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EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF THE CHILDREN OF ITALIAN WORKERS IN THE SAAR

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF THE CHILDREN OF ITALIAN AND PORTUGUESE WORKERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MOSELLE

Carried out by the Institut für Sozialforschung und Sozialwirtschaft (ISO) Trillerweg 56,67 - 6600 Saarbrücken (1974)

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OBJECTIVES

In recent years an increasing number of foreign workers have brought their families to the Federal Republic of Germany and to France. The situation of these young people, who lack adequate vocational qualifications, is further aggravated by linguistic problems and the socio-cultural and the socio-economic level of the parents.

The European Social Fund, anxious to determine suitable means of facilitating the social integration of young foreigners through vocational training, participated in two empirical and representative studies carried out simultaneously in the Saar/Lorraine frontier region. In the Saar, the sample consisted of 800 Italian immigrants; in the Moselle region 900 families

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were questioned, of which 600 were Italian and 300 Portuguese.

I. REPORT OF THE SITUATION IN THE SAAR

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

- From the outset the job opportunities open to the children of migrant workers depend on elements determining the parents' social situation: region of origin, length of stay in Germany, schooling, father's profession, knowledge of German and linguistic habits, probable length of stay in the host country.

The vast majority of the Italian parents (nearly 88 %) come from the agricultural regions of southern Italy - in particular Sicily - and have settled mainly in the industrial region of the Saar (70 %). They have great difficulty in adjusting to life in an industrial region, as hardly any of them were given preparatory training in Italy - whether in the form of language courses or vocational training - for their new life, whilst over two-thirds of these couples received no help in settling down and integrating when they arrived in the Saar.

- Nearly 70 % of the heads of Italian families living in Germany have been there more than ten years; two-thirds of all Italian migrant workers are skilled or semi-skilled; nearly 50 % did not attend school after the age of 11; most of the parents have retained their ethnic and national characteristics. The main features of their situation are uncertainty and lack of security.

The children are badly integrated into the German school system and have at the same time lost touch with their cultural and national heritage. About 3 % of the children of school age do not attend primary school, although education in Germany is compulsory for the children of foreign parents. One-third of the children leave school without obtaining a certificate and are therefore unable to take up an apprenticeship. Very few go to secondary schools, and these are mostly the children of parents with a high social and professional status. In addition to these social and linguistic problems, the aid provided to Italian children is inadequate: only 21 % receive supplementary tuition in German and only 12 establishments have been set up to help children with their homework.

The situation is even worse in the field of vocational training: only a fifth of the Italian children receive any such training and this is for the most part given within the school system, and not in specialized establishments.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

The study makes a number of proposals which could help solve the problems analysed.

At nursery school level, the "Landesausschuss für die Betreuung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer an der Saar" (Provincial Committee for the reception of foreign workers in the Saar should ensure that the officials responsible allocate at least a proportion of available nursery school places to the children of foreign parents. Model nursery schools should be set up in which foreign children form a substantial minority, the staff includes both Italian and

Germans, and a joint German-Italian advisory service is provided for parents.

At primary school level, special classes should be set up to prepare children of foreign parents for their school-leaving examination. A special reception service should be set up for Italian children of over main secondary school (Hauptschule) age who, on their arrival in Germany, should receive special preparation for their schooling. Provision should be made for afternoon supervision (i.e., outside school hours) and training programmes for teachers of foreign children.

At vocational training school level, all young foreigners whose knowledge of German is inadequate should attend an elementary vocational training school for one year. The number of young foreigners admitted to joint training centres run by undertakings must be increased. These training centres should also develop special teaching methods for both teachers and pupils at the German language classes. Lastly, the prospects for migrant workers' children could be improved by setting up annual refresher courses run parallel to part-time work in the firm, to prepare young workers for apprenticeship.

II. REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN LORRAINE

RESULTS OF THE INQUIRY

The Italian and Portuguese families living in the department of Moselle come from mainly rural areas; the Italians come from the southern provinces, in particular Sicily, Calabria and Sardinia. They have had very little education

and hardly any vocational training; most of the parents left school at 11, while others (25 % of the Portuguese) never attended school at all. Some families, especially the Portuguese, still have difficulty in speaking French although they have been in the country for several years. On the whole, the Portuguese do not want to settle permanently in France, though more than half the Italian families do not envisage returning to their native country.

At nursery school level the attendance rate for Italian children is much the same as for French children. Nearly 50 % of the Italian children have no knowledge whatsoever of their parents' mother tongue. The Portuguese are less inclined to send their children to nursery school: they often send them back to relatives in Portugal so that the wife can go out to work.

At primary school the children are handicapped by the low socio-cultural level of their family environment and more than a third of the children of foreign parents have to repeat classes. At vocational training level, they are more likely to seek a certificate of vocational education (CAP) than a technician's diploma. Most of those who already have jobs are unskilled workers; very few are skilled.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

The study makes a number of proposals on the various actions which should be undertaken among immigrant families with a view to ensuring that the highest possible level of education and vocational training is reached:

1. Parents

a) in the country of origin:

- advanced information on living and working conditions in France;
- in view of the essentially rural origin of immigrants, some preliminary vocational training should be given, but may be limited to a brief introduction to the various occupations in industry.

b) in Moselle

- compulsory, paid introductory language classes during the first months following arrival;
- systematic information in the parents' mother tongue on the French educational system and the type of qualification required for various jobs;
- parents kept constantly informed by the teachers of each child's progress at school.

2. Children

a) in the country of origin:

- introduction to the French language, and in the schools of the country of origin, for children of school age with parents settled in Moselle;
(in the case of return to country of origin)
- psycho-pedagogical assistance for children returning to their country of origin to prevent problems arising from the change in schooling;
- teachers in the regions of origin should be kept permanently informed of the French educational system with a view to setting up structures facilitating the re-integration of children receiving general education or preliminary vocational training.

b) in Moselle

- maintaining a bi-national culture among school children by including special classes in school hours on the language and culture of their country of origin;
- contacts with the country of origin by means of trips organized jointly during holidays by teachers both from the country and from the Moselle.

