical development of students better adapted to the real environment, the increased interest in this issue and to encourage colleagues and collaborators in the choice of such training sessions as an opportunity to develop their personal and professional development.

**“Grigore Moisil” Technological High School** prepares students both in our own school workshops and in specialized companies.

The training sessions are organized in the following training fields, for the following qualification and in the companies “Grigore Moisil” Technological High School has signed contracts with for the students’ training sessions:

1. Electro Industrial machinery and equipment: AGACHE OVIDIU AURELIAN II Company, SC AVELON PRODSERV SRL Company, SC UNIEL SRL Company;
2. Electric / low voltage Electrician: SC BITNET SRL Company, SC RADIOTON SRL Company;
3. Manufacture of wood /universal carpenter: SC COMPACT SRL Company, SC BIN-FURNIPROD Ltd., D & D JOBS Company;
4. Manufacture of wood / upholsterer: D & D JOBS Company, SC TAPISAL SRL Company;
5. Trade / merchants / seller: SC CARREFOUR SA Company;
6. Electro mechanics: SC YAZAKI ROMANIA SRL Company.

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### THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN SLOVENIA

Transition from school system to the labour market is a challenging period for eachones' life cycle.

Secondary education in the Republic of Slovenia is divided into general and vocational/secondary professional and technical education organized under The Law on the Organization and Financing of Education. The law regulates administration and funding of vocational and secondary professional and general education. It also provides mandatory components of secondary educational programs.

The Law on Vocational Education regulates the lower and upper secondary vocational education and secondary vocational education, which provides relevant knowledge, skills and competence to work in a professional context and at the same time to prepare for further education especially in higher professional education.

After finishing the general compulsory education at 15 years of age students usually decides to continue their education at:

Secondary schools offer **vocational/technical** and **general secondary**. General secondary schools prepare students to enter university, on the other hand **vocational and technical schools** prepare students namely to enter labour market.

There are two types of secondary **vocational/technical schools** in Slovenia:

- a) **Vocational schools** (3-5 years, depending on the program type; preparing students predominantly for labour), which are open to students who have successfully completed basic school or short vocational upper secondary education program. The short vocational upper secondary education (2-3 years) are open to students who have met the basic school obligation and successfully completed Year 7 of the compulsory elementary school program, or completed compulsory elementary school in the scope of the lower educational standard program that are adapted to children with special needs;
- b) **Technical schools** (4-5 years; depending on the program type). All students who have successfully completed basic or short vocational education can enrol in technical upper secondary education. Candidates who have successfully completed Year 4 of gimnazija or the final year of a technical education can enrol to a one-year vocational course. In technical and vocational schools, students acquire qualifications needed to enter the labour market, as well as to continue education in non-university tertiary education programs.

### How are young people prepared?

The fundamental task of school counsellors is to use their professional competence providing assistance to students, parents, teachers and school management, and participates in the planning, implementation and evaluation of everyday educational work in school. In this way, advisory ser-

vice contributes to improving the effectiveness of individuals, groups and schools as a whole. Basic types of activities are: assistance to the job orientation, group work with students to improve the quality of learning (learning), counselling for personal and social development, career guidance - counselling in enrolment at secondary school and university, cooperation in creating individualized programs for students with special needs, counselling students in resolving personal development problems (various personal crises, learning or behavioural problems, social problems). Theoretically the system works fine but there is a big discrepancy between their work and the observation and the need of social partners (employers).

### **How the Dual system from school-to-work in Slovenia works**

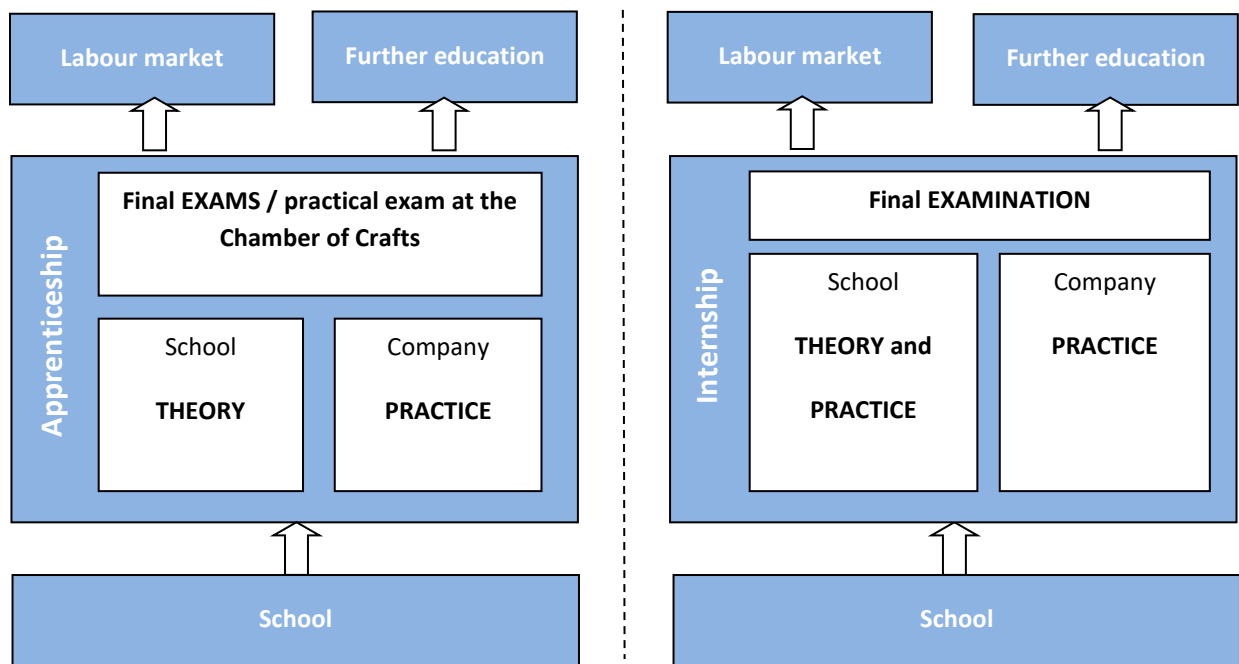
In Slovenia general school-to-work transition process is sometimes named **Hybrid Model** where theoretical part of the educational process is in hands of school, practical is in domain of schools or social partners (employers). Education for a wide range of occupations is carried out in two ways:

1. The school organization organises theoretical and practical training as a general rule in the whole school. If the part of practical training is taking place at the employer, the school and the employer sign a contract where their mutual rights and obligations together with the rights and obligations of the student during practical training are defined.
2. In the dual system the school organises theoretical and basic part of practical education while the most part of the practical education is done at the employer. Student and the employer sign a contract which should be confirmed by the Chamber (of Crafts or Commerce). By the confirmation of the contract the student acquires a status of apprentice which further on secure him/her a reward during the placements at the employer and some other bonuses employees normally get by the employer. The number and range of apprenticeship placements are published annually by the call for enrolment or in a special publication of Chambers.

The difference in both programs is that the school organization educates more theoretical and less practical, while in the dual system, the emphasis is mostly on practical education, developing job skills and habits, learning about the working environment, all of which contributes to the professional socialization and the increased possibility of later employment. Apprentice is about four months in school, and three there at the employer. This arrangement is partly different by the occupations.

Notwithstanding the differences in school organization and the dual system of education, apprentice and students must successfully pass the final exam to get a degree of the vocational education (e.g. a carpenter, mechanic, hairdresser). Upon completion of training, students and apprentices have open way either in employment or continuation of education in the two-year program of vocational-technical schools.

Dual training system has been developed for a large number of occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber-roofer, carpenter, and bricklayer, installer heating systems, machine mechanic, structural mechanics, toolmakers, seamstress-tailor, butcher, baker, florist gardener, pastry chef, and some others.



*Dual systems in Slovenia*

The learning output is monitored both by the company and the vocational school. Theoretical part of the final exam is monitored by the school and the practical part by the Chamber of commerce which monitors obtained knowledge and competences for different fields of orientation. Without passing both exams the student will not be allowed to work in his chosen profession. But once he has passed successfully, he is seen as skilled worker facing easier access to the labour market or he chose for further education.

### **Master exams - secondary technical education**

Chamber of Craft of Slovenia provides the master exams since 2000 for 52 master titles. Master exams are also being implemented for the most deficient professions for which enrolment in regular education programs is not possible. To obtain a master title represents an excellent opportunity to increase employability in chosen profession (for those master degrees that are tied to individual implementation of construction works - eg. a master mason, carpenter master, master of mechanical installations, Consumer Electronic master).

In the past several programmes, measures and organizations in Slovenia help youngsters and students in the school to work transition process. Some of the measures are part of Active employment policy implemented by Employment Service of Slovenia:

- **First challenge** programme promotes employment and improving employment opportunities of unemployed young persons up to 30 years of age who have been registered as unemployed with the Employment Service for a minimum of three months. The employment relationship must be concluded for a minimum of 15 months and includes a three-month probationary period. The subsidy for a full-time employment equals EUR 7,250 EUR (2,250 EUR for the three-month probationary period and EUR 5,000 for the remaining 12 months until the end of the period of the subsidized employment).

Additional promotion of training and employment of unemployed young people up to 30 years of age is also envisaged in the amendments to the public invitations Zaposli.me (Employ.me) and on-the-job training.

- **On-the-job-training:** Due to lack of work experience, the young unemployed have fewer opportunities to integrate into the labour market. Therefore, the unemployed who are younger than 30 years of age may participate in the three-month training programmes. In 2013, EUR 5 million will be allocated for this purpose.
- **Zaposli.me (Employ.me):** the possibility of including the unemployed young persons younger than 30 years of age in a subsidized employment scheme for the duration of one year. In 2013, the programme will be allocated EUR 15 million.

**Centres for information and vocational counselling** provide support when choosing vocational orientation and the support to transition to the labour market. Their aim is to secure information of education, training, profession and labour market for the students.

Wide range of NGOs in Slovenia offer students and other youngster's information of transition to the labour market.

### **What are the advantages, what are the drawbacks in Slovene transition system?**

In February 2016 the unemployment rate among young age from 15 to 29 was 22,7 % and affects young people with different levels of qualification (STAT, 2016).

According to the studies dual system in Slovenia is very appropriate when choosing for the rare occupations and in occasions when school systems do not supply the regular education due to low demand for this kind of education. The dual system is also very successful in providing education for the group of students who are not the most successful and for those with different kind of disabilities, for the group of students who developed hostile attitude towards the school system. The system shows its advantage also in connection to the faster adaptation of the technological development.

In Slovenia there is still present "fear" of different or alternative vocational education, especially towards the apprenticeship model and dual system. Instead of shortening, Slovenia is in process of prolonging the vocational education period up to 5 year.

In transition from compulsory elementary school to the vocational education student and their parents are in general left with no career guidance. In Slovenia there is a lack of proactive programmes which should provide vocational experiences to the students, and help them regarding vocational orientation. There is also a gap in cooperation between schools and companies which would activate vocational decision of parents and their children in risky circumstances.

In Slovenia there is still present negative motivation for vocational orientation (lower salary, first job finding). Vocational schools have not established yet mentoring and tutoring system of help for the students and their parents (Medveš, 2012).

## **How are disadvantaged young people doing in the Slovene transition system?**

In Slovenia, the transition of youth with disabilities from school to the labour market has not been satisfactory. Youth with disabilities are often left to themselves after finishing the education. Many of them stay at home, some register at the Employment Service of Slovenia, others enter vocational rehabilitation programs, and rare individuals become employed. Often a young person enters vocational rehabilitation after many years of having stayed at home unemployed and having lost the basic employability skills, professional knowledge, working habits and confidence.

State of the art in Slovenia reveals that many institutions take care of youth with disabilities but their activities are not connected: Employment Service of Slovenia, school councillors, Career centers at Universities, Association of students with disabilities, The National Education Institute of The Republic of Slovenia, providers of employment rehabilitation, University Rehabilitation Institute – medical examination and vocational counselling, and others.

When education institutions close their door, it is hard to find appropriate information and the best possible outcome in the unfamiliar area covered by many institutions. That is especially true in times of rapid legislation, crisis and institutional changes – in recent years, the changes in labour market have been substantial in Slovenia; many employers have shut down their facilities and legislation changes have been comprehensive. The knowledge about possible engagement is not so easy to be assured for youth with disabilities and for their parents since average professional workers know only the area they cover in their institution and rarely what other institutions can do (Tabaj et Al, 2014).

## **WORK-BASED TRAINING APPROACHES AT RCR**

### **Project learning for young adults**

Project learning for young adults (PUM) is an informal educational programme for young drop-outs aged up to 25 years. The aim of the programme is to motivate young people to resume their interrupted education, help them to reach a decision for education within the framework of existing possibilities and forms and enable them individual support for the compensation of insufficient knowledge.

The programme PUM is designed for young people aged between 15 and 25 years who are not included in the regular school system, have not acquired the fundamental basic or vocational education and are unemployed. The programme is carried from September to June and participant can enter the programme in each part of the year.

Work in PUM is based on the principles of simulation of direct life-related problems with active and equal participation of participants. Mentors and participants equally solve concrete problems which arise from commonly agreed project contents which are interesting for the whole group. Work is directed towards the elaboration of a concrete product (a clear project plan). The project defines contents and educational goals which young people recognize as reasonable and are therefore motivated for the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. The criteria of success is the

quality of the end product, which also conditions the quality of the end product. During the practical work participants:

- acquire practical experience with work,
- form a relationship to work which they are interested in,
- get familiar with new ways of creativity,
- new manners of using less energy-consuming and environmentally friendly technologies,
- the manner of using natural materials,
- the possibility for recycling waste material,
- get acquainted with production.

One of the forms of work within the PUM is also individual work with the main purpose:

- preparation of participants for the continuation of interrupted education or
- preparation for exams (regular, re-examination, final, entrance).

The main goals of the programme: is to acquire functional knowledge and skills, to acquire positive experience with learning, to help the planning of the educational or career path and development of creative thinking and of the critical eye.

Practical showcase of the PUM result in Ljubljana PUM:



*The beginning*



*Team work*



*The result*

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### **FROM SCHOOL TO WORK – THE SWEDISH TRANSITION SYSTEM**

The purpose of the transition system is that students will be well prepared for working life after a professional training and that the transition from school to work should work. This applies to school and work, with a focus on what we call the Workplace-Based Learning (WBL). To the quality of vocational education should be as good as possible it is important that the WBL works at all stages.

All pupils at upper secondary school vocational programs and in upper secondary special school national programs shall implement parts of the WBL. WBL can also occur in adult education and pre-university programs. Because of that, WBL must be of high quality and involves school boards, principals, teachers and tutors together. WBL defines as "learning in a program implemented in one or more work outside of school" (Upper Secondary Ordinance 2010: 2039<sup>th</sup>).

#### **Upper secondary school**

WBL should be a part of secondary schools national vocational programs with at least 15 weeks. Within the upper secondary apprenticeship training it must be at least half of the training program. WBL will also occur for students in the program oriented to individual choice. Within the induction program into employment should WBL or internship occur. Every week with WBL is equivalent to 23 hours guaranteed teaching time.

#### **Upper secondary special school**

Pupils at secondary special school national programs shall implement at least 22 weeks are work-place. Every week with WBL in upper secondary special school corresponds to 25 hours guaranteed teaching time.

#### **Adult education**

In adult education can WBL occur, but the time for WBL is not regulated. Courses or parts of courses may be attributed to one or more workplaces. A supervisor will be appointed at the work-place.

#### **Responsibilities to WBL**

The school always has the main responsibility for WBL. A key factor for good quality is that of workplaces and schools work together.

#### **The school management's responsibility for WBL**

The organizer of the training is responsible for obtaining WBL places and that the requirements of the program are met. The headmaster decides on the allocation over the year and for students to



implement all or parts of courses that is WBL. The school should report their contacts with the labor market in the context of quality work.

### **Upper secondary school's responsibility for WBL**

Upper secondary schools are responsible for each student on a national vocational program in upper secondary school to be able to achieve the requirements for a professional qualification.

According to upper secondary school curricula, the schools are responsible to each student at a national vocational program that they will be able to achieve the requirements for a professional qualification. This means that the student:

- have achieved one of the industry acceptable level of proficiency in order to be well prepared for professional life;
- acquire good knowledge of the courses included in the student's path;
- to use these skills for further studies, social life, work and everyday life;
- use their knowledge as a tool to:
  - formulate, analyze and test assumptions and solve problems;
  - reflect on their experiences and their own way of learning;
  - critically examine and value statements and relationships;
  - solve practical problems and tasks.

The school should strive for flexible solutions for the organization, courses and methods. The school will also interact with the student's guardians regarding their learning and development.

### **Students' the working environment on WBL**

It is important that the students' work environment is secure at the workplace that receives students for WBL. The organizer of the school and the workplace are jointly responsible for the student's work environment. The Work Environment Authority has developed rules for minors' working environment where certain jobs and working hours are not allowed.

### **Planning of WBL**

The teacher will plan for student learning in the workplace in relation to the objectives of the training. A student must have a supervisor at work who has the necessary skills and is otherwise considered appropriate.

The teacher puts, together with the supervisor, a plan on how learning can take place in the workplace and how learning will be assessed and fed back. The planning of the workplace learning can advantageously be done in consultation with the local program council according to the upper secondary school program.

## **To prepare the workplace**

Faced WBL, school needs to contact workplaces to plan the training content in relation to their educational objectives. It is important that the school will contact the workplaces in due time before the student will begin the WBL.

## **Workplace quality**

The school must ensure that the workplace has a good working environment and meets the applicable requirements. Safety rules for those under 18 also apply to students at WBL. According to the Work Environment Authority the principal of the school and the employer must make a risk assessment of the workplace before the start WBL.

Some important prerequisites for a high quality WBL place are:

- Workplace has sufficient width / depth in their activities for the current field of education;
- Workplace appoints a supervisor who is prepared and suitable for the task;
- Workplace has a good working environment.

## **Preparing tutor and student**

The school is responsible for preparing both supervisor and student facing WBL period. When the school has secured WBL places for all students, the school can invite all supervisors to an introductory meeting with the school. If the supervisor cannot come to school the teacher can visit the workplace and where to go through the supervisor needs to know. The following are examples of the supervisors needs to know:

- Contact information
- Year Schedule
- Agreement/contract/agreement
- Responsibilities and roles (teacher-supervisor)
- Insurance/Health and Safety
- The student's prior knowledge
- Introduction of the pupil in the workplace
- Education plan
- Logbook/checklists

It is important to inform and prepare students for their WBL. The school's task can be seen as preparing the student and create conditions for the learning that will take place in the workplace. The student needs feedback and opportunities to reflect on their learning in the workplace. It is also important that students receive a review of the working environment, risks and protective measures. A review of the various health and safety rules can help to make students safe in the workplace.

Before the WBL period begins, the teacher should ensure that students know what parts of the program which will be implemented in the workplace. Under the Education Act, students have

influence over their education and therefore it is important that students are given the opportunity to participate in the planning of the WBL.

### **Follow-up on students' developments of knowledge of WBL**

It is important that procedures are in place clarifying how the proper exchange of information between the workplace and the school can be secured. The principal should ensure that there are procedures for the assessment of WBL.

The supervisor should be well informed about the goals and knowledge that pupils should work towards. During the student WBL-period the teacher needs to receive regular information from the supervisor on the student's development of knowledge.

The headmaster needs to ensure that the teacher can have contact with the student and the supervisor during WBL. The teacher should be able to monitor and support students' knowledge and be an integrated part of the learning process. The student will then receive ongoing feedback on what she or he has so far achieved and need to develop in order to reach proficiency. Such an approach may also give the teacher feedback on what needs to be changed or developed to achieve better results. Teachers therefore need to periodically look back, summarize and visualize the students' learning.

During a WBL period the student will, on a number of occasions, face situations that are repeated to the training. The supervisor should inform the teacher about student development, for example, independence, and quality and skill in the performance of duty. It may be helpful to document these situations for discussions with the student prior to assessment and grading.

### **Local program council**

According to upper secondary school regulation, there must be one or more local program of collaboration between school and workplace. How the local program councils should be organized and what information they should have is not regulated in any further regulation.

Well-functioning local program can be a vital prerequisite for vocational training in secondary schools. The local program councils can contribute to an organized and close interaction between school and workplace. In the local program councils 'work can also be students' feedback is gathered.

Data for the local program one can consist of:

- Assist the principal to arrange places for workplace learning
- Assist the principal in planning and organizing the workplace learning
- Participate in the design of school work
- Collaborate on education long term development
- Consult on which courses are offered as software recess
- Participate in the systematic quality work by developing evaluation principles relating to the workplace learning

## **Implementation of WBL - school and work**

The teacher needs to follow pupils' knowledge in the workplace, and periodically review the student's work together with the student and the tutor. One way could be to create various types of checklists and matrices as a basis for follow-up. The tasks will be planned and structured so that it becomes possible for the student to achieve the goals.

To communicate with students when they are out on their WBL it's necessary with follow-up procedures that can be adapted to different workplaces. There are several methods that can complement workplace visits to communicate with the student during WBL. Today many students have digital tools which can be useful for communication and documentation. The student and the supervisor can document the work through both photography and film. The films can then lead to a developmental conversation between the student, the vocational teacher and supervisor and used as a basis for assessment. Students can also blog or write log and send all the data directly to the teacher and supervisor.

This type of documentation can be particularly useful in cases where the student has the WBL located abroad or where the opportunities to visit the workplace of the teacher is limited. With the students who have WBL abroad, the supervisor and the teacher are often in contact via email and phone. Various digital solutions available today can contribute to the implementation of trilateral meetings over the internet.

## **Monitoring and assessment of student at WBL**

It is important that the teacher follows the student continuously during the WBL period to ensure that the student is working toward the goals. To do that, the teacher should plan assessment and feedback, together with the supervisor. The teacher is responsible for the assessment and to rate and assess student performance throughout the course. The supervisor helps with data according to the agreed planning.

Rating is an overall assessment of student knowledge at the end of the course. The teacher must therefore use all available ratings data from both school-based parts and the workplace, and weigh it against each other. Document from workplace is used to the extent that the teacher finds it relevant and useful. The teacher is obliged to inform the student about what applies to the assessment in the WBL.

## **Evaluation support**

The National Agency for Education has developed assessment support for national vocational programs, broken down by program. There is an introductory video, a publication on assessment of professional competence, filmed the assessment example, matrices and skill profiles and discussion questions.

## **Topic plan is the basis for the assessment**

The starting point for assessing the proficiency requirements syllabuses and courses states:

- What goals the student should attain;
- What should be assessed;
- How the quality of the performed tasks shall be valued.

To create a comparable basis for assessment, the teacher, the supervisor and the student have a common understanding of the concept of quality as specified in the subject field. The relationship between goals and knowledge must be clear. Only then can the various student performances be assessed equally.

## **Evaluation and quality of WBL**

Good quality work is based on the school plan, monitoring and evaluating own work, taking advantage of the results and translate them into various measures to develop the activities. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that the school has the potential to do this.

One of the most important issues when it comes to quality assuring the WBL is the extent to which the school has procedures and working systematically to develop cooperation between school and workplaces. By evaluating the school it is possible to capture what worked well and what didn't. It is important that all parties, the student, supervisor and teacher evaluate the training.

The concept of quality can be defined by how well the activities are carried out:

- Meeting national goals and meet national requirements and guidelines;
- Meeting other goals, requirements and guidelines formulated locally;
- Living up to its vision of renewal and constant development.

## **Quality of education**

Characteristics of a good quality work are to:

- Evaluation and development efforts are carried out in a structured and systematically;
- School assessment systems that evolves with the activities;
- Results of the evaluation are used to advance education and improve operations;
- School and the local program council have agreed on the principles on evaluation;
- Pupils and parents are given the opportunity to participate with the school staff in evaluation and school development.

## **Support in development**

National Agency for Education is working in several ways to support schools' development of WBL.

## **National apl developers**

From spring 2014, the National WBL-developers that can be booked by school leaders. The national WBL-developers provide support in the systematic quality work on WBL with an emphasis on collaboration between school and the workplace.

## **WBL-develop training of instructors**

The National Agency for Education offers a WBL-develop training for those working as trainers in a vocational program.



## **WBL-supervisor**

The National Agency for Education has developed a web-based WBL-supervisor training for supervisors in workplaces that receive students in WBL. The training consists of an introduction and a deepening module.

## **Learning at the workplace in the Nordic countries**

By exchanging ideas and experiences on how to organize youth and adult learning in apprenticeships and traineeships, the Nordic countries can learn from each other.

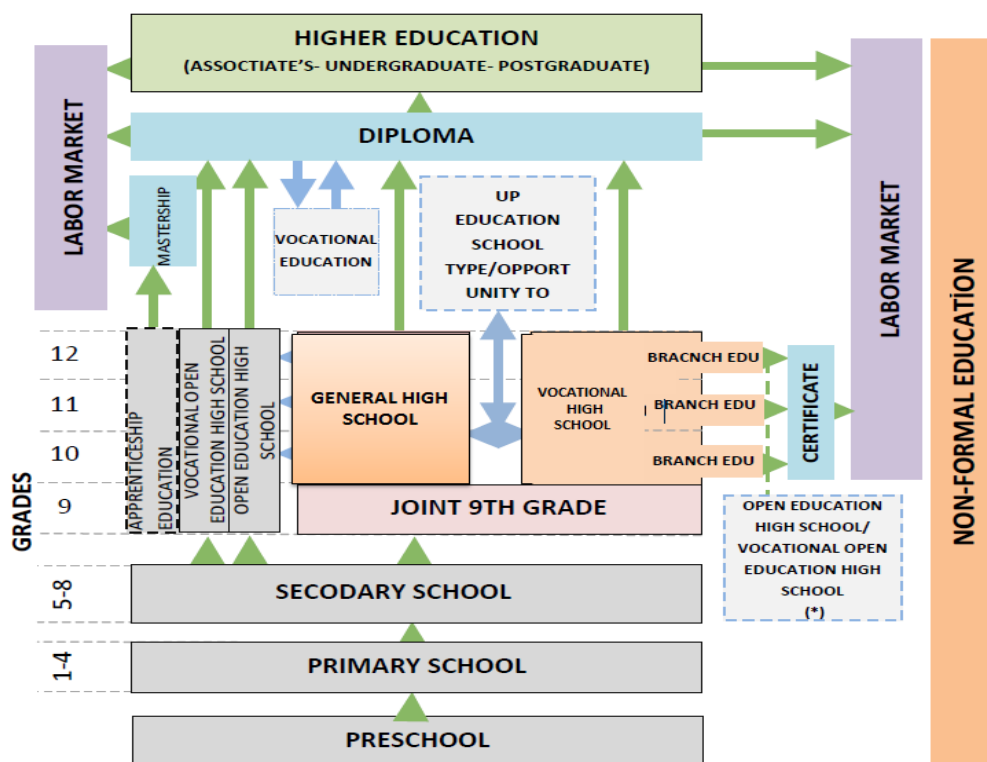
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## THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION SYSTEM in TURKEY

### Introduction

The education system in Turkey basically consists of five stages, namely, pre-school, elementary school, secondary school, high school and higher education. The preschool and higher education levels are not compulsory, and the 12-year compulsory staged education is arranged as the first-tier four-year primary school (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades), the second-tier four-year secondary (elementary) school (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades) and the third-tier four-year high school (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades)



Education System and Transition Possibilities<sup>22</sup>

The students who complete the first stage continue with the high school or religious high school. According to the new implementation started in 2013-2014 school year students will continue in high school education upon weighed grades of year end average of 6th, 7th and 8th grades and the Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG) exam of eighth graders on six subjects. The students who have graduated from the High School education level can participate in the labour force, can make transition to the higher education according to the YGS and LYS exam results.

<sup>22</sup> ([http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/network/up/TVET\\_STRATEGY\\_PAPER\\_2014-2018.pdf](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/network/up/TVET_STRATEGY_PAPER_2014-2018.pdf))

## Vocational and Technical Education in Turkey

Vocational and technical education aims at educating students as good citizens as well as preparing them for next education and/or business life by giving a common general culture in a flexible structure and in line with their interests and abilities. Vocational and technical high school education consists of vocational and technical high schools implementing various programs.

Student admissions to vocational high schools may vary according to the type of school, and the fields and branches to be chosen. The transports and transitions of the students among the types of schools and programs can be made under certain circumstances. Diplomas are arranged according to the type of school, programs, fields and branches the students have completed.

In formal vocational and technical education, the 9th grade is common in all types of schools. The students who have completed the 9th grade make field choice. The 10th grade students of vocational high schools and technical high schools continue their education in the vocational areas, and the 11th and 12th grade students in the branch, which they have chosen, of the field they are educated.

The duties and functioning of the vocational education centres responsible for the education of apprenticeship, journeyman and mastership in the non-formal education system are regulated by the Law on Vocational Education and Training No. 3308. The educations of the candidate apprentice students, apprentice students, and journeyman students are given in the vocational education centres. In addition, master training and vocational courses are organized in these centres, and the people's acquisition of professions with their own preferences is aimed according to the needs of the society.

Technical and Industrial Vocational High School	Girls Vocational and Technical High School	Hotel Management and Tourism Vocational High School	Trade Vocational High School	Vocational High School of Health	Vocational and Technical Education Centre	Multi-Program High School
■ Anatolian Technical High School	■ Anatolian Girls Technical High School	■ Anatolian Hotel Management and Tourism Vocational High School	■ Trade Vocational High School	■ Anatolian Vocational High School of Health	■ Vocational and Technical Education Centre	■ High School
■ Anatolian Vocational High School			■ Anatolian Trade Vocational High School			■ Vocational High School
■ Technical High School				■ Vocational High School of Health		
■ Industrial Vocational High School	■ Anatolian Girls Vocational High School		■ Vocational High School of Justice			■ Religious High School
■ Maritime Vocational High School		■ Hotel Management and Tourism Vocational High School				
■ Maritime Anatolian Vocational High School	■ Girls Technical High School		■ Anatolian Communication s Vocational High School			
■ Agricultural Vocational High School						
■ Agricultural Anatolian Vocational High School						
■ Land Registry and Cadastrate Vocational High School	■ Girls Vocational High School					

*Vocational and Technical Education - High School Types*



According to the Law on Vocational Education and Training No. 3308, those who are over the age of 14 and under the age of 19 are accepted to apprenticeship training. However, those who are over the age of 19 but have not received apprenticeship training before can be accepted to the apprenticeship training according to the vocational education programs to be organized in coherence with their ages and levels of education. With the transition to the 12-year compulsory education system in 2012, the students, who want to continue with the apprenticeship program, must register to the open education high school or vocational open education high school programs after completing the secondary school.

In line with the sector demands, modular programmes are used in the vocational education centres affiliated to the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. The apprentices do practical application at the workplaces five working days a week, and participate in theoretical trainings in the vocational education centres one working day a week. At the end of the apprenticeship education, those who pass the exam of journeyman receive journeyman's certificate. Mastership education courses are carried out by the Ministry in order to give those, who have acquired journeyman competence, the competencies required to provide for their vocational development and for opening their own independent workplaces. Those who have acquired the journeyman competence and have worked in their professions for at least five years can directly participate in examinations of mastership. Mastership certificate is given to those who have passed these exams.

### **Vocational Education and Internship Applications in Enterprises**

The period of internship in Anatolian technical and technical high schools is 300 hours. The student can do a maximum of 1/3 of his/her internship study at the end of the 10th grade, and the rest starting from the 11th grade. The internship applications are made at the weekend, semester or summer vacation. The internship application can be made in schools with face to face education or in the enterprises.

Vocational education is given in the enterprises three days a week at the 12th grade in the Anatolian vocational and vocational high schools. However, the students, who cannot attend vocational education in the enterprises for various reasons, have to do internship study for 300 hours starting from the end of the 10th grade. The vocational education and internship applications in the enterprises may vary according to the characteristics of the type of program implemented in schools.

Enterprises employing ten or more staff give occupational skill training to VTE students, not less than 5% of the number of its employees. Enterprises that will provide occupational skill training to 10 or more students, establish a training unit. In this unit qualified trainers having craftsmanship adequacy with pedagogical training are appointed.

The provinces and the professions that will be within the scope of vocational education in businesses are chosen by Ministry of National Education (MoNE) upon request of Vocational Education Board. The provinces and professions in this scope and the list of the businesses which are liable to do vocational education are submitted to Provincial Employment and Vocational Education Board within the month of February by Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) Regional Directorates.

Business recognition commissions in provinces and districts determine eligibility of the businesses that are liable to provide vocational and technical training by taking the criteria within the Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions into consideration.

With the law no 6111 enacted in 2011, vocational training in businesses of the students in higher education institutions are included in Vocational Education Law no. 3308.

### **Non-Formal Education**

The duties and functioning of the vocational education centres responsible for the education of apprenticeship, journeyman and mastership in the non-formal education system are regulated by the Law on Vocational Education and Training No. 3308. The educations of the candidate apprentice students, apprentice students, and journeyman students are given in the vocational education centres. In addition, master training and vocational courses are organized in these centres, and the people's acquisition of professions with their own preferences is aimed according to the needs of the society. According to the Law on Vocational Education and Training No. 3308, those who are over the age of 14 and under the age of 19 are accepted to apprenticeship training. However, those who are over the age of 19 but have not received apprenticeship training before can be accepted to the apprenticeship training according to the vocational education programs to be organized in coherence with their ages and levels of education. With the transition to the 12-year compulsory education system in 2012, the students, who want to continue with the apprenticeship program, must register to the open education high school or vocational open education high school programs after completing the secondary school.

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### **Turkish Qualifications Framework**

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a set of principles and rules consisting of levels used for defining the qualifications existing in a country, classifying according to the criteria set and comparing qualifications. NQF integrates the qualification systems existing in a country and provides coordination among the qualification systems. NQF facilitates the qualifications to be more transparent and identifiable within the framework of quality standards, and the learners' horizontal and vertical mobility among the qualifications.

Creation of a national qualifications framework that will improve the quality of the education and training system and that will strengthen the relationship between employment and education is one of the priority needs of Turkey. Therefore, intensive efforts are being made to prepare a national qualifications framework that will support the education and training needs of all individuals in the society and that will ensure the development of the qualifications required by the labour market.

Qualifications Framework (TQF) is designed in conformity with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) which identifies, on eight levels, all the qualifications standards achieved in primary, secondary and higher education programs and in other learning environments. Qualification types in TWF and levels are given following:

8	Higher Education Institutions	(Ph. D., Ph. D. in Art, and Medical Specialty)		Vocational Qualifications Authority	8th level Professional Competence Certificate	
7		Master's Degree (With Thesis) Graduate Degree (Without Thesis) Graduate Certificate			7th level Professional Competence Certificate	
6		Graduate Degree			6th level Professional Competence Certificate	
5		Associate Degree(Academic) Associate Degree (Vocational)			5th level Professional Competence Certificate	
4	Ministry of National Education	High School Diploma	Vocational and Technical Education High School Diploma		Mastership Certificate	4th level Professional Competence Certificate
3					Journeyman's Certificate	3rd level Professional Competence Certificate
2		Secondary Education Certificate			2nd level Professional Competence Certificate	
1	Primary Education Certificate					
	Preschool certificate of Participation					

*Secondary education degree is required for journeyman's certificate<sup>23</sup>*

## THE PROCESS OF OUR STUDENTS IN TRANSITION FROM STARTING OF THE SCHOOL TO THE LABOUR MARKET

### TEOG Exam (The Exam of Transition from Elementary School to High School) and School Choice Period

The students who complete the first stage continue with the high school or religious high school. According to the new implementation started in 2013-2014 school year students will continue in high school education upon weighed grades of year end average of 6th, 7th and 8th grades and the Transition from Primary to Secondary Education (TEOG) exam of eighth graders on six subjects. The students who have graduated from the High School education level can participate in the labour force, can make transition to the higher education according to the YGS and LYS exam results.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Draft TQF Document, VQA 2013

## The First Year (9<sup>th</sup> Grade) and the Process of Vocational Fields' Choice

The first year of the high school is the 9th year of the compulsory education. In formal vocational and technical education, the 9th grade is common in all types of schools. The 9th grade students have the common lessons shown below.

LESSONS		9th Grade
COMMON LESSONS	Turkish Language and Expression	2
	Turkish Literature	3
	Religion and Morals	1
	History	2
	Geography	2
	Mathematics	6
	Physics	2
	Chemistry	2
	Biology	3
	Hygiene(Health Knowledge)	1
	Philosophy	-
	English	6
	Physical Education	2
	Visual Arts / Music	1
Traffic and First Aid	-	
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>
VOCATIONAL COMMON LESSONS	Vocational Improvement	2

*9th Grade Weekly Lesson Schedule*

At the end of the 9th grade, the mark of making choice for a vocational field is determined by the average of 60% of 9th grade final year mark and 40% of the classes final year marks in elementary school. The students are ranged according to the success mark and placed into the vocational fields by the ministry of national education. If a student's family has an occupation related to the vocational fields in the school, at the request of the family and student, the student can start studying at the vocational field directly. If a student cannot work at the field he has chosen because of the health problems, that students again can make a choice for the vocational fields which have enough quota.

## The Second Year (10<sup>th</sup> Grade) and the Process of Vocational Branches' Choice

Let us assume a student who wants to study at Machine Technology Department which is one of the six vocational departments of AfyonMTAL. Our student has completed the 9th grade which consists of the general common lessons and a are ready now to start studying at Machine Technology Department. At this grade (10th), in a week, students have 29 hours common lessons and 14 hours vocational lessons both in theory and practice.

LESSONS		10th Grade
COMMON LESSONS	Turkish Language and Expression	2
	Turkish Literature	3
	Religion and Morals	1
	History	2
	Geography	2
	Mathematics	6
	Physics	2
	Chemistry	2
	Biology	3
	English	4
	Physical Education	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>29</b>
VOCATIONAL FIELD LESSONS	Machine Technical Design	6
	Basic Manufacturing Processes	8

*10<sup>th</sup> Grade Weekly Lesson Schedule*

Students' vocational field lessons are planned according to work based method. The examples that students may encounter in labour market and workplaces are presented in the workshops of the school. The workshops of our school are equipped with the tools and machines which are used in real life. For this reason the students are trained in the workshops as in real life atmosphere and they learn by practising more.



*Training of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in Machine Technology Workshop*

The student who completes the 10th grade successfully can start to choose a branch of the vocational field.

Fields	2015-2016 School Year Vocational Branches
Machine Technology Department	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Computer Assisted Machine Design</li> <li>2. Computer Assisted Manufacturing Branch</li> <li>3. Maintenance and Repairs Branch</li> </ol>
Automotive Department	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Automotive Electromechanic Branch</li> </ol>

*Samples of the fields and branches in our school*

## The Third Year (11<sup>th</sup> Grade) of Vocational High School

Now our sample student can start training at the branch of Computer-Aided Machine Design. This branch is the branch where the projects are designed by computers. The student has 16 hours general subject lessons in a week and 22 hours vocational lessons by practising in workshops. This shows the importance of *work based training* in the school because the students are always in workshops and use theory in practice. The students also can find the opportunity to practice for the school manufacturing service in the workshops and to earn money.

	Lessons	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
General School Lessons	Turkish Language and Expression	2
	Turkish Literature	3
	Religion and Morals	1
	History	2
	Philosophy	2
	English	4
	Physical Education	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>
Lessons of the Vocational Branch	Machine Elements and Mechanisms	22
	Descriptive Geometry	
	Solid Modelling and Animation	

11<sup>th</sup> Grade Weekly Lesson Schedule

## The Fourth Year (12<sup>th</sup> Grade) and Internship Period

This year is the last year of the students' training in the school. At this year, students do internship 3 days in a week and continue to have general school lessons in other days (this system is inspired by German Dual System and integrated into Turkish Vocational Education System).

	Lessons	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
General School Lessons	Turkish Language and Expression	2
	Turkish Literature	3
	Religion and Morals	1
	English	4
	Traffic and First Aid	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>
Lessons of the Vocational Branch	Skill Training in Workplaces	24
	Serial Production System and Mechanisms	4

12<sup>th</sup> Grade Weekly Lesson Schedule

In the last year (12th Grade) the students find opportunities to practice internship in industrial workplaces and check their training in theory and practice. The students are supervised by technical teachers and masters in the workplaces. This is the process of the first step to the carrier.



*Student training in an industrial workplace*

During the internship, students get the salary which is 30% of minimum wage. Insurance premium is paid by Turkish Government. At the end of the internship students have an exam which evaluates their general training. The students who are successful in this exam can graduate from our school.

### **Graduation and getting into job**

The student who completes all the processes mentioned above is now a graduate and has the following rights:

- To receive the Vocational High School Diploma;
- To take advantage of transition to Vocational Colleges without any examination;
- To have the same rights as other high school students in order to have the university entrance exam;

In addition to this

- According to Law No. 3795 title they can be employed as technician;
- They can establish a workplace with the diploma of the vocational field if they pass the mastership examination;
- Provided that they improve themselves, they can be employed in the place where they do internship;
- They can be employed by the system of E-MEZUN which is carried out by the Ministry of National Education;
- They have the opportunity to find job easily since they are registered in İŞKUR ( a platform for job seekers).

## THE PROCESS OF NON-FORMA EDUCATION AT AFYONMTAL

One of the most important problems of employment is having no jobs. Although the firms have difficulty in finding quality manpower, there is unskilled labour more than ever in Turkey.

In this context; with aim of bringing a solution to unemployment problem which occurs for the reason of demand and supply gap, UMEM-Beceri 10 Project (Specialized Vocational Courses) has started.

UMEM courses have been implemented with the development of Beceri 10 Project on 23rd June 2010 by the cooperation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, General Directorate of Turkey Employment Association, the Ministry of National Education and Turkish Union of Chambers and Exchange Commodities.

AfyonMTAL is a Project school in this Project and has offer UMEM courses to provide jobs for the young people since 2011.

Thanks to this project, Chamber of Commerce and Industry determines the jobs and staff to be needed. This information is provided to İŞKUR (a platform for job seekers). An Education program is arranged in the system of İŞKUR. AfyonMTAL is the place where this education programs will be carried on. The participants of the courses are educated in theory and practise for 3 months. After finishing this course, the participants start doing internship for 3 months. The people who show achievement are employed by Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The advantages of UMEM Project:

- The trainees get 25 Turkish Lira for a day during the theoretical education and 38,48 TL for a day during the internship.
- General Health Insurance is provided and paid by Turkish Government.
- The firms which employ the trainees exempt from employer's national insurance contribution taxes for 3 years.

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## Conclusions

The Work-based Training (WBT) project deals with an increasingly relevant theme within the public debate and among policy makers' concerns: the school to work transition. The current economic crisis has heavily hit the youth population making even more difficult for them to successfully enter the labour market. Youth unemployment has grown in every country and in some national contexts it now hits some third of the population under 30 year old. In this dramatic scenario, it is evident how policies aimed to improve the school to work transition become essential for the future of next generations.

This research sought to analyze the school to work transition in the partner countries highlighting, in particular, which are the emerging initiatives and best practices developed in the various local contexts to make the school to work transition easier and faster. The identified initiatives and best practices are particularly useful as they ideally are the object of a mutual exchange between the partners countries and beyond.

Research activities carried out by partners suggest that this form of education can meet the twin goals of improving individuals' employability and increasing economic competitiveness. Creating opportunities for high-quality work-based training thus lies at the heart of the current European education and training policies. Despite these commitments, the supply of work-based training/learning in EU continues to be under-developed. The picture varies greatly by country and efforts are needed to invest in expanding the offer of work-based training in countries where opportunities for this type of learning remain very limited.

A lack of workplace experience and the related skills and competences is one of the factors contributing to the "skill gap" in the EU today. While 5.6 million<sup>24</sup> young people in the EU suffer the consequences of unemployment, 36% of employers' report that they struggle to find new recruits with skills they need. Something is clearly wrong. The need to identify, adapt and adopt practices which can tackle this skills gap is urgent.

Part of the solution can be found in high quality vocational education and training systems, in which the active participation of employers and a strong element of work-based training/learning facilitate young people's transition to work by providing the knowledge, skills and competences which they need for a successful first step into the labour market. Countries with strong and attractive VET systems, and notably those with well-established apprenticeship systems, tend overall to perform better in terms of youth employment.

Country specific recommendations<sup>25</sup> related to workforce skills and competences and VET highlight the need for reforms to better connect VET and labour markets, strengthen the relevance of VET and support transition from school to work.

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<sup>24</sup> Eurostat, Unemployment Statistics, April 2014

<sup>25</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm)

The school system and labour market policies are two key sides of the school to work transition. Concerning the educational system, the exit from mandatory school is generally between 16 and 18 years old. With the exception of Portugal, full-time mandatory education is at 16 in all other countries.

In terms of legislative competence, but especially for operative structures, in all partners countries, it emerges the importance of local institutions. At least partially, legislative competence is gradually devolved to local authorities and competent bodies. This devolution trend doesn't stop from designing guidelines and action plans setting the frame for the various local experiences. The picture emerging defines legislation, policies and strategies present everywhere in the partners countries.

However, structural changes are needed to develop high-quality work-based training/learning, involving long-term commitment by employers and policymakers. The benefits for individuals, enterprises and indeed society at large are significant. In parallel to such on-going reforms, immediate results can also be obtained by investing in other forms of work-based training/learning, notably on-the-job-traineeships, onsite labs and workshops in schools, and real life project assignments which all increase the relevance and quality of vocational education and training and support a smooth transition from learning to work. Success requires the active commitment and expertise of not only policymakers, notably those responsible for education and training and for employment / labour market policy, but also – crucially – of social partners. Effective collaboration by a wide diversity of stakeholders is needed to put into practice three key components:

1. **Governance.** Good work-based training/learning governance is the basis for a successful system. It requires effective collaboration and strong commitment by a wide diversity of stakeholders, together with a clear definition of their roles and responsibilities.
2. **Quality.** Both the qualification gained and the learning process itself should be of high quality to exploit the full potential of WBT/WBL and ensure it is recognised as a valuable learning pathway, transferable across borders.
3. **Partnerships.** Effective partnerships between VET schools / institutions and companies are fundamental to successful WBT/WBL.

This Research is intended, therefore, as a tool for VET practitioners and policymakers working on modernising and reforming VET systems. The diverse country examples it contains useful information on key components for successful work-based training/learning. It is hoped that the Research will help encourage more and better work-based training/learning by highlighting successful practices and policies in diverse settings.

## Abbreviations

EAfA – European Alliance for Apprenticeships

EQF – European Qualification Framework

ILO – International Labour Organization

IVET – Initial Vocational Education and Training

NEETS – Young People Not (engaged) in Education, Employment or Training

NQF – National Qualification Framework

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

VET – Vocational Education and Training

WBL – Work-based learning

WBT – Work-based training

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