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Cedefop assists the European Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational education and training, through exchanges of information and the comparison of experience on issues of common interest to the Member States.

Cedefop is a link between research, policy and practice by helping policy-makers and practitioners, at all levels in the European Union, to have a clearer understanding of developments in vocational education and training and so help them draw conclusions for future action. It stimulates scientists and researchers to identify trends and future questions.

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- facilitating new ways of learning for a changing society;
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- improving European understanding and transparency.

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The opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the position of Cedefop. The *European Vocational Training Journal* gives protagonists the opportunity to present analyses and various, at times, contradictory points of view. The Journal wishes to contribute to critical debate on the future of vocational training at a European level.

Interested in writing an article ... see page 80



Editorial

The debate on the need for vocational education and training systems to change has been settled and has moved on to what, not whether, changes need to be made.

This issue of the European journal looks at some of the key policy questions about the direction that reform of vocational education and training should take. But to contribute to the debate, in this issue, policy questions are set alongside the history of the development of vocational education and training policy in Europe and against the emergent findings of some important research on future skills needs.

The widespread consensus on the need for change - which incorporates policy-makers, practitioners and researchers from across the EU - is significant and valuable. It facilitates debate and the exchange of ideas and, importantly, encourages an openness to ideas.

But change is not new for vocational education and training systems and to think so is a misconception. Vocational education and training systems have proved very dynamic over the last decades as shown in the article (the first in a two-part series) "Political and legal framework for the development of training policy in the European Union" by Steve Bainbridge and Julie Murray. The article maps out the development of vocational education and training policy from the Treaty of Rome in 1957, to the introduction of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It shows how, in response to the challenges of rising unemployment, social exclusion and technological change, vocational education and training became an important tool of economic and social policy. The historical perspective the article gives, can provide useful insights and lessons for future policy development.

After examining the past the journal looks at the policy questions under consideration today in the face of ever quickening economic, social and technological change, by reproducing the "Berlin Memorandum on the Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training Guidelines

for the creation of a dual, plural and modular (DPM) system of lifelong learning" by the advisory committee of the Berlin Senate's Department of Labour Vocational Education and Training and Women's Affairs. The memorandum shows that even the widely admired and respected German vocational education and training system must change if it is to preserve its tradition for excellence and high standards. But the memorandum points out that the dilemma lies in retaining the strengths of the system while introducing necessary reforms.

The memorandum is followed by a contribution by an international working group of employers organisations from seven EU countries, "In search of quality in schools". It is interesting for a number of reasons. It reflects the consensus across the EU on the need for reform and the strong measure of concern felt by employers - as one of the major investors in the development and use of skills - about the direction that reform should take. And although its focus is on the general education system, the issues raised underline the importance of not treating vocational education and training in isolation from other parts of the learning framework. This is a point brought out in another interesting policy paper (not reproduced here) by the employers group UNICE¹. The journal has invited the European Trade Union Congress (ETUC) to express their views.

The article by Senker et al "Working to learn: a holistic approach to young people's education and training" proposes a direction for vocational education and training in the UK. It examines the experience of a system that has undergone enormous transition in recent years. Despite the scope of change undertaken in the UK, the article points to some of the fundamental weaknesses that still remain. In doing so, the article illustrates some of the differences between the stated aims and intentions of reforms and the reality of the results. This underlines the importance of the effectiveness of institutions and instruments for implementing policy. It emphasises that the dimension of how,

1) UNICE (2000): For education and training policies which foster competitiveness and employment, UNICE's seven priorities, Brussels.



not only what, change is needed has to be integrated into the debate.

Finally the journal looks at a contribution to vocational education and training for the low-skilled with a collection of three articles, by Eugenia Kazamaki Ottersten and Hilary Steedman “Low-skilled people on the European Labour market: towards a minimum learning platform?”, Arthur Schneeberger “The concept of a minimum learning platform educational contents and methods for improving the low-skilled” and Roberto Carneiro “Achieving a minimum learning platform for all”. These articles debate the initial findings of the New job skills and the low-skilled (Newskills) project, which suggests that the best policy to help low-skilled workers might be to reduce the number of them

entering the labour market. The project also explores the idea of a ‘minimum learning platform’ - a range of skills including qualities required to be effective in the workplace and to learn there and elsewhere to develop in employment and society - whose core might be adopted in Europe as a goal for all its citizens.

The debate on the direction of vocational education training policy is an important one. It must be an informed debate so that the decisions taken can be soundly-based and be understood. It is hoped that this issue of the journal will be seen as a contribution to that process.

Steve Bainbridge
Editor in chief



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Political and legal framework for the development of training policy in the European Union

Part I - From the Treaty of Rome to the Treaty of Maastricht

Introduction

The vocational training policy framework examined comprises the European *acquis communautaire*, which is the body of community law which places obligations on Member States or individuals in respect of vocational training. In this article the *acquis* is interpreted in a broad sense to include:

- (a) European Community legal instruments – regulations, directives, decisions and recommendations;
- (b) judgements of the European Court of Justice;
- (c) non-binding policy statements – conclusions and resolutions of the Council of Ministers – communications and white and green papers from the European Commission and joint opinions of the social partners.

This article examines the development of the policy framework from the perspective of successive treaty articles directly relating to vocational training policy. It does not cover those articles in the treaties, or the policy developments concerning the European Social Fund.

Over the period 1957 to 1992, economic and social change steadily raised the profile and importance of vocational training. The policy framework in the EU has been adapted on many occasions to take account of changing circumstances and has supported the development of vocational training as a key instrument of employment and active labour market policy.

The article shows how the policy framework established by the European *acquis* has supported the development of vocational training principally in two ways. Firstly, it has encouraged debate among Member States enabling national issues to be discussed more widely and areas of common interest to be identified. In this way, the European Union has acted as an important reference point for the development of national vocational training policies. Secondly, various initiatives and programmes over the years have supported practical measures, including pilot projects and exchanges of information and people. These have facilitated cooperation between many different parties throughout Europe in seeking to improve vocational training.

The framework for the common vocational training policy of the Treaty of



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This is the first of two articles looking at the development and implementation of the vocational training policy framework in the European Union, from the founding of the European Economic Community under the Treaty of Rome in 1957 to the Treaty on European Union signed at Amsterdam which came into force in May 1999.

This article looks at the period covering the common vocational training policy established under the Treaty of Rome up until its replacement by the Treaty on European Union agreed at Maastricht in 1992, which introduced a Community vocational training policy. The period from 1992 to the present will be considered on the second article which will be published in the next issue of the European Journal.



“(...) the common vocational training policy of the Treaty of Rome was established in a legally binding decision (...)”

“From the political perspective, the common vocational training policy was to involve close and varied cooperation among Member States. It was defined as coherent and progressive action to be carried out at both Member State and European level to implement (...) the 1963 decision.”

“(...) the common vocational training policy was not the same as common policies in other areas, for example, in agriculture, transport or competition. (...) In the area of vocational training, efforts were to focus not on the structure or organisation of vocational training but on bringing about a convergence of standards, in terms of qualifications, certificates and examinations.”

Rome was established in a legally binding decision in 1963¹. It was subsequently adapted over the years through non-legally binding policy statements, which as well as giving political direction, provided for some practical measures to be funded. Despite not having legal force, the policy statements and the measures they introduced were effective because they received firm political backing from the Member States at a senior level.

However, in the early 1980s, it was agreed to fund European Union action, in respect of vocational training as well as in other areas, only through legally-binding instruments. This, together with European Court of Justice decisions, led to concern among Member States over the extent of Community influence over national education and vocational training policy. In consequence, the common vocational training policy of the Treaty of Rome was changed in 1992 to a Community vocational training policy to support and supplement national actions, so making explicit what was implicit before, that responsibility for the content and structure of vocational training rests with the Member States.

The above developments are mapped out in this article. It also illustrates how the social partners have exercised growing influence over the development of policy and examines the contribution of vocational training to the free movement of workers.

The Treaty of Rome: a common vocational training policy

As part of its social provisions under the Treaty of Rome to establish the European Economic Community, Article 128 stated that the Council of Ministers shall lay down:

...general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market.

These were agreed in the Council Decision of 2 April 1963¹ laying down general principles for implementing a common

vocational training policy (**see Box**). The 1963 decision set out the types of cooperation envisaged and, despite subsequent changes to the Treaty, it remains in force.

From the political perspective, the common vocational training policy was to involve close and varied cooperation among Member States. It was defined as coherent and progressive action to be carried out at both Member State and European level to implement the ten principles in the 1963 decision.

The decision provided for various types of cooperation to implement the principles, including studies and research, exchanges of information and experience. A certain degree of harmonisation was also foreseen. The eighth principle stated that a common vocational training policy must be framed to enable levels of training to be progressively harmonised, with a view to the mutual recognition of qualifications. However, cooperation was not to be limited to all the Member States acting at the same time over the same issues. The decision encourages the European Commission to conclude multilateral or bilateral agreements, should the occasion arise.

Responsibility for implementing the principles lay with both the Member States and the European Commission. But the decision made no clear demarcation of responsibility between them as to how the principles should be implemented. Although it defined the areas covered by the common vocational training policy, namely training for all young people and adults who might be, or are already, employed in posts up to supervisory level, it did not define vocational training.

However, the common vocational training policy was not the same as common policies in other areas, for example, in agriculture, transport or competition. In these latter areas, the decision-making powers at European level – also known as Community competence – were extensive, and, as appropriate, Member States were obliged to change national systems or arrangements to comply. In the area of vocational training, efforts were to focus not on the structure or organisation of vocational training but on bringing about a convergence of standards, in



terms of qualifications, certificates and examinations.

Implementing the common vocational training policy

Taking the 1963 decision as the policy framework, implementation began with the institutionalisation of the role of the social partners alongside the Member States in the development of policy, with the setting up of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training² (ACVT), in December 1963, to give opinions on questions of general importance or of principle concerning vocational training. This was followed by a European Commission recommendation initiating a reporting procedure to exchange information and experience on vocational guidance³. Work was also carried out on harmonising training levels to promote free movement of workers, and, in 1970, the Council adopted a recommendation on the European vocational profile for the training of skilled machine tool workers⁴. However, the European Commission concluded in 1971⁵ that work undertaken following the 1963 decision had not yielded the expected results. The reasons cited were a lack of experience in methods to turn abstract principles into working projects, insufficient distinction between short and long-term projects and inadequate resources.

The era of resolutions

From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, implementation of the common vocational training policy was characterised by a series of non-binding resolutions by the Council of Ministers (the approach was different in areas concerning the free movement of workers which is discussed later). These resolutions established the policy framework, setting out the key policy areas in which cooperation should take place. They acted as reference points for the development of national policies by reflecting the major economic and social debates in which vocational training had a role. They also outlined various measures to implement the policy framework and, as appropriate, indicated the

action to be taken at European level and to be carried out by the Member States. By adapting the 1963 principles to modern needs, the resolutions developed vocational training into a more sophisticated instrument of labour market policy, as well as a tool for promoting social aims.

Following the 1971 guidelines calling for a renewed effort in vocational training, the first resolution was agreed in 1974⁶. It reinforced the importance of the common vocational training policy and the progressive attainment of its objectives. It provided for the establishment of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (commonly known by its French acronym 'Cedefop'). Set up in 1975⁷, the centre was to provide technical expertise and information on vocational training, compile and distribute documentation, stimulate research and work on the approximation of training standards to promote the free movement of workers.

Economic and social change in the 1970s also encouraged the use of vocational training to realise social aims by targeting measures at specific groups.

The first group to be targeted for special help was handicapped people in 1974⁸. The next was young people. The Council introduced a range of measures based on two resolutions, one in 1976⁹ to improve the transition from school to working life and another in 1979¹⁰ on linking work and training for young people.

Vocational training was also developed as an instrument for promoting equal opportunities. The equal treatment directive in 1976¹¹ required Member States to ensure access to vocational guidance and vocational training without discrimination on the grounds of sex. In recognising that equality of opportunity for access to training is essential if equality of opportunity in employment is to be a reality, it defined a role for vocational training in creating a more equal society.

The problem of rising unemployment by the early 1980s affected all age groups. Long-term unemployment, in particular, was increasing substantially (by the mid-1980s over half of the unemployed had been out of work for over a year). These difficulties raised expectations about the

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“In response to the challenges posed by change over the years, the Member States had pooled their experience. Benefiting from the wider European debate, they agreed resolutions that implemented and developed the common vocational training policy through a framework that was not legally binding, but which had strong political backing. In this way, the European level became established as a reference point for the development of national vocational training policies.”

“While the European Union acted as a reference point, Member States retained freedom to decide how to implement the common vocational training policy and kept control over the structure, content and organisation of vocational training in their own countries.”

role of vocational training as an instrument of labour market and employment policy. Vocational training was seen as having a central role in improving the match between the demand for and supply of labour, helping people who were long-term unemployed and, as a new role, promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The early 1980s were also marked by a growing awareness of the impact of new technology as a major driving force of change. In a resolution in 1983¹², the Council accorded a major role to vocational training in equipping workers with the capacity to adapt to changes brought about by new technology, an adaptation essential not only to keep down unemployment but also to exploit the economic potential of new technology and encourage its widespread implementation.

In July 1983, the Council updated the common vocational training policy framework through a resolution on vocational training policies in the 1980s¹³. Its aim was to strengthen the implementation of the common vocational training policy and it outlined the strategic role of vocational training which was to be developed as:

- (a) an instrument of active employment policy to promote economic and social development and adjustment to the new structure of the labour market;
- (b) a means of ensuring that young people are properly prepared for working life and their responsibilities as adults;
- (c) an instrument for promoting equal opportunities for all workers as regards access to the labour market.

The resolution reflected the way in which economic and social change during the 20 years after the decision laying down the principles for the implementation of the common vocational training policy had significantly altered the profile and importance of vocational training. It was now seen as strategic to the achievement of both economic and social aims.

In response to the challenges posed by change over the years, the Member States had pooled their experience. Benefiting from the wider European debate, they

agreed resolutions that implemented and developed the common vocational training policy through a framework that was not legally binding, but which had strong political backing.

In this way, the European level became established as a reference point for the development of national vocational training policies. This role was reinforced by the European Council which in a resolution in July 1983 committed Member States to ensuring that all young people who wished, especially those without qualifications, could benefit from a six-month or, if possible, a one-year full-time basic training programme, work experience, or a combination of the two.

While the European Union acted as a reference point, Member States retained freedom to decide how to implement the common vocational training policy and kept control over the structure, content and organisation of vocational training in their own countries. The resolutions, as appropriate, distinguished between action at European and Member State levels. Furthermore, the 1983 resolution emphasised the need for flexibility in the implementation of policies at European level and the need to respect the diversity of national systems. Although there was cooperation in areas of common interest, it was not seen as leading to vocational training systems becoming more alike, but rather as Member States approaching similar problems in different ways.

The resolutions were innovative in introducing new forms of cooperation, which, over the years, had deepened and widened. They incorporated reporting procedures to analyse the experience of Member States in particular areas, including study visits for specialists and workshops for teachers and trainers of teachers, experimentation through pilot projects, joint undertaking of research, networks, cooperation over statistics, exchanges of information and experience and the establishment of technical expertise in Cedefop. Cooperation, therefore, was not just at the policy-making level and between government representatives, but also between researchers and practitioners, directly involving those most closely concerned with the problems identified.



However, the development and implementation of the common vocational training policy through non-legally binding resolutions, backed up by commitments at a senior political level, changed in the mid-1980s, following an agreement between the European Communities' institutions that European funding should be sanctioned by a legal instrument based on the Treaty. This change was to have important repercussions.

The age of the action programme

During the period 1986 to 1991, a number of European vocational training action programmes were established through legally-binding decisions based (but not always exclusively) on Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome. Each programme was concerned with a specific aspect of the common vocational training policy, developing the role of vocational training in adapting to change (Comett I & II and, 1986¹⁴ and 1989¹⁵, and Eurotecnet, 1990¹⁶), supporting young people (Petra I and II, 1987¹⁷ and 1991¹⁸), improving continuing training (Force, 1990¹⁹) promoting cooperation in higher education (Erasmus, 1987²⁰), language learning (Lingua, 1990²¹) and support for people with disabilities (Helios I and II, 1988²² and 1993²³).

The action programmes built upon well-established methods of cooperation – pilot projects, networks, exchange programmes and research. Cooperation continued at both policy-making and practitioner levels.

However, the requirement to have legal instruments to fund Community actions led to differences, not over the types of cooperation, but over the definition of vocational training and consequently over the extent of EU competence over the development of national policies.

Developments leading to a treaty change

Until the action programmes, the only legally-binding instrument based on Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome was the 1963 decision setting out the principles for the implementation of the common vocational training policy and the estab-

lishment and rules of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training. For an instrument to be agreed under Article 128, only a simple majority of the Council was required. Consultation with the European Parliament was not mandatory.

The Comett decision, establishing the first action programme, was adopted in 1986 under Articles 128 and 235 – the 'catch-all' article enabling action to be taken where specific treaty articles did not exist. Adding Article 235 required unanimity in the Council, after consulting the European Parliament, to agree to the proposal. This dual legal base process was subsequently used to agree the Erasmus in 1987. However, the European Commission's proposal to amend the Erasmus programme in 1989²⁴ proved problematic, not because of its measures, but because it was based only on Article 128, dropping the additional reference to Article 235 which had been used to adopt the original programme. The Council added Article 235, but this was contested by the European Commission in a case before the European Court of Justice (ECJ)²⁵.

The Erasmus case revealed sharp differences between Member States and the European Commission over the extent of Community competence in the area of vocational training. Member States were concerned about the possibility of Article 128 being used to introduce, by a simple majority of the Council, legal obligations to implement the common vocational training policy. Furthermore, they were concerned over the extension of the policy into education, as the Erasmus programme dealt with university exchanges.

The ECJ decided that it was not necessary to add Article 235. Referring to earlier judgements, the ECJ concluded that Article 128 did provide for legal measures that could impose corresponding obligations of cooperation on the Member States, including those that might require changes to the organisation of their education and vocational training systems. The ECJ also stated that, for the most part, higher education came under the remit of a common vocational training policy, as education which prepares for a particular profession, trade or employment is vocational training, and, in general, university education fulfils these conditions.

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“The [ECJ] judgement interpreted Article 128 and the 1963 decision in a way which, to the Member States, extended the scope for action at the European level in the areas of education and vocational training. (...) Alongside what they saw as a weakening of their position, the Member States became increasingly concerned over the prospect of a legally-binding European-wide instrument on access to vocational training.”

“The debate was not about the need for action at European level in vocational training, but rather about the type of action which was appropriate. The Member States had seen the European role in vocational training as a complementary one. However, the European Community’s goal was to act in the best interests of the single market, which could have involved regulation in respect of vocational training.”

The judgement interpreted Article 128 and the 1963 decision in a way which, to the Member States, extended the scope for action at the European level in the areas of education and vocational training. This was of concern to them since the Council of Ministers in 1974 had stated that cooperation in education must make allowance for the traditions of each country and the diversity of their respective policies and systems. Vocational training resolutions over the years had also distinguished between actions at Member State and European levels. In addition, the action programmes contained references to the need for action at European level to respect the diversity of custom and practice and the powers of national law. However, while these distinctions, which were such an important part of policy in the past, might not be ignored, they now appeared weaker and likely to have less influence on shaping future action by the European Union.

Alongside what they saw as a weakening of their position, the Member States became increasingly concerned over the prospect of a legally-binding European-wide instrument on access to vocational training. These concerns were fuelled by the Social Charter of Fundamental Workers’ Rights adopted during the French presidency in 1989, which was a non-binding document listing a number of ‘rights’ for workers²⁶. It included the right of access to vocational training throughout working life and proposed setting up continuing training systems providing for training leave. The possibility of a proposal for a legally-binding instrument on access to vocational training introducing statutory entitlements to training leave – which if proposed under Article 128 would require only a simple majority in the Council to be adopted – led to considerable unease and intense political debate.

The debate was not about the need for action at European level in vocational training, but rather about the type of action which was appropriate. The Member States had seen the European role in vocational training as a complementary one. However, the European Community’s goal was to act in the best interests of the single market, which could have involved regulation in respect of vocational training.

On one hand, there were grounds for strengthening the role of the European level in vocational training policy. Following the Single European Act of 1986 and the drive to complete the single market by the end of 1992, the pace of European integration had quickened. The completion of the single market was an objective shared by all and Member States accepted that vocational training was important to the single market. The economic and social changes that had encouraged closer cooperation in the area of vocational training, were acting as a force for the creation of the single market, but were also being speeded up by it. Technological change required higher skill levels generally, and a European Union-wide entitlement to training leave would ensure that even those unlikely to receive vocational training would have greater access to it.

On the other hand, particularly from the perspective of Member States, the key principle of subsidiarity – that the European level should act only where objectives could not adequately be achieved at national or local levels – and whether action in this area was desirable at European level (even though it was just a possibility), irrespective of the degree of support for any such proposal, was critical.

A number of factors needed to be taken into account. One was the impact on existing national arrangements. There was entitlement to training leave in many Member States, but arrangements were varied and not universal. The problem, however, was not one of administrative inconvenience. The organisation and systems of vocational training in the Member States reflected the different choices made over the years in the light of their differing social, economic and cultural characteristics. These, in effect, were the outcome of striking a sometimes delicate balance between a wide range of interests – of national, regional and local government, the social partners, vocational training providers, certification bodies, sector and trade associations, professional bodies and individuals – and which involved the expenditure of large sums of public and private money on vocational training. The impact on these various interests within the Member States – some of which would favour action at European



level on access while others would not – in terms, for example, of the additional cost to businesses could not be overlooked. For instance, the social partners indicated that where entitlement to training leave was a matter dealt with by collective agreement, it should remain so.

Also at stake was the question of precedent. Even if a Member State supported legally-binding action at European level on access, there would be no guarantee that future proposals in the area of vocational training would be palatable. Given that such a proposal could be adopted by a simple majority in the Council, a Member State could find itself having to implement nationally a policy it did not support. Such a precedent could also be far-reaching following the rulings of the ECJ, which had, to a considerable extent, brought higher education firmly into the remit of a common vocational training policy.

In this case, politics overruled economics. The Member States decided that, although vocational training was important to the single market, politically it was more important for them to retain full responsibility for it. Times had changed since Article 128 and the 1963 decision. The objective of close cooperation leading to the harmonisation of standards in vocational training, that had seemed appropriate for a Community of six founding Member States in 1957, was no longer suitable for a Community of 12, with more countries negotiating to join. Differences in vocational training systems and arrangements in Member States and their close attachment to them, coupled with the importance of education to their culture and the structure of their society, led Member States to conclude it was necessary to look again at the idea of a common vocational training policy and what it meant.

The Inter-Governmental Conference that opened in 1991 planned the steps towards economic and monetary union and provided Member States with the chance to revise the social chapter of the Treaty of Rome, including Article 128. They took the opportunity. The common vocational training policy was replaced by a Community vocational training policy to support and supplement activities of the

Member States under Article 127 of the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht in 1992²⁷. Action under Article 127 was to be decided in the Council by qualified majority after consultation with the European Parliament and no longer by simple majority. It was made clear that Member States were responsible for the content and organisation of vocational training, and harmonisation of their laws and regulations concerning vocational training was specifically ruled out. Education was separated from vocational training policy and was given a separate legal base in Article 126, upon which future cooperation in this area was to be based. Harmonisation in education was also ruled out.

After the Maastricht Treaty was signed, but before it came into force, a non-binding recommendation on access to continuing training was agreed in June 1993²⁸. It was the last act under the common vocational training policy.

It did not seek to regulate vocational training systems and, interestingly, made no reference to training leave. Instead, its proposals centred on enterprises, encouraging them and local and regional development authorities to regard continuing vocational training as a strategic planning tool and expenditure on it as an investment.

The recommendation in many ways anticipated the new policy of supporting and supplementing action at Member State level. In eschewing regulation and in outlining a market-oriented, 'bottom-up' policy approach to the development of continuing vocational training to complement the practical approach of its action programmes, the recommendation set the tone for future developments.

A new treaty, but not a new policy

By the changes introduced by the Maastricht Treaty, the Member States did not – and did not seek to – alter the nature of vocational training policy followed under the Treaty of Rome. They continued the approach that had characterised the common vocational training policy.

“Also at stake was the question of precedent. Even if a Member State supported legally-binding action at European level on access, there would be no guarantee that future proposals in the area of vocational training would be palatable.”

“The Member States decided that, although vocational training was important to the single market, politically it was more important for them to retain full responsibility for it. (...) The common vocational training policy was replaced by a Community vocational training policy to support and supplement activities of the Member States under Article 127 of the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht in 1992. (...) It was made clear that Member States were responsible for the content and organisation of vocational training, and harmonisation of their laws and regulations concerning vocational training was specifically ruled out.”



“By the changes introduced by the Maastricht Treaty, the Member States did not – and did not seek to – alter the nature of vocational training policy followed under the Treaty of Rome. They continued the approach that had characterised the common vocational training policy.”

“The changes had been introduced to rule out the possibility of intervention at the European level in Member States’ vocational training systems, while continuing the various forms of practical cooperation.”

“(…) the social partners contributed to the development of, first, the common and, second, the Community vocational training policy. They have increasingly influenced developments since the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986, which encouraged social dialogue at European level, through their joint opinions on issues, including vocational training”

The five aims of the Community vocational training policy in the Article 127 of the Maastricht Treaty reflected the major policy areas established under its predecessor. The changes had been introduced to rule out the possibility of intervention at the European level in Member States’ vocational training systems, while continuing the various forms of practical cooperation.

In addition to the new article on vocational training, the Maastricht Treaty included, as an annex, an agreement on social policy²⁹ (the social protocol) concluded between all Member States with the exception of the UK³⁰. The social protocol provided for contractual agreements between the social partners at EU level, which could then be implemented by the Council on a proposal from the European Commission. The social protocol was very cautious in its treatment of vocational training. Any contractual agreements between the social partners in the area of vocational training were limited to the integration of people excluded from the labour market and any such agreements were to be without prejudice to the vocational training article of the Treaty. This demonstrates that although the 11 Member States which had signed the social protocol supported a greater role for the European Union in social policy, they still wished to avoid any legally-binding proposals that might impinge upon their responsibility for the content and organisation of vocational training, as well as any proposals for harmonisation.

Vocational training and the European social dialogue

Through their role on the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training established in 1963, the social partners contributed to the development of, first, the common and, second, the Community vocational training policy. They have increasingly influenced developments since the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986, which encouraged social dialogue at European level, through their joint opinions on issues, including vocational training³¹

The joint opinions reflected the trends of economic and social change that shaped the development of training policy from the social partners’ perspective. They encouraged the use of vocational training as an instrument of active employment policy to promote adaptation to change, the integration of young people into the labour market, social inclusion and equal opportunities.

The social partners’ joint opinion of March 1987 on training and motivation, information and consultation highlighted the importance of the introduction of new technologies being accompanied by vocational training. Citing the joint opinion, the social partners were included in the committee overseeing the implementation of the Comett II programme established in 1988. This acted as a precedent for subsequent programmes – Force, Petra II and Eurotecnet.

The social partners also contributed to the development of the Community vocational training policy agreed in the Maastricht Treaty. Their joint opinion on the future role and actions of the Community in the field of education and training of July 1993 (followed by another in April 1995) drew attention to major objectives and challenges in terms of skill requirements. The social partners’ concerns – adapting to change, improving training to help integration into the labour market and bringing together the worlds of education, training and work – were all reflected in the policy aims set out in the Treaty.

The agreement on social policy (the social protocol), annexed to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 – incorporated into the Treaty negotiated at Amsterdam in 1997 – was, moreover, based almost entirely on a text jointly agreed by the social partners in October 1991. The agreement represented an important step forward as it provided for contractual agreements to be implemented through legally-binding action by the Council on the basis of a proposal from the European Commission.

As well as influencing the broad framework, the social partners have also contributed to developments in specific areas. Their joint opinion on ways of facilitating the broadest possible effective ac-



cess to vocational training opportunities in 1991 formed the basis of the access recommendation adopted in 1993, after much debate. Their joint opinion on vocational qualifications and certification of October 1992 emphasised the importance of transparency in qualifications in order for employers across Member States to understand their content. This was reflected in the Council resolution on transparency of vocational qualifications agreed in December 1992.

Vocational training and the free movement of workers

There have been a number of ways in which vocational training has been used to promote the free movement of workers. These have centred on mobility programmes and on different initiatives to enable qualifications acquired in one Member State to be used to obtain a job in another, in particular, through mutual recognition, harmonisation of training levels, comparability of qualifications and transparency.

The first exchange programme for young workers was adopted in May 1964³². Although not strictly part of the common vocational training policy, an aim of the programme was to use the opportunity of working for a period in another Member State as a means of improving the training of young people. A second programme was introduced in July 1979³³ and a third in 1984³⁴. From 1991, work placements for young people in vocational training were included in the Petra II programme and subsequently in the Leonardo da Vinci programmes³⁵.

Directives on the mutual recognition of qualifications recognise the right of people to work in an occupation in another Member State without discrimination³⁶. Many of the early directives were transitional arrangements pending mutual recognition of the relevant laws. But negotiation proved arduous (for example, the directive on toxic products took six years to bring into effect), even after the Single European Act in 1986 made it possible to obtain agreement by qualified majority voting. However, directives for the gen-

eral recognition of university qualifications and other vocational qualifications for regulated professions were adopted in 1988³⁷ and 1992³⁸.

Unlike mobility programmes and mutual recognition, the harmonisation of training levels was a specific element of the common vocational training policy included in the eighth principle of the 1963 decision. As such, its focus was on vocational training for workers up to supervisory level. In 1970, the Council adopted the recommendation on the European vocational profile for the training of skilled machine-tool workers, which was to be a reference point for the vocational training programmes and qualifications for several different occupations in this category. It comprised a lengthy list of the aspects regarded as minimum requirements to qualify for the occupations covered and even gave an overall pass mark to meet the requirements. It also listed the qualifications in each Member State which were recognised as meeting the European profile. As a recommendation, the profile was not legally binding, but there was a strong political commitment to implementing it. This approach, however, was brought into question in 1971 by the Council wanting to know how the profiles were to be updated in the light of changes. The approach was replaced in 1974 by a policy of approximating training standards – a subtle but significant shift away from the harmonisation foreseen in 1963 towards a more flexible approach.

Work on the approximation of training standards led to the decision in July 1985³⁹, on the comparability of vocational training qualifications. It set out a five-level structure as a point of reference to identify the respective levels of vocational qualifications and certificates of different countries. Use of the structure was not compulsory and comparisons were not legally binding. But although the structure helped to improve understanding of qualification systems, it was complex and unable to reflect labour market requirements owing to the pace of change. What was needed, it was argued, was more accessible information for employers and the social partners to be able to determine the suitability of someone trained in one Member States for a job in another.

“There have been a number of ways in which vocational training has been used to promote the free movement of workers. These have centred on mobility programmes and on different initiatives to enable qualifications acquired in one Member State to be used to obtain a job in another, in particular, through mutual recognition, harmonisation of training levels, comparability of qualifications and transparency.”



“Vocational training policy European level can be described as action oriented. The Community has acted as a strong reference point for the development of vocational training policy in Member States and has supported cooperation through practical action, such as pilot projects and exchanges of information and people.”

Consequently, the debate moved towards improving the ‘transparency’ of vocational qualifications.

Transparency expresses the need to make qualifications more visible and comprehensible. In December 1992⁴⁰, the Council shifted the focus from centrally-regulated approaches to the need for individuals to provide information on their vocational and training, skills, competences and experience. The Council also suggested that this information might usefully be presented in a common format.

Concluding remarks

Vocational training policy European level can be described as action oriented. The Community has acted as a strong reference point for the development of vocational training policy in Member States and has supported cooperation through practical action, such as pilot projects and exchanges of information and people.

Over the years, the policy framework established by the ten principles of the 1963 decision was adapted and redefined through various non legally-binding, but strongly supported, political statements, such as Council resolutions, and European Commission communications. The social partners also contributed increasingly to the development of the policy framework, through their joint opinions, in particular. Driven by forces of economic and social change, the policy framework supported the development of vocational training as a powerful tool of employment and active labour market policy. Important roles for vocational training were defined in improving employment prospects through facilitating adaptation to change, supporting the integration of

young people, and other groups, into the labour market and promoting equal opportunities.

The change in the treaty, and the move from a common vocational training policy to a Community policy to support and supplement activities in Member States, was an important event. The need to have a legal base for funding Community action, as well as judgements by the European Court of Justice which, in the view of Member States, extended Community competence in this area, affected and changed the nature of cooperation between the Member States and the European Community. The Member States, concerned over the prospect of Community-wide legally-binding regulation of their vocational training systems, took the opportunity to revise the Treaty. But the changes they made preserved the nature of the policy that had been pursued up until 1992 and maintained the delicate balance between their national interests and those of the Community, by ruling out harmonisation of vocational training systems and reaffirming that responsibility for their content and organisation lay with the Member States. The Maastricht Treaty, therefore, effectively continued the original policy, as witnessed by the five aims of vocational training set out in the Treaty, which, as before, identified it as an important tool of employment and active labour market policy.

Furthermore, the developments in relation to mutual recognition, harmonisation, comparability and transparency can be seen in parallel to the general development of the vocational training policy framework. The changes represent a shift way from a centralised, legislative approach towards a more user-oriented approach to promoting mobility. An approach, moreover, which takes account of national diversity.



Council Decision of 2 April 1963 laying down the principles for implementing a common vocational training policy

First principle

A common vocational training policy means a coherent and progressive common action which entails that each Member State shall draw up programmes and shall ensure that these are put into effect in accordance with the general principles contained in this decision and with the resulting measures taken to apply them.

The general principles must enable every person to receive adequate training, with due regard for freedom of choice of occupation, place of training and place of work.

These general principles must deal with the training of young persons and adults who might be or already are employed in posts up to supervisory level.

It shall be the responsibility of the Member States and the competent institutions of the Community to apply such general principles within the framework of the Treaty.

Second principle

The common vocational training policy shall have the following fundamental objectives:

- to bring about conditions that will guarantee adequate vocational training for all;
- to organise in due course suitable training facilities to supply the labour forces in the different sectors of economic activity;
- to broaden vocational training on the basis of a general education, to an extent sufficient to encourage the harmonious development of the personality and to meet requirements arising from technical progress, new methods of production and social and economic developments;
- to enable every person to acquire the technical knowledge and skill necessary to pursue a given occupation and to reach the highest possible level of training, whilst encouraging, particularly as regards young persons, intellectual and physical advancement, civic education and physical development;
- to avoid any harmful interruption either between completion of general education and commencement of vocational training or during the latter;
- to promote basic and advanced vocational training and, where appropriate, re-training, suitable for the various stages of working life;
- to offer every person, according to his inclinations and capabilities, working knowledge and experience, and by means of permanent facilities for vocational advancement, the opportunity to gain promotion or to receive instruction for a new and higher level of activity;
- to relate closely the different forms of vocational training to the various sectors of the economy so that, on the one hand, vocational training best meets both the needs of the economy and the interests of the trainees and, on the other hand, problems presented by vocational training receive the attention which they deserve in business and professional circles everywhere.

Third principle

When the common vocational training policy is put into operation, special importance shall be attached:

- to forecasts and estimates, at both national and community levels, of the quantitative and qualitative requirements of workers in the various productive activities;



- to a permanent system of information and guidance or vocational advice, for young people and adults, based on the knowledge of individual capabilities, training facilities and employment opportunities, operating in close cooperation with the productive and distributive sectors of the economy, vocational training services and schools;
- to the opportunity for every person to have recourse to the system provided for above at any time before choosing his occupation, during his vocational training and throughout his working life.

Fourth principle

In conformity with these general principles and in order to attain the objectives stated therein, the Commission may propose to the Council or to the Member States, under the Treaty, such appropriate measures as may appear to be necessary.

Moreover, in close cooperation with the Member States, the Commission shall carry out any studies and research in the field of vocational training which will ensure attainment of a common policy, in particular with a view to promoting employment facilities and the geographical and occupational mobility of workers within the Community.

Furthermore, it shall draw up a list of training facilities in the Member States and compare them with existing requirements with a view to determining what actions to recommend to the Member States, indicating an order of priority where necessary; should the occasion arise, it shall encourage the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements.

The Commission shall follow the developments of such measures, compare the results thereof and bring them to the notice of the Member States.

When carrying out the tasks assigned to it in the field of vocational training, the Commission shall be assisted by a tripartite advisory committee, whose composition and rules shall be laid down by the Council after receiving the opinion of the Commission.

Fifth principle

In order to promote a wider knowledge of all the facts and publications concerning the state and development of vocational training within the Community, and to help keep current teaching methods up to date, the Commission shall take all suitable steps to collect, distribute and exchange any useful information, literature and teaching material among the Member States. It shall ensure in particular the systematic distribution of literature relating to innovations already in use or to be introduced. For their part, the Member States shall give the Commission all the necessary help and support to carry out these various tasks and, in particular, shall provide any useful information concerning the present state and development of national systems of vocational training.

Sixth principle

In cooperation with the Member States, the Commission shall encourage such direct exchanges of experience in the field of vocational training as are likely to enable the services responsible for vocational training and specialists in such field to acquaint themselves with and study the achievements and new developments in the other countries of the Community in matters of vocational training.

Such exchanges shall be brought about in particular by means of study seminars and by programmes of visits and stays at vocational training institutions.

**Seventh principle**

The suitable training of teachers and instructors, whose numbers should be increased and whose technical and teaching skills should be developed, shall be one of the basic factors of any effective vocational training policy.

Member States shall, with the assistance of the Commission where necessary, encourage any measures which are likely to contribute to the improvement and development of such training, in particular measures to ensure a continuing adjustment to progress in the economic and technical fields.

The training of instructors recruited among specially qualified workers shall be encouraged. Harmonisation of instructor training shall be sought; all exchanges of experience and other similar appropriate means, and in particular, those mentioned in the sixth principle, may be used towards such harmonisation.

Special measures shall be taken in the Community countries to promote the basic training and advanced training of teachers and instructors for work in the less favoured regions of the Community and in developing states and territories, in particular those associated with the Community.

Eighth principle

The common vocational training policy must, in particular, be so framed as to enable levels of training to be harmonised progressively.

In cooperation with the Member States, the Commission shall, according to requirements, draw up in respect of the various occupations which call for specific training a standardised description of the basic qualifications required at various levels of training.

On this basis, harmonisation of the standards required for success in final examinations should be sought, with a view to the mutual recognition of certificates and other documents confirming completion of vocational training; the Member States and the Commission shall encourage the holding of European competitions and examinations.

Ninth principle

In order to contribute to the achievement of an overall balance between the supply of and demand for labour within the Community, and taking into account the forecasts made for this purpose, the Member States and the Commission may cooperate in taking adequate steps, in particular when drawing up suitable training programmes. Such steps and programmes must aim at the rapid training of adults and vocational retraining, taking into account the situations caused by economic expansion or recession, technological and structural changes and the special requirements of certain occupations, occupational categories or specific regions.

Tenth principle

In the application of the general principles of the common vocational training policy, particular attention shall be given to special problems concerning specific sectors of activity or specific categories of person; special measures may be taken in this respect.

Measures taken with a view to attaining the objectives of the common vocational training policy may be jointly financed.



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Berlin memorandum on the modernisation of vocational education and training Guidelines for the creation of a dual, plural and modular (DPM) system of lifelong learning

Introduction

In their Memorandum the advisory committee on vocational education and training and employment policies analyse the causes of the current situation and consider proposals put forward by various interest groups concerned with vocational education and training. They also include promising approaches from other EU countries.

The advisory committee have drawn on this information to develop seven guidelines which are intended to help the German vocational education and training system to adapt and meet the social and technological challenges of the coming decades. A summary of the Memorandum's main points follows.

Background

Traditional work spheres are disappearing altogether while new fields of employment are emerging at an ever quicker pace to keep up with the faster and faster developments in science and technology. Simple jobs of the past are giving way to skilled activities, especially in the service sector. Information and communication technologies are making inroads into nearly all industrial and service sectors. Bio- and genetic technologies in conjunc-

tion with modern information technologies are triggering unprecedented leaps in productivity. Since the 1980s enterprises have been radically restructuring in many industrialised nations in Western Europe, the United States, Latin America and East Asia in order to gain a competitive edge by capping costs, improving quality and slashing innovation cycles in times of turbulent market development. New customer orientation, diversification and specialisation of companies, short life cycles of technological products and new forms of work organisation demand - step by step - a higher degree of professionalism and greater flexibility.

In this context some fundamental questions are ubiquitous: are the forms of general education and training which have developed in Germany over the last one to two centuries still in keeping with the times? Are the ways that knowledge originates, the way it is taught, disseminated and applied, which were suited to industrial society, worth their salt in the new age of changed value-added processes? Do schools, initial vocational training, specialised institutes of higher education and universities still fit together? Are we facing the end of 'occupational' divisions and job categories (*Beruflichkeit*) and the German system of skilled labour? Does it still make sense to train people for a job, whether at academic or intermediate level, when lifelong learning is called for in al-

The 'Berlin memorandum on the modernisation of vocational education and training' is a strategic paper prepared by the advisory committee of the Berlin Senate's Department of Labour, Vocational Education and Training and Women's Affairs, in September 1999. The document pinpoints existing problems and presents approaches for addressing these shortcomings as a starting point for discussion. The Berlin Memorandum was handed over to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which plans to take the memorandum into account in its current work.



“The German education system persists in clinging to its traditional role of taking young people at the start of their career and preparing them for a lifelong occupation. Talk about systematic lifelong learning is still nothing more than empty words and growing demands for social institutions to become ‘learning organisations’ have scarcely triggered any major changes to education policy apart from isolated innovations in the form of pilot projects at company level. If we take a closer look at the development of the dual system over the last few years, it becomes apparent that the current ‘crisis’ in vocational education and training in the Federal Republic of Germany is a cumulative interlacing of two different types of dilemma, (...)”

“To escape this plight, the German vocational education and training system needs realistic prospects that stand a chance of being implemented at political level.”

most all occupations? Is a profession or occupation no longer the goal or purpose in life?

It is a logical consequence that the current form of skilled labour must break away from the Taylorist definition. A great deal of management competence has to be seen as an integral part of new skilled work. If flat organisational structures, co-operative management, teamwork and autonomous decision-making are essential features of future work organisation, then they have to be taught and trained. Vocational education and training must set out on an entirely new course. Central ideas of this kind have no place in the classical understanding of vocational education and training. Helping citizens to become mature, responsible and socially-acting members of society must be the goal of any form of education, and this concept must be at the root of every social and entrepreneurial action.

This is why the status of skilled labour will be enhanced in future and traditional boundaries between management and skilled worker levels will be abolished along with the barriers between the mainstays of education and between general and vocational education. The future belongs to the modernisation of occupational categories and to new, open and dynamic forms of skilled labour, both in the industrial and service sectors.

Individual European countries are responding to the situation with very different initiatives. Countries like Denmark and the Netherlands are coping better and better with the changes on the labour market, sharply reducing overall unemployment and youth unemployment in particular. Sweden and Finland have also achieved considerable success in recent years. All these countries have pursued appropriate skills strategies in addition to a wide range of job creation schemes. Their endeavours have led to broad consensus on an important issue: The higher the speed of technological progress and the more flexible employment conditions are, the less tenable job-related knowledge is and the more important it is for decision-makers, employers and employees to adopt a new way of thinking, increase their knowledge and skills and constantly tackle new developments.

Plea for extending the dual system. Taking Europe as the yardstick.

The German education system persists in clinging to its traditional role of taking young people at the start of their career and preparing them for a lifelong occupation. Talk about systematic lifelong learning is still nothing more than empty words and growing demands for social institutions to become ‘learning organisations’ have scarcely triggered any major changes to education policy apart from isolated innovations in the form of pilot projects at company level.

If we take a closer look at the development of the dual system over the last few years, it becomes apparent that the current ‘crisis’ in vocational education and training in the Federal Republic of Germany is a cumulative interlacing of two different types of dilemma, the cyclical and the structural crises, with the structural component deserving greater attention. It is noticeable that since the early 1990s there has been a steady overall decline in training capacities in all sectors, in prospering as well as declining branches which have had to cut back on staff, in future-oriented as well as more traditional areas. School-based vocational education courses are the only type expanding. Neither government appeals nor the increase in public funding – about 80% of training places in the new federal *Länder* are subsidised by the state – were able to alter the situation.

A number of reasons have been cited as causing the crisis in the dual system, such as inadequate adjustment of training structures to employment structures, changed recruitment patterns especially of highly innovative companies, the extension of integrative concepts of work organisation, companies treating training as a cost factor and not as an investment, the increase in the average level of qualifications and higher demands on non-job-related competences. Young people’s attitudes towards training and careers have also changed, and this, too, has led to a cut-back in dual training structures.

To escape this plight, the German vocational education and training system needs realistic prospects that stand a chance of being implemented at political level. Cer-



tainly not all the measures implemented in neighbouring countries can be automatically transferred to the German vocational education and training system. However, they provide important food for thought for the inchoate (vocational) education debate in Germany.

The committed speeches of the former Federal Head of State Roman Herzog helped the educational debate to gain broad public attention. The need for modernising the education system was also a priority in the 1998 Bundestag election campaign. Concrete steps to implement the planned reform are slow in coming, however. The SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen coalition agreement sketches a very vague outline of the new educational policy. Although it identifies important key concepts for a future educational policy, the euphoric promises of the Bundestag election campaign have now given way to the growing impression that the issues are not being addressed as energetically and broadly as they should be. It remains to be seen whether the 'Education Forum' launched by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research will fill the requirements.

Dualism, pluralism and modularism. The principles for shaping a modern system of vocational education and training in Germany and Europe.

The advisory committee on vocational training and employment policies is of the opinion that the singular assets of the German vocational education and training system should definitely be preserved. These strengths include in particular the system's exceptional ability to meet the economy's requirements at the medium qualification level. This results from the fact that in Germany vocational education and training is not concentrated at one site or one level but favours a plural provision of initial and continuing training at various learning sites. One of the main objectives of vocational education and training in Germany is to provide fully qualifying vocational qualifications in recognised occupations.

This occupational categorisation (*Berufsförmigkeit*) helps employees and employers to orient themselves on the labour market. In the case of in-company training, it saves the company the transaction costs of recruiting skilled labour. In addition to securing workers' income on the basis of collective wage agreements, it provides them with social protection of their achieved status. This makes it clear that vocational training in a state-recognised training occupation not only provides opportunities to earn a living but also to gain social status. Thus, a reform of the vocational education and training system must be based on the objective of job categorisation (*Beruflichkeit*), provided that the occupational categories are no longer based on outdated Taylorist patterns.

Another indispensable achievement which helped the German initial vocational training system to gain worldwide recognition is its dual nature. Compared with monostructural systems, the shared responsibility of the state and the economy for initial vocational training, which is summarised in the word 'dual', constitutes an outstanding quality criterion both in terms of qualifications and occupational socialisation.

This still holds true even though the hallmark 'dualism' no longer reflects the reality of the German initial vocational training system and has not done so for some time. With regard to the classical division between company and school learning sites, the training system is now complemented by extra-plant and out-of-school training, resulting in a variety of different learning sites and combinations thereof. The regulation of the system is not limited to the dual responsibility of the state and market forces either, but is characterised precisely by the fact that it takes account of the various interests of employer organisations, trade unions and trade associations in a complex bargaining process. In the past this regulation of the dual system in consensus with the social partners largely helped prevent polarisation between industrial associations and the trade unions. It helped confine the risks of market or state shortcomings, aided the networking of information resources and helped prevent blockades in implementing vocational policy decisions

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"Another indispensable achievement which helped the German initial vocational training system to gain worldwide recognition is its dual nature."



“(...) safeguard the traditional strengths of the German vocational education and training system, the advisory committee on vocational training and employment policies proposes a ‘gentle’ transformation of the vocational education and training system from its strong concentration on initial vocational training into a comprehensive ‘dual, plural and modular’ system (DPM system) of vocational training with a focus on lifelong learning. The guiding principle of the DPM system is that people assume control and responsibility for their own educational processes.”

“For the state it means it must relinquish its practice of defining and organising educational paths down to the finest detail and create new framework conditions.”

into in-company training practice. Without these complex arrangements the training system, which is based on the concept of occupations and largely financed by the private sector, would very likely have failed long ago as a result of conflicting interests.

In order to safeguard the traditional strengths of the German vocational education and training system, the advisory committee on vocational training and employment policies proposes a ‘gentle’ transformation of the vocational education and training system from its strong concentration on initial vocational training into a comprehensive ‘dual, plural and modular’ system (DPM system) of vocational training with a focus on lifelong learning. The guiding principle of the DPM system is that people assume control and responsibility for their own educational processes. These new principles do not dispel educational ideals of the past such as equal rights and opportunities and efficiency, however, but add some important components which take account of current circumstances. This certainly requires a new way of thinking on part of all concerned. Individuals must become aware of their new responsibility, accept it and understand it as an opportunity. For the state it means it must relinquish its practice of defining and organising educational paths down to the finest detail and create new framework conditions. The institutions set up by the state to provide vocational education and training must take on the challenge, to a greater extent in future, of offering information, guidance and quality assurance in addition to educational programmes.

Steps and guidelines for implementing the DPM vocational training system in Germany.

The formulation of ‘strategic fields of modernisation’ is intended as a means of identifying approaches for reforming vocational education and training. No one should expect a list of 150 steps and definite proposals specifying which items should be regulated by which legislation project. This would be somewhat premature.

With the introduction of the DPM system the following issues should be discussed.

Expansion of the dual system into a plural system of networked learning sites with the aim of promoting self-organised learning and improving regional infrastructure conditions

In practice, large enterprises in Germany in particular are in the process of reforming training ‘from the bottom up’. In view of a steady decline in the number of training places, changes are occurring in two directions: On the one hand, enterprises are taking into account the need to increase their potential flexibility in deploying their personnel by generalising the offered occupational spectrum and specialising training contents more. On the other hand, they are placing more emphasis on process orientation in training. In order to make the German dual system more attractive for enterprises once more, it would be advisable to follow this mapped course instead of trying to swim against the tide of economic interests and establish an abstract model.

In practical terms of implementation, this should mean that apart from a core of relatively stable basic qualifications, training regulations should leave enough scope for flexible training contents (concept of open, dynamic occupational profiles). Such flexibility would guarantee that within the scope of defined targets, initial vocational training would be able to meet the specific needs of individual sectors, companies and regions.

Transformation of part-time vocational schools into regional innovation, consultancy, guidance and education centres that also provide continuing training. These centres should be allowed to take on contract work and thus interlink research, work and learning

Vocational schools of the future should be able to give trainees and companies support in a consultant capacity, experimenting and developing new forms of process-oriented vocational training. Teaching should focus on interrelated knowledge and skills concerning the occupation. Interrelated occupational knowledge and skills are the basis for a



high level of expertise that is oriented towards a company's value-added chains and the technologies which are becoming a more and more integral part of them. Modernisation has to start within the vocational schools themselves. They have to restructure and provide diversified services according to their client demands, and become regional innovation centres for the craft, trade and service sectors. The best way for them to accomplish this transition is for them to cooperate more with other educational and research institutions and become innovative themselves. Remodelling vocational schools according to the Danish system of production schools is certainly one way of providing training, especially for slow learners. One further benefit of these schools is that they are able and expected to cover part of their operational costs themselves. They are thus in a position to take on activities that go far beyond the normal tasks of a school. In the dual system a production school would not only be a partner for most training enterprises but also a genuine competitor.

Recognition of dual qualifications and permeability between initial vocational training and higher education

Dual, plural and modular vocational training calls for close links between initial vocational training providers and specialised institutes of higher education and universities. This would give vocational school students the opportunity to acquire dual qualifications and thus improve their chances of transferring to tertiary education. Opening up such training paths is all the more urgent since the demand for managers with job-related qualifications is steadily increasing in all economic sectors. It would also signify a major step in achieving the goal of intensifying recent discussions on 'universalising the dual form of qualifications'. In the area of vocational education and training, vocational academies are presently the only promising counterpart to the clear structure of general education with its grammar school and subsequent studies at tertiary level. Conversely, it is only logical that specialised institutes of higher education and universities offer a feasible link to allow students to transfer easily from upper secondary vocational education to tertiary education. Proposals for integrated mas-

ter craftsman and engineering programmes in the form of dual higher education point in the right direction since precisely such a combination would be an attractive contribution towards bridging the shortage of entrepreneurs in the craft trade sector.

Full integration of support measures and programmes for the disadvantaged in initial and continuing vocational training systems. Prevention of educational poverty

The right to vocational education and training 'for everyone' constitutes an important element of dual, plural and modular vocational training. This cannot be questioned in any society that sees itself as showing solidarity with all members of the society, not even when economic conditions or regional circumstances stand in the way of achieving this aim. The Federal Republic of Germany cannot afford any form of 'educational poverty'. In a social order centred on the concept of occupations and professions, access to vocational training is the prerequisite for guaranteeing the individual an economic and social 'subsistence level', quite apart from the potential for forming a personal identity that is still attributed to a person's occupation and its significance for personal character development.

For the time being one of the greatest challenges facing vocational education and training is, therefore, to open up ways for all young people to proceed to the medium qualification level. Higher qualification requirements combined with a decline in the number of jobs for unskilled workers are endangering the employment prospects of educationally and socially disadvantaged young people more and more. It seems increasingly unlikely that disadvantaged young people can be integrated into the labour market exclusively with the help of conventional support measures. As a consequence, support and guidance policies have to be changed to ensure that all young people enjoy equal chances on the labour market. A first step in the right direction is the Federal Government's emergency programme 'Jump' which envisages pre-vocational training measures, assistance in obtaining a school leaving or training certificate, as well as bridges into employment upon comple-

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“(...) the advantages of modular training should not be ignored. If modules are developed as standardised partial competences that can be applied in various areas - at horizontal and vertical levels - it should be possible to integrate initial and continuing training.”

“(...) continuing training organisations should be required to undergo regular nationwide audits carried out by independent authorities. This would be in the best interests of training providers themselves and would pose no problems for reputable organisations in this sector.”

tion of vocational education and training. If it is to become an ongoing and effective youth promotion programme, ‘Jump’ urgently needs to be extended and the right to benefits under this programme has to be regulated by law. Only when ‘Jump’ has become an established scheme and, in the long term, become synonymous with young people’s successful entry into the labour market, will it have achieved its real purpose.

Improving access for backdoor and crosswise entrants by recognising informal learning and work experience because effective transfer of knowledge is often informal and does not always follow established routes

Systematic and conceptional field studies are required in this context to provide for an appropriate ‘modularisation within the occupational concept’. Such proposals are based on the British qualification approach and have been hotly debated in the last few years. France, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Spain have also adopted forms of modular training in their respective vocational education and training systems. In Germany a broad divergence of opinions on the modular system still reigns since the latter is based on a fundamentally different philosophy from the German vocational education and training system. These critical comments are justified and must, by all means, be taken into consideration when implementing the modular concept. Modularisation should not encourage narrow-gauge training tracks. On the other hand, the advantages of modular training should not be ignored. If modules are developed as standardised partial competences that can be applied in various areas - at horizontal and vertical levels - it should be possible to integrate initial and continuing training. Training could be designed more flexibly in this way and continuing training would become far more transparent than it is today.

A system of lifelong learning that tames rank growth in continuing training

The present concept of stocking up on learning for an entire working life is no longer in keeping with current and future requirements of work and qualifica-

tion processes. It has to be replaced by systematic lifelong learning. An important prerequisite for this is, however, that basic and interrelated knowledge for understanding the key issues of present-day society be imparted early in life, i.e. at school. In the same way basic education has to strengthen its focus on teaching methodological competences with regard to handling constantly changing technological foundations, social competences in dealing with others and personal competences based on reflection and identity.

A constantly growing demand for continuing training and the corresponding supply are impressive evidence of the new significance of continuing training. Although this variety of continuing training is welcome, it holds a number of problems as well. At present no one has an overall picture of which institutions provide respectable continuing training really. Even the Federal Labour Office - the largest client on the continuing training market - is unable to say at the moment who is offering sound courses. Regulations in this area are called for to put some order in the spectrum of training providers and make their offers more transparent. To ensure that training organisations develop into service providers offering high-quality products, individual providers and institutions should have to present a more detailed profile. When developing their offers, they should have to put more emphasis than in the past on requirement planning, quality assurance, as well as programme and curriculum development. To ensure that this happens, continuing training organisations should be required to undergo regular nationwide audits carried out by independent authorities. This would be in the best interests of training providers themselves and would pose no problems for reputable organisations in this sector. Such a ‘continuing training control association’ would be the appropriate institution to advance the development of a common certification system for all providers and institutions of continuing training. The certificates presently awarded to vocational training participants are often of very limited relevance and usability. Records of participation and performance in continuing training courses must provide clearer information and the different programmes



should be made comparable, irrespective of time and place.

Job rotation as a first step towards a system of lifelong learning

The principle of job rotation was a central component of the Danish reform of labour market policy in 1994. Job rotation was originally a labour market tool, linked to the right to engage in continuing training for up to one year. With prior consultation and the agreement of their employers, employees can take training leave for a maximum of one year. During this time they are entitled to full unemployment benefits (sometimes increased by additional payments of the employer as agreed). If the company takes on an unemployed person during this period, it receives an additional payroll subsidy. In Denmark this applies 60% of the time. This shows that job rotation is being used both as a means of training and reintegration into the workforce and also as a way of upgrading skills.

Job rotation is not a universal remedy to solve employment problems and meet the training needs of companies. It is simply an intelligent method of linking training, structural change within companies and employment policy in a positive and cost-effective way for all concerned. This tool has meanwhile reached the limits of its efficiency in Denmark. This can be explained by the fact that Denmark achieved a substantial drop in unemployment. The method no longer works since there are not enough fill-ins available and the demand of both employees and employers can no longer be met. A lot of water will pass under the bridge before Germany arrives at this point.

Further professionalisation of training staff

Professionalism on the part of vocational school teachers, occupational educationalists and trainers is one of the crucial prerequisites for restructuring vocational education and training in Germany. The qualification requirements for training personnel in the dual system have already been defined and are legally binding. Whether they are suited in their present form to meet the new demands must be examined, however. Wherever minimum standards for

vocational education and training do not exist, they must be established fast. This applies to the sensitive health and social service sector, for example. In the area of continuing training also, there is a severe disparity between specialised competence and teaching ability. Most staff are freelance. The number of full-time trainers is still small. This leads to a 'marginal professionalisation' that no longer meets today's requirements. Thus, to ensure high quality continuing training it is necessary to greatly improve the ratio of full-time staff to freelancers and to provide comprehensive training for them. One approach to improve this situation would be boosting public funding for the provision of training for specific individuals.

In principle, the training of occupational educationalists should pay greater attention to functions rather than to institutions (such as vocational schools). The professionalisation of occupational educationalists should be based on subject-related matters as well as aspects of education management, control of learning processes and personnel development. State examinations should therefore be consistently replaced by academic qualifications (such as Diplomas or MA degrees). Graduate occupational educationalists who combine vocational education with an area of occupational specialisation are better equipped to ensure the overlapping of application areas at different learning sites.

Strengthening educational clients' market opportunities by providing a sustainable foundation for a system of financing initial and continuing vocational training

The financing of vocational education and training is an old and still unsolved problem. The constantly growing demand for vocational education and training, which at present imposes different financial burdens on the individual, the state and the economy, gives rise to demands for alternatives to the current system of funding education. Initial attempts at introducing alternatives were already made in the last parliamentary term, but were not implemented because of various reservations.

As it is not very likely that levy financing will be implemented, other possibilities have to be taken into consideration. A

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“The financing of vocational education and training is an old and still unsolved problem. (...) A demand-led, instead of the present supply-led regulation of financing arrangements would be a feasible option. A training fund would have to be set up and all private and public institutions including the Federal Government, regional and local governments would pay a certain percentage of their budget into it. In addition, private saving for educational purposes would be sponsored by the state, depending on income.”



“In view of the enormous challenge to strengthen the innovative power and modernisation efforts of the economy and society by raising the potential of the present and future workforce, experts should meet to discuss these proposals and examine them for inconsistencies or conflicting interests.”

demand-led, instead of the present supply-led regulation of financing arrangements would be a feasible option. A training fund would have to be set up and all private and public institutions including the Federal Government, regional and local governments would pay a certain percentage of their budget into it. In addition, private saving for educational purposes would be sponsored by the state, depending on income. The fund would assign a credit account to every person who has completed compulsory education. The recipients would be free to use the credit account, which could also be conceived as an interest-bearing account, over their entire working life for any form of vocational education and training offered by accredited institutions. The credit itself would consist of a subsidy and a loan component. The amount of the loan would depend on the economic status of the individual (measured on the basis of current income and the household's assets, taking account of family commitments). This means that the loan component would increase in line with growing economic status, while lower-income people would be entitled to a set of fully subsidised vouchers. More affluent people would have to be content with a loan component, which they would not be obliged to make use of if they had sufficient resources of their own (e.g. from their educational savings account).

This model which, admittedly, has been presented here in a rather simplistic form would soon be accused of generating an oversized bureaucratic apparatus, inefficient in terms of organisation and implementation and, of course, of shifting decision-making powers, although this time not to the fund but to the demand side. This anticipated criticism would require detailed examination but its extent would depend on the concrete structure of such a financing system. In principle this model should basically illustrate that the development of vocational education and training into a structure permitting lifelong learning requires new financing arrangements as well.

Summary

In the light of the strategic fields described above it becomes apparent that a number of measures are needed to draw nearer to the aim of establishing a modern DPM (dual, plural and modular) vocational education and training system in Germany. The reference point where changes have to be initiated is the 1969 Vocational Education and Training Act, although important aims and provisions listed there ought to be preserved. The high aspirations, which are reflected in the term 'Vocational Education and Training Act' must again become the focus of discussion and must be systematically redeemed. The Vocational Education and Training Act offers the possibility of defining ways to identify the need for training, of structuring open and dynamic occupational fields, of re-defining the status of vocational schools through an amendment and above all, of establishing framework conditions for dual and bridging qualifications. Job rotation based on the Danish model should be regulated in labour market legislation (Social Security Code III) since it is important to structure overall training strategies for a transition period. Elements of occupational orientation and the possibility of obtaining certificates at a later stage should also be defined and implemented in this context.

In view of the enormous challenge to strengthen the innovative power and modernisation efforts of the economy and society by raising the potential of the present and future workforce, experts should meet to discuss these proposals and examine them for inconsistencies or conflicting interests. To substantiate the political debate both professionally and scientifically, it seems to be highly advisable to assign councils to the relevant federal and regional committees. Equipped with a clear mandate, these councils should develop detailed solutions to the questions touched upon. Working along these lines, the advisory board on vocational training and employment policies will continue its work and submit concrete proposals.



In search of quality in schools The employers' perspective

Introduction

The aim of this article is to contribute to the debate on quality in schools. Steps to improve the quality of national education systems have begun in the countries highlighted here. We hope this contribution to the debate will prompt further action, and we welcome the views of others. The article is divided into four sections, dealing with the why, the what, the how, and finally the who and when of school reform for the coming century. We believe that our proposals for reform are interdependent and complement each other (see table 1).

We recommend that they are implemented in a systemic vision. Emphasising some elements of the proposals at the expense of others will be less effective, and may even undermine the basic aim.

Why?

In the 20th century, developed countries succeeded in making education accessible to all and faced the challenge of adapting their schools to universal education provision without matching this with changes to the nature and organisation of schools. The challenge for education in this century is to respond to new needs, and ensure that national education systems build in incentives to improve quality continuously. Our proposals are put forward on the basis that only high quality education systems can guarantee social cohesion, progress and sustainable economic growth.

The skills and knowledge that will be required in fifty, or even ten years could be quite different from those required today. Economic trends now suggest some outlines of the landscape of the near future:

- ❑ the pace of change will be fast: knowledge and skills will quickly become out of date;
- ❑ technological change will become even more prominent in life and in work;
- ❑ globalisation of trade, and its impact on our life, is likely to become more, not less, intense;
- ❑ the skills and abilities of individuals will be the major factor in competitiveness and national prosperity, and in individuals' employability and the quality of their lives;
- ❑ labour markets will remain open, flexible and challenging.

In the coming century, schools will operate in an environment which will be altered radically by new media, advances in information and communications technologies, and new ways of supplying the demand for information and education. Schools must equip students to use new media, to choose between the information on offer and to use their knowledge to add value. Schools are no longer the main information and education source and have to compete with other education means.

There is a gap between the skills which employers will increasingly look for in

Informal working group of employers federations¹

This article reproduces the initial views of employers organizations from seven EU countries on improving the quality of primary and secondary education. The group recognizes education is a matter for national governments, but aims to contribute to the debate on quality in schools.

1) In 1999 A. Oliva, President of the School Committee of Confindustria (the Italian Employers' Organisation), invited Employers' Federations from other EU countries to set up an informal working group to look at quality in primary and secondary education in their countries. The members of this working group are

Austria, VOI: G. Riemer, E. Altrichter
Denmark, DA: L. Skanting
France, MEDEF: A. Dumont, J.P. Farrugia
Germany, BDA: D. Kluxen-Pyta
Italy, Confindustria: A. Oliva (chairman), C. Gentili, F. Paterno
Netherlands, VNO-NCW: C. Renique
United Kingdom, CBI: M. Murray

**Table 1**

Ten key messages

Fundamental reform of the education system is needed to enable schools to equip their students to flourish in the 21st century and to bridge the gap between the knowledge and competences schools teach now, and those increasingly needed for excellence and competitiveness.

Schools must renew their mission and their organisation. They must continue to provide high quality basic skills and a solid foundation of knowledge. But they must also emphasise the social and personal skills, the values of citizenship and the ability to learn throughout life, which are necessary for work, mobility and quality of life in the 21st century.

Governments need to give schools the autonomy to manage themselves. Schools need to have high expectations, to set targets, and to take responsibility for meeting them. They should be able to choose their own team of teachers and to develop strong contacts with parents, the local community, other schools and employers.

Governments also need to ensure that schools are accountable for cost and quality and to define national standards for each curriculum subject as a means of measuring school performance and as a tool for schools for their self-assessment and continuous improvement. National standards should lead to the highest standards of achievement. Governments need to set up an independent body to evaluate the quality of each school and of the system as a whole. Published information on schools' performance should be available for national benchmarking between comparable schools, and to inform students, parents, employers and government policy.

More money does not necessarily mean more quality. The priority must be to reform the management of staff, teaching methods and the organisation. Schools must make more effective use of existing resources to meet the changing needs of students and employers. Public funding of schools should be demand-led as a general principle and related to student numbers in each school.

Cooperation and competition are both needed to deliver inclusiveness and efficiency. Elements of competition - such as informed parental choice of the most appropriate school, schools choosing their own teachers, and benchmarking among comparable schools - must be introduced within a framework of public rules.

Schools should become stimulating centres of active learning, individually tailored, making full use of the potential of information and communications technology.

Schools need to ensure a balanced focus on theory and practice - on both *savoir* and *savoir-faire*. To stimulate students' curiosity, schools should help students to learn how to apply their knowledge and understanding.

Heads and teachers make the difference. They are crucial to schools' success. They must have high level qualifications - to university level or equivalent, or beyond, together with practical training and access to continuous professional development. The terms and conditions of the profession must be updated to ensure that heads and teachers have the incentives to succeed, with differentiated rewards depending on their tasks and their performance. All teachers must also recognise the importance of innovation as their role evolves more into that of a coach. Their role will often require a greater emphasis on teamwork.

Employers need to become actively involved in supporting schools to prepare their students for working life and to manage themselves more effectively - particularly through careers guidance, work experience, offering secondments, openness to placements for heads and teachers and supporting the implementation of ICT changes. Schools, parents and employers must cooperate to ensure that students make informed choices about further study and work.

their employees, and the skills schools currently equip their students with (table 2). The gap is widening. Students should be qualified to the highest standard, both to preserve and extend the cultural richness of our countries and to

strengthen the competitiveness of our economies.

Failure to meet these challenges impoverishes students and society as a whole. Students should complete their education;



none should leave early. We should expect and demand high aspirations on the part of students, teachers, parents and governments.

The quality control of teaching and learning is not adequate. Public education is thought of as 'free' for parents and students, but the community as a whole pays a lot for its education systems. In all developed countries an average of 5-6% GDP is spent on national education, including tertiary education. This leads to sizeable expenditure per student, the most appropriate measure for international comparison (see table 3). Reliable systems of accountability are needed to help ensure that schools provide value for money, and to ensure that the main cost elements (of which teacher costs are the most significant) are put under rigorous control. The ratio of students to teachers is set out in table 4.

There is clear evidence to support employers' concerns. In international surveys such as TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Survey), European results are poor compared to those from other developed countries (table 5).

What?

The fundamental mission of schools has long been to prepare their students for work, and to play a full part in society in general. This aim is unchanging, but schools need to consider what achieving that aim means today, and for the years to come. As a starting point it is worth looking at the recommendations of the 1996 UNESCO Report on Education, which are in line with employers' experience. The report concluded:

"Education must provide the maps of a complex and ever changing world and the compass to find one's way".

The report recommends that schools must ensure equal attention is paid to the four principal elements: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live with others, learning to be.

For employers, these principles mean providing students with:

Table 2

National education systems – the employers' view

Austria	<p>Although Austria is in the vanguard in terms of international expenditure on schooling and education, there is a gap between the qualifications demanded by the economy and those offered by schools. The application of market elements like quality control, school management etc. would lead to an increase in the quality of teaching and a better use of existing resources.</p> <p>Federation of Austrian Industry report 'Österreich AG' ('Austria PLC'), 1999</p>
Denmark	<p>The Achilles heel of the national education system is its lack of awareness of the world beyond the school: schools lack links with employment, and with the aims of economic growth and competitiveness.</p> <p>Danish Employers' Confederation report, 'Objectives, quality and management - demands for primary and lower secondary school', 1999</p>
France	<p>French schools provide a good level of knowledge, but do not teach students how to enhance or develop their knowledge. Traditionally, businesses relied on state education whilst bitterly criticising it ... now they have to become aware of the role they ought to play.</p> <p>MEDEF - French Employers' Movement, quoting Godet et Crozier, "Objectif Compétences", 1998 - English text by CBI</p>
Germany	<p>Schools fail to release the potential of students and even to pass on basic life skills. It costs German employers around DM 70,000 per student to prepare students for work – the preparation that schools should have completed.</p> <p>German Business Institute survey, 1999</p>
Italy	<p>Education in Italy is characterised by quantity at the expense of quality – too many curriculum subjects, too many teachers and too many schools for the numbers of students.</p> <p>Confindustria report, 'Towards the school of 2000: co-operating and competing', 1998</p>
The Netherlands	<p>Too few schools have an educational policy focused on the improvement of classroom teaching. Evaluation of innovation in schools is rare. On average, lower secondary school education meets only 64% of national curriculum targets.</p> <p>Report of the Netherlands National Inspectorate, September 1999</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Inadequate outcomes from foundation learning are of concern to all employers. The problem lies mainly with low expectations ... the vast majority of young people have the potential to achieve far more than is generally expected of them, and must be encouraged to do so.</p> <p>CBI report, 'A skills passport' 1995. The report's conclusions apply to the education systems of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland</p>



Table 3

Expenditure per student on public and private education institutions (with percentage deviations from EU 15 average) US\$ converted using ppp

1995	All levels of education **		Early childhood		Primary		Secondary	
Austria*	6763	(+37.1%)	4907	(+30.6%)	5572	(+43.2%)	7118	(+42.6%)
Denmark	5968	(+21%)	4964	(+32.1%)	5713	(+46.7%)	6247	(+25.1%)
France	5001	(+1.4%)	3242	(-13.7%)	3379	(-13.2%)	6182	(+23.8%)
Germany*	5972	(+21%)	4381	(+16.6%)	3361	(-13.6%)	6254	(+25.2%)
Italy*	5157	(+4.5%)	3316	(-11.7%)	4673	(+20%)	5348	(+7.1%)
The Netherlands	4397	(-10.9%)	3021	(-19.6%)	3191	(-18%)	4351	(-12.9%)
United Kingdom	4222	(-14.4%)	5049	(+34.4%)	3328	(-14.5%)	4246	(-15%)
Average EU 15	4934		3758		3892		4983	
US	7905	(+60.2%)	N/a		5371	(+38%)	6812	(+36.4%)
Japan	4991	(+1.5%)	2476	(-34.1%)	4065	(+4.4%)	4465	(-10.6%)

* includes only public education; ** including third level (university);

Source: OECD Education at a glance, 1998

Table 4

The ratio of students to teaching staff by level of education (with percentage deviations from EU 15 average)

1995	Early childhood		Primary		Secondary	
Austria	18.9	(+1.3%)	12.7	(-24.4%)	8.9	(-34.1%)
Denmark	13.1	(-29.8%)	11.2	(-33.3%)	11	(-18.5%)
France	24.6	(+31.9%)	19.5	(+16.1%)	13.3	(-1.5%)
Germany	23.7	(+27.1%)	20.9	(+24.4%)	15	(+11.1%)
Italy	13.9	(-25.5%)	11.2	(-33.3%)	10.2	(-24.4%)
The Netherlands	20	(+7.2%)	20	(+19%)	18.6	(+37.8%)
United Kingdom	19.1	(+2.4%)	21.3	(+26.8%)	15.6	(+15.5%)
Average EU 15	18.65		16.8		13.5	
US	21.9	(+17.4%)	16.9	(+0.6%)	16.1	(+19.2%)
Japan	17.8	(-4.5%)	19.7	(+17.2%)	15.9	(+17.8%)

Calculation based on full-time equivalents

Source: OECD Education at a glance, 1998

□ basic skills – literacy and numeracy, up to date and relevant knowledge and understanding;

□ practical skills, such as problem solving, the ability to use ICT, having a work ethic;

□ social skills, such as communication with others, working with others in a wide range of environments and cultures, foreign languages, the core values of citizenship;

□ personal skills and values including a sense of autonomy and responsibility, emotional intelligence, an entrepreneurial

attitude, the desire and capacity to learn, knowing how to apply learning, the ability to take advantage of change and the ability to assess one's own strengths and weaknesses and address them.

It is as important as ever that students leave school with a good grounding in traditional skills and knowledge: literacy, numeracy and a knowledge of the past and present world remain essential. Virtually no student should leave school without formal qualifications (see table 6). But schools must also equip students with the skills and attitudes which will help them play a full part in the community and in an increasingly globalised environment.



To meet those needs, schools must revitalise not just their aims, but also their methods. Modern education methods must be used to help pupils develop the skills set out above in an integrated way – developing several skills at once, just as they will in working life. In many schools students learn the same environment and with the same tools their parents, or even grandparents, used to prepare for a very different world. Schools should be challenging and stimulating institutions, which we believe they can be. Information and communications technology should provide a tool which can help transform them.

Learning no longer ends at the school gates. The essence of 21st century employment is the ability to learn and adapt throughout working life. Schools must teach pupils the value of lifelong learning and give them the tools and the desire to pursue it. Schools must help young people to understand their responsibility to continue learning. As set out in the 1995 EU White Paper 'Towards the Learning Society', we should aim for a learning society for which schools are the foundation and the inspiration.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) 1995 shows that a large percentage (between 25% and 50%) of the population in developed OECD countries did not reach the desired literacy level (table 7). These figures are quite worrying and underline the need both for a high quality initial education system and the importance of lifelong learning.

How?

"To create a good school, it takes a strong, skilled headteacher who understands the importance of clear leadership, committed staff and parents, high expectations of every child and above all good teaching.... in a climate in which schools are constantly challenged to compare themselves to other similar schools and adopt proven ways of raising their performance."

We set out below the key reforms we consider are needed to stimulate the process of change. Some of these changes

Table 5

TIMSS scores. Mathematical achievement for students at age 14

1995	Mean	Overall TIMSS Rating
Austria	539	12
Belgium (Flemish Community)	565	5
Bulgaria	540	11
Cyprus	474	35
Czech Republic	564	6
Denmark	502	26
Finland	N/a	N/a
France	538	13
Germany	509	23
Greece	484	32
Hungary	537	14
Ireland	527	17
Italy*	502	19
Latvia	493	29
Lithuania	477	34
Luxembourg	N/a	N/a
The Netherlands	541	9
Portugal	454	36
Romania	482	33
Slovak Republic	547	7
Slovenia	541	10
Spain	487	30
Sweden	519	22
United Kingdom	506	24
Average EU 15	513	
US	500	27
Japan	605	3
Singapore	643	1
Korea	607	2

* source and calculations: CEDE

Results of the last TIMSS test show that EU countries on average perform less well than the best Asian countries: Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

Source: OECD at a glance, 1998

Table 6

Ratio of upper secondary graduates to population at typical age of graduation

1996	
Austria	86%
Denmark	81%
France	85%
Germany	86%
Italy	79%
The Netherlands	93.9%
United Kingdom**	81%
Average EU 15	85.9%
US	72%
Japan	99%

** Source: DfEE. Data refers to the percentage of people aged 16 getting at least one GCSE in England. Source: OECD at a glance, 1998;

**Table 7**

Percentage of the population aged 16 to 65 years at the various levels of document literacy. Data drawn from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)

1994/5	IALS level 1*	IALS level 2	IALS level 3	IALS level 4
Australia	17%	28%	38%	17%
Belgium (Flemish Community)	15%	24%	43%	17%
Canada	18%	25%	32%	25%
Germany	9%	33%	40%	19%
Ireland	25%	32%	32%	12%
Netherlands	10%	26%	44%	20%
New Zealand	21%	29%	32%	18%
Sweden	6%	19%	39%	36%
United Kingdom	23%	27%	31%	19%
United States	24%	26%	31%	19%

* Levels one and two are considered insufficient to meet the demands of modern work and life. The IAL Survey was conducted by the OECD and Statistics Canada in 1994/5. It tested literacy in three different ways, targeting specifically 'prose literacy', 'document literacy' and 'quantitative literacy'. Data reported in the table refers particularly 'document literacy', i.e. to the knowledge and skills needed to locate and use information contained in various formats such as job applications, payroll forms, transport timetables, maps, tables and graphs. Austria, Denmark, France and Italy did not participate in the research.

Source OECD, Education, at a glance (1998)

and employers to make informed choices. Virtually no student should leave school without qualifications.

The use of national standards to measure performance is also important from the international perspective. International benchmarking should make educational performance more transparent, enhance co-operation and mobility. This could be particularly relevant for science subjects, for which adoption of similar standards in different countries is possible and practical.

The development of criteria to evaluate personal and social skills as well as academic achievement would be useful, although we recognise that further research would be helpful on this issue.

An independent body must evaluate school performance against national standards. It must evaluate the overall quality of the national school system, allowing comparisons with international standards. It should offer constructive advice in its evaluation of schools' performance. Within the national school system, each school should be evaluated externally against national standards. Governments and parents can then assess comparable schools and look at individual schools' progress against their past performance. Individual schools, and individual teachers, should be able to evaluate their performance and measure their progress against that of others. A culture of self-assessment, and improvement, must be encouraged. To achieve these aims effectively, the independent body for evaluation must report the results of school performance to the government and these results should be publicly available. School failure should be unacceptable; young people only have one chance at school.

Co-operation and competition

Schools' responsiveness to the needs of their students will be effectively tested through parental choice. Parental choice, based on accurate information about school achievement, rewards the schools which best meet their students' needs. This provides the necessary incentive to learn from the best, to innovate and to raise standards. Schools should both co-

"Clearly defined national standards of knowledge and competences are needed as means to measure achievement. (...) The use of national standards (...) is also important from the international perspective. International benchmarking should make educational performance more transparent, enhance co-operation and mobility."

have already started in individual European countries, but nowhere are they complete.

National standards of achievement and independent evaluation

Clearly defined national standards of knowledge and competences are needed as means to measure achievement in each national curriculum subject and provide the information schools need to evaluate their performance. National standards should lead to the highest standards of achievement; all schools must continuously set themselves targets to reach those standards. Student performance must be objectively assessed through a central exam system at each of the main stages of the school curriculum. As well as formal academic achievement, the practical skills which students need to learn should also be measured.

Governments and schools must set targets for progress on the basis of national results. An objective assessment of achievement allows governments, parents



operate and compete with each other. Schools should not be afraid of this element of competition (cum-petere means to strive together, with difference as the creative force) – this will help them become better schools. This is the sense in which we recommend competition between comparable schools to meet students' needs more effectively.

Public funding should be mainly based on student numbers and school performance. This provides the necessary financial dynamic to make parental choice a reality and creates a demand-led system. Funding should also reward the progress schools make with their students. Schools must take responsibility for their budget and cost control. If schools are to be given the responsibility for achieving targets, they need the means to do so.

Resources must be linked to results, providing the incentive to meet students' needs better. More money does not necessarily mean more quality. The priority must be to reform the management of staff, teaching methods and the organisation. Education must be able to provide incentives for better performance, both of individual schools, and of teachers and students within those schools, to create a rewarding system for each school and for its personnel.

A 21st century curriculum

A balanced curriculum can help meet students' needs by reflecting the importance of arts, scientific and technical subjects. Schools should aim to produce rounded individuals who are ready and equipped to participate fully in the wider world and understand the core obligations of citizenship. Schools must also teach the good reasons to share the fundamental values of our society, towards which schools cannot be neutral. Students must be prepared for mobility by developing their language skills and ICT competences. Businesses should make a particular contribution to the development of vocational education and to helping students move from school into work: the employers who will recruit former students must take a part in preparing them for that transition to employment.

Learning must be as individually tailored as possible, but equally prepare students for society. Students should increasingly be treated as active participants in learning, rather than passive recipients of teaching. The teacher should help students to learn autonomously. Schools should consider how, for example, they can strike a balance between teaching students and teaching them how to learn in the future. Schools should also aim to nurture and inspire students' lifelong learning, recognising that learning will continue throughout working life. Schools should encourage the curiosity of their students by emphasising the practical and functional application of their knowledge and understanding.

Schools need to provide high quality careers guidance to help students to move from school into work. Parents, schools and employers in particular should cooperate to help students make informed choices about their careers. They should encourage students to recognise that education is a good investment and emphasise their responsibilities concerning their own future.

The early years of education (nursery and primary education) are as important as the ones dedicated to secondary and higher education. Investment of financial and teaching resources should reflect that balance.

Autonomy for schools

Schools need the freedom to manage themselves and decide their teaching methods. To improve quality schools must take responsibility for continually raising their performance against national standards, towards the highest levels of achievement. Governing bodies or the relevant public authority must have the right to choose heads. Schools (heads or governing bodies) must be able to choose their teachers and reward the best teachers and remove those who have a really damaging effect on students' education. Self-management could be achieved through school governing bodies who, together with heads, are accountable to parents and to the Government for the performance of the school. Such governing bodies should represent both those directly involved with the school, and external stakeholders.

“Parental choice, based on accurate information about school achievement, rewards the schools which best meet their students' needs. This provides the necessary incentive to learn from the best, to innovate and to raise standards. Schools should both co-operate and compete with each other. Schools should not be afraid of this element of competition (...) this will help them become better schools.”



Table 8

How far has school reform developed in seven European countries? – The employers' audit

Aspect	Austria	Denmark	France
Individual outcomes from curriculum subjects measured against national standards	Partly	National objectives measured at the end of compulsory schooling. Schools required to evaluate students throughout	Yes
Uniform exam system measured externally	No	Exam systems are not measured externally, but external examiners are used	No
Independent national body to monitor and evaluate schools' performance	No	A national independent body exists to evaluate education, but not student performance	No
Autonomy of each school over management, budget, staffing and teaching	Partly. An ongoing process to increase autonomy has been in place since 1990	Local authorities have responsibility over school economy within the limits laid down in the law	No
School funding based on each pupil enrolled	Yes	Possible, as funding is decided at local level	Partly
Heads qualified to national competence standards and chosen by the school governing body through a competitive process	Yes – Heads qualified to different levels at Laender level. Process to appoint Heads through competitive process recently begun	The school board make a proposal on application. In most cases Heads have a background as a teacher	No
Teachers qualified to national competence standards and paid depending on performance and responsibilities	Teachers qualified to national standards but not paid on the basis of responsibility and performance	Teachers qualified to national competence levels but not paid totally on the basis of performance and responsibilities	Partly. Payment does not depend on performance
Quality careers guidance for students available throughout school life	Yes	Yes	No
Governing bodies with powers of strategic management, made up of those directly linked to the school and external members	No	Only parents are represented from outside the immediate school environment	Governing bodies have no real power
Strong links between education and business	Yes, particularly in the vocational school sector	Not at national level – the position varies at local level	Partly

We believe that these reforms are critical to improving quality in schools – this audit is not a judgement on the current quality of each system



Germany	Italy	The Netherlands	United Kingdom**
No	No. National objectives but no national standards	Yes*	Yes. Phased in throughout the 1990s
No	No. State exams at 14 & 18; uniform written not oral tests. Not externally measured	Only in secondary education	At 16. Exams at 7, 11 & 14 phased in throughout the 1990s
No	Yes, from 2000, but not independent. Evaluation is limited to learning levels, not to efficiency	The task of the Inspectorate, which has a certain autonomy*	Yes, since 1992
Autonomy in teaching and learning only	Yes, starting from 2000. But only for teaching and organisation, not yet staffing and budgets	Yes. Fully in secondary schools, largely in primary schools*	Yes, since 1990
Partly	No	Yes	Yes, since 1990
No	In 2001 all Heads will become managers with limited powers through a non-competitive process. Not chosen by schools	Heads chosen competitively but special standards for Heads	Heads chosen competitively. An optional national qualification for new Heads introduced in 1999
Qualification framework exists but not paid on performance	Yes but only for 20% of teachers starting from 2001, with a bonus (10-15% of salary) on external evaluation	No	No. A framework of national competence standards introduced in 1999. Plans to phase in the option of additional payment linked to performance from 2001
Partly	Partial, non-systematic, and only in secondary schools	Mainly available in secondary schools, but no quality standards	Mainly in secondary schools. Quality uneven
No	With no external stakeholders and with no real powers	Yes	Yes
No. Only Individual initiatives	Mainly for technical schools. It is not systematic	Not in primary or secondary education	Most schools have links, but the strength and quality varies

* These reforms were developed throughout the 1990s

** (description applies principally to England and Wales)



“A rigorous system of training and selection for teachers, supported by investment, is needed to equip heads and teachers for new challenges. Each teacher should be qualified to university level, or equivalent, or beyond, and should have a period of practical training in a school.”

School autonomy should allow schools flexibility in the organisation of their resources. Schools must have the freedom to make the most effective use of their buildings and other resources and open themselves to adult education and to the community in general.

Schools must have access to research and analysis on best practice in teaching and school management. Individual teachers and schools should themselves establish links to promote this aim, but they will also need to link up with university and other research bodies to make best use of the available material. Innovation should be encouraged by governments, and employers should be willing to share good practice in management and be open to placements of teachers and heads.

Schools must seek to draw lessons on best practice, innovation and guiding values from a wide range of environments, including the entrepreneurial world of business. Schools and employers should recognise that they can both learn valuable lessons from each other, and that they share an important common task in the preparation of students for working life and society.

A top quality teaching profession

Heads should be leaders of their schools, qualified for the task and with the autonomy and the responsibility to make that leadership a reality. They should be evaluated on results.

Teachers should be valued professionals with the opportunity of a career which rewards better performance, offers incentives for committed and motivated teachers and greater flexibility in teachers' employment contracts – for example, full time, part time and short term contracts.

A rigorous system of training and selection for teachers, supported by investment, is needed to equip heads and teachers for new challenges. Each teacher should be qualified to university level, or equivalent, or beyond, and should have a period of practical training in a school. In order to ensure serving teachers are up to date with professional developments, training must

be available on an ongoing basis, including training in non educational environments. Businesses can help by being open to mutual exchanges of staff. The head should take responsibility for the development of his or her staff.

Teachers must be equipped to make full use of information technologies. ICT has the potential to transform teaching methods and individual study by opening up learning to the student's control. Schools and policy makers should consider the potential for distance learning, and for developing teachers' skills, which multimedia technology offers. To make full use of these opportunities, investment must be not just in hardware and software, but in training teachers themselves how to shape learning through ICT.

Who and when?

This article sets out a broad framework for reform. It represents what the working group of seven employers' organisations believes is needed to make successful reform a reality. It requires a systemic vision in which every element is seen as important and interdependent. We hope that our suggestions, and our audit set out in table 8, can make a helpful contribution to this process.

We recognise that different countries are undertaking reform at different speeds. Within each of the seven countries, some progress has been made, but in each there is still some way to go before the systematic reform we would like is fully achieved. In order to remain competitive our countries need to make education reform a priority. The role of governments is fundamental: they must set new rules of the game to release and build on the energies and talents which are already present in our schools.

We believe that reform is a matter of urgency. We recommend that in the year 2000 each country produces an analysis of its own system. A wide consultation, which should cross national borders, would help inform this process. Employers' organisations would welcome involvement in this process at a national and international level.



Working to learn: a holistic approach to young people's education and training

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Introduction

How should the government improve the system of education and training of young people who finish their full-time education between the ages of 16 and 19, to make it better for the young people involved, better for the economy and better for society as a whole? This was the question we addressed in our 'Working to Learn' report (Evans *et al.*, 1997).

We believed that there were serious deficiencies in government policy, and that it was important for the views of employers, young people, training providers and others concerned, which have been assembled in numerous research studies, to be marshalled and brought to the attention of policy-makers. The 'Working to Learn' report summarized in this article analyses deficiencies of current policies and makes out a strong case for fundamental reform.

The British Conservative government's approach seemed to be based on the assumption that we were making gradual progress in the right direction. From this perspective, further fine-tuning was all that was needed. The Labour government in the UK has so far adopted a similar attitude. It is, indeed, introducing several major new initiatives, such as the New Deal, the University for Industry and Individual Learning Accounts. A significant development has been the establishment of a statutory right to time off for paid educational leave for 16- and 17-year-olds.

Recently, the Local Government Association, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) agreed to give a right to three years' free education to everyone under 25 (Bright, 1998). These measures include some steps in the right direction. However, these piecemeal initiatives do not represent a coherent strategy to tackle the fundamental problems afflicting work-based learning. We believe that such a strategy is needed, and present our case in this article.

We begin by outlines the reasons why we think that new proposals are needed, from the point of view both of individual young people and the national economy. Despite numerous attempts at reform, the pattern of provision remains incoherent, and international comparisons show that the quality of much of what is on offer to young entrants to the workforce in this country is inferior. Next we consider some of the major changes within the economy and the youth labour market which the development of policy has so lamentably failed to match. Many initiatives have suffered because they were predicated on too simplistic a notion of the problems requiring solution. Despite numerous attempts at the reform of education and training in Britain, the pattern of provision remains incoherent and international comparisons show the quality of much on offer to young entrants to be inferior. The ineffectiveness of policy has also partly been a consequence of conflicting visions of economic development underlying policy and resulting in confusion -

The authors of this article believe that there were serious deficiencies in education and training policy for young people between the ages of 16 and 19 in Britain. The 'Working to Learn' report, summarized in this article, analyses the deficiencies of current policies and makes out a strong case for fundamental reform.



“The ineffectiveness of policy has also partly been a consequence of conflicting visions of economic development underlying policy and resulting in confusion - one view stressing the value of a skilled workforce as the sole source of sustainable long-term competition, the other seeking the benefits for enterprise which could flow from the availability of deregulated, flexible and casualized labour.”

“Many initiatives have suffered because they were predicated on too simplistic a notion of the underlying problems that have to be solved. There is also a worrying trend of increasing narrowness of policy focus (...). Several times what were originally broad-based policy aims have become narrowed down.”

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The longstanding government commitment to voluntarism which is at the root of many problems is then discussed. While employers have extremely important roles in relation to every aspect of employment and training, voluntarism fails to take account of the legitimate and substantial interests of other stakeholders. For example, the wider public interest requires that young people be given broader and better education and training than most employers are ever likely to provide in view of their own relatively short-term private interests.

After outlining the case for a holistic approach to the development of a high quality work-based route, the ‘Working to Learn’ proposals are presented in outline. Admittedly, the direct costs of meeting young people’s needs for broader education and training would be significantly higher than at present. However, reducing the massive and excessive administrative costs in the present system could release funds to be used for these purposes. In contrast, the economic and social costs of continuing on the present path are likely to be substantial.

In conclusion, we suggest that reform of the system of work-based learning to provide high quality opportunities for those young people not in full-time education is a priority because young people need the opportunity to continue to learn beyond the period of compulsory education; and also because without a high-quality system of work-based learning, the foundations necessary for their lifelong learning will be absent.

Background

From a national economic point of view, skills are an important determinant of economic advantage. From the point of view of individual young people, the transition they make from education into

employment shapes their attitudes to learning throughout their lives. We wrote the ‘Working to Learn’ report because research evidence points towards deep reasons for serious past policy failures in this area. Many initiatives have suffered because they were predicated on too simplistic a notion of the underlying problems that have to be solved. There is also a worrying trend of increasing narrowness of policy focus, with the possible exception of parts of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme. Several times what were originally broad-based policy aims have become narrowed down. Sometimes, as with the New Training Initiative, economic recession and the associated growth of youth unemployment resulted in a dramatic shortage of training places. The subsequent concentration on finding sufficient places inevitably undermined broader intentions. On other occasions, narrowing has been built in to policy design. For example, the development of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) has restricted the content and scope of training programmes, and led to an over-emphasis on qualifications. Yet research evidence has shown that the achievement of a qualification does not guarantee valuable learning, and that the learning context, the learning process and the expertise of those providing education and training are at least as important as qualification structures in determining scheme success.

In 1989, the CBI identified a set of minimum foundation training standards that it claimed would allow the British workforce to become competitive, concluding that:

“there is inadequate and insufficient education and training of young people to meet skill needs and the current situation is unsustainable... employers believe that there must be a quantum leap in the education and training of young people both to meet the needs of the British economy and to face the competition on even terms.” (1989:13)

None of the CBI standards has yet been met. Despite the expectations raised by the introduction of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), the majority of the trainees left the scheme before completing their training and failed to achieve a full



qualification; and in 1996 14% or more of all school-leavers were not in full- or part-time post-compulsory education, nor receiving benefits, nor on YT.

Even now in the late 1990s, young people can still effectively end their participation in formalized learning when they leave school at 16. We doubt whether current approaches to young people's vocational education and training based on voluntarism can meet either the needs of young people themselves, or those of the economy. And we suggest that the potential of work-based learning to both motivate young people and develop their latent talents is woefully undervalued.

Many young people leave the education system disillusioned with formal learning: they have low expectations of what they can achieve and are little motivated by the quality of vocational provision. The economic and social costs of this continuing failure are very high. Unless initial foundation education and training is accessible to the whole young workforce, costs of subsequent training will be excessive and much will have to be remedial. If many young people are effectively excluded from education and training, or what they are given is unsuitable or of low quality, then they will have poor employment prospects and their ability to become participative citizens will be gravely impaired. Despite current concern about the role of education in creating a more civilized society, the lack of education for social citizenship remains a serious deficiency. Work-based learning for young people needs to address broad issues of social justice, and should do all that is possible to redress disadvantages of gender, ethnicity, social class, geographical location or sexual orientation.

A persistent problem faced by work-based learning programmes for young people in Britain is their low status. In recent years, as staying-on rates in full-time education have increased and participation in training schemes has correspondingly diminished, this problem may well have intensified. With the possible exception of the Modern Apprenticeship, these are schemes for other people's children, and for lower-skilled, lower-status and insecure jobs.

Yet work-based learning programmes will continue to play an important part in the lives of at least one in five of British young people, and of far more in certain areas and in certain groups. They must, therefore, be good enough for anyone to enter. They have a role to play in underpinning the upskilling of the British workforce and the progress towards a learning society. They have a place in extending social justice and in addressing problems of youth alienation which sometimes lead to crime - although improving work-based learning for young people could not achieve such ends on its own.

Employment needs and changes in the youth labour market

Shifts in policy for work-based training for young people have been accompanied by tremendous changes within the economy and the youth labour market. Changes include the massive and continuing shift of employment out of manufacturing and into the service sector; the decline in skilled and unskilled, often male, manual employment; the growing casualization of employment; increases in demand for female labour; a sharp rise in staying-on rates in post-compulsory education, and an overall reduction in the size of the youth labour market.

An increasing proportion of young people are being employed in part-time and temporary jobs, and youth unemployment is becoming increasingly concentrated among lowly qualified males. At the same time, the withdrawal of unemployment benefit for 16- and 17-year-olds, combined with the perceived low status of much YT provision among its potential clients, has led to a growing number of young people disappearing from official statistics.¹ The existence of this 'unknown' group of significant proportions confirms the inadequacy of current provision for the age group, as well as underlining the weaknesses of existing mechanisms for monitoring the transition from school to work.

The potential client group for a future work-based learning route is likely to be significantly smaller than the mass provi-

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1) These youngsters are not legally employed, not in receipt of benefit and not in any form of education or training. Research in South Wales (Istance *et al*, 1994) found that, rather than being the 1.5 to 4.5 per cent of the age group that official government estimates suggested, in South Glamorgan this group accounted for between 16 and 23 per cent of the age cohort at any one time. Research in other areas of the country has replicated these results and confirmed the scale and depth of the problem posed by these 'drop-out' youngsters (Wilkinson, 1995).



“Success is more likely to attend a work-based learning programme that forms part of a wider range of policies aimed at increasing demand for skills. Without a greater demand for higher skills among young employees and their current and future employers, it is harder to create the incentives that would underpin a successful scheme, and there is the danger that the skills being created would be ineffectively used in the absence of product market and competitive strategies that emphasize the delivery of goods and services of high quality.”

sion envisaged for the original YTS, but it is not going to disappear. This smaller client group is volatile and varied in nature. Many will be among the least academically successful school pupils, although the Modern Apprenticeship pilots have shown that others with high ability will continue to choose the work-based route, perhaps especially at 17-plus. Some young people will move into and out of work-based learning, as their circumstances and career ambitions change during their transition to adulthood.

The progress of work-based learning for the 16 to 19 age group cannot easily be separated out from wider problems in the acquisition and usage of skills within the British labour market. The demand for more and better skills is patchy, and the remnants of the youth labour market are one of the areas where such demand may be weakest. Problems in demand stem, in part, from the product market strategies adopted by many companies, and associated systems of work organization and job design that offer limited opportunities for higher levels of skill to be deployed. If firms' demand for skills is to be increased, and the skills that are created are to be put to productive use, policy needs to address ways in which organizations across the economy can be encouraged to “de-Taylorise” work, and better integrate skills into their competitive strategies. Policies that assume that the demand exists, and that all that is needed is institutional reconfiguration of the supply of skills, are doomed to failure. Many employers have shown little interest in upskilling their young workers. They withdraw many trainees from training before it is complete, and allow them to leave schemes without qualifications.

Prior to its defeat in the general election, the Conservative government was offering two conflicting visions of economic development. One stressed the value of a skilled workforce as the sole source of sustainable long-term competitive advantage. The other told firms that the low labour costs that stem from a highly deregulated, flexible and casualized labour market would create the ‘enterprise economy’ of Europe. The latter strategy not merely offers an alternative to the former, but its pursuit tends to produce

structural conditions within the labour market that make it increasingly difficult to develop a national workforce capable of sustaining a high-skill, high-commitment, high-quality competitive strategy (Keep and Mayhew, 1996). We need to be clear as a nation which vision we want to pursue, and why.

The need for a more highly skilled workforce is often asserted by a general consensus. If it is to be taken seriously, then there is a need to foster conditions and incentives that would encourage firms towards competitive strategies based on the delivery of high specification, high value-added goods and services needing a highly skilled workforce. Such strategies exist in many other developed countries. They have been absent in Britain, where it has been believed that market forces alone will produce the desired results.

Success is more likely to attend a work-based learning programme that forms part of a wider range of policies aimed at increasing demand for skills. Without a greater demand for higher skills among young employees and their current and future employers, it is harder to create the incentives that would underpin a successful scheme, and there is the danger that the skills being created would be ineffectively used in the absence of product market and competitive strategies that emphasize the delivery of goods and services of high quality.

If any form of work-based learning is to warrant even the levels of government expenditure now incurred, longer-term national employment needs must be re-asserted, with a recognition that society as a whole, not just employers, has a legitimate interest in this being done. This means other stakeholders, such as the trade unions, representing employees' interests, should be involved in regulatory structures.

State-supported work-based learning programmes should be more widely targeted even than at national employment needs, important though they are. Such programmes also have a role to play in helping young people make the transition into being adult citizens and in addressing questions of social justice. Work-based



programmes have enormous potential to widen young people's opportunity for learning. This broader objective is in the interests of the young people themselves and of society as a whole. It requires a general educational component to the programmes, to broaden the abilities and perspectives of young people in their transition from school to adulthood and work. This should be the case for all abilities, whereas in the Dearing proposals (1996), a limited notion of breadth seems to be reserved for the more able.

Many young people between the ages of 16 and 19 are cut off from education and training. Some are in insecure jobs where no training is provided. Others, sometimes referred to as 'status 0' have dropped out of official records, being absent from employment, education or training. In the current English and Welsh social and economic climate, a significant number of these young people see no incentives to join the official system, preferring the attractions of informal labour market activity and crime (Istance *et al*, 1994). We need to offer such young people opportunities for learning that are accessible and of value, whether or not they are able to get a regular job. It is unreasonable to expect employers to shoulder the full responsibility for these broader aspects of a work-based learning programme.

The problems of voluntarism

Voluntarism for employers takes different forms. Employers are free to choose whether or not to involve themselves in youth training programmes. They are free to choose whether or not to train young people whom they employ. They are free to terminate any employment and/or training placement, subject to employment law, and they are being given increasing freedom to determine the nature of training a young person placed with them receives. But it is against the national interest for employers to provide full-time jobs without training to young people under the age of 19. There is a need for legislation to make it illegal to employ young people for more than the equivalent of three days per week, except as part of an approved training programme. Supple-

mentary training should be provided for those employed part-time. This would ensure a level playing field for all employers, and reinforce the existing trend towards fewer jobs without training for 16-19-year-olds in Britain.

It would be unfair and unworkable to remove from employers the right to terminate employment or a training placement. However, young people should be protected from situations in which they are unable to continue training through no fault of their own. Every 16 to 19-year-old should, therefore, have an entitlement to an on-going learning programme which should continue regardless of contextual changes.

It would be unrealistic to expect employers to provide the breadth required in such a system on an entirely voluntary basis. There is need for government stimulation of the capacity of small and medium-sized firms - which account for a very large proportion of employment - to offer more and better work-based learning opportunities. There should be public funding of the broader educational elements, and the entitlements of learners to job-specific, occupational and general education need to be secured through nationally agreed frameworks, backed by legislation. For example, learning for citizenship and the wider employment agenda require all young people to have access to off-the-job learning, which very few small and medium-sized employers could possibly provide themselves. Further, many young people placed with small employers would require a second placement to give them greater breadth of experience. Although employer goodwill could provide such opportunities for some young people, it could not guarantee them for all. A voluntarist system involves the danger that those employers facilitating breadth and flexibility are disadvantaged if their training costs are higher than those of rivals who train more cheaply or do not train at all. Legislation could ensure the entitlement of young people, and give involved employers a level playing field.

So structures should be put in place to allow employers to determine the level of their involvement, with mechanisms for that to be supplemented where necessary.



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The right to choose the level of involvement should be balanced by an acceptance of nationally and locally agreed programme standards, so that the interests of young people, employers in general and the state as a whole could be safeguarded. This would require the replacement of employer control over training with partnership structures where employers have a key role and a strong voice, as should others such as education representatives and the trade unions.

Group training schemes could have a greater role in stimulating the training capacity of small and medium-sized firms. They expanded rapidly in the late 1960s, stimulated by Industry Training Boards - especially by the Engineering Industry Training Board. Their primary role was not to provide training, but to act as training departments for small firms which could not afford their own. This involved them helping small firms recruit and select trainees and devising training programmes for them (Senker, 1992). In recent years, group training schemes have been transformed into private training providers. Many still provide ‘training department’ services for small companies on a commercial basis. For example, they help small firms to secure TEC financial support for training and assessment to NVQ standards by dealing on their behalf with the paperwork, and also by training and providing assessors and external verifiers. However, the emphasis for many years has been on them competing in the training market.

To meet the wider social need for youth trainees, such organizations need to be encouraged and supported in devoting resources to partnership with employers to help stimulate and meet the need for many more young trainees. In addition, support needs to be made available to encourage and stimulate the creation and development of many more such organizations. They are still concentrated in specific sectors, particularly engineering, and such services need to be far more widely available to stimulate demand for trainees. The present availability of these services reflects market demand, but does not reflect adequately the important roles these organizations could play for the wider benefit of society. There are continuing problems of finding work place-

ments in areas of low employment and for those who need special support and/or a sheltered work environment. In these cases, the social costs of not making special provision outweigh the costs of providing alternative placements through appropriate forms of community activity, sports and recreational activity with a work dimension. The voluntary sector is a major potential provider both of training and work placements.

The need for a holistic approach

Motivation for the development of a high-quality work-based route derives from recognizing that the workplace can be a creative and motivating site for learning; and that this requires an integrated and holistic approach to enabling young people to combine on- and off-the-job learning experiences.

The concept of a ‘community of practice’ provides a useful model for considering how the different partners who come together on the work-based route might complement each other (Lave, 1991). At the centre of the community are the young people who combine theoretical and practical knowledge with skills to transform their practice. Both the workplace and the off-the-job learning must, therefore, be organized in such a way as to ensure the young people can demonstrate as well as acquire new skills and knowledge and, hence, their true potential as both employees and trainees. Because a high-quality work-based route should transcend the boundaries of both the traditional classroom and shopfloor/office, we would advocate the development of new pedagogical approaches. These might comprise a pedagogy of work (Fuller and Unwin, 1996) practiced in such a way as to create meaningful links between learning, production and work organization. An expansive approach to learning would be adopted so that young people would be encouraged to question workplace practices.

The ‘Working to Learn’ proposals are intended to provide young people with a broad, work-based learning experience to prepare them for a future of uncertain



change, and to help them to grow and develop as people. New forms of work-based learning for young people are most likely to be effective in the context of a new style and direction of policy-making at national level. A broad, holistic model of work-based learning needs to be underpinned by legislative authority. Such a programme should be built around partnerships at local and national levels, in which the sometimes conflicting but legitimate interests of various stakeholders can be expressed and considered. In addition to young people and employers, stakeholders with a legitimate interest in work-based education include trade unions, the state and professional providers of training and guidance.

At national level, delivery of work-based education and training would be through partnership between sectoral and/or occupational groupings and locally approved training providers. Occupational groupings would be particularly important where skills are cross-sectoral (for example, secretarial skills), and there would be the need for a national consortium of partners with a remit to look across sectors and help to minimise duplication of effort and provision. Sectors and/or occupations could create sectoral templates for the scheme in partnership with other interested parties. In the case of sectors with many small employers, NTOs could be encouraged to establish group training provision to deliver schemes.

Partnership is also important at the level of individual young people and employers, and the structure should reflect the legitimate needs of the different partners. In this context, the concept of entitlement is central. 'Working to Learn' would centre on the development of job-specific competence within the workplace, in ways similar to current youth training schemes and the Modern Apprenticeship. However, it should go much further. Young people studying for the 'Working to Learn' qualifications would receive a variety of learning experiences - a balance of on-, near- and off-the-job learning, determining that balance would involve considering the needs of the different stakeholders and the availability of local facilities. Off-the-job experience and learning might be on the employer's premises, or elsewhere.

Each trainee would work in at least two different placements to ensure sufficient breadth in their learning experience. In many larger firms, this might mean spending time in more than one department. In other circumstances, a temporary move to a second employer might be necessary. In recognizing that young people change, that their original choices of training placement might cease to be appropriate, and that a key aim of 'Working to Learn' would be to nourish the growth of the person, the scheme would build in the opportunity to change occupation at least once, with no penalty to the young person, the employer or a training provider. Furthermore, all young people would be entitled to a period of work sampling if appropriate.

Educational breadth is essential to contribute to personal growth and as preparation for future changes in career and work. It should embrace communications and numeracy skills, but go well beyond them. Trainees might usefully learn about business organization and the role of trade unions. There should also be scope for trainees to follow studies of their choice.

Mechanisms would need to be provided for allocating the trainees to particular training providers and establishing that training and workplace arrangements are satisfactory. This function could be carried out by the Careers Service. A flexible form of development plan for an individual training programme should play a central role. This would differ from the action plans which have constrained developmental work and have tended to become bureaucratic and 'paper-driven' in their operation. It would focus on the evaluation of past and present experiences and on self-managed learning in order to anticipate future actions. A mentor would give the young person guidance and support, and where necessary would take the young person's part, for example by acting as sponsor or advocate and making arrangements. Mentors should have powers to intervene if either the young person was being inadequately trained or an employer or other training provider was not getting reasonable behaviour from a trainee.

A key part of learning for an occupation is to acquire extended experience in that

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“Broad frameworks would be developed nationally, but the details of the individual programmes will be worked out locally. We envisage the creation of sector-specific local partnerships between employers and other training providers, with the balance depending upon the ability and willingness of the individual employers to provide a high-quality, broad-based programme.”

“FE colleges and private training providers participate in an annual battle to secure adequate funding from a steadily reducing allocation granted by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This annual scramble for funds has contributed to short-term planning and has acted against the development of a robust infrastructure to support the work-based route.”

occupation. For this reason, and to make possible the greater breadth advocated, full-time training should be a minimum of two years, with the possibility of extending this to three years where necessary. Those who learn fast should be stretched by developing their skills, knowledge and understanding further, not by early completion.

Broad frameworks would be developed nationally, but the details of the individual programmes will be worked out locally. We envisage the creation of sector-specific local partnerships between employers and other training providers, with the balance depending upon the ability and willingness of the individual employers to provide a high-quality, broad-based programme. Many employers, especially small ones, cannot cope with the complexities even of current narrowly focused training approaches, let alone programmes with the wider objectives advocated here. Their role is and should remain central, but there is a need for structures to support and enhance the contribution which such employers can reasonably make.

At local level, local learning co-ordination units (LLCUs) would have the prime responsibility for balancing the needs of the various partners involved in a training programme, while giving the legitimate needs of the young trainee primacy. Financial and regulatory functions would be operated at local level through the LLCUs. We envisage four kinds of training provider relating to the LLCU: employers, an extended network of group training schemes working in cooperation with smaller employers, private training organizations and Further Education (FE) colleges. The last three would all need to establish liaison arrangements with the trainee's employer through the LLCU. Providers would allocate an appropriately qualified mentor to each trainee,

Regulation would take place through sectoral or occupational boards which would establish standards for training courses and job placements within their remit. This would include stipulations about courses and placements leading to recognized qualifications, and in the case of employers acting as training providers, this might include the existence of

structured work placement programmes, the employment of a recognized trainers and/or achievement of standards such as Investors in People.

Funding distortions: how resources could be used more effectively

Our proposals outlined above would cost significantly more than present arrangements in terms of the direct costs of the education and training provided. However, the complexity, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of present arrangements for administration are excessive to the extent that it is probable that our proposals could be delivered at little or no extra net cost to the public purse.

Funding methodologies for the UK's system of post-16 education and training are far too complex. The government funds education and training for 16-19-year-olds via four main systems:

- a. Local Education Authority (LEA) school sixth forms receive funds through their LEA's Local Management of Schools (LMS) system.
- b. Grant maintained school sixth forms receive funds from the Funding Agency for Schools.
- c. FE and sixth-form colleges receive funds from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).
- d. Work-based training providers receive funds from their local Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).

Each of these systems operates in a unique way, even though some of the courses and qualifications they deliver may be the same. FE colleges and private training providers participate in an annual battle to secure adequate funding from a steadily reducing allocation granted by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This annual scramble for funds has contributed to short-term planning and has acted against the development of a robust infrastructure to support the work-based route. Moreover, outcome-related funding has promoted finan-



cial priorities above concern for the quality of the learning process and the quality of learner achievement.

One of the main consequences of annual funding allocation and budget cuts is that providers cannot afford to invest in the capital equipment required for vocational subjects such as engineering and construction. Providers are forced to deliver courses which require little in the way of resources and can be taught largely in the classroom. Outcome-related funding also biases providers towards courses that are risk-free in terms of ensuring students will achieve the necessary passes and which take the minimum amount of time. In the current competitive climate, it is easier for training providers to increase profitability by cutting costs than by improving the quality of their programmes and their relevance to local labour market needs. Therefore, the pedagogical, occupational, locational and social aspects of the community of practice, identified by Fuller and Unwin (1999), are weak. The main controls on the quality of training provision are the achievement of specified qualifications and the attraction of customers. NVQs are inadequate to protect programme standards, and young people and many employers do not choose a training programme because of its quality or lack of it (Steedman and Hawkins, 1994). These factors combine to cause major distortions of funding priorities away from meeting the needs of local economies and providing young people with a meaningful occupational identity and status.

For the purposes of this chapter, the two most relevant funding systems are those administered by the FEFC and the TECs, as both provide resources for the work-based route. A key difference between TECs and colleges is in the level of funding freedom they enjoy to operate as individual organisations. All colleges have to comply with the FEFC's national funding methodology, whereas each TEC negotiates its own funding arrangements with its Government Regional Office (GRO).

Although they operate under different funding arrangements, colleges and TECs have to co-operate at local level to deliver the work-based route. Colleges, for example, may act as managing agents for

YT (Youth Training) and all colleges provide off-the-job training for both YT and Modern Apprenticeship. TECs control a national pot of some £20 million which colleges can draw on in their efforts to meet the needs of local labour markets. TECs and colleges may also collaborate on bids to the Single Regeneration Budget and to the European Social Fund.

The current system is manifestly inefficient, involving the waste of large funds in cumbersome administration. We estimated that there could be enough money in the present system to allow every 16-year-old in an annual cohort to study to NVQ level 3, based on an average cost per programme of £ 6,500. To liberate that amount of funding, however, requires a considerable alteration of the existing arrangements. Structural reform of the system could yield savings which could make major contributions to funding the additional costs inherent in some of our proposals.

Furthermore, the current funding regime ensures that much training effort is ineffective from an economic point of view, being deployed to create competences which are relatively inexpensive to produce, rather than creating those competencies in demand and needed to enhance the productivity of the economy.

It is also relevant to take broader considerations of social cost and benefit into account. The Prince's Trust estimated that the average cost to the public purse of a crime committed by a young person (aged 10 to 20) was £ 2,620 in 1994. Given that 44 per cent of all crime is committed by young people, the bill for 1994 came to £ 5,500 million. By helping more young people to participate in interesting education and training directed at meeting the economy's needs, and by helping even slightly to reduce youth crime and its enormous costs, the work-based route outlined above could represent a first-class investment of public funds.

Conclusions

Central to the development of a high-quality work-based route is a recognition that the workplace can be a creative and mo-

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“The legacy of earlier failed attempts to solve this problem lends to colour perceptions of what is possible, and the effort invested in the creation of institutional mechanisms and modes of delivery that have subsequently been discarded has led to disillusionment and cynicism about any future developments.”

tivating site for learning and that an integrated and holistic approach is required which enables young people to combine on- and off-the-job learning experiences. There are a number of deep-seated inter-related factors that have contributed to this country's inability to deliver a coherent, comprehensive, high-quality work-based education and training route for the young. These include an education system that in some cases produces young people who want nothing more to do with formalized learning; a society that has low expectations of what many young people can achieve, an implicit belief that many are destined for unemployment or a life of low-skill work that requires little in the way of formal preparation; cynicism (often well-founded) about the quality of provision on government training schemes aimed at the unemployed; the continued existence of employment opportunities for the young that offer little or no training; and little demand from UK employers for a general upskilling of the workforce. The result has been work-based learning for the young that has, in effect, been aimed largely at the lower achievers from the schools system. Many youngsters, especially from the most disadvantaged groups, have fallen through the gaps in the system and do nothing. Reforming our system of work-based learning so as to provide high quality opportunities for those young people not in full-time education is a priority both because all young people need the opportunity to continue to learn beyond the period of compulsory education, and also because without a high-quality system of

work-based learning for the young, the foundations necessary for an effective system of lifelong learning will be missing.

If there were a simple solution to these issues, it would have been discovered and adopted long ago. All aspects of the problem of youth training are complex, and some are intractable. Furthermore, economic and political circumstances, combined with recent institutional and political history, significantly constrain the avenues that are available for policy development. The legacy of earlier failed attempts to solve this problem lends to colour perceptions of what is possible, and the effort invested in the creation of institutional mechanisms and modes of delivery that have subsequently been discarded has led to disillusionment and cynicism about any future developments.

Unless we are willing to face up to these issues, and to tackle them in a broader and more co-ordinated fashion than hitherto, significant progress is unlikely. While it is important to build on the strengths of the work-based learning route embodied in the apprenticeship tradition, simply tinkering with the institutional mechanisms is not a sufficient response. Failure to attempt more far-reaching reform, based upon higher expectations, notions of entitlement and active partnership between all those involved in the provision of learning opportunities for the young, will mean that 10 years from now we will still be bemoaning the inadequacy of provision for young entrants to the labour force.

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Low-skilled people on the European labour market: towards a minimum learning platform?

Introduction

Most European labour markets have experienced changes in recent years. More intense competition from industrialising countries, the increasing role of technology in production and changes in work organisation have resulted in high demand for human capital, in particular for higher skill-levels at the workplace. Consequently, the situation of low-skilled workers in the labour market appears to have deteriorated.

This collection of 3 articles debates the initial findings of the New job skills and the low-skilled (Newskills) project, which suggest that the best policy to help low-skilled workers might be to reduce the number of them entering the labour market. The project also explores the idea of a 'minimum learning platform' - a range of skills including qualities required to be effective in the workplace and to learn there and elsewhere to develop in employment and society - whose core might be adopted in Europe as a goal for all its citizens.

The initial findings of the Newskills project are outlined below and are then discussed in two subsequent articles. The first by Arthur Schneerberger, considers what can be done to ensure that as many young persons as possible leave the education system with the minimum of knowledge and competences for their further learning and employability. In the second, Robert Carneiro, regards a mini-

mum learning platform as a necessity and suggests that traditional approaches to education and training need to be changed to provide it.

The low-skilled on the European labour market

The Newskills project, supported by the targeted socioeconomic research programme (TSER), examines the level of skills in a number of European countries and the demand and supply of such skills. The project involves France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK as participating partners. In addition, data for Germany have been collected and incorporated in the research wherever feasible. The period of study is primarily from 1985 to 1995 and the project ran from 1996 to 1999. It aims to contribute to the basic framework for the design of policies for low-skilled people, firstly, by documenting their labour market opportunities of and secondly, by proposing effective ways for developing the necessary skills in society.

The project defines low skills as those with only qualifications from the compulsory secondary school, the International Standard Classification of Education level 2 (ISCED 2). While not all in this group are low-skilled, when cross-checked against the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) data, between one half and two-thirds of the ISCED 2 group is also at IALS levels 1 and 2. The ISCED 2 group



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Debate

This collection of 3 articles debates the initial findings of the New job skills and the low-skilled (Newskills) project, which suggests that the best policy to help low-skilled workers might be to reduce the number of them entering the labour market. The project also explores the idea of a 'minimum learning platform' - a range of skills including qualities required to be effective in the workplace and to learn there and elsewhere to develop in employment and society - whose core might be adopted in Europe as a goal for all its citizens.

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¹ The views in this article are the author's and not those of the European Investment Bank.



“(...) the project results so far show that conditions for low-skilled people are less favourable than 10 years ago, with the possible exception of Portugal, as greater value is placed on a person’s human capital.”

“From the study of changes in stocks of low skills in the population of working age, the Newskills research concludes that in the medium term, the entry of better-qualified young people into the working age population will not eliminate the problem of low skills.”

also contains nearly all of those at IALS level 1, the lowest literacy level.

In summary, the project results so far show that conditions for low-skilled people are less favourable than 10 years ago, with the possible exception of Portugal, as greater value is placed on a person’s human capital. The core of the classical labour market has been to match an applicant to a vacancy, or labour to a job. The matching concept in the labour market today can be assessed in a slightly modified framework, as a match of a portfolio of human capital to some specific job design which is continually changing due to the dynamic nature of the labour market. Different worker characteristics are matched to jobs with different attributes. The individual’s main endowment in the search for a job is their human capital comprising personal capital, such as education and experience, and social capital, for example, an individual’s ability to work in a team. Owing to the growing speed in the rate of organisational changes and globalisation, parts of the labour market experience a fast erosion of human capital. This development demands continuous adjustment and a steady acquisition of skills.

The Newskills research shows that that low-skilled people share a number of common characteristics. Most are adults of whom between one half and two-thirds are in employment. Examining employment/population ratios by educational attainment for individuals aged 25 to 64 with less than upper secondary education, shows low-skilled people experience lower labour market participation rates and higher levels of unemployment in all but one of the countries studied. (The exception is Portugal where the labour market is in transition, but still assimilates low-skilled workers.) In addition, the likelihood for unemployment or economic inactivity in the lowest skill level is higher than for other groups particularly in Germany and Sweden.

The declining position of low-skilled people is further evidenced by rising wage differentials between them and those more highly skilled. The number of sectors in each economy in which low-skilled people can find employment is shrinking - again with the exception of Portugal.

Low-skilled occupations have decreasing shares of employment even in expanding sectors, such as, retailing, hotels, and the public and social services. Germany and the Netherlands have a large concentration of low-skilled workers in a small number of sectors, whereas in Portugal and Sweden low-skilled people are employed in a wider range of sectors.

Further research for the Newskills project confirms that the supply of low-skilled individuals is falling in all European countries studied. A general finding is that younger populations (aged 25 to 28) are better qualified than the working age population. This can in part be explained by the fact that participation in post-compulsory education has risen in most countries. Large differences exist between the countries, however, all have reduced the proportion of low-skilled people qualified below ISCED level 3 (less than upper secondary education) in the working population (aged 16 to 64 years) over the period 1985 to 1996. Nevertheless, some countries - France, (43%), the UK (53%) and Portugal (77%) - continue to have around half or more of the total working population with no qualifications beyond those gained in the period of compulsory education (ISCED level 2) or below. Even if current growth rates of those with upper secondary education or vocational training, or both at ISCED level 3 group continue at their present level, most European countries will still contain a significant group around 10% of the low-skilled (as defined above) in 2010.

From the study of changes in stocks of low skills in the population of working age, the Newskills research concludes that in the medium term, the entry of better-qualified young people into the working age population will not eliminate the problem of low skills.

A minimum learning platform as a policy option

Based on the research a policy recommendation would be to reduce the net supply of low-skilled people entering the labour market. Employer-provided training improves skills, but does not compen-



sate for the deficit created by inadequate initial education and training.

How can their numbers be reduced? The Newskills research suggests, as far as young people are concerned, the primary route is to persuade more of them to continue into upper-secondary education, vocational training, or both. Consequently, achievement in the period of compulsory education needs to be boosted. An analysis for the project of the determinants of participation in post-compulsory education shows that the key explanatory variable is prior success at the compulsory education level, plus, for males, the returns available to offering a higher level of education, and the level of real income available to 'spend' on education. The level of youth unemployment and the availability of training scheme places seem to have little effect.

The Newskills research has also looked at defining a 'minimum learning platform' and a profile of education and training. The concept of the minimum learning platform, is to be understood as a range of skills which individuals are able to use and apply effectively. This range of skills includes what is now frequently called 'employability', that is the qualities required to be effective in the workplace. But it is not only that; a 'minimum learning platform' also includes any additional skills needed to learn in the workplace and elsewhere to develop in employment and as a citizen in society.

An emerging option?

In a number of countries there is already strong evidence of interest in a 'minimum level'. Naturally, this is not always the term used, but there are striking similarities between countries.

In the Netherlands there has been a policy discussion over the last five years on the topic of the so-called 'minimum starter qualification'. The original idea was that every Dutch citizen should have the minimum level of skills required to start a working career. Part of the debate discussed whether the existing age-related school obligation should be replaced by a skill-related school obligation.

In Sweden, there is a tradition that the curriculum of the compulsory school should aim to provide skills necessary for daily life rather than for working life. Although it is not officially recognised as a minimum level, around 80% of young people complete upper-secondary school.

In Portugal, the desired profile of a young person at the end of 12 years of education has been defined. This profile stresses citizenship and social skills as well as academic attainments and has acted as a guide to the development of the curriculum. The demand here is not set out in terms of a specific minimum of skills, but rather that all leaving compulsory school should receive at least one or preferably two years of vocational training provided partly by schools and partly in the workplace.

France saw the publication in 1996 of a report highly critical of school and post-school education and training. The Fauroux report called for priority to be given to what are termed *savoirs primordiaux* (which can be translated as 'core skills' or 'basic learning tools') and for the integration of substantial work place learning and experience into initial education and training provision. More recently, substantial debate has taken place around seven 'proposals' formulated by main French employers' organisation (CNPF). The main thrust of the proposals has been to assert the primacy of 'competence' - the ability to operationalise a skill or knowledge in a given context - as the prime ingredient of employability. This debate again takes up the point made by Fauroux that the education system alone cannot produce 'operational' employees. It can only provide the underpinning elements.

The identification of the importance of personal and social skills or 'softer skills' for effectiveness in the workplace has been an important feature of the debate about a minimum learning platform over the past 10 years. Adequate levels of literacy and numeracy are now seen as necessary for employability but only really effective if accompanied by a range of 'softer skills'. In the UK, employer organisations have taken the lead in emphasising the importance of these skills, and the debate culminated in the incorporation of

How can the number of low-skilled people entering the labour market be reduced? "The Newskills research suggests, as far as young people are concerned, the primary route is to persuade more of them to continue into upper-secondary education, vocational training, or both. Consequently, achievement in the period of compulsory education needs to be boosted."

"The concept of the minimum learning platform, is to be understood as a range of skills which individuals are able to use and apply effectively. This range of skills includes what is now frequently called 'employability' (...) also includes any additional skills needed to learn in the workplace and elsewhere to develop in employment and as a citizen in society."

"In a number of countries there is already strong evidence of interest in a 'minimum level'. Naturally, this is not always the term used, but there are striking similarities between countries."



***“The identification of the importance of personal and social skills or ‘softer skills’ for effectiveness in the workplace has been an important feature of the debate about a minimum learning platform over the past 10 years.” (...) The identification of the importance of personal and social skills or ‘softer skills’ for effectiveness in the workplace has been an important feature of the debate about a minimum learning platform over the past 10 years. (...) Many countries have debated these same issues and come up with their own definitions of skills in this new area. In the countries considered some points of convergence are already apparent. Communication in all its forms, (...) a solid foundation of language competence and knowledge of basic mathematics. In non-English speaking countries, some ability to work in a foreign language, (...) familiarity and basic understanding of information and communication technology. Personal and social skills are increasingly valued (...)*”**

***“(...) in the search for solutions to the problems of low-skilled people, the discussion has shifted away from the major global and egalitarian principles - that individuals must be given the same education and follow the same educational process - and towards a system in which different human beings go through different processes of education and training according to their needs, (...)*”**

a range of personal and social skills into new vocational qualifications offered to young people for the first time in the early 1990s. Many countries have debated these same issues and come up with their own definitions of skills in this new area. In the countries considered some points of convergence are already apparent.

Communication in all its forms, including quantitative literacy and self-presentational skills, is considered to be necessary for employability. This requires a solid foundation of language competence and knowledge of basic mathematics. In non-English speaking countries, some ability to work in a foreign language, normally English, is increasingly required - and achieved - for most employees. All countries emphasise familiarity and basic understanding of information and communication technology. Personal and social skills are increasingly valued - these include the ability to learn independently, the capacity to react to and deal effectively with uncertainty and unpredictability in the work environment, the capacity to manage interpersonal relations successfully, the ability to manage time and own work in an autonomous manner.

In considering the research and conclusions of the Newskills project there are a number of issues that should be taken into account. The low-skilled group is very heterogeneous and, it can be argued, the definition of low-skilled people, up to ISCED 2, is limited in scope. The definition only takes account of attainments in the formal education and training system and gives no direct indication of performance on other important dimensions of skill, in particular the ‘soft’ or ‘core’ skills, such as personal and social competences. Furthermore, it is important to recognise cohort effects within the low-skilled group. Populations that left school in recent decades with no or low qualification levels have normally done so as a result of being excluded from mainstream education routes by progressive stages of selection and that individuals so excluded often originate from disadvantaged backgrounds. By contrast, individuals from older cohorts (usually aged 45 and over) often left school at the minimum age because it was regarded as a socially ac-

ceptable level of qualification for entry to employment. In some European countries, formal barriers in the shape of fees for post-compulsory schooling, or highly selective entrance requirements to post-compulsory education, prevented many highly able individuals from continuing. These cohorts are therefore most probably different in average ability level from younger cohorts. In addition, many will have developed a whole range of skills through employment, which have never been formally certified.

It is also accepted that there are inconsistencies in the measurement of educational outcomes in the European labour force survey in which some countries measure outcomes on the basis of years of attendance and some on qualifications achieved. In most countries there is a minority that fails to achieve any useful level of education or skill despite participating in education for the compulsory period - usually nine or 10 years.

Furthermore, the volume of low-skilled employment might be underestimated. Low-skilled jobs are increasingly taken by individuals (many of whom are immigrants with irregular citizenship status) who are not registered in the official statistics. This might mean that official statistics are over-stating the fall in employment of low-skilled workers.

Nevertheless, in the search for solutions to the problems of low-skilled people, the discussion has shifted away from the major global and egalitarian principles - that individuals must be given the same education and follow the same educational process - and towards a system in which different human beings go through different processes of education and training according to their needs, so that they all arrive at the same point. The importance of new practices such as those designed to recognise and certify non-formal achievements is being increasingly highlighted, as is the fact that training is a factor not just in career development but also in personal development and an opening out to society. Finally, although the cost of creating a minimum learning platform is high, it may be far more costly not to follow this approach and to have a core of marginalised people.



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The concept of a minimum learning platform educational contents and methods for improving the low-skilled

What can be done to ensure that as many young people as possible leave the educational system with the minimum of knowledge and competences for their further learning and employability?

Debate

Introduction

Highly industrialised countries show broad empirical evidence of a worsening position of low-skilled people in the labour market. In the framework of the Newskills¹ project, the main statistical indicators have been developed: rising wage differences between the low-skilled and the higher-skilled and increasing unemployment amongst individuals with low skills (Steedman, 1998). What can be done to stop this process of segregation and to improve the position of those falling out of the educational mainstream?

One of the basic strategies to address this situation is the reduction of the net supply of low-skilled workers. The more people with higher levels of initial training and education enter the labour market the higher the remaining share of jobs for the low-skilled. But since in most highly industrialised countries the demand for low-skilled workers has been decreasing faster than supply, the situation has worsened despite strong efforts by educational policy-makers to widen the participation rates in post-compulsory education and training.

As an approximate indicator, the 'low-skilled' can be defined as those who have not attained or completed any post-compulsory education and training (ISCED Levels 1 and 2). The primary route to reduce this share in the population is to 'persuade more young people to continue into upper-secondary education and/or vocational training'. According to the

Newskills project, 'The key variable of participation in post-compulsory education and training is the prior success in compulsory education; furthermore, for male workers, economic returns and real income available to spend on post-compulsory education and training. Those who do not participate and finally attain an initial level of training and education are handicapped in the long run. Motivational lacks for continuing and further training among the low-skilled is one of the consequences. Workers with lower levels in initial education 'receive less work-related training in part because they are less interested in taking it, and not because firms are less likely to offer it'. These empirically-based assumptions raise the question of:

What can be done to ensure that as many young persons as possible leave the educational system with the minimum of knowledge and competences for their further learning and employability?

Looking at the educational attainment of young persons in terms of ISCED in an international perspective, we can observe, on the one hand, the changes over the post-war period and, on the other, the still remarkable differences in national education systems (see table 1). The country studies of the Newskills project pointed out that 'education systems have been modified over the post-war period to make access to upper-secondary education a realistic option for progressively larger groups of young people' (Steedman, op.cit.). This is also true for north American, Asian and eastern European

1) Newskills project explanatory note, p. 2



countries. Growing enrolment in upper-secondary education and training pathways is the direction of societal change.

Countries still with a high proportion of their workforce in the primary sector are in a different situation. People who have attained less than upper-secondary education are still the vast majority and not a minority who could keep pace with mainstream students. Therefore the educational and labour-market situation of this share of the workforce cannot be really compared with persons without post-compulsory education and training in countries where continuation after compulsory school is an expectation of society, or can even be regarded as being nearly an obligatory standard. In 1995, nearly 90% of young adults in Nordic countries, Germany and the United States attained at least an upper-secondary education and training level (see table 1); additionally, some have begun but could not complete the whole training period.

Does this mean that in those countries the problems of low-skilled workers are going to disappear, or is it more likely an indication of a higher degree of educational integration and heterogeneity at the first post-compulsory level of education and training?

In the United States, which has more experience than European countries with a nearly comprehensive high-school (Trow, 1991), the problem of increasing wage gaps between high-school and college graduates is being discussed on a broad basis. In countries where nearly all of an age group are included, at least at the beginning, in upper-secondary education and training, a share of educational low-achievers might be subsumed within upper secondary students. If we imputed that low skills are only a problem where there is no enrolment in post-compulsory education and training, we would turn a blind eye to young persons with problems in countries where nearly all youngsters at least begin, or take part in, some kind of post-compulsory training.

The educational answer to the problems of low-skilled young persons cannot remain a formal one, we have to find substantial components of a minimum learning platform and learning and teaching

Percentage of population who have completed at least upper secondary education, 1995

Table 1

	Age 25-34	Age 25-64	Increase (%)
European countries			
Austria	81	69	12
Belgium	70	53	17
Denmark	69	62	7
Finland	83	65	18
France	86	68	18
Germany	89	84	5
Greece	64	43	21
Ireland	64	47	17
Italy	49	35	14
Luxembourg	32	29	3
The Netherlands	70	61	9
Portugal	31	20	11
Spain	47	28	19
Sweden	88	75	13
United Kingdom	86	76	10
Switzerland	88	82	6
Norway	88	81	7
Czech Republic	91	83	8
Poland	88	74	14
Turkey	26	23	3
Non-European countries			
United States	87	86	1
Canada	84	75	9
Australia	57	53	4
Korea	86	60	26
New Zealand	64	59	5
Country means	71	60	11

Source: OECD, Education at a Glance 1997, Paris 1997, p. 39.

methods for how to reach it, at least gradually. It would be useful to look at countries with a highly developed service economy and a knowledge-based occupational structure, in Europe or elsewhere. The technological and organisational changes are changing occupational structures and the skills required.

The economy has always been interested in reliability, a positive attitude and the willingness to work hard. But today, employers emphasise additional hard and soft skills that job applicants would not have needed 20 years ago. In the service



“Technological and organisational changes are a main cause of changing requirements and of the worsening labour market position of the low-skilled.(...) At the end of the 1980s, (...) many young Austrians who had not successfully completed lower-secondary education could be integrated without problems in the apprenticeship system (...). Over the past few years, employers have begun to stress more and more the apprentices’ entrance qualifications regarding cognitive and social skills.”

economy, it is not only a question of ‘hard’ or cognitive skills – although they are not to be neglected, - increasingly it is also a question of social and communicative skills. Technological and organisational changes are a main cause of changing requirements and of the worsening labour market position of the low-skilled. The experience of countries with the highest developed technology-based production and service industries is crucial for finding the minimum learning platform of future knowledge-based society. Changing employment shares for different categories of skill-levels are, to a very large extent, the result of ‘within-industry’ changes, rather than ‘between-industry’ changes: ‘This suggests that technical changes are an important driving force behind the fall in the demand for the low-skilled.’ (Steedman, op. cit.)

At the end of the 1980s, for example, many young Austrians who had not successfully completed lower-secondary education could be integrated without problems in the apprenticeship system and had opportunity to learn both vocational and personality-related skills in the dual system. Over the past few years, employers have begun to stress more and more the apprentices’ entrance qualifications regarding cognitive and social skills. Occupational requirements and educational streams have changed and have caused a new situation after compulsory schooling and in their transition from school to working life by means of different pathways of initial education and training. (Lassnigg and Schneeberger, 1997)

Murnane from Harvard and Levy from MIT have produced a very interesting contribution to the problem of low-achievers and changing skills requirements. Their starting point is data on skills needed today to get a job, for example, in a modern automobile plant. Test-scores show that nearly half of the 17-year-olds are not sufficiently trained for this kind of middle-class job.

The American educational researchers did not stop with an analysis of skills deficits, they also explored the basic skills needs of the future, they defined ‘new basic skills’ based on case studies in companies. Their findings about basic skills

needed today and in the future have important implications for the European discussion about a minimum learning platform, too (Murnane and Levy, 1996).

Basing on case studies Murnane and Levy suggest that people need the following abilities to get a middle-class job, terming them ‘the new basic skills’, namely the the ability to:

- read at the ninth-grade level or higher;
- do math at the ninth-grade level or higher;
- solve semistructured problems where hypotheses must be formed and tested;
- work in groups with persons of various backgrounds;
- communicate effectively, both orally and in writing;
- use personal computers to carry out simple tasks like word processing.’

The findings of Murnane and Levy based on experts in companies have considerable relevance for the problem of defining a minimum learning platform. Furthermore, under the aspects of the sociology of knowledge, it can be hinted that similar social structures and problems cause similar problems in the educational systems and, as a consequence, in the research area dealing with it.

For non-English speaking countries, a further minimum skill that young people need for being able to cope with occupational requirements in our technology-based service economy with its manifold needs should be added: the ability to understand and to read some basic English.

The need for some basic command of English can come up when reading technical manuals, while being in a foreign country on an installation or construction job, or in the tourism industry and retail trade. It is important to mention that these requirements occur in many occupational areas at the skilled workers’ level, not only above it. For these reasons classes of ‘subject-related English’ have been introduced in the syllabi of the Austrian part-time schools for apprentices in the 1990s.

Some would say that the points above are too low for a minimum learning platform,



some too high. But this underlines the need for both 'hard' skills (like maths and writing) and 'soft' skills like communication and social behaviour. Arguably, the minimum skills explored by Murnane and Levy are too high to reach within the framework of compulsory schooling, or at schools in general. This means that we need certain arrangements to ensure a high attainment rate of basic skills and a socially broad integration of youth into some kind of upper-secondary education and training.

Firstly, post-compulsory schooling should be structured and graded basing on defined cognitive and social skills, including the minimum learning platform. Disadvantaged young persons should be given more time and additional or special instruction to reach the minimum learning platform as a basic level for their further work and training. Secondly, it is necessary to use the learning possibilities of dual or alternating training models as a device of motivation and to learn from concrete experience. Some 'low-achieving' young persons can learn the same as the majority in vocational education and training pathways if they are given more time for the same curriculum.

An example from Austria is the special 'pre-apprenticeship' contracts² for low-achievers who cannot find a regular training place. They have the chance to learn the same as regular apprentices in their first year of the training period, but are granted two years to learn the content regular apprentices master in one year. The time factor should not be underestimated. Clearly defined learning levels are needed, but more flexibility for individual time periods to reach the various levels.

It is not enough to provide post-compulsory educational pathways with broad access and a high degree of formal (but not substantial!) permeability. Special provisions for those with problems and for those who need more time, more help and special learning arrangements to reach the minimum skills level described above are needed. It is important to provide education and training with a wide variety of learning opportunities which leave scope for different learning paces and places of instruction.

Conclusions

Three crucial aspects need to be taken into account to be able to help the low-skilled, to give everybody the chance to attain the minimum learning platform and provide appropriate support in the framework of a socially broad integration in various and diverse pathways of upper secondary education and training:

□ a very modest and graded approach to the hard skills as components of the minimum learning platform we want to design. Otherwise we would turn education into a device of exclusion of those being at risk in the transition from compulsory school to working life not of social integration and personal improvement;

□ use the advantages of workplace experience, learning and learning motivation in all existing and innovative ways available to us, not only to train technical skills, albeit this is extremely important, but also improve the 'softer skills'. In our service society 'soft skills' have, in many parts of occupational and private life, turned into decisive and very hard skills. Soft skills can be improved under favourable conditions but they cannot be taught as maths or geography. They can only be promoted. That has to be considered when designing programmes for low-skilled young persons to obtain the minimum learning platform before, or during an initial vocational education and training programme;

□ consider, and take the appropriate pedagogical consequences of, different paces of learning. Some young persons need more time to reach a certain skill level than others.

Different learning paces do not involve lowering standards of the outcomes of vocational education and training in the end. It means, in many cases, that some young persons need more time, patience and understanding to learn the same skills standards. Therefore it is necessary to define clear levels of skills standards that can be attained step by step. The most basic level, including the transversal skills, should be taken as the minimum learning platform. Different learning paces and special support have nothing to do with 'watering down' educational and skills stand-

"It is not enough to provide post-compulsory educational pathways with broad access and a high degree of formal (but not substantial!) permeability. Special provisions for those with problems and for those who need more time, more help and special learning arrangements to reach the minimum skills level described above are needed."

2) The introduction of the *Vorlehre* is one of the results of the national employment action plan based on the employment guidelines of the European Commission. It was the aim of the concept to avoid any kind of 'stigmatisation' for the youngsters who go through the programme. Therefore it is directly linked with the standard apprenticeship programme: Those who are sufficiently qualified after the two years will have the opportunity to continue within the standard programme, the others will get a recognised certificate for the qualifications acquired by them; see: Georg Piskaty: *'Die Vorlehre - ein Bildungsangebot für "low-achievers"*, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft*, 10/1998, p. 9.



“Different learning paces do not involve lowering standards of the outcomes of vocational education and training in the end. It means, in many cases, that some young persons need more time, patience and understanding to learn the same skills standards.”

ards. Clear standards are an essential prerequisite for efforts to integrate the low-skilled, of youth at risk, in the transition from compulsory school to working life.

Not everybody can learn everything if they get more and more time. There are al-

ways barriers and limits to learning, but for as many people as possible to reach a minimum learning platform there are ways to overcome various barriers (at social, emotional, cognitive levels) by providing youngsters with more time to learn and by giving them special support.

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Achieving a minimum learning platform for all - Critical queries influencing strategies and policy options



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Introduction

Europe faces a difficult challenge when the gradual spread of a knowledge economy is considered against a persistent backlog of low-skilled labour. Defining a minimum learning platform for all is a necessary step, but far from sufficient. Our institutional fabric will be tested by our ability to launch effective strategies and policies addressing the issue, as will our common allegiance to a legacy of values and social commitments. This article attempts to spell out some broad directions for such an endeavour. Four major target groups are surveyed, followed by an analysis of how overall educational priorities could be affected. The article then considers some philosophical principles guiding a new learning thrust and spells out of a profile of inescapable European values. The guiding concept of lifelong learning as it relates to an approach marked by the notion of inclusive knowledge is also considered. Finally, the article addresses the challenge of a new social contract for Europe: the crucial balance between rights and duties and the way in which education and learning could take place in a seamless knowledge-based European Union.

Discerning the different target groups

When issues surrounding low-skilled people are addressed it is important to differentiate between the various potential target groups.

Each group has specific needs in line with its background and situation. Proposed policies will therefore be subject to mounting pressures for modification to adapt them to their demands.

We shall adopt a typology of four target groups categorised under two broad headings. The need for remedial measures will gradually fall as prevention rises to the top of the political agenda. The variety of needs entails a corresponding policy framework as shown in table 1.

The best policy mix for each situation requires careful evaluation of surrounding conditions. The issues at stake are often compounded by institutional constraints or societal barriers, which call for different strategies fitting particular settings.

For example, school-focused strategies can be impaired or hampered by the uneven quality of provision, with particular reference to the levels of basic or compulsory education. Likewise, uncertainties surrounding investment by firms in general training or the reluctance of low-skilled people to participate in training activities ought to be taken on board when remedies are designed. From a different angle, the high risk of transitions – within the school system, from school to work, or between labour cycles – is a very important factor influencing the effectiveness of public policies.

In sum, the overall definition of the problem – low skills – hides a complex cluster of outstanding issues. The core question is whether public policies are equipped to cope with such a wide array

Debate

Defining a minimum learning platform for all is a necessary step, but far from sufficient. Our institutional fabric will be tested by our ability to launch effective strategies and policies addressing the issue, as will our common allegiance to a legacy of values and social commitments.



Table 1

A simple typology of target groups.

	PREVENTION		REMEDICATION	
TARGET	High-risk children	Low-skilled employed	School failures	Low-skilled unemployed
POLICIES (examples)	Early education. Positive discrimination actions.	On-the-job training. Assisted learning-by-doing.	Second-chance education. Vocational training.	Re-skilling activities. Training entitlements for re-adjustment

“(...) European systems are still struggling with a 20% to 25% underclass of students who are simply not succeeding, either because they are early drop-outs, or are unable to reach the prescribed level of attainment.”

of situations and able to move from a context of standardisation and of nationally uniform approaches.

Focusing education on what is really important

A forward-looking educational strategy must look at the complex question of basic education in a different way.

Current policies in industrial countries, have foundered when catering for those at the lower end of the social intake. European countries are proud of the virtues of universal basic education; to retreat from them would be considered nothing less than heresy. However, European systems are still struggling with a 20% to 25% underclass of students who are simply not succeeding, either because they are early drop-outs, or are unable to reach the prescribed level of attainment.

Setting aside detailed findings, research generally on low skilled people confirms one fundamental intuition: the policy agenda to redress the problem of those lowly-qualified in our economies will inevitably require measures aimed to reduce the net supply of low skills.

This simple conclusion puts pressure on our national educational policies. A core effort to address the issue calls for greater investment in the upper cycles of compulsory education and argues for an increase in the corresponding allocation of resources. Here lies a critical segment where the supply of an “appropriate education” falls short of the demand, signalling a serious market failure and opening

the case for streamlined public policies. Furthermore, investment in quality basic education yields the highest economic returns, bringing prosperity gains for a larger number of citizens. Finally, one should also expect high social returns from externalities associated with the reduction of social entitlements and the minimisation of related social costs.

Qualitative improvements in basic training will boost standards of achievement of the target group and provide the broad foundations needed for upgrading skills throughout life. Moreover, research provides evidence that satisfactory completion of basic education by those in disadvantaged social groups can raise individual preferences for further education and increase demand for upper-secondary studies or, alternatively, post-compulsory vocational training.

One human being - different human developments

Achieving a minimum learning platform for all is a formidable challenge for European institutions.

The size of this challenge is emphasized if one considers the century-old legacy of the so-called European social model and the *corpus* of humanistic values that underlie it.

Europe is the birthplace of distinct concepts regarding the place and role of the human being in society. Invariably, these notions gravitate around successive definitions of each particular *homo* and their critical relation to the environment. The capacity to reflect upon this common predicament is generative: that is to say, it



leads to a state of awareness that characterises higher-order societies.

A minimum learning platform is not a simple technical target. Nor can it be seen as a result of a mere educational algorithm. It deals with all aspects of the human condition and requires us to fully involve those aspects of our common humanity which strive for elevation and fulfilment.

Given the unity of the human condition that lies beneath the endless variety of mankind, we could elicit several types of *homo* – conflicting or complementary – in line with the progression of societies and the emergence of cultures (Carneiro, 1998).

- ❑ *homo faber* excelled in cultures of tools
- ❑ *homo socialis* developed cultures of group relation
- ❑ *homo mediaticus* expanded cultures of communication and intermediation
- ❑ *homo ludens* preferred the cultures of leisure
- ❑ *homo economicus* concentrated in cultures of appropriation and accumulation
- ❑ *homo conectus* – the latest mutant – is an expert in cultures of networking

We could extend this analysis *ad nauseam*. However, the final mosaic is made up of hybrids rather than by pure breeds; in other words, each human is an intricate combination of the different types collated in any such classification of organisms).

The fundamental question is whether these developments, however interesting, contribute to the real advancement of *homo sapiens*, the wisest echelon of a species destined to contemplate the universe and to derive from it cultures of interpretation.

A minimum learning platform is that threshold level - translated into knowledge and basic understanding of humanity - that allows for a personal quest for meaning. Employability, certainly, but also the ability to question one's sense of existence and draw all the radical consequences springing from the apparently simple awareness that no-one lives in isolation: learning to live together, learning to learn together and learning to grow

together, are closely intertwined in the pathway springing from the basic values of solidarity and sharing, leading to a firm commitment toward freedom and excellence.

Education is the road to personal empowerment especially when attuned to a landscape of uncertainty and change. A broad approach to human advancement needs requires overcoming the linear - unidimensional - concept of skills upgrading. It is true that, from the economic point of view, society requires the furthering of professional development and the fostering of sustainable employability at all times. But two other categories merit the adequate provision of educational effort: personal and cultural development, and social and community development.

While personal and cultural assets contribute to the enhancement of individual meaning-making, social and community development addresses the fundamental quest of active citizenship in our modern complex societies. The formation of social capital is not a minor challenge. Quite on the contrary, it lays the foundations of social cohesion and trust - a necessary ingredient of robust societies - thus providing the setting where sustainable development becomes possible and mature communities can blossom.

A profile of European values

The previous considerations lead to concerns over the preservation of our common European heritage.

In preparing present or future citizens for the tasks of participating in the consolidation and further development of Europe, it becomes increasingly evident that employability issues go hand in hand with the profile of values that we, as a community, share.

Learning to live together requires sharing a vision and a sense of belonging. Over the centuries, Europeans have been able to affirm and propose to the global community a set of values that have developed into what has been gradually identified in political jargon as "the Western World". Some main elements of this canon are:

“A minimum learning platform is not a simple technical target. Nor can it be seen as a result of a mere educational algorithm. It deals with all aspects of the human condition and requires us to fully involve those aspects of our common humanity which strive for elevation and fulfilment.”



Table 2

On development and learning: 4+4 pillars.

The four pillars of development

Skilled people
 Knowledge institutions
 Knowledge networks
 Information infrastructures

The four pillars of learning

Learning to be
 Learning to know
 Learning to do
 Learning to live together

other words, it makes the most of a multi-sectoral approach which imparts the pleasure of learning through all stages of life.

Learning to do lays the groundwork for bridging knowledge and skills, learning and competences, inert and active knowledge, codified and tacit knowledge, the psychology and the sociology of learning. This proposition draws the attention of educators and policy-makers to the need for further experimentation with alternative models involving both periods of formal classroom learning and professional experience. Learning by doing and doing by learning is the key to the most sought after problem-solving skills required to face uncertainty and the changing nature of work.

Finally, learning to live together epitomises a formidable challenge. This pillar addresses the building of cohesion thresholds, in the absence of which communities are not viable and development does not take place. It contemplates the construction of core citizenship values within intercultural settings. Ultimately, it provides the pre-condition for a culture of peace.

Learning throughout life and the way to inclusive knowledge

A minimum learning platform open to all presupposes a knowledge system whose access is inclusive. Such a definition contrasts with the traditional approach to education and training, which was a source of multiple exclusions and encompassed selective processes vis-à-vis economic activity.

The information society has the potential to overcome the exclusive mode typical of industrial organisation. But it also contains the potential to widen disparities based on inequalities of knowledge distribution in any given society.

The way to inclusive knowledge follows a fine line. It must take on board the momentous possibilities offered by new information and communication technologies (ICT) both to reverse a tradition of social stratification and to learn to work effectively against forces which produce inter-generational poverty. Implementing

“A minimum learning platform open to all presupposes a knowledge system whose access is inclusive. Such a definition contrasts with the traditional approach to education and training, which was a source of multiple exclusions and encompassed selective processes vis-à-vis economic activity.”

- human rights and the superlative value of human dignity;
- personal responsibility, fundamental freedoms and democratic rule;
- peace and the rejection of violence as a means;
- respect for others and the spirit of solidarity;
- equitable development;
- equal opportunities;
- principles of rational thought;
- ethics of evidence and proof as a basis for scientific thinking;
- preservation of the ecosystem.

Europe must stand fast on those values to live up to her historic international duties and to deliver accordingly. For many centuries Europe was a major source of spiritual wealth to humanity. The transition from an industrial to a knowledge-based society entails a host of transformations both in the development paradigm and in the appropriate learning strategies. The four pillars of development (World Bank, 1998) and of modern learning (UNESCO, 1996) can be outlined as shown in table 2.

Learning to be emerges as a timeless priority. This pillar relates to the lasting construction of identity – personal or collective - and to the formation of the self. The learning process involved entails a lifelong inner journey conducive to maturity and self-determination.

Learning to know is embedded in the realm of scientific progress and technological breakthrough. Moreover, this principle addresses the urgent need to respond to new sources of information, to diversity in multimedia content, to new modes of learning in a networked society and to the growing importance of knowledge-workers. To express it in



a learning society will have to cope with the conventional predictors of exclusion in our communities: ethnic minorities, slum areas and urban squatters, poor social background, single parent families, multiple school failure, and many more familiar deprivations.

The contrast between a classical and a new approach to learning strategies is schematically depicted in table 3.

A fresh strategy inspired by the notion of inclusive knowledge nurtures the development of a community of learners. A society propelled by the desire to learn throughout life should base its learning policies on six broad directions:

- ❑ ensuring a diversity of learning itineraries;
- ❑ warranting continuing learning opportunities to all members of the community;
- ❑ fostering community participation in the design and delivery of learning;
- ❑ implementing antidotes to un-learning and to de-skilling;
- ❑ adding social dimensions to knowledge production and diffusion;
- ❑ finding remedies to overcome the inequitable distribution of intelligence.

These policies stem from a totally different perspective of the educational system and the roles of its main actors. Three simple illustrations can help understand the scope of such institutional changes. Firstly, the introduction of a study-time entitlement scheme following the compulsory schooling period could decisively assist in shifting from a teaching supply paradigm to a learning demand paradigm. Secondly, putting teachers and educators at the centre of new learning opportunities may reverse a longstanding inertia of educational institutions and release new energy to drive a lifelong learning policy. Thirdly, a dual system combining strengths of both enterprises and schools can help minimise the “trust gap” between employers and training centres, making the most of cooperative ventures and profiting from the corporate curriculum.

These societal partnerships for learning potentially bear a host of advantages. In fact, the responsibility for ensuring broad opportunities to access knowledge and to advance in learning no longer lies with

Table 3

The way to inclusive knowledge

Classical approach	New approach
What to teach How to teach	Where to learn When to learn
Initial education for a lifetime	Flexible learning throughout life
Status-ridden knowledge	Inclusive knowledge

one segment of society alone. One obvious area of cooperation is that which looks to the complex problem of non-formal skills and related modes of acquisition. Indeed, the intangible asset base of our economies is constantly broadening as a consequence of multiple ways to access knowledge such as: learning by doing, accumulation of experience, tacit knowledge formation, Internet browsing, oblique transmission practices, self-learning, learning through mobility, non-formal apprenticeship, and so forth.

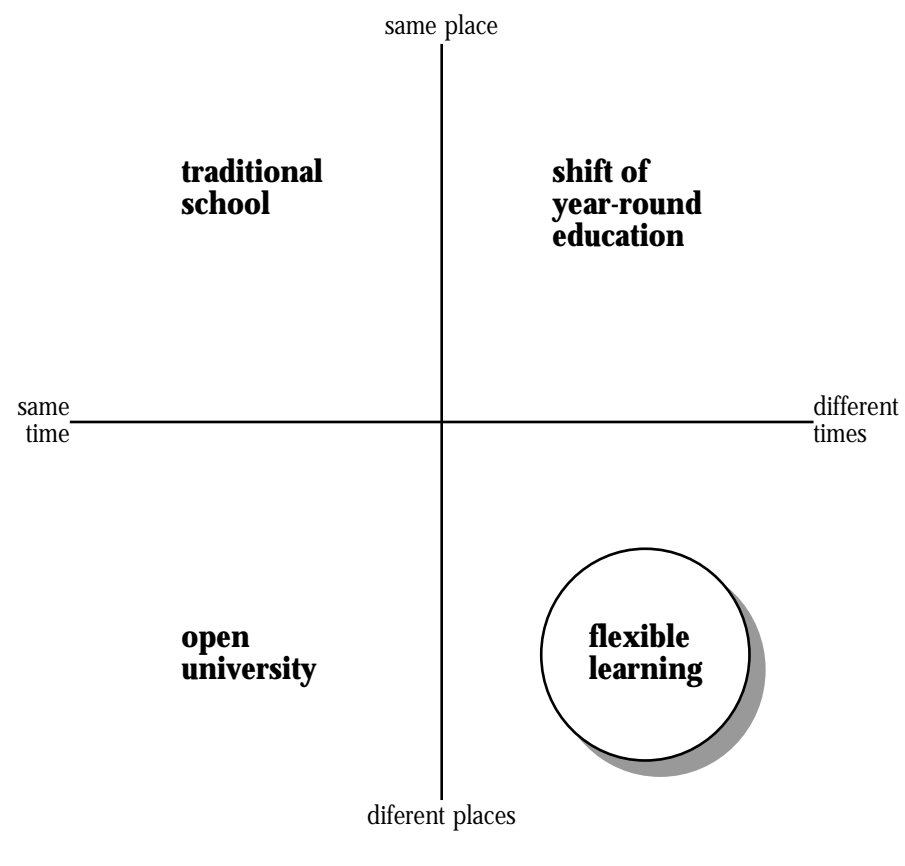
Our highly competitive environments make it untenable to overlook the effects of non-formal learning, or to undervalue its contribution to the sustainability of European economies. Finding innovative ways to recognise, measure, accredit and certify such knowledge and skills is a matter of urgency, even survival. Furthermore, this is a task to be performed in conjunction between firms, educational institutions, employers associations and unions, if we think that our dual society – very much a consequence of sharp educational gulfs between generations – merits urgent redressing.

Changes in society entail a commensurate shift in teaching and learning paradigms.

“Our highly competitive environments make it untenable to overlook the effects of non-formal learning, or to undervalue its contribution to the sustainability of European economies. Finding innovative ways to recognise, measure, accredit and certify such knowledge and skills is a matter of urgency, even survival.”



Table 4
Traditional and flexible delivery systems in education and learning.



tific way of knowing while *techné* reported the acquisition of technical knowledge. *Dianoia* assembled all the relevant cognitive processes. However, the wealth of practical knowledge derived from learning through experience occupied an equally important place in Plato's cognitive philosophy: *metis* was the name he attributed to this knowledge base, anticipating to a large degree what are nowadays the elaborate theories surrounding concepts of tacit knowledge and cunning intelligence.

Policies that espouse the natural formation of wisdom out of life will increasingly demand *metis*-friendly institutions, that is to say institutions that draw strength from learning from actual skills at work in the real world. Solid manifold experience, proven to be effective under the most severe conditions, remains in short supply. It is somewhat tragic that scholarly knowledge is so often made up of contempt for the unobserved social constructs that travel between generations by simple observation, by mentoring, by doing and by means of informal advice.

A new social contract for Europe

Europe has invariably connected development and community wealth to some kind of a social contract. The burning questions concerning the European way to the future or, in other words, our prevailing social model constitute another way of formulating the same question: that of the contractual basis of our society and of the rulings set out to harmonize the legitimate interests of the state, society and the citizen¹.

The social contract is mostly an implicit agreement, accepted by all parties concerned. The post-war social contract, which lasted successfully for some 50 years, is now grossly outdated. This terminal stage is becoming apparent in a number of assumptions that no longer hold today: stable and full employment; the benefits of the welfare state; limitless economic growth machinery; absolute faith in democratic governance; strict separation between constitutional powers.

There remains little doubt that unless a new concerted effort is put into practice

This transition from traditional modes of delivery, inspired by the needs of static markets, to an environment with variable geometry markets, liberated from the industrial model of heavyweight formal institutions, is schematically depicted in table 4.

Flexible learning systems will gradually replace outmoded formal education and training designs based on same place or same time delivery concepts. Flexible systems in knowledge access will take full advantage of new information technology possibilities granting learners freedom to choose the most convenient time or place to exercise their learning activities in a permanent fashion (Carneiro, op. cit. 1998). Knowing is no longer a prerogative bestowed by formal institutions. Plato, two and a half millenia ago, had the perfect premonition of how important it would be to allow a multiplicity of ways to know. *Epistheme* was the scien-

1) For an abridged but very telling essay on the traditions of the free city and the origins of our social contract see Q. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1998.



to produce a different social contract, tailored to serve the complex information society and to make the most of the learning challenges, our societies will run into growing difficulties. In this new contractual approach, the economy will go on playing an important role; however, it is not the sole nor the primordial factor. Full citizenship standards, striking a right balance between duties and rights, will increasingly call upon values such as justice, fairness, equity and solidarity in both our national and international orders.

Adam Smith, a founding father of modern economics, put it eloquently: "The major differences between the most dissimilar of human beings are not based on nature but on habit, custom and education". These words suggest a new social contract inspired by the meeting of two ends. On one hand, the full realisation of education as a right, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; on the other, the recognition of learning as a moral obligation, regardless of whether such a precept impinges upon individuals, organisations or societies as a whole.

By this token, strategies and policies aiming at Europe-wide acceptance of a mini-

mum learning platform would be regarded from a totally different angle. The unfolding of multiple supply opportunities is certainly an integral part of the contract. But equally decisive would now appear to be the stimulation of demand as part and parcel of a new vision of both social obligations and moral duties. A European dimension to continuous learning throughout life springs from this combination of rights and duties produced from the ferment of the emergent learning society.

Modern complexity theory as proclaimed by the most renowned authorities tells us that it is in the inner nature of complex systems to self-organise (Krugman, 1996). Another current doctrine affecting complex systems is that self-organisation stems from a limited cluster of emergent properties.

The information society tends to self-organise around patterns of cognition. The pivotal emergent property conditioning the very future of these multifarious societies is learning. The winners will be selected among those peoples, societies and systems that fully grasp this challenge and that sooner than others develop into learning societies and nurture knowledge-based structures.

"The post-war social contract, which lasted successfully for some 50 years, is now grossly outdated. (...) unless a new concerted effort is put into practice to produce a different social contract, tailored to serve the complex information society and to make the most of the learning challenges, our societies will run into growing difficulties. In this new contractual approach, the economy will go on playing an important role; however, it is not the sole nor the primordial factor."

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International Commission for Education in the 21st Century (1996) Learning, The Treasure Within, UNESCO, Paris.

Krugman P. R. (1996) The Self-Organising Economy, Blackwell Publishers, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

World Development Report 1998/99, Knowledge for Development, **World Bank**, Oxford University Press, Washington, D.C.

This section has been prepared by **Anne Waniart**, and the Documentation Service with the help of members of the national documentation network

This section lists the most important and recent publications on developments in training and qualifications at an international and European level. Giving preference to comparative works, it also lists national studies carried out as part of international and European programmes, analyses of the impact of Community action on the Member States and national studies seen from an external perspective.

Europe International

Information, comparative studies

An age of learning: vocational training policy at European level

Bainbridge, Steve; Murray, Julie; Ward, Terry
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Cedefop
Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000, 146 p.
Reference document
ISBN: 92-828-8051-6
EUR-OP,
2 rue Mercier,
L-2985 Luxembourg,
or from its national sales offices
E-mail: info.info@opoce.cec.be
URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int/>
Cat. No: HX-25-99-075-EN-C

An age of learning analyses vocational training policy developments at European level over the past 40 years. It looks at the current action being taken in Member States in this area and examines the impact of economic and social change on vocational training. It is generally agreed that to meet the challenge of change people need access to learning throughout their working life. Lifelong learning is regarded as an important element in the development of vocational training. But making lifelong learning a reality has far-reaching implications. It raises important questions about the future of vocational training. Establishing systems of lifelong learning requires a fundamental examination of vocational training policy. To support this process the report suggests Europe provide a reference point through the establishment of a clearer policy framework. This framework should encourage a systematic exchange of information about and experience of lifelong learning to support policy-making. The report argues that the elements of such a system exist. The challenge at European level lies in bringing these elements together. The report contains: references to sources of EU legislation and policy statements in the area of vocational training; comparative statistical data, including links between qualification levels and

employment, earnings, and participation in vocational training; analysis of vocational training policies in the EU Member States drawn from their national action plans (NAPs) for employment.

Towards the learning region: education and regional innovation in the European Union and the United States

Nyhan, Barry; Deitmer, Ludger; Atwell, Graham (eds.)
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Cedefop
Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000, 155 p.
Reference document
ISBN: 92-828-8597-6
EUR-OP, 2 rue Mercier,
L-2985 Luxembourg,
or from its national sales offices
E-mail: info.info@opoce.cec.be,
URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int/>
Cat. No: HX-26-99-441-EN-C

This book examines the trend towards regional strategies to address economic and social objectives that has been growing in recent years in Europe and the United States. The driving force behind this trend is a belief that self-directing and outward-looking regional communities can confront the challenge of globalisation and build sustainable social systems in a way that bigger national entities cannot. Regions are small enough to be flexible and manageable, but also big enough to flex their muscles on the international stage. Community-oriented education and development agencies are beginning to play a major role in these developments. They are catalysts for the production of new ideas. But they are also acting as brokers and mediators enabling groups from the public and private sector to work together to develop the know-how to turn plans into reality. A region implementing an education-led innovation strategy can be called a 'learning region'. This book provides an overview of innovative practices in regions in the United States and Europe. It contains sixteen papers written by experts from the educational, economic and regional development fields in the United States and the European Un-



ion. These papers analyse the ingredients of regional innovation and describe successful case studies.

OECD information technology outlook 2000: ICTs, e-commerce and the information economy

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD
Paris: OECD, 2000, 260 p.
ISBN: 92-64-17185-1 (en)
OECD Publications,
2 rue André-Pascal,
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16,
Tel. (33-1) 45248200,
Fax 49104276,
E-mail: sales@oecd.org,
URL: <http://www.oecd.org/publications>

Information technology (IT) is significantly affecting the economy, the growth and structure of output, occupations and employment and how people use their time. The OECD information technology outlook 2000 describes the rapid growth in the supply and demand for information technology goods and services and their role in the expanding Internet economy and looks at emerging uses of information technology. It reflects the spread and diversity of a technology that is underpinning economic and social transformation. It makes use of the new official national sources of data, which are becoming available as statistical mapping of the information economy improves.

The Appraisal of Investments in Educational Facilities

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD
Paris: OECD, 2000 236 p.
ISBN: 92-64-17036-7 (en)
OECD Publications,
2 rue André-Pascal,
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16,
Tel. (33-1) 45248200,
Fax 49104276,
E-mail: sales@oecd.org,
URL: <http://www.oecd.org/publications>

The appraisal of the substantial investments which are being made in educational facilities remains a largely unexplored field of research. Is it possible to develop reliable and effective criteria for evaluation, given the wide range of pa-

rameters from planning and cost-effectiveness of buildings to their impact on the performance of the educational system as a whole? These questions, which are facing every modern educational system, are of concern to investors and funding bodies, as well as those who are responsible for planning, managing and designing educational facilities.

Vocational education and training reform: matching skills to markets and budgets: a joint World Bank-ILO publication

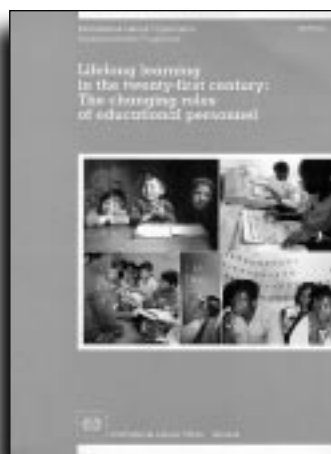
Gill, Indermit; Fluitman, Fred; Dar, Amit (eds.)
World Bank; International Labour Office, ILO
Herndon: World Bank, 2000
ISBN: 0-19-521590-7

Governments often expect more from their vocational education and training (VET) systems than the systems have been able to provide. These high expectations have resulted in heavy government involvement in VET. However, the exaggerated expectations and overly involved governments appear to be responsible for the disappointments that have plagued VET in many countries. Some countries are now realising that demands made of VET systems may have been unrealistic and that government's heavy involvement may be unnecessary. Based on the experiences of countries worldwide, Vocational Education and Training Reform examines the constraints they face in implementing VET and related policies, analyses how some countries have successfully implemented reforms, and evaluates VET reforms in central and eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and other countries in transition to a market economy, such as China. This book was produced jointly by the World Bank and the International Labour Office.

Lifelong learning in the twenty-first century: The changing roles of educational personnel: report for discussion at the joint meeting on lifelong learning in the twenty-first century

International Labour Office, ILO
Joint Meeting on Lifelong Learning in, Geneva, 10-14 April 2000
Geneva: ILO, 2000, various pagination





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tries,
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Fax (41-22) 7998577
E-mail: pubvente@ilo.org
<http://www.ilo.org>*

The report has been prepared using a wide variety of sources, beginning with information available from a range of ILO reports and statistical material. Important material was provided by ILO officials from the Training Policies and Systems Branch, the Bureau of Statistics, and the Special Team: World Employment 1998-99. Extensive use was made of data, analysis and viewpoints on education and lifelong learning generously provided by the following individuals and organisations: officials of the Education, Training and Youth Directorate of the European Commission; the Director and staff of Eurydice, the Information Network on Education in Europe; staff of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training; staff of the International Bureau for Education (IBE); the Deputy Director (Education) and principal administrators of the Directorate of Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and officials of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Viewpoints and information were also provided by employers' and teachers' organisations, and by a number of academic specialists and practitioners in the field of lifelong learning, education and training. Extensive use was made of official government reports available on Internet sites or through inter-governmental organisations.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/jmep2000/jmep1.htm> <http://www.ilo.org/public/french/dialogue/sector/techmeet/jmep2000/jmep1.htm> <http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/dialogue/sector/techmeet/jmep2000/jmep1.htm>

Training for employment: Social inclusion, productivity and youth employment: Human resources training

and development: Vocational guidance and vocational training

International Labour Office, ILO
International labour conference, 88th session, Geneva, 2000
Geneva: ILO, 2000, 62 p.
International labour conference (88) Report 5
ISSN: 0074-6681
*ILO Publications,
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland,
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tries,
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Fax (41-22) 7998577
E-mail: pubvente@ilo.org
URL: <http://www.ilo.org>*

The ILO Governing Body decided at its March 1998 session that human resources development and training should be the subject of a general discussion at the International Labour Conference in 2000. The present report is therefore intended to stimulate a discussion on: the new context of human resources development and training and the new demand for skills and competences in an increasingly integrated world economy; and the knowledge and skills society (Chapter I); the rationale of human resources development and training for improved competitiveness, employability and equity in employment, and the respective roles of basic education, initial training, and continuing training in promoting and maintaining employability (Chapter II); the specific issue of youth employment and training (Chapter III) - an issue which the ILO's Governing Body decided at its March 1999 session should be part of the present general discussion; and the HRD and training challenge in today's world: new policies and institutional frameworks and new roles for the partners in training (Chapter IV). At the end of the report a set of points for discussion are suggested. Ultimately, the Conference Committee on the subject will be expected to advise the Office on whether a new Human Resources Development Recommendation should be submitted for adoption at a subsequent session of the Conference.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc88/rep-v.htm> <http://www.ilo.org/public/french/standards/relm/ilc/ilc88/rep-v.htm> <http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/standards/relm/ilc/ilc88/rep-v.htm>





Workers without frontiers: the impact of globalisation on international migration

Stalker, Peter

International Labour Office, ILO

Geneva: ILO, 2000, 163 p.

ISBN: 92-2-111383-3

ILO Publications,

CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland,

or from ILO local offices in many countries,

Tel. (41-22) 7997912,

Fax (41-22) 7998577,

E-mail: pubvente@ilo.org,

URL: <http://www.ilo.org>

This book brings together the findings and conclusions of empirical studies by the ILO and many others on how greater integration of capital and commodity markets may have reduced or further widened income disparities between nations and among groups within them. It also examines whether reducing poverty is likely to dampen people's propensity to emigrate, and whether in a more integrated global economy the prospects of development of poor States would be helped or undermined by the impact of migration on their labour markets. The book is disturbing in its conclusion that the evidence so far available on the impact of globalisation points to a likely worsening of migration pressures in many parts of the world. The author finds that processes integral to globalisation have intensified the disruptive effects of modernisation and capitalist development and talks about 'a crisis of economic security.' This book will help stimulate thinking about what should be the shape of future migration regime that fully respects the rights of individual migrants, while enhancing the positive role of migration in growth and development.

The dynamics of wage relations in the new Europe

Clarke, Linda; De Gijssel, Peter; Janssen, Jörn (eds.)

Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, 351 p.

ISBN: 0-7923-7742-7

This book is intended to inform and intensify debate on wage relations in Europe. It focuses on three aspects: 1) the State and regulation of wages, 2) wage

forms, the reproduction of labour and living standards, and 3) competition, the market and changes in work organisation. In papers and discussion by a range of leading experts from eastern and western Europe, rehearsed initially at a symposium supported by the European Commission, entrenched orthodoxies are challenged and new approaches proposed. Should social protection be integrated into the wage system? Are wages best determined according to the quality, quantity or value of the input or the output of labour? How do wage relations reinforce inequalities and social divisions, especially gender divisions, and exclude sections of society? Have flexibility in the labour market and unregulated competition adversely affected firms' productivity and the organisation of work and pay? These and many related questions are addressed in this wide-ranging book - essential reading for all those concerned with wage policies, whether politicians, academics, employers, trade unions and others interested in the subject.

European Union: policies, programmes, participants

The 'Rolling Agenda': working document on new working procedures for European cooperation in the field of education and training

European Commission, Directorate-general for Education and Culture

Brussels: European Commission - Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2000, 19 p.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture -

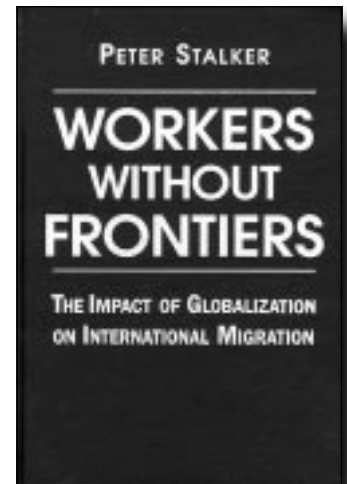
Office B7,

rue de la Loi 2000,

B-1049 Brussels,

Tel. (32-2) 2966571

The Education Council in Tampere in September 1999 agreed to base its work on a rolling agenda, as a means of ensuring continuity under successive Presidencies and enabling a more effective exchange of information, experience and good practice between Member States. Initially, three subjects were selected for inclusion: 1) role of education and training in employment policies; 2) development of quality education and training at all lev-





els; and 3) promotion of mobility, including recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Towards a European research area

Commission of the European Communities

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000

Documents COM (2000) 6 final, 38 p.

ISSN: 0254-1491

EUR-OP,

2 rue Mercier,

L-2985 Luxembourg,

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E-mail: info.info@opoce.cec.be,

URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int>

This communication is the result of a coordinated impetus and a determined effort to increase and better organise the European research effort in the Member States and adapt it to the new candidate countries. This European research area should be an area where the scientific capacity and material resources in Member States can be put to best use, where national and European policies can be implemented more coherently, and where people and knowledge can circulate more freely; an area both attractive to European

researchers from third countries and built on respect for the common social and ethical values of Europeans and their diversity.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.html>

Strategies for jobs in the information society - Communication from the Commission

Commission of the European Communities

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000

Documents COM(2000)48 final, 36 p.

ISSN: 0254-1475

EUR-OP,

2 rue Mercier,

L-2985 Luxembourg,

or from its national sales offices,

E-mail: info.info@opoce.cec.be,

URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int>

Cat. No: KT-CO-00-047-EN-C

This Communication sets out a strategy to prepare Europe for the future, a strategy focused on people and communities whose participation is essential to Europe's progress towards the Information Society. It widens the perspective from job opportunities to job strategies, building on successful initiatives in the Member States and stressing the strong linkage between enhancing Europe's response to the Information Society and fostering employment in Europe.



From the Member States

D Lernen, Wissensmanagement und berufliche Bildung (Learning, knowledge management and vocational training)

Dehnbostel, Peter; Dybowski, Gisela
Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, BIBB
Technical Meeting 'Berufliche Bildung in lernenden Organisationen', Berlin: 15. - 16.10.1998
Berichte zur beruflichen Bildung, vol. 234
Bielefeld: Bertelsmann, 2000, 238 p.
ISBN: 3-7639-0895-1

The globalisation of world markets means that companies are faced with harsher competition. The rapid processing and use of information and the acquisition of additional competences have become essential preconditions for survival in an increasingly crowded market. New forms of learning, knowledge management and vocational training have become necessary to keep pace with radical changes. The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has undertaken an empirical study of the new challenges facing the innovative capacity of companies in a series of pilot studies as part of the 'BILSTRAT' research project. What is required is a change in our understanding of education, learning and knowledge, and the implementation of new directions for learning in individual, organisational and cultural areas. This volume compiles the papers given at the technical meeting 'Berufliche Bildung in lernenden Organisationen' (Vocational training in learning organisations), where the results of the project were presented and discussed.

Workshop Kosten, Finanzierung und Nutzen beruflicher Bildung 10. Hochschultage Berufliche Bildung, (Costs, Financing and Benefits of Vocational Training, 10th University Conference on Vocational Training) Dresden: 23-25 September 1998

Kath, Folkmar (ed.)
Der Vorstand der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Hochschultage Berufliche Bildung e.V. - Hochschule, Betriebe und Schule
Neusäß: Kieser 1999, 170 p.
ISBN: 3-8242-1068-1

This volume is a compilation of the lectures presented at the Workshop 'Kosten, Finanzierung und Nutzen beruflicher Bildung' (Costs, Financing and Benefits of Vocational Training) organised within the framework of the 10th University Conference on Vocational Training. The subject was approached from various angles: from the scientific angle to show the current state of research and to identify research deficits; from the political angle to make the effectiveness of different financing models more transparent; and from the business angle to show the significance of decisions for corporate strategy. Contents: Becker: Bildung als Investition; Bardeleben/Beicht: Kosten und Nutzen der Ausbildung in Deutschland; Steiner/Lassnigg: Kosten und Nutzen der betrieblichen Ausbildung in Österreich; Schulz: Kosten und Nutzen der Lehrlingsausbildung in der Schweiz; Kath: Finanzierung der Berufsausbildung im dualen System; Sauter: Finanzierung der beruflichen Weiterbildung; Ulrich: Finanzielle Förderung der beruflichen Ausbildung in Ostdeutschland; Hübel: Verbundausbildung - eine alternative Finanzierungsform; Walden: Kosten, Nutzen und Finanzierung der beruflichen Bildung - Herausforderung für die Forschung.

DK New organisation of work: not as easy as you might think

Banke, Palle; Holsbo, Annemarie; Madsen, Anne Mette
National Labour Market Authority, ACIU;
Ministry of Social Affairs
Copenhagen: ACIU, 1999, 24 p.
ISBN: 87-90021-25-8
*ACIU,
Hesseløgade 16,
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø*

This booklet deals with the issue of new organisation of work. In recent years, it has become generally accepted that the development of workplaces must be a result of correlated development of the organisation of work and the qualifications of employees. The booklet describes the changing perception of the organisation



of work from Taylor to present day. Furthermore, a model for the implementation of development projects is presented. The model is based on experiences from nine ADAPT projects that have focused on changes in the organisation of work. The booklet was published in connection with the conference 'The Future of the Workforce – The Workforce of the Future' held in Copenhagen in 1999.

Forsøg med erhvervsuddannelsesreform 2000: opsamling af de første erfaringer
(Experiments with vocational training reform 2000: gathering of the first experiences)

Shapiro, Hanne
 Undervisningsministeriet, UVM
 Uddannelsesstyrelsens temahæfteserie nr. 15, 2000
 Copenhagen: UVM, 2000, 2 vol. (112, 194 p.)
 ISBN: 87-603-1688-8 (vol. 1)
 ISBN: 87-603-1680-2 (vol. 2)
 Undervisningsministeriets forlag,
 Strandgade 100 D,
 DK-1401 Copenhagen K

From 2001, the Danish VET reform will be implemented in all vocational schools. However, a number of schools are already running the new training programmes on an experimental basis. These experimental projects are closely monitored and described in order to readjust the reform. This publication describes the results of a study made by the Technological Institute in the period from November 1999 to February 2000. The Technological Institute has collected experiences from a number of experimental projects and describes on this basis the various models, tools and methods tested in the projects. The aim of the publication is to inspire the VET schools and other stakeholders in the continuous work of preparing and implementing Reform 2000.

E Gestión bipartita de la formación continua
(Bipartite management of continuing training)

Ferrer J; Redondo J; (et al.)
 International Labour Office; Foundation for Continuing Training
 Madrid: Forcem, 1999, 241p.

Forcem,
Calle Albacete 5-7 pl.,
E-28027 Madrid

This volume contains a systematic compilation of the papers presented at the 1st Euro-Latin American Seminar on Bipartite Management of Continuing Training held in Madrid in November 1998. The papers are grouped in the following subject categories: training perspectives in Spain, including the National Vocational Training Programme and the three training sub-systems (initial, occupational and continuing training); the management of continuing training in Spain by the trade unions and the employers and the experience of Training for Continuing Training, with presentations from the trade unions and the employers' confederations; social dialogue and the bipartite management of training in Europe where developments in the EU Member States were presented; social dialogue and training in Europe, with the participation of the Union of the Confederations of Industry and Employers of Europe and a statement on the role of the social partners in training in Europe; training in Latin America and the outlook for bipartite management and collective bargaining. The volume also presents a summary of the reports and conclusions of the working groups (listed in the annex), which contain a number of recommendations for the improvement of bipartite management.

F Formation tout au long de la vie
(Lifelong learning)

Gauron, André
 Conseil d'Analyse Economique, CAE
 Paris : La Documentation française, Direction des journaux officiels, 2000, 168 p.
 (Rapports du CAE; 22)
 ISBN 2-11-004518-3
 La Documentation française,
 124 rue Henri-Barbusse,
 F-93308 Aubervilliers cedex

Undertaken at the request of the State Secretariat for Vocational Training and Women's Rights, this report seeks to throw some light on the key factors affecting lifelong learning and its direct relationship with employment: comparison with various industrialised countries, analysis of the training/employment relationship, contri-



butions to innovation and the modernisation of companies, impact on entry into the working world, the importance of the training market. Five proposals are made with a view to 'recasting' training: a stronger link between the basic training and alternance training of young people; transition from compulsory expenditure to a reciprocal commitment to training; a right to certification of vocational competences; priority for training for the low-skilled; a more transparent training market.

**Traité des sciences et des techniques de formation
(Treatise on training sciences and techniques)**

Carré, Philipp ; Caspar, Pierre (eds.)

Paris : Dunod, 1999, 512 p.

ISBN 2-10-004495-8

Dunod Editeur,

120 boulevard Saint-Germain,

SESJM,

F-75006 Paris

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http://www.dunod.com

This treatise offers a comprehensive survey of reference knowledge produced in the field of adult education; it is addressed both to students and practitioners. Written by some thirty specialists, researchers and adult education practitioners, the contributions are grouped into three main categories. The first part shows that training is embedded in a historical, economic, legal and sociological context. The second part examines the question 'How and why does an adult learn?' and deals with different psycho-pedagogical concepts such as the cognitive development of adults, skills, motivations, memory, the individual and the group, etc. Finally, a third set of texts shows the current trends in thinking and action in the areas of engineering, didactics and pedagogy. The conclusion proposes a forward-looking analysis of adult education.

FI New challenges in the co-operation between education and training and working life. Final report.

Tampere, Finland, 18-19.11.1999

Nyyssölä, Kari (ed.)

European Commission, EC
Opetusministeriö; Opetushallitus
OPM; OPH

Helsinki: OPM, OPH, EC 2000, 232 p.

ISBN952-442-290-5

Kari Nyyssölä,

Opetushallitus,

PL 380,

FIN-00531 Helsinki

Vocational education is seeking new forms for the 21st century. The globalisation of the world economy and developments in information technology are having a greater impact on the planning and development of vocational education than ever before. The goal of vocational education will be to increase the professional expertise of the entire working population, to provide basic preparation for lifelong learning and to fulfil the needs of the workplace. Achieving these goals requires cooperation between educational organisations and working life as well as between European States. This report is based on the New Challenges in the co-operation between Education and Training and Working Life -conference held in Tampere on 18-19 November 1999. The report deals with the comparison of various on-the-job learning models, the impact of the Leonardo programme, the EUROPASS Training and the quality of on-the-job learning. The report contributes to the European discussion on on-the-job learning, hopefully inspiring new ideas in the bringing together of education and working life.

Kohti uutta opettajuutta toisen asteen ammatillisessa koulutuksessa. Skenariot opettajan työn muutoksista ja opettajien koulutustarpeista vuoteen 2010

(Towards teachership in secondary-level vocational education. Scenarios of changes in teacher's work and of teachers' training needs by 2010)

Honka, Juhani; Lampinen, Lasse; Vertanen, Ilkka (eds.)

European Social Fund, ESF

Opetushallitus, OPH

Opettajien perus- ja täydennyiskoulutuksen ennakointihankkeen (OPEPRO) selvitys 10

Helsinki: OPH, 2000, 201 p.

Opetushallitus/kirjasto,

PL 380,



*FIN-00531 Helsinki,
http://www.edu.fi/projektit/oepro*

This report examines the pedagogical basic and in-service training needs of secondary-level vocational teachers by the year 2010. The training needs are examined in terms of both content and quantity. The survey is based on changes that have taken place in working life and the challenges they have created for the development of vocational education. Information about current teaching staff is based on a survey carried out in autumn 1998. The report discusses changes in the teaching culture of vocational education and their impact on teachers' work and on teacher education. The information in the report is useful to school administration officials, vocational teacher education colleges, those working in vocational education, those financing and providing continuing vocational education, as well as education planners and others interested in education.

I FaDol-Rete telematica nazionale per la formazione a distanza dei formatori (FaDol-online distance training of trainers)

Ministero del lavoro e della previdenza sociale-Ufficio centrale per l'orientamento e la formazione professionale dei lavoratori, UCOFPL

Istituto per lo sviluppo e la formazione professionale dei lavoratori, ISFOL
Roma: Ministero del lavoro e della previdenza sociale, 1999, unpagged
Ministero del lavoro e della previdenza sociale - Ufficio centrale per l'orientamento e la formazione professionale dei lavoratori, Vicolo d'Aste 12, I-00159 Roma

This text presents the Italian project for trainers' training 'FaDol' carried out by the Ministry of Labour with the technical assistance of ISFOL and funding from the ESF. By setting up an IT network throughout the country, the project aims at offering a distance-learning system that is based on a more homogeneous methodology and is technologically more advanced. Distance-learning activities are designed for refresher training, further training and re-training of personnel employed in vari-

ous phases of the training process (teachers, tutors, guidance counsellors, designers, administrative staff, etc.) belonging to the whole of the public training system. The IT link makes it possible to train a larger number of users in the workplace, at the same time and in different locations, than could be reached through classroom training. The text also contains an analysis of the objectives of the project, its technical characteristics and development perspectives in the separate regional contexts.
http://www.europalavoro.it/isfol/Fadol/fadol01.asp

IRL Programme for prosperity and fairness

Department of the Taoiseach
Dublin: Stationery Office, 2000, 132 p.
ISBN 0-7076-64381
*Government Publications
Postal Trade Section,
4-5 Harcourt Road,
IRL-Dublin 2*

This is the latest social partnership agreement in a series that has underpinned a sustained period of growth in the Irish economy. Apart from establishing future levels of pay - for the first time a national minimum wage will be introduced - and conditions of employment, the agreement sets out a number of other measures to sustain Ireland's international competitiveness while improving quality of life and living standards and tackling social exclusion as a matter of urgency. These measures are set out in five Operational Frameworks, one of which - 'Successful adaptation to continuing change' - encompasses lifelong learning in all its aspects, from early childhood education to post-secondary level participation and participation of mature students. It deals with second chance education, adult guidance, adult literacy, intercultural education, progression pathways and accreditation and apprenticeships.

http://www.irlgov.ie/taoiseach/publication/prosperityandfairness/default.htm

Responding to Ireland's growing skill needs, second report of the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs

O'Hare, Daniel
Expert Group on Skill Needs



Dublin: Forfas, 2000, 72 p.
Forfas,
Wilton Park House,
Wilton Place, 1
RL-Dublin 2,
<http://www.forfas.ie>

The Expert Group expects that the Irish labour market is likely to remain tight over the next decade with both a general labour shortage and skill shortages for particular categories of specialised worker. This report of the Expert Group examines both the general labour availability and the availability of workers for lower skill occupations. It also examines the skill needs of a variety of different areas, principally the main craft areas in the construction industry and the demand for graduates in the sciences and information technology. General labour shortages in the less skilled areas of the retail, contract cleaning and clothing sectors are noted for which a range of initiatives are advocated to encourage greater participation of married women, older people and those on social welfare. The report estimates that an additional 16,000 skilled craftsmen will be required by 2003. It recommends a number of measures to achieve this including further recruitment abroad, an exploration of routes to formal craft qualifications for experienced but unqualified general workers, a reduction in time taken for some apprenticeships and an immediate increase in the availability of off-the-job components of apprenticeship programmes.

**P The Future of Social Europe:
 Recasting Work and Welfare
 in the New Economy**

Ferrera, Maurizio; Hemerijck, Anton;
 Rhodes, Martin; Rodrigues, Eduardo Ferro
 (pref.)
 Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade
 – MTS
 Oeiras: Celta Editora, 2000, 132 p.
 ISBN: 972-774-067-7
CIDES-
Centro de Informação e Documentação
Económica e Social,
Praça de Londres, 2-2º,
P-1049-056 Lisbon

This book is an initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, within the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the

European Union, in collaboration with the European University Institute (Florence), and co-financed by the European Commission. This study systematically combines an analysis of the pressures confronting social Europe, with a reflection on both the constraints on and the best strategies for each Member State in the reform of its social security systems. It concludes with a series of innovative proposals for modernising and strengthening the European social model. Furthermore, the way in which the authors demystify some old preconceptions about the pressures facing social rights in Europe, the comparisons made between the problems confronting each country, as well as the suggested ways of overcoming those problems at the level of both the nation-state and Europe, make this study an important contribution to ensuring that our actions will be considered and have a sound basis.

**Inquérito à execução das acções de
 formação profissional em 1998
 (Survey of vocational training initiatives implemented in 1998)**

Departamento de Estatística do Trabalho,
 Emprego e Formação Profissional
 Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade
 – MTS
 Lisboa: Departamento de Estudos,
 Prospectiva e Planeamento – DEPP. Centro
 de Informação e Documentação Económica e Social-
 CIDES, 2000, 51 p.
 ISBN: 972-704-190-6
 ISSN: 0873-5352
CIDES-
Centro de Informação e Documentação
Económica e Social,
Praça de Londres, 2-2º,
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The Survey of Vocational Training Initiatives Implemented in 1998 had the objective of collecting indicators relating to vocational actions carried out during 1998, at the Mainland level, and within the scope of training of employees and of youth under the Apprenticeship System (Decree Law No 205/96 of 25th October). The survey was based on a sample of 5500 enterprises with 10 or more employees, covering all sectors of activity, excluding agriculture, fisheries and public administration (sections A, B, L and Q of the Classification of Economic Activities, 1992).



Data collected focused on training characteristics (training types, target groups, courses provided and their duration) as well as on financial resources and the training institutions involved. Such indicators were correlated with the variables sector of economic activity, size of the enterprise and N.U.T.II (Nomenclature of Territorial Units II).

**Guia de Aplicação Nacional Jobrotation
(Application Guide for National Job Rotation)**

SOPROFOR, Lda

Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade
- MTS

Secretaria de Estado do Emprego e Formação

Lisboa: SOPROFOR - Sociedade Promotora de Formação Lda, 1999, 69 p.

ISBN: 972-98159-0-9

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Centro de Informação e Documentação Económica e Social,

Praça de Londres, 2-2º,

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The guide explains the concept and the objectives of job/training rotation, a 'process through which a company can have the opportunity to provide continuing training for its workers and which at the same time allows unemployed people to acquire work experience in the jobs done by workers in training'. The purpose of this manual is to provide managers with a practical guide to the development of job/training rotation courses; it sets out the elements and the factors to be taken into consideration during the preparation, implementation and evaluation of this type of course. It also suggests various possibilities of obtaining funding for such projects and contains the national legal provisions on the implementation of this measure.

UK The Learning and Skills Bill

London, The Stationery Office, 1999

The Stationery Office

Publications Centre,

P.O. Box 276,

London SW8 5DT

This Bill takes forward the government's plans set out in the White Paper 'Learn-

ing to Succeed'. Its first reading in the House of Lords was in December 1999. It contains radical plans to transform post-16 learning and skills delivery in England and Wales. (Post-16 arrangements in Scotland are being reviewed separately.) The Bill proposes the establishment of new VET national bodies - the Learning and Skills Council for England and the National Council for Education and Training for Wales. The new bodies will be responsible for both college and workplace VET where previously responsibility for these sectors was split between the Further Education Funding Councils (separate ones for England and Wales) and a network of Training and Enterprise Councils. The Bill also includes: new arrangements for inspection of VET; the establishment of a new vocational guidance service for young people; and an improved framework for cooperation between schools, further education colleges and local education authorities.

<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/pabills.htm>

The learning and Skills Council Prospectus

Sheffield, Department for Education and Employment, 1999, 64 p.

DfEE Publications,

P.O. Box 5050,

Sherwood Park, Annesley,

Nottingham NG15 0DJ

This document sets out the Ministry's conclusions following consultation on the proposals for a Learning and Skills Council (for England) in the White Paper 'Learning to succeed'. (Separate but complementary proposals are being introduced in Wales.) It describes how the LSC and its 47 subsidiary local Learning and Skills Councils will work, including: details of the proposed planning and funding framework; new inspection arrangements; partnership arrangements with other VET bodies; and how the Council will meet the needs of individuals, businesses and communities.

Training and Development in Britain 2000

London, Institute of Personnel and Development, 2000, 12 p.

IPD House,



*35 Camp Road,
Wimbledon,
London SW19 4UX*

This survey is based on 600 telephone interviews with senior training managers in British organisations. The survey finds that over the last year commitment to training has risen with a larger proportion of organisations having a training budget. Organisations are, however, feeling the effects of a possible tighter labour market with a significant minority commenting that they are experiencing diffi-

culties in retaining essential employees. Other significant findings include: the need to integrate training strategy into business strategy was identified by respondents as one of the most significant issues facing establishments over the next two to three years; a rapid increase in the use of new technologies with the Internet and intranets now firmly established for training purposes in around 40% of the organisations surveyed; and a significant proportion of training managers' time spent on strategic activities like supporting organisational change.



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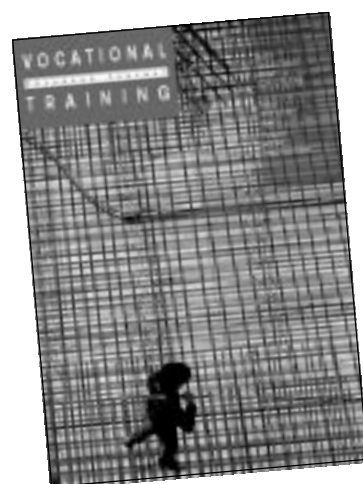
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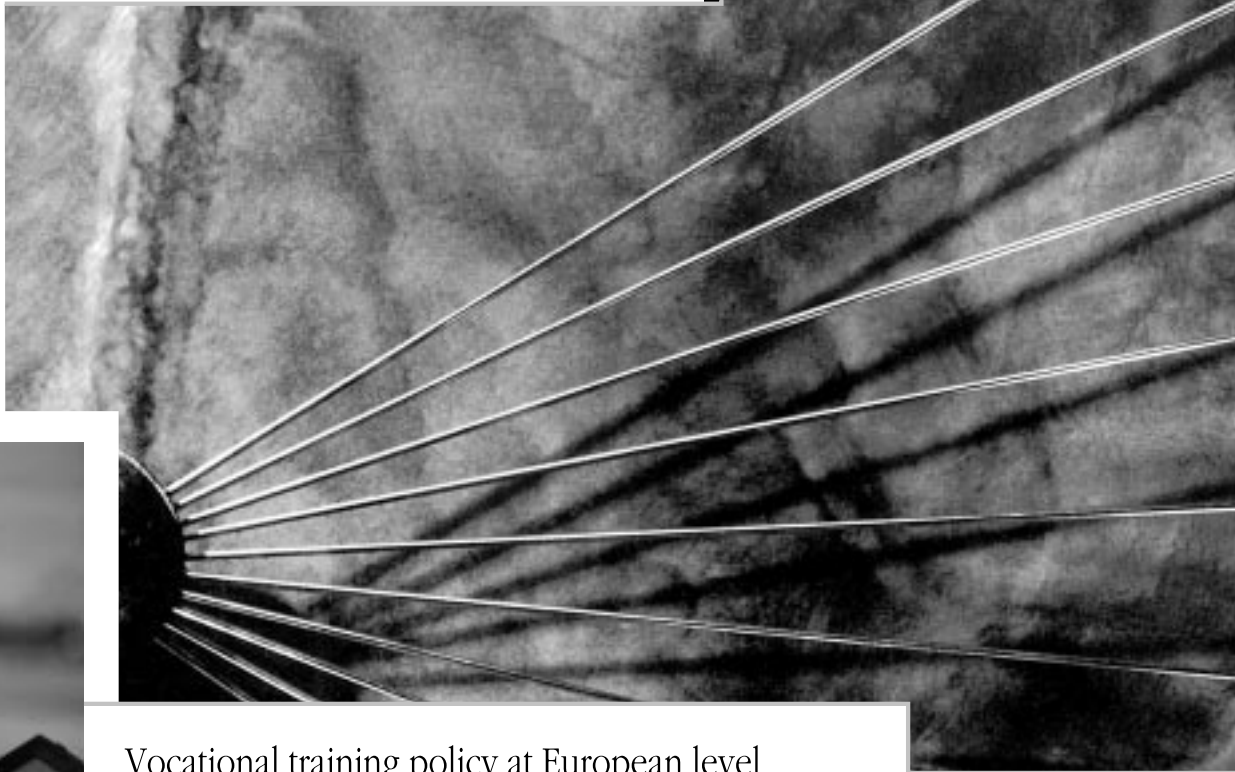
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An age of learning

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