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Part five:

Individual performance, transition to active life and social exclusion

Training and individual performance: evidence from microeconometric studies

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Abstract

Learning at school and university and also at the workplace has become more important in the knowledge-based economy. This paper provides a critical review of recent econometric work on the determinants and impacts of training in Europe. Training has non negligible positive effects for firms and trainees; for the group of non trainees potential negative effects has been found in some studies. The incidence and the impact of training depend on the national education and training system. However, selectivity, diversity of training, individual heterogeneity, self selection and general equilibrium effects seem to play an important role in all training systems.

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Summary

Learning at school and university and also at the workplace during working life has become more important in the knowledge-based economy due to economic and technological change. In some occupations and places of work, skill obsolescence due to technical change seems to be arriving more rapidly.

This raises questions on the importance of general versus more specific types of knowledge and skills, and the relative importance of classroom-based education versus self-organised forms of learning. In European Union countries, more people are better educated, more participate in continuous training and on-the-job learning. However, empirical knowledge on the determinants and effects of different methods of learning is still scarce, especially from a European viewpoint.

Although there is a widespread belief in a positive relationship between education, training and growth, the evidence provided so far is far from being complete. Aggregate figures for the European Union suggest a clear hierarchical pattern in the labour market: those who are better educated are on average better represented in the work force; have higher earnings; participate more frequently in formal continuous training; are less often unemployed; are more often self-employed; have a higher regional mobility, and work with newer and more high tech equipment. Job mobility on the other hand is negatively correlated with the amount of human capital invested in a specific occupation, since investment increases switching costs. The pattern seems to have been rather stable over the past few decades, although continuing skill-biased technological change is a challenge for VET policy in Europe.

These stylised facts do not necessarily mean that those who are better educated or have higher educational qualifications also have a higher lifetime income or utility, because in the investment period they often have higher costs and there may be substantial comparative advantages for different educational pathways (for example, more cognitive or more mechanistic skills) for different people. Assuming heterogeneous individuals, there are individuals at the margin, whose lifetime utility is rather similar in different pathways and there are individuals who receive higher utilities either with lower or higher educational qualifications.

What one would really like to know for policy analysis is the value of the lifetime utility of a person for different educational pathways under different educational standards and regulations. However, these values are not observable and estimates available are far from being conclusive in all respects.

The critical review of more specific econometric work in this study indicates that training is beneficial for both firms and individuals. The benefits are not negligible, in fact they are sometimes rather large. The fact that training has positive effects is, however, no guideline *per se* for government activity. There is evidence that self-selection on the one hand and general equilibrium effects on the other are at work. As a rule, training has positive effects and net benefits for trainees. However, there is some evidence that net effects for non-trainees might not be positive. In these cases, training might be a bad investment for the respective people, firms and – from the viewpoint of economic efficiency – for society.

In addition, non-negligible parts of observed differences in outcome variables such as earnings, wages, hours of work or career satisfaction cannot be attributed to education and training. Innate abilities, heterogeneity of abilities and preferences, family background, political events (for example the fall of the Berlin wall on 9 November 1989 had significant impact on the East Germans), luck and the path of economic and technological development are factors which are all important. Selectivity, diversity of training, selection and general equilibrium effects seem to play an important role in all training systems as well.

The empirical results suggest that the more structured the whole training system is and the more investment in general human capital acquired while a person is young, the lower the returns to continuous training are after

this high initial investment. If education is centralised and compulsory school attendance is expanded, then all people should achieve higher levels of education and formal skill levels. Selection into different career pathways transmitted through labour markets begins after compulsory school attendance. If the level of more general types of skills learned in schools is high, training at the workplace plays a different role and is no longer responsible for building up these more general types of skills. Such mechanisms seem to be responsible for the lower returns to continuous training in countries such as Germany and France compared to the United Kingdom. Conversely, the less structured the training system is, the higher the measured returns of continuous training seem to be.

European training systems differ. The different types of investment in VET and the spacing of these investments over an individual's life and the role of the State will depend on differences in prices for education, expected wage profiles, the skill structure of the workforce, tradition and technological factors. Success at school and other training institutions is not the only factor explaining work-related success and careers. Labour market regulations and institutions might lead to insider power and create entry barriers and waiting queues for young workers, despite higher education and greater investment in training. Such mechanisms seem to be present in most European countries, although to different degrees.

Some of the findings are a major challenge to the role of government in training. Obviously, formal education and training are not omnipotent weapons against all storms of life for all people, but they may be very strong weapons when used at the right time, to the right extent and with the right content. At other times in an individual's working life, other weapons such as non-formal learning, regional, firm or occupational mobility might be more helpful.

Centralisation, in the sense of generally acknowledged educational certificates (trades in the German dual vocational training system, for example) might be helpful for some occupations and especially when larger investments in educational qualifications are considered. However, there seem to be limits to such strategies.

Firstly, the German apprenticeship system sometimes seems to react very slowly to rapid economic or technical change (Blechinger and Pfeiffer 2000) with the consequence that training curricula are old fashioned and skill obsolescence becomes a problem for firms and workers, which they try to overcome by additional and costly continuous training. Secondly, the set up and running costs of such a system can be rather high. More decentralised, deregulated and flexible systems, similar to those in the United Kingdom or the United States which depend to a higher degree on market signals, might have an advantage in times of rapid and unpredictable technical change. However, there may be other benefits in a more centralised system with compulsory school attendance. Youth unemployment is low in Germany and participation rates in VET are high. Imperfect capital markets, which can create entry barriers for poor young individuals in market economies do not play a major role. One single optimal VET system does not exist. Policy-makers have to attach weight to different policy objectives when policy changes are considered.

Key qualifications and more general human capital cannot be acquired in a short time. If technologies change, key qualifications will also change – to some extent at least. They have to be acquired through a long and continuing process (Weinert 1997) which presumably will have a sustainable impact when people are young or very young. The older individuals become, the more important non-formal and self-organised types of learning become. Mobility between occupations, regions and firms might also be valuable strategies for improving the career position of workers.

For improving VET policies an adequate, systematic and regular research design *ex ante* would be helpful, to allow greater understanding of the relationship between specific VET activities and the actual, secondary and desired results. Due to tight public budgets, the need for evidence of impact and efficiency of

new and existing programmes will increase in future. A research design that takes diversity of situations, heterogeneity of individuals, differences in training systems, governments, markets, etc. into account is, however, expensive and takes time. If, for example, a unified European survey on VET would be conducted in the year 2000, the results of the analysis would only be available between 2001 and 2004 or even later. If one wished to compare the results over a longer time span, for example over a period of 30 years (compare the National Child Development Study – NCDS – from the United Kingdom which started 1958) results would not be available until 2030.

Besides research based on microdata which allows one to investigate the determinants and partial impacts of VET at individual level, general equilibrium effects should also be investigated using time series or panel data. Research on VET based on microdata might be improved if it were more regularly and systematically based on European wide conducted data sets, such as ELFS, European Household Panel or IALS. Despite methodological problems, international surveys should have the advantage that the most interesting human capital and training variables are defined in comparable ways. Empirical results for different regions might be more comparable and differences in results might help to identify the different impacts of national VET policies.

National VET programmes and policies dominate Europe. It is therefore necessary to evaluate specific VET programmes on a regional or national basis. There is no need for standardised and European-wide evaluations if national VET programmes dominate. Most firms hold formal or more informal training programmes. Therefore, there *are* markets for training and these programmes seem to provide returns to investment which are as high as other investments in machines or research. However, the author is not aware of systematic research on the returns on training investment by private firms. This would be an additional source of extremely valuable knowledge and information for assessing public VET policies.

From the author's point of view, future research could be directed towards the following questions to improve the understanding of the impact of VET policies at both individual and aggregate levels, and optimise policy reactions to technology and other shocks. The questions are interrelated.

1. Research on specific public VET programmes should be intensified to learn about partial impacts at individual level and efficiency of programmes. This type of research is usually based on microdata if the programmes are not too large. A partial evaluation design ignoring general equilibrium effects should suffice.

2. Research on public VET systems should also be intensified. This type of research should evaluate the whole system and also take into account general equilibrium effects, financial efficiency and labour market institutions. Research on this topic is usually based on aggregate time series data, individual panel data and official data on programme costs.

3. Research on the returns of VET for non-participants should be intensified. Should governments help non-participants and especially individuals with low skills to participate in VET or CT, or are other measures, for example wage subsidies, better for improving the labour market position of the low skilled?

4. It is not fully understood, whether there are cumulative negative or positive relationships of public VET policies of different types transmitted through labour markets. Therefore, research on the question of whether public promotion of higher education in the past 30 years had a negative impact on wages and labour market prospects of individuals with vocational education should be intensified to avoid negative relationships in future and improve coordination between educational and labour market policies.

5. How efficient will educational policies and relative higher and secondary education for the next 50 years be for young people en-

tering national training systems in the next five or 10 years? What is the optimal portfolio for different types of education? Should it be more general or more specific in nature, and should it be for individuals, firms, regions or Europe?

1. Introduction

Learning at school and university and also in the workplace during working life has become more important in the knowledge-based economy. In some occupations and places of work, skill obsolescence due to technical change seems to be arriving more rapidly. This raises questions on the importance of general versus more specific types of knowledge and skills, and the relative importance of classroom-based education versus self-organised forms of learning. In European Union countries, more people are better educated, more participate in continuous training and on-the-job learning. However, empirical knowledge on the determinants and effects of different methods of learning is still scarce, especially from a European viewpoint.

In this article, the relationship between learning, training and individual performance is discussed from a theoretical and empirical point of view, based on scientific research on the determinants and impact of training in the past decade. The main question is who participates in training and for what reasons, and what the effects are with respect to productivity, wages, job search, employment, job duration, mobility, careers and other variables. These questions can be applied to all agents involved in the training process, namely for individuals, firms, training institutions as well as governments. The research task is to measure the training incidence and outcome and to look behind the mechanism which may help to explain the results. Since governments in Europe are increasingly involved in educational policies and active labour market programmes for improving the skill level of the unemployed, and public budgets are tied, evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of such policies becomes more important.

In Europe, there is a great variety of training measures in terms of their content, duration, financing and direction, depending among other things on the changing historical and cultural role of the State in the education and training process. Thus, the determinants and outcome of training are also characterised by a considerable amount of heterogeneity. For some individuals, training has a positive impact under particular conditions, for others it seems to have no or even a negative impact. Although there is widespread belief in a positive relationship between education, training and growth, evidence provided so far is far from complete.

In this study, attention will be restricted to a microeconometric analysis of the determinants and effects of initial and continuous training in European countries or selected regions in Europe. The goal is to quantify different factors determining training and its outcomes. It rests on theoretical and statistical models and ideally allows the testing of conflicting hypothesis or alternative explanations. Due to the increased availability of microdata and to an increased use of microeconometric models in the past 10 to 20 years, this is a dynamic and growing field of research. It was not possible to review all of the work done in this field.[1]

The report concentrates on quite recent works carried out using data from European countries. Furthermore, there is focus on economic aspects of training, namely on incentive and investment issues. This does not mean that other aspects are irrelevant. Social and cultural aspects are also of great importance (see Cedefop's first report on vocational training in Europe: Tessaring 1999). However, there

[1] I apologise if all available research is not mentioned and discussed according to its relevance. The selection of studies used for this report is the result of an electronic search strategy and a manual search in selected journals, *the European Economic Review, Labour Economics, Oxford Economic Papers, The Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Economic Literature and The Journal of Labour Economics*. In addition, recent research on the determinants and effects of training for German employees and the self-employed has been incorporated (Pfeiffer and Reize 2000).

exists a trade-off between in-depth discussions of specific aspects of training from an economic viewpoint and a general discussion covering all aspects of training. This is not an issue for this study, since it favours a more specific discussion.

Although the main discussion centres around VET, some studies also refer to higher education at universities. This is important since in labour markets different types of skills may be substitutes or complements, depending on labour market institutions and technology. Recent research on skilled-biased technological change in industrial countries seems to indicate that skilled workers with higher secondary education are substitutes rather than complements for skilled workers with higher education (Machin and van Reenen 1998). In the process of technical change in particular, the share of skilled workers with secondary education is declining. Technical change seems to be biased to more cognitive and theoretical skills. The bias seems to depend not only on technological factors but also on labour market institutions. Therefore, extending the focus can help improve understanding of the basis for economic incentive and investment issues in education and training.

This chapter is organised as follows. The next part provides selected indicators showing the relationship between VET and economic performance in the European Union from a highly aggregated point of view using official data. Part three contains theoretical considerations on the relationship between ability, education and mobility. Individual or firm data sets are introduced in the next part, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and empirical methods underlying the empirical work and some issues with respect to the measurement of training and outcomes. There is virtually no unified data source that has been utilised for all countries of European Union and there is great variety in data, empirical methods and measurement of training. In part five, different results of theses studies are compared and discussed. In the last part, conclusions are drawn with respect to future research and VET policy in Europe.

2. VET and economic performance – selected indicators

This part provides an overview of selected empirical relationships between the amount of education and training a person received and his/her position in the labour market. The figures presented in Table 1 are based on highly aggregated numbers for the 15 Members States (EUR15, taken from Eurostat 1998 and the European Commission 1997) and, in the case of earnings, on 12 European member countries (taken from OECD 1998a).

In line with the discussion in Cedefop's first report on vocational training (Tessaring 1999) VET is identified with ISCED 3 (higher secondary education) and compared to ISCED 0,1,2 (preprimary, primary and lower secondary education) and ISCED 5,6,7 (higher education). The data collected refer to employment, unemployment and self-employment, to continuous training and earnings in 1995 or 1997, in EUR 15 or in 12 European countries.

It is shown in the first row of Table 1 that roughly 76% of those belonging to ISCED 3 aged 25 to 59 were employed, compared to 85% of those belonging to ISCED 5,6,7 and 59% of those belonging to ISCED 0,1,2. There is a monotonously positive relationship between levels of employment and the level of education, while unemployment rates are monotonously negatively correlated. Depending on the definition of unemployment, 7.3% or 8.8% of all those belonging to group ISCED 3 in EUR 15 had been unemployed in 1997, compared to 5.3% or 5.8% of those belonging to ISCED 5,6,7 and 8.4% or 12.5% of those belonging to ISCED 0,1,2.[2]

Youth unemployment rates in Europe are much higher than those for middle-aged people. However, again, there is a negative correlation between the level of education and

[2] The different numbers are the result of different definitions of unemployment. The lower numbers refer to the ILO definitions, the higher are based on the number of persons officially registered as unemployed.

the level of unemployment or the threat of unemployment. Those young people who have invested in an education comparable to a higher secondary education are less hit by unemployment than those who have invested less.

It is also clear from the numbers in the table that the higher the level of education, the higher the ratio of continuous training (CT). While roughly 6 % of the European medium-skilled labour force participated in CT during the past four weeks, only 3% of the low-skilled did so.

What is not as obvious and well documented is that self-employment rates (the figures in the table are based on the group of self-employed without employees) are positively correlated with the level of skills. The positive correlation is even more pronounced for the self-employed with employees, since qualification matters even more if the self-employed recruit employees and have larger firms (Pfeiffer and Falk 1999).

Education and earnings in the 12 European countries are also positively correlated. There are significant differences in the relative earnings position of VET earnings, but in every country they earn more than employed people with a lower level of education on average and less than employed people with a higher level of education. The wage distribution is more even in Scandinavian countries, but even less, for example, in Portugal, where low-skilled workers earn about 60% of medium-skilled workers and high-skilled workers earn about 183% of medium-skilled workers.

To summarise: aggregate figures for the European Union by and large show a positive correlation between investment in human capital and employment, earnings, self-employment and further investment in human capital and a negative correlation between human capital and unemployment.

There also seems to be a positive relationship between human capital, regional mobility and the use of high-tech machines at the workplace, as is reported by Pfeiffer (1997) for Germany, Entorf and Kramarz (1997) for France, or Blundell et al. (1997) for the United Kingdom. Occupational mobility on the other hand is negatively related with the amount of human capital invested in a specific occupation, since the costs of switching between occupations rise with former investments in human capital (Pfeiffer 1997).

A closer look at individual countries reveals different numbers in all these indicators but, by and large, the same pattern can be observed. The country numbers are documented in official reports of the European Commission and it is not necessary to repeat them in the current paper. The empirical relationship between training and other indicators differs between countries, with differences being the results of many factors, among them the economic and demographic composition of the labour force, the capital and technology intensity of firms and the industry, as well as differences in the governmental framework and policies of the individual European countries (Tessaring 1999; Müller and Shavit, 1998, OECD, 1998 b).

3. Theoretical considerations: education, innate abilities and mobility

According to a well-known distinction, there are two types of human capital: specific and general (Becker 1964). While general human capital is valuable in the whole economy, specific human capital is valuable only in a firm, region, or in conjunction with a special technology. Since resources such as time and money are scarce, individuals, firms, training institutions and governments have to make decisions about the composition of different types of investment in human capital. Findings from the aggregate level seem to suggest that there are different solutions to the trade-off between investment in either more specific or more general VET (Levhari and Weiss 1974) depending on the pace of cultural, economic and technical progress where the individual lives.

The trade-off is a result of at least two conflicting factors. More general skills and hu-

man capital can be used in many different occupations and can help to reduce the cost of further education and learning, for example at the workplace. A large and rising degree of specialisation at the workplace, however, also requires very specific skills. People with these skills presumably start with higher productivity when entering a new workplace compared to people with more general skills. In times of more rapid technical change or increased uncertainty about the future of economic development, investment in more general skills can be a better strategy, because demand for specific skills in the future is uncertain and the risk of skill obsolescence higher. In times of reduced levels of uncertainty about the path of economic and technological development, investment in more specific skills might be a better strategy.

Larger amounts of investment in more general skills in all European countries over the past few decades can be explained as a reaction to increased levels of uncertainty about economic and technological developments. Although more people are better educated ('educational revolution'), the numbers and figures in Table 1 seem to indicate a clear hierarchical pattern in the labour market: those who are better educated are, on average, more often part of the workforce, have higher earnings, participate more frequently in training and are unemployed less often. In the past 20 years in most European countries, the percentage of workers with an academic degree has doubled (BMBF 1999). The percentage of workers with higher secondary education has also risen, but only slightly. Nevertheless, the hierarchical patterns seem to have been rather stable in recent decades. According to Mayer (1996), the hierarchical pattern has been stable in Germany for the past 50 years. However, the interrelated impact of educational revolution on the one hand and skilled-biased technological change on the other, might have far reaching consequences for the future of VET, a topic which will be discussed again.

The numbers presented in Table 1 are of a descriptive nature and are taken from aggregate statistics. The relationship may not be true any longer at individual level. A positive correlation between earnings and years of education in the aggregate is, for example, compatible with the observation that there are people with 18 years' education who do not earn more than people with only nine years' education. Furthermore, it is not possible to conclude on the basis of the numbers that the observed relationships and earnings differentials are the direct result of training or VET.

First, the differences in the outcome variables such as earnings may also be the result of other factors not under investigation in Table 1, for example age, gender or occupation. Differences in the age structure of the workforce may explain part of the positive relationship between levels of education and earnings, since investment in human capital typically takes time and is therefore positively correlated with age.

Second, people may put themselves into different training routes according to their preferences and innate abilities, factors which typically are not observed very well in empirical research. People take part in training because they expect higher net benefits, which might be difficult to observe for researchers. Innate differences in abilities, for example, can explain 50% of the variance of intellectual capacities of young people in Germany (Weinert 1997, Weinert and Schneider 1998). Furthermore, the ability differentials seem to stay rather constant over long periods and might not change in schools. A statistical correlation between schooling and training variables, and outcome variables such as earnings, might therefore be biased due to omitted variables such as innate abilities or ambitions, i.e. due to self-selection. The bias can be in both directions.

In economic terms, this is part of the human-capital versus signalling debate (Cohn and Geske 1990, Tessaring 1999, Weiss 1995, Wolpin 1977). The positive correlation between higher earnings and level of education may not be the result of investment in human capital, but higher investment in human capital might just be a signal of higher innate abilities. 'In the most extreme form of this screening hypothesis, schooling serves

Table 1: Education and economic performance – some indicators

Region/year	ISCED 0.1.2*	ISCED 3**	ISCED 5.6.7***
		employed (age 25 to 59)	
EUR15/1997	59.1 %	75.6 %	85.4 %
		unemployed (age 25 to 59)	
EUR15/1997	8.4 %	7.3 %	5.3 %
		out of labour force (age 25 to 59)	
EUR15/1997	32.5 %	17.1 %	9.4 %
		unemployment rates (age 25 to 59) (ILO def.)	
EUR15/1997	12.5 %	8.8 %	5.8 %
		employed (age 30 to 59)	
EUR15/1995	58 %	76 %	87 %
		unemployed (age 30 to 59)	
EUR15/1995	11.4 %	7.6 %	4.7 %
		unemployed (age 20 to 29).	
EUR15/1995	22.2 %	14.1 %	-
		threat of unemployment (age 20 to 29)	
EUR15/1995	5.2 %	3.1 %	-
		continuous training in the last four weeks: employees	
EUR15/1995	2.9 %	5.7 %	11.5 %
		self-employed without employees	
EUR15/1995	0.8 %	3.2 %	7.5 %
		relative earnings (age 25 to 65/age 30 to 44)	
Denmark	84/84	100	132/134
Finland	91/93	100	173/185
France	81/82	100	178/178
Germany	81/76	100	153/158
Ireland	84/85	100	183/183
Italy	80/76	100	148/156
Netherlands	86/86	100	129/137
Norway	85/85	100	138/142
Portugal	59/64	100	183/184
Spain	- /78	100	- /153
Sweden	91/90	100	149/153
UK	80/74	100	185/181

*ISCED Level 0: Pre-primary education, 1: Primary education, 2: Lower secondary second
**ISCED Level 3: Higher Secondary education
***ISCED Level 5,6,7: Higher Education
Sources: own composition from Eurostat (1998), European Commission (1997), OECD (1998a).

only to identify those individuals who are more productive in the market, the proposition being that an individual's productivity is unaffected by the formal schooling process.' (Wolpin 1977:950).

This debate is also relevant for CT, although the incentive and investment character of decisions in CT differ. Firms already know their workers and the information problem has therefore been solved and can no longer be the central issue if we look at firm and work-related training. However, training and promotion schemes are highly interrelated (Prendergast 1993) and the causal relevance of training for promotion can be questioned. Training at the workplace might rather be a consequence of promotion than promotion

being a consequence of training. In that case, research on the determinants of promotion becomes as important as research on the determinants of training.

For the purpose of this study, training is defined as an investment by individuals, firms or the government. While the costs of training have to be born today, benefits will manifest themselves in the future. The outcome of training is uncertain to different degrees depending, for example, on the quality of the training institution, the path of technical change and economic growth, but also on the size of cohorts and demographic change (Tessaring 1999).

Investment in training is not the only relevant decision for any involved party, namely individuals, firms or governments. Firms, for example, have to decide on products, product quality, capital investment and innovations. Some of these decisions are highly interrelated to training decisions, such as introducing new products or new processes for improving the firm's position in the market. Firms have the option to hire skilled labour without training, which might lead to negative external poaching (Hocquet 2000) and insufficient training in a private economy.

The term 'training' should not be restricted to formal training activities, especially when one looks at CT (Weiss 1994, Pfeiffer and Reize 2000). Learning by doing, that is informal training at the work place, has important economic implications as well. Arrow (1962) assumes that the productivity of a firm depends on the total experience of all firms (measured by accumulated gross capital investment). In the course of time the same output will be produced with less and less labour ('learning curve'). The productivity effect arises solely from the process of learning through production ('learning by doing'), and the common knowledge character of experience ('knowledge spillovers').

Individuals also have to choose between several alternatives and actions. They can choose to change their firm to get higher wages, or they can choose to participate in privately financed training programmes. For individuals, to undergo VET is an important and far-reaching decision, and they should therefore be careful when making this decision. Expectations about the outcome of training, taking into account that other people may also decide to train, do indeed play a measurable role in individual behaviour (Heckman, Lochner and Taber 1999).

One general aspect to consider for all parties is the topic of timing of investments in human capital. Among other things, timing depends on compulsory school regulation, individual abilities, labour market regulations and career plans. This consideration suggests that the decision to undergo a particular training measure is part of a larger set of economic activities of firms, training institutions and individuals. Therefore, it does not always make sense to talk about the effect of training isolated from its context, since training is one of several simultaneous economic activities.

The determinants and effects of training depend on labour market institutions and the path of economic and technological development. They also depend on national education and training systems. That is, they depend on how and by whom education and training is financed, on its content, qualification and assessment. Training systems in Europe vary to a great extent with respect to all of these factors, as has been documented in the first report on vocational training. Comparing outcomes of different training types in the different systems in Europe may help to understand the complex interrelationships between education, training and outcomes. It may also provide a guideline for the optimal spacing of investment in training throughout life and improve the understanding of the role of government in optimising content, finance, assessment, qualification and participation.

Since training is viewed as an investment in this study, there should be a parallel between the cost and benefits of training (Lynch 1994, Booth and Snower 1996). According to the distinction of Becker, individuals receive a large part of the return of investment in general skills and human capital themselves. They should therefore bear a large part of the

costs. This system works if, after making the investment, individual productivity is higher and wages on average are higher for trainees thus providing an incentive for the investment. Furthermore, this system only works if individuals can borrow money to finance their general training or if wages are lower during the training period. If capital markets are not perfect, that is, if there are credit constraints, not all those wishing to participate in training for reasons of efficiency might be able to do so. This can be an important issue for privately funded education systems and usually serves as one rationale for government interventions; another rationale is positive externalities of education, because they may also lead to insufficient investment in human capital in a free market economy (Booth and Snower 1996). If government subsidises general training, private returns in the form of higher wages can, in principle, be lower than in the case of training which is purely privately financed.

Changes in wages are not only determined by training, but also by a larger set of factors (Hamermesh 1993), among them the amount of investment in machines and human capital investments in the population. If the amount of training in the population is considerable, which is the case in all European countries, it is necessary to take general equilibrium effects of training into account. The returns to training can differ depending on whether one looks from a partial or general equilibrium view (Heckman and Lochner 1998). In a general equilibrium view, the cost of training and the longer-term impact on the economy-wide wage structure should be taken into consideration.

The benefits of more specific types of training may lie in higher productivity gains for firms. Therefore, firms should bear the costs of more specific training and wages may not change after training. The relationship between the optimal amount of investment in general and specific human capital depends among other things on individual preferences and abilities, the capital and technology intensity of firms and costs and financing arrangements. The returns on more specific human capital may additionally depend on the amount of general human capital that a person has acquired. Thus, education, initial and continuous training are interrelated and the incidence and impact of training depends on the training system of a society as a whole.

Over-education or coordination failure between several types of training may arise in an economy. An example of coordination failure seems to be the German training system, where general university education is largely paid for by the government, while vocational training is not. Recent trends in the demand for labour suggest that due to rapid technological change, vocational skills are becoming obsolete at an increasingly faster rate, which favours cognitive and more academic skills (skill-biased technical change, see Blechinger and Pfeiffer 2000, Machin 1996, Machin and van Reenen 1998). The bias in favour of skilled labour depends furthermore on labour market institutions. The more rigid the wage structure is, the faster upskilling will be during the computer revolution (Blechinger et al. 1997).

Labour markets in Spain might serve as another example of situations where labour market regulations also have secondary undesired effects. One reason for the very high unemployment rates for young people in Spain is the employment protection rules for older workers. The Spain youth labour market has therefore been characterised as a high-skilled – bad job labour market, since high skilled individuals end up in low skilled jobs, crowding out low skilled individuals (Dolado et al. 1999).

For other authors, the problem of under investment in general skills might be a serious problem for economic development. There might be a complementarity between general human capital and technological development (Acemoglu 1996). A lack of basic skills might hamper the speed of innovation. Firms who want to innovate have to train their workforce, which means additional costs of innovation for the firms and therefore less innovation and productivity gains. This can theoretically lead to the vicious circle of 'bad skills – bad jobs' or 'low innovation – low training' equilibria (Snower 1996).

Individuals, firms, educational arrangements and labour and product markets are characterised by a large degree of heterogeneity, where VET and CT play different roles. The rest of the paper is devoted to looking more closely into the relationship between VET, CT and outcomes in the labour market using data sets from firms and individuals. The following part introduces the potential and limitations of data sets, the methods used, as well as measurement problems with training variables and main explanatory variables.

4. Econometric methods, data and measurement issues

4.1 Econometric methods

Most studies reviewed below use econometric methods to quantify the determinants of training and its impact on wages, hours of work, duration of job search, duration of employment and other outcomes. Most of the studies explicitly take care of the self-selection problem in quantifying the impact of training. They model the decision to train and the outcome of training simultaneously.

The problem of impact measurements in social sciences[3] when compared with natural sciences is that social programmes cannot be easily isolated from real life processes (with the exception of psychological experiments). Social programmes such as public VET policy are embedded in real life. The main task of research is to measure the impact of the programme despite the fact that many other factors simultaneously influence participating individuals or firms and thus the desired outcomes. These influences stem from individual, social, economic and policy factors.

The coefficients of econometric works based on single equation outcome models with some training indicators as an explanatory variable, can be seriously biased by self- and/or programme-selection. Participants in training do not usually constitute a random sample of the workforce or the population of unemployed people. Those who see comparative advantages and higher net benefits in training might have higher probabilities of participation. Comparative advantages may result from lower costs of training or higher expected returns, or there might be special preferences towards training.

There is an ongoing scientific debate on the question of selectivity, individual heterogeneity and the role of institutions. If selectivity is empirically relevant, then simple comparisons of means of outcome variables between non-participants and participants in training and the coefficients of single equation models might be seriously biased. More complex econometric models would often be needed to solve the so-called 'comparison problem'. It is not possible to observe the outcome of an individual participating in training and the outcome of the same individual in the case where he/she would not have participated in that training. On the other hand, the difference between the mean earnings of non-participants and participants in training can be a misleading guide for assessing the impact of training. This is the case, for example, when participants in training programmes are more highly motivated or have higher innate abilities than non-participants. In such cases, earnings, working hours, or other outcome variables of interest may have already been higher before the participation in training and training may have no impact at all.

The advantages of training are usually identified by the difference between the two outcomes, one observed, and the other not observable. To assess the impact of training, one has to rely on estimates which can be based on a group of people without training. Obviously this group of people should be identical with

[3] For an in depth discussion of the methodological issues see Heckman, LaLonde and Smith (1999) and for a broader discussion of an evaluation of the welfare State and cost-benefits analysis of education and tax policies, Heckman and Smith (1998) and Heckman, Lochner and Taber (1999). Discussion in the paper will concentrate on the determinants and effects of training with the exemption of training programmes as part of the active labour market policies for the unemployed. For an extensive literature survey on impacts of active labour market programmes in the United States and Europe, see Heckman, LaLonde and Smith (1999).

the people participating in training with respect to all relevant characteristics (whether they are observed or not) of the people and the environment in which they live. The comparison problem is to find such a control group. The precision and accuracy of the estimate will depend on the precision and accuracy of the control group. While some researchers believe that the comparison problem can only be resolved by means of social experiments, others have developed statistical and econometric tools for unbiased estimates of the impact of training with the help of non-experimental data.

In classical experiments, prospective programme participants have been randomly divided into one experimental and one control group. Given this research design, the difference between the outcome in both groups must be a result of the programme if all other conditions are similar. The other approach uses information from participants and non-participants of actual programmes. In this case, the individuals participating in a programme have been selected systematically, either by themselves or by specific programme rules. Since social experiments are rare in Europe, current research into the determinants and impact of training in Europe depends on non-experimental data and adequate econometric tools.

One possible solution is the comparison of the individual outcome variable before and after participation in VET in the framework of an econometric model (see Blundell et al. 1997, Pannenberg 1997 and Pischke 1996 for such a procedure). This information is, however, often not available, for example when people are young and have no labour market experience before entering VET. Pfeiffer and Reize (2000) use the concept of the comparison group in two ways. On the one hand, they compare trainees and non-trainees, taking care of the selection problem with econometric methods. This is a common way of taking advantage of non-experimental comparison groups.

Furthermore, the determinants and impacts of continuous work-related training between employees and the self-employed are compared. In this case, the self-employed group serves as a comparison group for assessing the relevance of estimated effects of CT for the group of employees. The self-employed decide for themselves concerning the amount of investment in training. In the case of employees, firms decide who participate in their work-related training programmes. The decision process is therefore more complex for employees, and aspects such as poaching externalities, funding or promotion ladders become important. Therefore, the estimated impact of training in the self-employed group provides a sort of benchmark value for assessing the role of human-capital for training in the group of employees (see Cohn and Geske 1990 for a survey on former studies based on differences between self-employment and wage work).

There might be intentional and unintentional outcomes of training, or the lack of it, which are either favourable or unfavourable for the individual, firm, region or industry, or the whole economy. Most econometric studies investigating training analyse the direct intended impact at personal or company level for some favourable variables such as wages, productivity, employment prospects, etc.. Secondary, sometimes undesirable effects occurring to other individuals, or at other firms or industries, might be important (so-called general equilibrium effects), although they are seldom investigated in empirical research. Examples of research which addresses these issues in a more indirect manner are the aforementioned studies on skilled-biased technological change and on over-education (Hartog 2000).

Secondary effects cannot be excluded empirically *a priori*. If some firms, for example, provide excellent training for their employees and thus are more competitive, other firms might lose market share, or their employees may have a higher probability of being dismissed. Such negative indirect effects are, however, difficult to trace, and their assessment often requires costly research designs. One important general equilibrium effect stems from the fact that government promotion of VET has to be financed and therefore affects the budgets and welfare of taxpayers.

4.2 Microdata on VET

The aim of microeconometric studies on education and training is to investigate the determinants of training and assess its impact on subsequent working careers taking into account observed factors such as age, gender, labour market conditions as well as unobserved factors such as motivation or innate abilities. These studies are based on microdata. The units of observation are either individuals, firms or both.[4] The aim and scope of data differs considerably. Not all were, for example, collected for studying VET-related issues exclusively. This part provides an introduction to the empirical basis which should be helpful for a critical understanding of the results. The data belong to one of the following four types (see Table 2):

a) cohort data (CD);

b) cross sections (CS);

c) repeated cross sections (RCS);

d) panel data (PD).

CD consists of all persons or a sample of persons born for example in 1958 in England. These persons are either interviewed once in a retroperspective manner which is the case with the German Life History Study (GLHS), the Brabant Survey (BRAS), the Norway Survey (NORS) and the Lancashire Career Data Survey (LCSD), or are followed during their life on a regular basis. An example for the latter is the English National Child Development Study (NCDS).

The four cross-section data (CS) survey samples of persons or firms from a well-defined population at a point in time. The Dutch wave of the International Adult Literary Survey (DIALS) is a survey based on a sample of the whole Dutch population in 1995; the French Survey on Education and Qualifications (FDQ) is based on a sample of the adult French population; the Company Training in Ireland (CTIRE) data survey firms from Ireland in 1993, and the Community Innovation Survey (CIS) surveys firms from manufacturing in 12 European countries in 1993.

If survey data for well-defined populations are produced regularly without being connected individually, they are called *repeated cross sections* (RCS). Examples of this type of data are the German Qualification and Career (Q&C) data, a representative sample of employees surveyed in 1979, 1985 and 1991; the German Labour Force Survey (GLFS), a representative sample of the population surveyed every year (since 1991 GLFS has been part of the European Labour Force Survey), and the Swedish Level of Living Survey (SLLS), a representative sample of the Swedish population surveyed in 1968, 1974, 1981 and 1991.

The last type of data sets is termed panel data (PD). The same units of observations are surveyed at different time points again and again. Six studies rely on panel data, three on individual panel data (Dutch Biannual Labour Supply (OSA), biannually since 1992; German Socio Economic Panel (GSOEP), annually since 1984; Norwegian social insurance data (KIRUT) since 1989), three on firm panel data (Collective Bargaining in Large Firms (NCGE) in Spain since 1979, the Hannover Firm Panel (HFS) covering industrial firms in Lower Saxony, Germany since 1993 and the German Plant Panel (GPP) covering plants in Germany since 1993).

In a recent *Employment Outlook* (OECD, June 1999), the determinants and wage impacts of continuous training in seven OECD countries are studied: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands also based on microdata. For European countries, they used the 1993 cross section of the German Socio Economic Panel, the French Survey on Education and Qualifications of 1993, the 1996 cross section of the British Household Panel of 1996, the 1991 Bank of Italy survey and the 1994 cross section of the Socio Economic Panel of the Netherlands. For a description of the last three data sets, which look quite promising for microeconometric research on training issues and which are not mentioned in Table 2, see OECD (1999).

[4] There is a tendency in empirical work to use matched employees-employer data (see Bellmann et al. 1999, Bratberg and Nilsen 1998, Entorf and Kramarz 1997, Krueger and Rouse 1994).

Table 2: Individual and firm data

Description (abbreviation in brackets)	Country/Region	Type*	Aims**	Unit of observation	Sample	Start	Frequency of interviews	Years under investigation
Brabant Survey (**BRAS**)	The Netherlands	CD	B	individual	Cohort 6. Class 1952	1952	1952/1983	1983
Lancashire Career Service Data (**LCSD**)	United Kingdom	CD	A	individual	Cohort of school leavers	1991	1 year	1991
Dutch wave of the International Adult Literary Survey (**DIALS**)	The Netherlands	CS	B	individual	Representative for the population	1995	once	1995
Dutch biannual labour supply survey (**OSA**)	The Netherlands	PD	B	individual	Employees 1994	1992	biannually	1994
French Survey on Education and Qualifications (**FQP**)	France	CS	A	individuals (matched with firm data)	Representative sample of French adult population	1993	?	1993
German Labour Force Survey (**GLFS**)	Germany (before 1989 West Ger.)	RCS	B	individual	Representative sample of the population	1981	1 year	1991, 1993, 1995
German life history study (**GLHS**)	Germany (before 1989 West Ger.)	CD	A	individual	Representative sample of cohorts	1929-31	1929-31, 1949-51, 1954-56, 1959-68	all
German Socio-Economic Panel (**GSOEP**)	Germany (before 1989 West Ger.)	PD	B	individuals	Representative sample of the population	1984	1 year	1986-93
Social Insurance Data (**KIRUT**)	Norway	PD	C	individuals	10 % sample of the Norwegian population	1989	regularly	1989-94
National Child Development Study (**NCDS**)	United Kingdom	CD	B	individual	Cohort of people born in 1958	1958	1958/1965/1974/1981/1991	1974-81 and 1981-91
Norway Survey (**NORS**)	Norway	CD	B	individual	Cohort of people born from 1956 to 1958	1975	1975/1981	1975-81
Qualification and Career (**Q & C**)	Germany	RCS	A	individual	Representative sample of employees	1979	1979/1985/1991	1979-91
Swedish Level of Living Surveys (**SLLS**)	Sweden	RCS	B	individuals	Representative sample of Swedish population	1968	1968/1974/1981/1991	1968-91
Community Innovation Survey (**CIS**)	Europe	CS	C	firms	Firms from the industrial sector	1993	once	1993
Collective Bargaining in Large Firms (**NCGE**)	Spain	PD	C	firms	Representative sample of firms with more than 200 employees	1979	1 year	1988/89
Company training in Ireland (**CTIRE**)	Ireland	CS	A	firms	Representative sample of firms from Ireland	1993	once	1993
German Plant Panel (**GPP**)	Germany	PD	C	plants of firms	Representative sample of plants matched with personal data	1993	1 year	1995
Hanover Firm Panel (**HFP**)	Lower-Saxony; Germany	PD	C	firms	Representative sample of firms from the industrial sector	1993	1 year	1993-95

; *Type: CD = **c**ohort **d**ata; CS = **c**ross **s**ections; RCS = **r**epeated **c**ross **s**ections; PD = **p**anel **d**ata; **Aims: A = the main objectives are the determinants and the impact of education and training; B = the main objectives are related to education and training; C = the main objectives focus on other topics, but meaningful questions on education and training are included.
Source: own composition.

The remaining data designs differ according to the main focus of the surveys (see Table 2). While some aim directly at analysing training issues, others have different aims or should best be characterised by a multitude of aims. Nevertheless, these data have been used for analysing the determinants and impact of training. It is necessary to keep the main focus of the data sets in mind when interpreting the results or discussing policy implications.

The following categories of aims can be distinguished (see also Table 2):

a) the main objectives are the study of the determinants and impact of education and training (CTIRE, GLHS, FDQ, LCSD, Q&C);

b) the main objectives are also related to education and training (BRAS, DIALS, GSOEP, GLFS, NCDS, NORS, OSA, SLLS);

c) the objectives focus on a different set of topics; meaningful questions on education and training are included (CIS, GPP, HFP, KIRUT NCGE).

From the 18 data sets under consideration, five belong to category A, which was originally designed to provide an understanding of the relationship between training and the outcome of training, for example the performance of the labour market. Eight belong to the second group, where the study of training is one among several aims. As an example, the German or European labour force surveys should be mentioned, which aim at investigating issues such as participation, family situation, unemployment, social insurance and so on, and also continuous training. Five sets of data belong to the last category. They provide meaningful information on training, but have different aims. An example for this category is the 'Collective Bargaining in Large Firms' (NCGE) study from Spain, which aims at investigating wage-setting in large Spanish firms, but nevertheless provides meaningful information on firms' investment in training.

The types of data have specific advantages and disadvantages for investigating VET-related themes. Below, some of them will be sketched very briefly. Cohort data provide valuable information for a well-defined cohort of persons, but no information on individuals of other cohorts. Interactions between cohorts on the labour market cannot be studied. With cross section data it is, on the other hand, not possible to disentangle age and cohort effects. Earnings equations based on cross sections presuppose constant age-education-earnings relationships over time, which might be questionable in a dynamic world.

Longitudinal studies based on panel data or repeated cross sections are constructed to overcome these restrictions. Aspects of individual biographies, such as lifetime-earnings-profiles or education and training histories can, in principle, be investigated if the time period is long enough. The GSOEP, for example, started in 1984 and contains a biographical annex for all persons surveyed for the first time in 1984. In principle, longer life histories can be reconstructed with such a design.

However, longitudinal data might be plagued by the problem of comparison of variables and other information over time and might be affected by fluctuations in the business cycle or political and other events. Changes in the definitions of earnings, working conditions and hierarchies over longer time periods might lead to spurious correlations in empirical work.

The lessons to be learned from empirical work seem to be that there is no single ideal data set for all research problems. An ideal data set will depend on the goal under investigation and on financial resources as well, since conducting surveys is expensive.

Recently, in OECD countries and/or European countries, four surveys have been conducted to provide harmonised training statistics for OECD or European countries (OECD 1999): the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) 1994-95, the European Labour Force Survey (ELFS) 1997, the OECD/INES (Indicators of Education Systems) data on continuing training 1991-96, and Eurostat's Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) 1994. These surveys provide valuable insights into training among the different countries. Com-

Table 3: Dimensions of training in microeconometric studies

Dimension	Description
Type of training	initial training, continuous training;
Degree of formality	informal training (learning by doing); formal training courses: without a recognised vocational qualification, with a recognised vocational qualification.
Content	general knowledge; work-related training courses; occupation-specific training courses.
Subject	electronic data processing, languages, etc.
Provider	employer-provided training courses; individually provided training courses; government-provided training courses
Place	at school; in the classroom; at the workplace, inside a firm; outside the firm
Duration	in days, month or years
Frequency	number of courses taken in a month, year or in a 10-year period
Amount of resources invested	costs

Source: own composition.

parative research on VET in different countries based on cross section data now becomes possible.

However, measured participation rates in CT differ significantly between the four surveys (OECD 1999:142, 144), which is presumably a result of different definitions of training between the surveys and, furthermore, of sample sizes. To give the reader a numerical example of the diverging participation rates in career or job-related training: in Germany this rate amounts to 20% according to the IALS, 4.2% according to the ELFS, 33.3% according to the OECD/INES, and 24% according to the CVTS (OECD 1999: Table 3.2). That seems to indicate that harmonisation of surveys to provide harmonised statistics might not always be a superior strategy of data collection.

Some of these surveys have been used for microeconometric work in some countries. The IALS data have been used for investigating training in the Netherlands (Oosterbeek 1998), the ELFS data for investigating training in Germany (Pfeiffer 1997). Although these surveys seem to have specific problems as mentioned above, VET-related research could be improved if the data were to be used more systematically for all countries.

4.3 The measurement of training and outcomes

Training, like human capital, has several dimensions. In empirical research, it is necessary to measure the dimension of training. There are qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The following dimensions have been investigated, some of them overlapping (see Table 3). Besides more qualitative dimensions such as training in a classroom, at or outside the workplace, or training with or without a qualification certificate, there are some quantitative dimensions, such as the hours, days or years of training, or the cost of training. The studies presented all use slightly different definitions of training and none include comprehensive information on all dimensions of training.

Furthermore, it is necessary to measure the impact of training, which may reveal further

Table 4: The outcome of training

Type of training	initial training, continuous training;
Type	wages, earnings, productivity, hours of work, time of search for the first job, length of duration of the first job, mobility (regional, occupational), upward mobility, employment/unemployment, further training, others (health, fertility, democratic values, etc. not investigated here)
Impact	direct intended impact, direct impact not intended but favourable, direct impact not intended and not favourable, indirect impacts (general equilibrium effects), both desired or undesired
Level	individual, firm, training institution, region, industry, economy

Source: own composition.

dimensions (see Table 4). There must be a close relationship between the aim of a training programme and the measurement of outcome variables. In empirical literature, outcome measures include wages, earnings, productivity, hours of work, time of search for the first job after VET, length of duration of the first job, mobility (regional, occupational), upward mobility, employment and unemployment probabilities, further training and others.

While some types of vocational training aim explicitly at providing more general skills in the sense of transferable knowledge (transferable between firms, technologies and over time) such as the German dual vocational training system, others aim at providing rather specialised skills (such as large parts of CT) to master specific aspects of everyday work, for example a two-day training course to understand a new version of an internet browser. There are even more different types of training which aim at reintegrating people into the regular labour market, which applies for most active labour market programmes.

Furthermore, training programmes might have undesired secondary effects. This leads to a distinction between the direct impact of training at individual or firm level and indirect impact, sometimes termed 'general equilibrium impact'. For example: if an increasing number of people are trained with specific skills, the returns to this type of training may decline, or the number of people trained with more general skills may have an impact on the demand for labour in a different skill group.

4.4 The set of explaining factors

The task of the research is to assess the determinants and the isolated impacts of VET. Researchers try to quantify the direct impact of training, which is the difference between the outcome variable before and after training within the framework of econometric mod-

els. Often the determinants of participation in VET and its outcomes are modelled simultaneously, which seems a natural way of tackling the issue, since training is chosen individually or by firms through its impact on desirable outcomes. The set of explanatory factors explaining training usually includes all or some of the following categories of variables:

- Socio-demographic background and work history (age, gender, experience, periods of unemployment, ...);
- family background information (education of parents, place of residence, ...);
- educational background and ability variables (intelligence scores, educational degrees, ...);
- information on former or current labour market conditions (regional unemployment rate, ...) and characteristics of the firm (if training was or is provided in a firm);
- information on the training institution (type of school, qualifications,...).

The set of explanatory factors explaining the impact of training includes variables which also belong to the above categories of variables as well as training indicators.

5. Discussion of results

5.1 Summary

The determinants and effects of training depend on individual characteristics, labour market institutions and the path of economic and technological development. Furthermore, they depend on national education and training systems. Education and initial and continuous training are interrelated, and the incidence and impact of training depends on the training system of society as a whole.

Critical review of empirical literature seems to indicate that the more structured the whole VET system is through institutional arrangements and State regulation, and the higher the amount of more general investment in human capital provided in the early years of life or of an employment relationship is, the lower the measured returns to continuous training are after the high initial investment. Conversely, the less structured the training system, the higher the measured returns of continuous training seem to be.

Furthermore, selectivity plays an important, but different role in training systems. It seems as if the more people or workers are trained to reach a higher level of general vocational skills, for example through State-financed training systems, the greater impact selectivity has on the labour market after finishing VET at schools and/or firms. The role of CT then changes: worker promotion becomes more important and those who are promoted are trained as well. However, if the government-regulated training system provides less general human capital during the early stages of an individual's life, selection for training at the workplace becomes important and the aim of training lies in providing specific or general skills.

5.2 The determinants of training

The discussion of results starts with the question of who participates in VET and CT? While in some countries such as Germany, the difference between initial VET and CT is rather clear cut, in other countries such as the United Kingdom, the difference is not so clear. In Germany, young people who do not enter the university system have to participate in the dual vocational training system. Young people either start a regular two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half year apprenticeship training scheme with a firm, or if they do not find an apprenticeship training place, they have to go to special VET schools until the age of 18. After finishing that phase of education and training, continuous training can start. In the United Kingdom, statutory schooling ends at the age of 16. Thereafter, there are three main qualification pathways (job-specific training, general vocational education, general education, OECD 1998b, Chapter five). One difference from the German system seems to be a higher degree of freedom and less institu-

tional regulations with respect to choices of individuals and firms. Therefore, the boundaries between initial and continuous training are sometimes less obvious.

Evidence from empirical work (which has been put together in Table 5) can be summarised as follows:

- family background, school quality and ability (measured for example with mathematics scores) are important determinants of participation in VET and CT;
- CT first increases in parallel with experience and begins to decrease after 10 to 20 years;
- higher educational qualifications or vocational skills seem to increase the probability of receiving CT; there seems to be a correlation between the occupation chosen in initial and further training;
- former participation in CT also seems to raise the probability of CT;
- women do not have higher probabilities of participation than men and in some studies probabilities are lower;
- self-employed persons have a lower probability of participation than employed workers;
- minority groups, for example immigrants, have a lower probability of receiving training;
- part-time workers receive less training than full-time workers;
- larger firms provide more training than smaller firms;
- training probabilities in growing and in high-tech industries are higher;
- training probabilities are higher in more unionised industries and union members receive more training than non-union members;
- the probability of training decreases with job tenure, although the pattern in the first 20 years is far from being monotonous; workers staying in the firm where they received initial training have a lower probability of training than other workers;
- public sector establishments provide more training than private sector establishments;
- for the self-employed, non-formal CT seems to be more important than formal CT;
- initial training and CT seem to be substitutes in part.

These results indicate that selection and selectivity are important issues in the determinants of training. Training does not seem to be a random element of human economic activity. However, not all the results shown in the list are found in all of the studies. It is these differences that can help obtain a deeper understanding of the forces underlying training. The following issues are discussed in greater detail: the relationship between initial and continuous training, the role of gender and the determinants of initial training.

Although there is some need for more differentiation, most of the studies seem to confirm the positive relationship between the amount of human capital received in initial education and training and continuous training which becomes clear from the aggregate data (see Table 1) in a multivariate statistical framework. For studies based on personal data, see Arulampalam and Booth (1997), Blundell et al.(1997, 1999), Goux and Maurin (1998), Groot (1995), Pannenberg (1995, 1997, 1998), Schömann and Becker (1995) and OECD (1999); for studies based on firm data, see Alba-Ramirez (1994), Gerlach and Jirjahn (1998).

Oosterbeek (1998), who examined supply and demand factors in terms of training determinants, was able to show that while for firms (the demand side) education is insignificant, it is not for individuals. He suggests that the positive correlation between education and CT found in most of the studies is the result of omitted ability variables or self-selection. Furthermore, he argues that this finding is not a result of selectivity effects from the demand side. For firms, it does not matter whether they train better educated or less educated workers, but for individuals there are differences in the payoff of training, with a higher payoff for the better educated. There-

Table 5: Determinants of the participation in VET/CT: summary

Data	Study	Type	Sample	Educational background and ability variable	Experience	Econometric method
NCGE	Alba-Ramirez (1994)	Firm-based training	Firms with more than 200 employees	+		Probit, tobit model
		Firm-based training for junior, senior employees		0 +		
LCS	Andrews/Bradley (1997)	Vocational training or Non-vocational training	Young people leaving compulsory school			multinomial logit
			Women	- (academic ability)		
			Men	- (exam performance)		
NCDS	Arulampalam/Booth (1997)	Determinants job-related training	Women	+ (qualification) - (reading score) + (math score)		Negbin hurdle model
			Men	0 (reading and math score)		
		Number of courses	Women	0 (qualification) 0 (ability)		
			Men	+ (qualification) 0 (ability)		
NCDS	Blundell, Dearden, Meghir (1997, 1999)	Work-related training with a recognised vocational qualification	Men Women	+ +		Probit, ordered probit
		Employer provided training	Men Women	+ +		probit, ordered probit
HFP	Gerlach/Jirjahn (1998)	Firm financed CT	Industrial enterprises	share of academic workforce + share of blue-collar workers -		Random Effects probit model; ordered probit
FQP	Goux/Maurin (1998)	Employer sponsored training	Workers in the private sector	+	+	Bivariate probit (mobility and training)
BRAS	Groot (1995), Groot/ Hartog/ Oosterbeek (1994)	Enterprise-related training	Wage earners	+ (ability) (education not significant)	+	MLE
OSA	Jonker/de Crip/van Smoorenburg (1997)	CT with the employer	Employed workers	0		Probit
GSOEP	Pannenberg (1995, 1997, 1998)	CT (duration, number, place, financing)	Full or part-time employed workers	+	inverted u-shape	Ordered probit, negbin hurdle model, multinomial logit
GLFS	Pfeiffer (1997	CT	Employed worker Self-employed	+ 0	inverted u-shape 0	Probit, ordered probit
Q&C	Pfeiffer/Reize (2000)	CT	Employed worker Self-employed	+ 0	inverted u-shape 0	Probit, ordered probit, MLE
DIALS	Oosterbeek (1998)	CT (work-related) in the last 12 month	Employed people	+ (numerical skills) Qualification: individuals do care, firms do not	inverted u-shaped	Probit, bivariate probit
GLHS	Schömann/Becker (1995)	CT	Males Females	+ +	cohort effects	Partial likelihood

Source: own composition.

fore, more better educated people are more likely to participate in training.

Pfeiffer and Brade (1995), who processed detailed information on the subject of university education (engineers, natural scientists, employees in administration, economists and others), find that there is no monotonous positive correlation between education and CT. Their findings suggest that workers with a university degree in engineering or natural sciences have no higher probability of participating in CT than workers with apprenticeship training. Conversely, teachers and other workers with a degree in social sciences had a much higher probability of participating in CT. The authors conclude that in the age of natural science, engineers and natural scientists are the main producers of new knowledge and new products, and that the activity of this group of workers generates the need of CT for other staff. Therefore, engineers do not have the highest probability of participating in CT.

Findings suggest that education is not the only factor of the positive relationship between initial and further training. The activities of an employee, that is his or her position and tasks within the firm, have some explanatory power, too. Most of the studies cited only give some broad information on education and are therefore not suited as a basis for a deeper discussion of this question. One further exception is the study of Pfeiffer and Reize (2000) which indicates that in Germany the determinants of training for workers with an apprenticeship degree are higher if the type of apprenticeship belongs to the electro-technology or commerce industries compared to other trades. Such differences point to occupation-specific differences in skill needs resulting from technological change, or in differences in the quality of initial training in different trades.

A comparison between employed and self-employed people to identify the determinants of self-employment indicates that for the self-employed, the negative gender effects are not significant (Pfeiffer and Reize 2000). Since the self-employed decide on CT on their own, this says something about the role of the worker-firm relationship in the selection of participation in CT. It is not that women do not want to undergo training, but that firms seem to prefer men. A similar finding and argument is reported by Oosterbeek (1998), who argues that this behaviour may be the result of a higher investment risk, since women have a higher probability of career interruptions than men. The OECD (1999) study also found no significant gender differences in participation rates based on recent surveys.

Focusing on the determinants of participation in initial VET, evidence suggests that school quality and innate abilities have some explanatory power. The family background (parents' educational attainment) and the alternatives available to the individual also seem to be important for explaining participation in VET. There is by and large a positive relationship between parents' educational qualifications and the educational qualifications of children, although during the educational revolution a larger number of children from parents with lower educational qualifications entered universities (for Germany see Pfeiffer 1997). Innate differences in abilities can explain 50% of the variance of intellectual capacities of young people (Weinert 1997). Furthermore, the ability differentials stay rather constant over long periods and seem to be unaffected by schooling.

The study of Andrews and Bradley (1997) gives insights for a region in Britain. The results seem to indicate that a higher academic level reduces the probability of participating in VET after compulsory school and increases the probability of attending a university. The same is true for young people's occupational preferences and associated expected lifetime earnings. Judging from that variable, non-vocational continuing education is preferred to continuing vocational training, which again is preferred to the remaining alternatives (youth training schemes, working and on-the-job training, unemployment).

School type and quality seem to matter, although this is an ongoing debate. Dearden, Ferri and Meghir (1997) provide a summary of the research on school quality, educational attainment and wages, a large part of which has been carried out in the USA. Andrews and

Bradley (1997: 399), for example, differentiate between standard schools maintained by local authorities, a 'voluntary/grant' category and 'special' schools, 'which cater mainly for the needs of young people with learning difficulties'.

These variables have some explanatory power for explaining the long-term career choices of pupils. For example, school leavers from special schools have a higher probability of joining youth training schemes, while those from the first category have a higher probability of joining non-vocational continuing education. School size can also have an influence on the probability of non-vocational continuing education, where the greater the school size, the greater the negative influence.

Andrews and Bradley (1997: 408) conclude: 'Moreover, the estimates ... suggest a clear ranking of outcomes, where the most able end up following non-vocational continuing education, and the least able end up either unemployed or with jobs with only on-the-job training... ' It is not clear how valid this statement is for different countries in Europe and for different types of training systems.

5.3 The effects of training

Does training have a positive impact, for example on productivity, job search duration and mobility and if so, what is its quantitative magnitude? Which part of the observed differences in wages or wage growth, in hours of work, or job duration can be attributed to training? Most econometric studies have investigated the effects on wages, on earnings or corporate productivity.

One should bear in mind that in standard earnings equations (so-called Mincer earnings equations) in cross-sections, 25 to 50% of the variance of earnings or wages can be explained by human capital variables such as years of education or educational qualification, training, age, professional experience, occupational status, technology and gender. The rest remains unexplained. This demonstrates that a quite substantial part of earnings variation among workers remains unexplained by the standard human capital approach. Other studies investigate the effect of training on job search duration, length of job duration, hours of work, post training firm job mobility and upward mobility, and the impact on employment probability. Although training and other human capital variables often have some explanatory power, again a large part of the individual variations in these outcomes variables remains unexplained by empirical research.

The findings of the econometric studies, which have been put together in Table 6, can be summarised as follows:

- there is a positive correlation between VET and wages (found in all studies with the exception of one study for Norway, where the effect is zero, Elias et al. 1994; in the other Norwegian study, the coefficient is positive, Bratberg and Nilsen 1998); the positive relationship between VET and wages depends on the type of VET, the country and the group of individuals under investigation; the estimated returns range between 0 and 40%;

- family background and ability have measurable effects on earnings (Blundell et al.1997, 1999);

- the estimated returns to training are by and large positive for the group of participants; there are examples where the estimated returns turned out to be negative for the group of non-participants (Groot 1995, Groot et al. 1994, Oosterbeek 1998). This suggests the existence of comparative advantages, general equilibrium effects and self-selection;

- there is evidence that the returns for employed workers are higher than those for the self-employed (Pfeiffer and Reize 2000);

- there is evidence that the returns to CT are higher if they are financed by individuals instead of firms (Pannenberg 1997);

- there is evidence that informal CT has returns (Weiss 1994) as well and that these returns are lower than those of formal CT (Pfeiffer and Reize 2000); there is further

evidence that the degree of formalisation matters (Pfeiffer and Reize 2000), as well as school quality (Dearden et al.1997, not cited in Table 6);

- there is evidence that the returns from CT depend on the educational qualification and on gender (Blanchflower and Lynch 1994, Blundell et al. 1997, Elias et al. 1994 and OECD 1999, not cited in Table 6); the evidence for gender seems to be mixed, as well as the evidence with respect to educational qualification (Jonker et al. 1997); while former studies sometimes found a negative relationship between educational qualification and returns to CT, new studies with different econometric methods seem to challenge these findings (Abadie et al. 1999, not cited in Table 6);

- there is evidence that hours of work are positively correlated with CT (Pfeiffer and Brade 1995);

- there is evidence that upward mobility rises parallel to CT and educational qualification (Schröder and Blomskog 1997, Goux and Maurin 1998, Pannenberg 1997);

- there is evidence that employment prospects increase with educational qualification and firm-related CT (Blundell et al. 1997, Bratberg and Nilsen 1998, Mayer and Carroll 1987);

- there is evidence that job search duration after initial education and length of job spells in the first job rise with educational qualification (Bratberg and Nilsen 1998) and with the amount of human capital the firm invested in apprentices (Franz and Zimmermann 1999, not cited in Table 6);

- productivity of firms rises parallel to training (Alba-Ramirez 1994, Gerlach and Jirjahn 1998);

- there is evidence which suggests the existence of poaching externalities (Hocquet 2000);

- there is evidence that firms not only gain from specific investment in human capital (specialised training), but also from more general investment in human capital (general training) (Barnett and O'Connell 1998).

Although considerable methodological and data problems remain to be solved – the result stems from different countries, different data, estimators and methods used, and often the main objective of these studies is rather positive than normative analysis – these are interesting results which are especially important for VET policy.

First, results indicate that classroom education, work-related and more general types of training are beneficial for both firms and individuals. These benefits are not negligible and are sometimes rather large. Benefits from education. learning and training seem to occur to a great extent between individuals, firms and regions. Individual heterogeneity, differences in the education and training systems, are important factors behind these differences.

Second, the result that education and training has positive benefits does not mean that policy has been optimal or that publicly provided VET should be enhanced. There is rather a lot of evidence for positive impacts of VET on participants and comparably less evidence on the impacts of VET in the group of non-participants. In fact, there is evidence that self-selection on the one hand and general equilibrium effects on the other are at work. Training has positive effects and net benefits for the group of trainees. However, there is also some evidence that for non-trainees, net benefits might not in fact be positive. From the viewpoint of economic efficiency for these individuals, training might be a bad investment for firms, individuals and society. Furthermore, most of the studies reviewed do not investigate the costs of VET.

Third, any benefits of CT seem to decrease with the level of educational qualification. The lower the amount of initial training, the lower the incidence of CT, but the higher the measured returns in terms of any increase in wage. The benefits of CT for those who already have a high educational qualification seem to be

Table 6: The effects of VET: summary

Data	Study	Training	sample	wage/earnings (+-volume)	post training mobility	employment
NCGE	Alba-Ramirez (1994)	Firm-provided training	Industry enterprises with more than 200 employees	Labour productivity +28% (4.2) (mainly driven by training of senior employees)		
CTIRE	Barnett/O'Connell (1998)	General training Specific training (Training expenditure total payroll)	Private enterprises	+2.0 (1.9) –0.8 (-1.0)		
NCDS	Blanchflower/Lynch (1994)	Training with current firm Apprenticeship No qualification + City and Guild Craft + City and Guild Awards Training with current firm Apprenticeship No qualification + City and Guild Craft + City and Guild Awards	Men Women 	1.8 (1.5) 1.8 (2.3) 1.9 (0.1) 7.2 (3.3) 2.6 (2.3) 1.8 (1.7) 1.6 (0.03) 2.7 (0.3)		
NCDS	Blundell, Dearden Meghir (1997)	Employer provided Training current job On-the-job Off-the-job Previous job On-the-job Off-the-job Other work-related training Employer provided Training current job On-the-job Off-the-job Previous job On-the-job Off-the-job Other work related training	Men Women 	 +4.1 (1.7) +7.2 (3.0) +6.2 (1.67) +6.0 (2.1) 6.7 (3.2) +0.3 (0.1) +4.6 (1.4) +0.5 (0.1) 1.0 (0.3) +6.6 (2.4)		+ +
KIRUT	Bradberg/Nilsen (1998)	<10, 10-12, 13-15, >15 years in education	Men / Women	increasing with education	Increasing with education	+ (13-15 years)
NORS	Elias/Hernaes/Baker (1994)	Vocational apprenticeship formal certificate	Men age 22-24 Women age 22-24	-/0 -/0		
FQP	Goux/Maurin (1998)	Firm-provided training	Wage earners	+7% (3.5) Selectivity bias corrected: –5.7 (0.9)	0 (firm mobility)	

BRAS	Groot (1995)	Enterprise-related training	Wage earners Trained Not trained	Rate of return per year Average marginal +28% -0.16 -83% -0.16		
FQP	Hocquet (2000)	Employer-provided training Content (11 categories) Qualification (6 categories) Duration (11 categories) From current firm From previous firm	Wage earners, men	 0-28% 0-17% 5-11% (not ordered) +7% +10%-+18%		
GLHS	Mayer (1996) Mayer/Caroll(1987)	Vocational apprenticeship compared to no vocational training	Employed		+ (expert statement)	+ (qualitative statement)
GSOEP	Pannenberg (1995, 1997)	CT on-the-job training employer-financed	Wage earners	 +9% (2.9) +3% (0.9)	Change of employer: 0 upward mobility + (short courses)	
GLFS	Pfeiffer/Brade (1995)	CT on-the-job Less than 1 month Longer CT off-the-job At a chamber of trade and commerce	Male wage earner	+7.2 (-3 -+ 7%) –2.4 (–0.1 –3.8)	Hours of work +1.9 1.6-3.4 +8.1 1.9-3.3	
Q&C	Pfeiffer/Reize (2000)	Formal CT with certificate Informal CT rel. to no training	Trained worker Rel. to no certificate Rel. to informal Train. self-employed Trained worker Train. self-employed	 11.8 % 28.6% -11% (rel. inform., n.s.) +16.1 % +-0.09 % (n.s.)		
DIALS	Oosterbeek (1998)	Work-related training	Trained Not trained	Positive returns for firms and worker 50% net effects negative for workers. but positive for firm 33% net effects for workers positive, but negative for firms 17% negative for both		
SLLS	Schröder/Blomskog (1997)	Educational levels EDUC2 Comp to EDUC 1 EDUC3 Comp to EDUC1 EDUC4 Comp. To EDUC 1 Post-entry education	Men / Women		(upward mobility) + 0 / +0 + / + +/ + + /+	

Source: own composition.

related to rising wages to a much less extent than for those with a lower level of qualification. However, it is currently too early to conclude on the basis of these findings and on economic efficiency reasons that people with a lower educational qualification should receive more training because their returns to training are higher (this seems to be one conclusion of the OECD employment outlook report, OECD 1999). The positive VET impacts for low educated people found in cross-sections (OECD 1999) might not stay constant in panel studies, hinting at unobserved heterogeneity problems in the cross-section studies (Abadie et al. 1999).

A refined version of the hypothesis seems to be more in line with the evidence. To a certain extent, VET and CT can be substitutes. In those countries where individuals invest a comparably large amount in initial VET (for example workers in Germany), returns to CT are lower than in those countries where people invest a comparably smaller amount in initial training, for example workers in the United Kingdom (compare Blundell et al. 1999 and Pfeiffer and Reize 2000 or Pischke 1996) or in the United States, where returns to continuous training also seem to be rather high (Lynch 1994). The refined hypothesis therefore postulates that returns to training after education are smaller if more people have received more initial education.

Fourth, government intervention in the training process of firms certainly has effects, which should be carefully investigated. There is some evidence that the French system provides more workers with training, because it is compulsory for firms to do so. However, in this system returns to training seem to be zero, even for those participating in training (Goux and Maurin 1998). Government interventions into private training processes might therefore have unintended negative secondary effects, which should be understood carefully for rational policy reasons.

Fifth, returns to CT seem to be higher for employed workers than for the self-employed (Pfeiffer and Reize 2000). From this result, one can conclude that human capital aspects in the narrow sense of productivity enhancement only constitute one part of the training story. CT is the result of complex negotiations between workers and firms. Self-selection, firm selection, industrial relations, and internal promotion ladders are important factors in the process of training. Training often seems to be the result of a pre-selection process where workers are matched to hierarchical positions. It is not always training which leads to higher wages but rather the selection process which is the driving force behind an increase in wage. After selection for higher positions has taken place, workers are trained and receive higher wages. So, if we observe that a person has been trained, we often merely observe that he has been promoted. This is the case in the United Kingdom, Germany and other countries. However, in the United Kingdom, returns to training seem to be higher than in Germany and investment in initial training is lower than in Germany. In France however, where firms have to provide training, returns equal zero. Therefore, training in the French system seems to be no indicator for internal promotion.

Sixth, in the papers reviewed there is no clear picture of market or government failure. While some findings can be interpreted as evidence of market failure ('poaching externalities', Hocquet 2000), others suggest that market forces work in the 'right' direction. An example for the latter statement is that returns to employer-provided CT have turned out to be lower than those of individually provided CT which seems to be in line with forecasts from the human capital theory of G.S. Becker (Pannenberg 1997). Yet another example is the zero return result for France (Goux and Maurin 1998), which could be interpreted as government failure since it is compulsory for firms to provide training, whether it is efficient for them to do so, or not. But overall, the studies surveyed cannot be used to draw strong conclusions on the relevance of market or government failures.

Seventh, training in a competitive environment may have positive effects on some individuals and some firms, while it may have negative or positive effects on other individuals or firms at the same time, or later. Trained workers might crowd non-trained workers out

of the labour force or out of jobs, and firms which provide more training and more innovative might crowd other firms out of product markets, because staff of the former are better motivated and they have innovative products. These negative, indirect effects cannot be ruled out in market economy. Good firms with superior technologies or lower costs have higher survival probabilities than other firms. However, if training is subsidised by government, assessment of VET programmes should take care of such indirect negative impacts. Some recent theoretical work is based on the assumption of positive external effects of VET (Acemoglu 1996, Lucas 1988). In the case of positive technological external effects, the productivity of trained workers in one firm is higher if the workers of other firms are also trained. Unfortunately, there is not yet enough empirical evidence on these issues with respect to training to be able to answer whether and under what circumstances training has a positive or negative secondary overall impact on society.

Eighth, there seems to be a large heterogeneity with respect to the determinants and effects of training. The estimated effects seem to differ between individuals, regions, over time and even between researchers and methods. This is true even if the same data are used, as can be seen by a comparison of the numerous studies performed by the British NCDS or the German GSOEP data. From the evidence surveyed in this paper and the diversity of it, it is not possible to draw strong and very specific conclusions with respect to VET policies. However, it is possible to draw some broader conclusions with respect to VET-related policy and research issues, which is carried out in the next part.

5. Conclusions

Although there is widespread belief in a positive relationship between education, training and growth, the evidence provided so far is far from complete. Aggregate figures for the European Union suggest a clear hierarchical pattern in the labour market: those who are better educated are on average more frequently found in the work force, have higher earnings, participate more often in formal continuous training, are less often unemployed, are more often self-employed, have a higher regional mobility, and work with newer and more high tech equipment. Job mobility on the other hand is negatively correlated with the amount of human capital invested in a specific occupation, since investment increases switching costs. The pattern seems to have been rather stable over the past few decades, although continuing skill-biased technological change provides a challenge for VET policy in Europe.

These stylised facts do not necessarily mean that those who are better educated or have higher educational qualifications also have a higher lifetime income or utility, because they often have higher costs in the investment period and there may be substantial comparative advantages for different educational pathways (for example, more cognitive or more mechanistic skills) for different people. Regarding heterogeneous individuals, there are individuals at the margin, whose lifetime utility is rather similar in different pathways, and there are individuals who receive higher utilities either with lower or higher educational qualifications.

What one would really like to know for policy analysis, is the value of the lifetime utility of a person for different educational pathways under different educational standards and regulations. However, these values are not observable and estimates available are far from being conclusive in all respects.

The critical review of more specific econometric work in this study indicates that training is indeed beneficial for both firms and individuals. The benefits are not negligible, in fact they are sometimes rather large. The fact that training has positive effects is however no guideline *per se* for government activity. There is evidence that self-selection on the one hand and general equilibrium effects on the other are at work. As a rule, training does have positive effects and net benefits for trainees. However, there is some evidence that net effects for non-trainees might not be positive. In these cases, training might be a bad investment for the respective people, firms and

– from the viewpoint of economic efficiency – for society.

In addition, non-negligible parts of observed differences in outcome variables such as earnings, wages, hours of work or career satisfaction cannot be attributed to education and training. Innate abilities, heterogeneity of abilities and preferences, family background, political events (for example the fall of the Berlin wall on 9 November 1989 had significant impact on the East Germans), luck and the path of economic and technological development are all factors which are important. Selectivity, selection and general equilibrium effects also seem to play an important role in all training systems.

By and large, empirical results suggest that the more structured the whole training system is, and the more investment in general human capital is acquired while a person is young, the lower the returns to continuous training are after this high initial investment. If education is centralised and compulsory school attendance is expanded, then all people should achieve higher levels of education and formal skill levels. Selection into different career pathways transmitted through labour markets only begins after compulsory school attendance. If the level of more general types of skills learned in schools is high, training at the workplace plays a different role and is no longer responsible for building up these more general types of skills. Such mechanisms seem to be responsible for lower returns to continuous training in countries such as Germany and France compared to the United Kingdom. Conversely, the less structured the training system is, the higher the measured returns of continuous training seem to be.

European training systems differ. The different types of investment in VET, the spacing of these investments over an individual's life and the role of the State will depend on differences in prices for education, expected wage profiles, the skill structure of the workforce, tradition and technological factors. Success in schools and other training institutions is not the only factor explaining work-related success and careers. Labour market regulations and institutions might lead to insider power and create entry barriers and waiting queues for young workers, despite higher education and more investment in training. Such mechanisms seem to be present in most European countries, although to different degrees.

Some of the findings are a major challenge to the role of government in training. Obviously formal education and training are not omnipotent weapons against all storms of life for all people, but they may be very strong weapons when used at the right time, to the right extent and with the right content. At other times in an individual's working life, other weapons such as non-formal learning, regional, firm or occupational mobility might be more helpful.

Centralisation in the sense of generally acknowledged educational certificates (for example, trades in the German dual vocational training system) might be helpful for some occupations and especially when larger investments in educational qualifications are considered. However, there seem to be limits to such strategies.

First, the German apprenticeship system sometimes seems to react very slowly to rapid economic or technical changes (Blechinger and Pfeiffer 2000) with the consequence that training curricula are old fashioned and skill obsolescence becomes a problem for firms and workers, which they try to overcome by additional and costly continuous training. Second, the set up and running costs of such a system can be rather high. More decentralised, deregulated and flexible systems such as those in the United Kingdom or the United States, which depend to a higher degree on market signals, might therefore have an advantage in times of rapid and unpredictable technical change. However, there may be other benefits of a more centralised system with compulsory school attendance. Youth unemployment is low in Germany and participation rates in VET is high. Imperfect capital markets, which can create entry barriers for poor young individuals in market economies, do not play a major role. No single optimal VET system exists. Policy-makers have

to put weight behind different policy objectives when policy changes are considered.

Key qualifications and more general human capital cannot be acquired in a short period of time. If technologies change, key qualifications will also change, at least to some extent. They have to be acquired through a long and continuing process (Weinert 1997) which presumably will have a sustainable impact when people are young or very young. The older individuals become, the more important non-formal and self-organised types of learning become. Mobility between occupations, regions and firms might also be valuable strategies for improving the career position of workers.

For improving VET policies an adequate, systematic and regular research design *ex ante* would be helpful, allowing greater understanding of the relationship between specific VET activities carried out and its actual, secondary and desired results. Due to tight public budgets, evidence of impacts and efficiency of new and existing programmes will grow in the future. A research design that takes diversity of situations, heterogeneity of individuals, differences in training systems, governments, markets, etc. into account is, however, expensive and takes time. If, for example, a unified European survey on VET were to be conducted in the year 2000, the results of the analysis would be available between 2001 and 2004 or even later. If one wished to compare the results over a longer horizon, for example, over a period of 30 years (see the NCDS data), results would not be available until 2030.

Besides research based on microdata which allows one to investigate the determinants and partial impacts of VET at individual level, general equilibrium effects should also be investigated using time series or panel data. Research on VET based on microdata might be improved if it would be more regularly and systematically based on Europe-wide data sets, such as the ELFS, European Household Panel or the IALS. Despite remaining methodological problems, international surveys should have the advantage that the most interesting human capital and training variables are defined in comparable ways. Empirical results for different regions might be more comparable and differences in results might help to identify different impacts of national VET policies.

National VET programmes and policies dominate in Europe. It is therefore necessary to evaluate specific VET programmes on a regional or national basis. There is no need for standardised and Europe-wide evaluations if national VET programmes dominate. Most firms sometimes hold formal or more informal training programmes. There are, therefore, markets for training and these programmes seem to provide returns on investment which are as high as other investments in machines or research. However, the author is not aware of systematic research on returns to training investment by private firms. This would be an additional source of extremely valuable knowledge and information for assessing public VET policies.

From the authors point of view, future research could be directed towards the following questions to improve understanding of the impacts of VET policies both on the individual and aggregate levels and optimise policy reactions to technology and other shocks. The questions are interrelated.

First: Research on specific public VET programmes should be intensified to learn about partial impacts at individual level and efficiency of programmes. This type of research would usually be based on microdata if the programmes are not too large. A partial evaluation design ignoring general equilibrium effects should suffice.

Second: Research on public VET systems should also be intensified. This type of research should evaluate the whole system and should take into account general equilibrium effects, financial efficiency and labour markets institutions as well. Research on this topic will usually be based on aggregate time series data, individual panel data and official data on programme costs.

Third: Research on returns to VET for non-participants should be intensified. Should

governments help non-participants and especially individuals with low skills to participate in VET or CT, or are other measures, for example wage subsidies, better for improving the labour market position of the low skilled?

Fourth: It is not fully understood, whether there are cumulative negative or positive relationships of public VET policies of different types transmitted through labour markets. Therefore research on the question of whether the public promotion of higher education in the past 30 years has had negative impacts on wages and labour market prospects of individuals with vocational education should be intensified to avoid the possibility of negative relationships in the future and improve coordination between educational and labour market policies.

Fifth: What is the efficiency of educational policies and the relative efficiency of higher and secondary education for the next 50 years for the cohort of young people entering the national training systems in the next five or 10 years? What is the optimal portfolio of different types of education, more general or more specific in nature for individuals, firms, regions or Europe?

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The effect of national institutional differences on education/training to work transitions in Europe: a comparative research project (CATEWE) under the TSER programme

Damian F. Hannan et al.[1]

Abstract

The paper presents a comparative empirical study on school to work transitions in a range of European countries. The project (CATEWE, 1996-2000) is funded by the TSER programme. Discussed are the main conceptual and methodological approaches, empirical data bases, progress to date with the study and some initial results from a related earlier research project carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

The main objectives of the CATEWE project are to:

a) develop a comparative conceptual framework to study school to work transitions in EU countries with different institutional systems, and

b) apply that model to both comparative stock analyses of labour force surveys (LFS) in most EU countries, and comparative flow analyses of school to work transition surveys (SLS) in five EU countries – France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden.

To do this effectively we need to develop

c) a set of comparatively defined variables which adequately capture the complexities of school to work transitions in France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden – as measured both by 'flow statistics' in their national school to work transition surveys and as 'stock' statistics in their national labour force surveys.

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List of selected abbreviations used in this article

CATEWE	Comparative Analysis of Transitions from Education to Work in Europe (TSER project)
CLFS	European Community Labour Force Survey
DG	Directorate General (of the European Commission)
ET	education/training
EU	European Union
FE	further education
ILM	internal labour market
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LFS	labour force survey
LM	labour market
OLM	occupational labour market
SLS	school leavers survey
TIY	Transition in Youth
TSER	Targeted Socio-Economic Research
VTLMT	Vocational Training and Labour Market Transitions (TSER project)

1. Introduction

The main reason why comparative research on education/training to work transitions in European countries is important is its unique ability to assess the extent to which education, training and labour market integration processes are similar or different across EU national boundaries. If the same market and institutional processes operate in the same way and with the same outcomes and relationships across all countries there would be no need for comparative research. If, however, there are important national systemic differences in the complex relationships between individuals' social characteristics, education/training achievements and labour market outcomes then it is important for both research and policy purposes that these national differences be elucidated. The main purpose of the CATEWE research project is to do this.

The project builds on previous efforts in this field to develop a more sophisticated and comprehensive conceptual framework for this purpose. It constructs and uses a more comprehensive and standardised set of databases, and sets out to analyse these in more detail than previous efforts.

Four themes of that analysis appear most relevant to the aims of Cedefop's second report on vocational training research in Europe: the issue of educational and employment exclusion (point 7); detailed longitudinal surveys of education/training to work transitions (point 8); and the extent of 'matching' between education/training contents and levels and employment/occupational outcomes (point 9), with particular reference to low-skilled or poorly qualified school leavers (point 11).

The project is a comparative sociological and economic, empirical study on school to work transitions in a range of European countries. It is funded by former DG12[2] under the TSER programme (the CATEWE project, 1996-2000). This paper describes the main conceptual and methodological approaches to the study, the empirical databases used, progress to date with the study and some initial results from a related earlier research project carried out under the Leonardo (DG22[3]) programme. Since the research only started in December 1997 (to December 2000) and we have just started the analyses of the integrated, comparative databases we have no findings to report from these analyses. However we do provide some preliminary results from an earlier related comparative research project on early school leaving carried out under the Leonardo, DG22 programme (1997-98).

The main objectives of the CATEWE project are to:

1) develop a comparative conceptual framework to study school to work transitions in EU countries with different institutional systems, and

2) apply that model to both comparative stock analyses of labour force surveys (LFS) in most EU countries, and comparative flow analyses of school to work transition surveys (SLS) in five EU countries – France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden.

3) To do this effectively we need to develop a set of comparatively defined variables which adequately capture the complexities of school to work transitions in France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden – as measured both by 'flow statistics' in their national school to work transition surveys and as 'stock' statistics in their national labour force surveys.

The cross-national databases on national school leavers surveys contain almost 100 comparatively defined variables – though with many missing variable cells for some countries. These cover social background, initial and continuing educational/training variables, initial labour market experience vari-

[2] Directorate General 12, since 2000: Directorate General 'Research'

[3] Directorate General 22, since 2000: Directorate General 'Education and Culture'

ables. In addition to analyses of current school leavers' and labour force surveys a limited time series analyses of these school leavers' surveys will be carried out for Ireland and Scotland (1980–96) and for the Netherlands since 1988. In addition limited analyses will also be carried out on a comparative database of six-year follow-up surveys (1992-98) carried out in France and Ireland, and for a shorter period of observation in Sweden.

This paper is divided into five sections:

a) the conceptual framework,

b) study design and construction of comparative databases,

c) progress to date,

d) discussion of some relevant results from an earlier related study, and

e) conclusions.

2. A conceptual framework for comparative research on education/training to work transitions in Europe

Considering the varying institutional structure of European education/training systems and the varying national structure of education/training (ET) and labour market (LM) links, comparative European research on education to work transition is underdeveloped. We have only an incomplete and imprecise knowledge of the nature of the varying relationships across the different European countries, and we do not sufficiently understand the similarities and differences in these respects between EU countries, nor the mechanisms that can explain them. In the following section we will briefly discuss the major lines of research that have been pursued, highlighting the main gaps in existing knowledge.

The most influential conceptual approach has been that of Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre (1982). They conducted a detailed analysis of work organisation, job recruitment and occupational career patterns in a small number of selected French and German enterprises. Proposing a theory of *societal effects* they argued that the different kinds of qualifications which are produced in the German and French educational systems, and their use by German and French employers, result in complex system-specific relationships between qualifications and jobs. They describe Germany as a system patterned along a *qualificational space*, while France is considered to be patterned along an *organisational space*. In Germany, a rather differentiated set of widely recognised ET qualification outcomes are produced in a bipolar educational/training system (the dual system), and these courses and qualifications are used by employers both to organise jobs/occupations and to allocate suitably qualified people to them. In France, formal education is much less vocationally oriented and less closely related to the kind of work to be subsequently taken up. Skills and qualifications required for specific work tasks are mostly obtained (both formally and informally) through on-the-job training and are thus specifically tied to the needs of individual firms. Such organisation-specific qualifications have a less convertible value when workers move between firms. The association between ET qualifications achieved and LM positions subsequently achieved is, therefore, institutionally weaker in France than in Germany.

More recent studies based on this national institutional approach have generalised it by using the more general theory of segmented labour markets, rather than conceiving cross-national differences as idiosyncratic 'societal effects'. Countries have been typified according to the predominance of either occupational labour markets (OLMs), as in Germany, or the predominance of (firm) internal labour markets (ILMs), as in France or Britain. Equally there are substantial national differences in the relative importance of organised interest groups, and nationally agreed corporate interest mediation arrangements between employers, trade unions and governments, in agreeing the curricula, examination processes and qualification arrangements for ET provision systems – and the content of vocational

education in particular. Systems where such agreed upon education/training system arrangements are institutionally linked to 'matched', occupationalised labour market arrangements, are obviously quite different from others where the ET system is quite autonomously organised and occupational labour markets are weak (see Marsden 1990; Marsden and Ryan 1990; Ryan, Edwards and Garonna 1991; Eyraud, Marsden and Silvestre 1990). Soskice (1990; 1993) extended these analyses by showing how institutional variables beyond the labour market itself help to explain the emergence of, and reliance on, occupational qualifications that are of general value beyond the individual firm. His comparative work emphasises the impact of the structure of coordination existing in an economy between the State, employers and unions. He distinguishes between liberal market economies (mainly the English speaking countries) with rather decoupled educational systems and inefficient systems of vocational training, industry coordinated systems (Germany and the Scandinavian countries), and group oriented market economies (mostly Japan).

Most of this work has been carried out within the broader field of industrial sociology and labour economics and is methodologically marked by traditions most characteristic of these fields. Most of the studies are based on comparisons of a rather limited number of, usually 'core', countries and are often restricted to small samples of firms in selected industries or locations. While this allows an in-depth analysis of the processes across two or three counties, or that operate within individual firms or workplaces across countries, the results of this approach can rarely be widely generalised.

An alternative conceptual and methodological approach has generally been pursued in studies more closely tied to the sociology of social stratification or education. These studies are usually based on national samples of individuals, representative of the adult population or of selected birth cohorts. The information collected generally includes social background data on individuals, the type and level of education and training received, and characteristics of jobs and occupational careers. The most notable examples of such life history studies have been done in the 1970s in the US, Norway, and Poland, from 1980 onwards in Germany, and most recently also in the Netherlands and Sweden. Two comparative analyses from this tradition of research are of particular interest for the topic of this proposal: the studies of Allmendinger (1989) and studies done in the context of the CASMIN project. (See also Blossfeld and Shavit (eds.) 1993; Shavit and Müller (eds.) 1998.)

Allmendinger (1989) studies the effects of two specific aspects of educational systems – *stratification* and *standardisation* – on transition into employment and on patterns of associated work careers. Stratification refers to the extent of segmentation of the educational system into various tracks and their hierarchical organisation. Standardisation refers to the degree of comparability of specific educational qualifications within a given country in terms of the structure and content of curricula, examination standards as well as certification procedures. In countries like the USA both educational differentiation/stratification and national standardisation are low, while Germany is almost at the opposite extreme. Both dimensions contribute to the extent to which ET qualifications are used by employers as screening devices in selecting workers and allocating jobs to them. In her comparative study, based on life history data from Germany, Norway and the US, Allmendinger finds that stratification contributes to a closer link between the hierarchical levels of educational systems and various levels of work/occupational hierarchies, whereas standardisation contributes to early work career stability and less job search activity.

The main relevant contributions of the CASMIN project are its successful attempt to develop a unified conceptual framework and a classification schema for educational and vocational qualifications comparable for nine European countries with different educational systems, and its analyse of the relationships between such educational qualifications and occupational and class positions in the labour market (Müller et al. 1990; Müller and Karle 1993; Ishida, Müller and Ridge 1995). The

schema of educational qualifications is based on the twofold distinction between hierarchical levels of education on the one hand and the general (academic) or vocational nature of the qualification obtained on the other. While the empirical results indicate significant national similarities amongst the nations studied in the relationships between educational qualifications and labour market positions, they also show substantial national variations apparently due to specific national peculiarities of educational systems with their different historical roots as well as specific State policy interventions (particularly in the two east European countries analysed). The analyses also show the varying roles that education plays in intergenerational social mobility in the various countries.

An even more recent study in that research tradition (Müller and Shavit 1998) shows how varying national ET systems shape occupational attainment. In a comparative study of 13 European and other countries they find considerable between-country variation in the patterns of associations between educational qualifications and labour market outcomes. On the one hand, the strength of the association between educational qualification and occupational destinations appears to be clearly stronger in countries with higher degrees of stratification and vocational specificity in the ET system. On the other hand, the association appears to be weaker in countries with more general educational systems and larger proportions of the youth cohort achieving tertiary qualifications. While the study marks a significant advance the authors, however, point to several of its limitations. Its design is based on 'side by side' comparisons rather than on integrated and fully comparable data sets. It is somewhat limited in its analyses of the school to work transition process, being cross-sectional in nature, and labour market outcomes are measured mainly in terms of first stable jobs. The study is also limited in its coverage of important variables in the school to work transition process leading to stable employment.

While research discussed so far mainly attempts to elaborate and explain similarities and differences between countries in *objective patterns* of ET-LM relationships, a few comparative studies have also addressed the varying *subjective* experiences and motivations of individuals in their transitions from school to work in various institutional and societal context. Although the empirical base using this biographical approach is still very limited a number of studies compare school to work transitions in England and Germany (Bynner and Roberts 1991; Evans and Heinz 1994; Roberts, Clark and Wallace 1994) and another study compares Canada and the United Kingdom (Ashton 1988; Ashton, Green and Lowe 1993). The evidence shows how significantly individual perceptions and people's life histories are affected by the different institutional arrangements and societal conditions which structure this crucial transition in different societies.

The main conclusions, therefore, one can draw from available studies is that the nature of both ET and LM systems, as well as the nature of the link between them, varies across European countries. In addition, it is clear that these national institutional differences have significant effects on socioeconomic inequalities in educational achievements, on labour market outcomes and on individual life course trajectories. The following appear to be the most important dimensions of national variation in these respects.

2.1 The degree of institutional standardisation of ET systems

National ET systems vary in the extent to which centralised and standardised national curricula and examination systems exist, or are 'quality controlled'; and are then used for selection/progression purposes for further education or for labour market entry. In some countries (e.g., Ireland), both curricula and examination are nationally standardised, and a pronounced emphasis is placed on educational level and on grades achieved in selection for third level education and in access to paid employment (Breen, Hannan and O'Leary 1995). In other countries (such as the United States), curricula and exams are not nationally standardised at second level, grades are awarded on a school or district basis and are therefore much less relevant in

selection for further education or subsequent labour market chances (see Rosenbaum and Kariya 1991). It should be noted that the different levels of the ET system within a country may differ from each other in these respects. For example, second level education may be relatively unstandardised while third level education may be highly standardised.

2.2 The extent and nature of differentiation within ET systems

Differentiation within ET systems concern

a) the extent of division between general and vocational education, and the age and degree of selection into such different tracks/ streams;

b) the extent of formal differentiation or grading of educational achievement outcomes – at each stage/level of education; the degree of hierarchical ranking of educational achievement and the nature and degree of selection for progression to higher stages.

The degree of differentiation between academic and vocational 'tracks', courses or routes varies widely across countries (see Allmendinger 1989). The German and Dutch systems of education/training, for example, are highly differentiated institutionally with parents/pupils choosing from the age of 11 onwards what type of school and educational path is to be followed. In contrast, the Irish and Scottish systems are much more general and comprehensive, with relatively weak curricular tracking at second level (particularly lower second level), although pupils may specialise to some degree in particular types of subjects (see Hannan et al. 1993). One of the objectives of the proposed research will be to examine the extent to which such curricular specialisations in the latter countries – such as in vocational/technical subjects – have any equivalent LM effects which correspond to the strongly differentiated Dutch and German systems. These national institutional variations have obvious implications for access to appropriate vocational training and for the degree of matching ('content congruence') between type of training and type of occupation subsequently achieved.

The relative degree of hierarchical stratification of levels of educational achievement, or the relative significance of levels of education achieved versus other aspects of educational achievement, appears to be more significant in non-differentiated systems such as in the Irish case; though in all systems 'level of education' achieved is expected to be one of the most important variables in labour market integration. Related to such hierarchical ordering of achievements is the extent to which grades achieved in examinations are elaborated (and are used in selection) – varying from minimal 'pass'/'fail' distinctions to A to D, E, F distinctions in each subject in all examinations in Ireland and Scotland (see Breen et al. 1995).

These different aspects of differentiation vary across EU countries – with maximal influence of vocational/general differentiation in the dual system countries and the Netherlands, while in the Irish and to a lesser extent the British and French cases the importance of both level of education and grades achieved in examinations are likely to be far more important in educational progression decisions and in selection for employment. These macro-level characteristics of ET systems are likely not only to affect the educational progression decisions of students and their parents but the nature of the whole ET-employment relationship.

The research will therefore pay particular attention to micro-level variables which reflect three aspects of educational differentiation: the highest stage/level of education achieved, educational/vocational track or degree of specialisation involved, and curricular level taken and grades achieved in examinations.

2.3 The links between ET and LM systems

Employers' use of level and type of ET qualifications in employment decisions vary across countries and, within countries, between sectors and occupations. Employers' evaluations of ET outputs impact on labour market entrants in two ways: first, in opportunities to obtain employment and, second, in the nature

and level of the job obtained: whether regular or temporary, full-time or part-time, occupational status and level of pay. The nature of the link between ET and LM entry can vary substantially: from situations of complete isolation, or 'decoupling' of the ET system from the LM system (in 'liberal and open' market economies) to one where both systems are highly interconnected. Drawing on a typology developed by Hannan, Raffe and Smyth, (1996) and presented in Figure 1, we can conceptualise these links as follows:

a) *strong and direct, shared interlink:* Where employers and schools/trainers are jointly involved in the provision and delivery of training for young people, and where both employers and ET providers jointly agree on education/training requirements for specified occupations. This pattern is particularly evident in the German-speaking countries and Denmark where there is strong 'content' and 'level congruence' between educational outputs and labour market intake (see Konietzka and Solga 1995);

b) *collinear linkage:* Here a substantial occupational labour market exists, training for specific occupational positions takes place in second-level schools, but there is little or no joint delivery of training for young people moving from school to the labour force. In the Netherlands, for example, over 1 000 detailed occupational categories, and over 120 occupational groups can be distinguished on the basis of the level and type of education required for entry. As a result, there is a highly developed occupational labour market served by a large and diversified set of education/training programmes provided on a full-time basis, with a moderate to high degree of congruence between course content and occupational position. Elements of such a collinear link exist in other systems. In most countries, for instance, there is a range of professional and higher technical positions where specified educational programmes at third level are required for entry;

c) *no direct link but strong market signals from schools:* Although employers are not directly involved in schooling or training, school achievement outcomes (examinations and qualifications) are publicly certified and used by employers in making recruitment decisions. Education systems are highly standardised but tend to be less differentiated in terms of school type or curricular tracking. There is a high degree of 'level congruence' between educational outputs and labour market outcomes, but little regulated 'content congruence'. In addition to 'levels', examination grades may be widely used in access to employment (see Breen, Hannan and O'Leary 1995). Such reliable measurements of 'general human capital' are, not unexpectedly, widely used in employment decisions. With the exception of the American and Canadian second-level systems, most of the English-speaking countries fall into this category, as does France and many of the Scandinavian countries;.

d) *school placement function:* a somewhat stronger version of (c) exists in countries like Japan, where besides open market 'reading' and matching of educational outputs to job offers, employers may be directly linked to schools by the school guidance service effectively acting as job placement officers in the employment system. This arrangement may be supported by, and officially acting in place of, the State employment service, as in Japan (Nakajima 1990; Rosenbaum and Kariya 1991);

e) *no direct link and weak market signals:* the USA is the exemplar here. There is no national standardisation of the educational system at first or second level, and second-level education tends to be comprehensive and relatively undifferentiated. There also tends to be limited post-school training of those high school graduates or dropouts who do not go on to third level, compared to Germany for instance (Schupp et al. 1994). On the other hand, a much higher proportion of the cohort complete upper second level education and go on to third-level (or other further) education in the USA and Canada; and the third-level systems there appear to be much more open

Figure 1: A typology of education/training systems and labour market links: cross-classifying by level of standardisation, differentiation and link

School-work link	Degree of standardisation of ET system			
	High		Low	
	Degree of differentiation of ET system			
	High	Low	High	Low
Strong and direct link (dual system)	Germany Austria Switzerland Denmark			
Collinear link (diff. ET system linked to OLM)	Netherlands			
Decoupled and more general or comprehensive ET system but with strong market signals	United Kingdom France Sweden	Ireland		
Decoupled school but with strong market signals and strong placement function		Japan		
Decoupled with weak market signals				Canada USA

Source: Hannan, Raffe and Smyth 1996.

and flexible in terms of part-time and 'second chance' participation than is true for Germany, the UK (see Ashton et. al. 1993) or for Japan (Nakajima 1990). In these cases, there appears to be both weak 'content congruence' and weak 'level congruence', though high school graduates tend to be at some advantage in relation to school drop-outs, and third-level graduates have clear advantages over high school graduates (Rosenbaum and Kariya 1991).

Using the above three dimensions of national educational systems – standardisation, differentiation and ET/LM links – and crudely dichotomising each one we can derive the following typology of national ET systems.

As indicated there appear to be few differences between European countries in the degree of standardisation of their ET systems at second level – at least relative to the United States. Although substantial differences do exist in how this is achieved and the extent to which it is centralised, for this initial purpose we can regard them as standardised. The dual system countries are highly standardised and differentiated, with strong and highly institutionalised relationships between ET systems and employers, etc. – particularly through the apprenticeship system. At the other extreme is the American system – relatively unstandardised, undifferentiated and with little if any institutionalised link between the ET and the employment systems. Most north and western European countries fit within the standardised and moderately to lowly differentiated box – though within this there are substantial differences in the extent of differentiation – particularly at up-

per second level, and also in the relative importance of apprenticeship/'alternance' arrangements in vocational training and labour market integration. The importance of these institutionalised differences between national systems in Europe will be explored below in the section on hypotheses.

Aside from such national ET system differences ET and LM relationships are also affected by labour market – particularly youth – characteristics.

2.4 Labour market contexts and employment decisions

The extent of differences between the adult and youth labour markets varies across countries. In some countries, the distinctions is more marked with young people disproportionately concentrated in particular occupations, industries or types of firms. Points of entry into particular occupations or internal labour markets can be aged-based with certain segments disproportionately filled by younger workers (Ashton 1988; Ashton, Maguire and Spilsbury 1990). In other systems such 'youth jobs' segmentation is very limited. Segmentation can occur along a number of dimensions:

The main axes of segmentation are in terms of occupation, industry, firm size. These dimensions vary both within and between countries. Earlier conceptualisations of labour market segmentation posited a dualistic division between a primary sector (with higher paying and more secure positions) and a secondary sector (with relatively low paid unstable jobs) (see for example, Doeringer and Piore 1971; Averitt 1968). More recent approaches have moved away from this ideal type to emphasise the complexity of labour market segmentation (see, for example, Rubery and Wilkinson 1994). The approach adopted in our study draws upon these more sophisticated accounts, focusing on the diversity of labour market structures rather than positing a dualistic division.

The relative balance between occupational (OLMs) and internal labour markets (ILMs) is an important dimension of labour market structure which also varies across societies (see, for example, Marsden and Ryan 1990). Occupational labour markets (OLMs) refer to labour market sectors where jobs are clearly defined in terms of content and have high levels of consistency across firms and industries. Workers in OLMs usually have educational qualifications or skills that are transferable from one employer to another (see Edwards 1979). In contrast, in internal labour markets (ILMs) only lower grade jobs are usually filled from outside the firm with mobility into most higher grade positions taking place after a period of training. Training tends to be firm-specific, taking place on-the-job, and consequently skills are not generally transferable to other firms (see Doeringer and Piore 1971). Occupational and internal labour markets may coexist within the same national system but the relative balance between the two forms varies between countries. OLMs tend to be more prevalent in Germany and the Netherlands and less prevalent in France, Italy and Ireland; Britain occupies an intermediate position, with considerable variation across sectors, but with a general decline in OLMs (Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre 1982; Marsden and Ryan 1990). However, even in countries where ILMs are prevalent, occupational labour markets tend to operate for more desirable LM positions, in particular professional employment.

The relative significance of occupational *and* internal labour markets is not only likely to be closely related to education/training systems but it is also likely to impact on the processes through which school leavers become integrated into stable employment. In a general and comprehensively oriented ET system and in an ILM-dominated labour market structure, new entrants to the labour market mainly learn relevant skills on-the-job. They are therefore more likely to enter the labour market at lower levels of occupational achievement, and are at a competitive disadvantage compared to insiders for higher responsibility posts, etc. In OLM systems a high proportion of entrants are more likely to find work which fits their occupationally specific qualifications. One would, therefore, expect that in the former case it is more difficult for school leavers – particularly the more poorly

qualified – to find stable employment: more job search time, more job shifting, less secure jobs; with unemployment more concentrated among new entrants (Esping-Andersen 1993). In these systems, the formation of a disadvantaged youth labour market segment becomes more likely, in particular under conditions in which demand for labour is low.

The youth labour supply is, therefore, differentiated by varying levels and types of educational and training experiences and qualifications, and the different social backgrounds of entrants. It is the way in which employers take account of these initial differences between potential young workers in making employment decisions that transforms these differences into enduring labour market opportunities. Thus, a crucial element in analysing the nature of labour market differentiation is to determine the factors used by employers in recruitment (and subsequent promotion) decisions to different labour market positions. In our analyses we pay particular attention to two general aspects of new job applicants' characteristics: their educational/training characteristics, as already discussed; and their ascribed, social background characteristics – particularly gender and social class.

3. Methods: design of study

An ideal research design would involve both stock analyses of labour force surveys – to study the ET and labour market relationships; and flow analyses of school to work transition surveys, as well as longer, panel surveys of early labour market histories. Existing labour force surveys contain a lot of information on current labour force status and more limited information on educational/training achievements; but very little information on educational/training or labour market history. Nevertheless they provide the best sources of uniform information on education/training and labour market relationships in all EU countries. There are no equivalent data sources on the flows from education/training into the labour market across EU countries, although a small number of EU countries carry out regular surveys of large samples of young people who have left the educational system and entered the labour market, supplemented by follow-up surveys of their subsequent labour market and education/training histories. Ideally one would like such surveys to have much the same design and to have a large set of comparably defined variables/measurements for all countries of interest. However, data sources of this nature do not yet exist.

The labour force surveys (LFS) provide broadly comparable information on education/training and labour market characteristics across all EU countries. As such, the LFS is extremely useful in assessing the relationship between ET and LM systems across Europe. However, its usefulness as a data source for analysing transition behaviour is limited in a number of respects. First, most of the conventional labour force surveys have only limited information on education and training characteristics, and the categories used may also obscure important cross-national variations in education/training and labour market integration systems. Second, many such surveys have little or no information on the first jobs of young entrants to the labour market or subsequent detailed work histories. Third, because the sample covers all age groups, this may result in a very small number of labour market entrants in any given year. This makes it impossible to analyse country differences in the nature of the initial transition process. Fourth, these surveys rarely have information on the social background of respondents, thus obscuring variation between different groups of young people in the nature of the transition process. However, the national coverage of these surveys, their large sample sizes and comparable variable definitions mean that detailed comparative analyses can be carried out on the relationships between educational/training qualifications and current labour market statuses for different age/sex groupings in all EU countries. This kind of comparative analysis allows us to ground our SLS flow analyses of five EU countries within the wider EU system.

Surveys of school (or third-level) leavers (SLS) have much more potential for the analysis of

school to work transitions. These surveys allow us to examine in detail the relationship between social background, education/training characteristics and early labour market experience. This information can be supplemented by analyses of youth cohort or follow-up surveys, which give a more complete picture of the impact of education/training on longer periods of labour market experience. Since countries vary significantly in the pace, timing and patterns of the transition process, it is important to use longitudinal data to analyse the complexity of life histories among young people. In addition, changes in education/training policy and secular shifts in the economy will result in differences between cohorts of young people in their employment chances, access to further education and training, and so on. The school leavers' surveys are available for several points in time, allowing us to study the differences between cohorts of young people. However, such regular national school leavers' surveys are only carried out in a limited number of countries: France, the Netherlands, Ireland, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Sweden.

Although these surveys have not been designed to be comparable, they have substantial similarities. The five surveys comprise a year-group survey (Sweden), a labour market entrants' survey (France) and three follow-up school leavers' surveys – Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands. Four of these surveys cover a cross-section of young people; the fifth (French) survey is targeted on leavers from specific courses. The surveys vary in the number and timing of follow-ups, and in the data they collect. For example, the most recent comparable surveys cover:

a) Scotland: young people who left 'general' secondary education in 1993-94 (although some may have taken up various mixtures of general and vocational courses), surveyed in the spring of 1995. Vocational courses (FE colleges), apprenticeships and training schemes, as well as higher education, all count as destinations;

b) Ireland: young people who left secondary education in 1995-96, surveyed in autumn 1997. This includes those who left Junior or Leaving Certificate (including vocational and applied) and post-leaving certificate courses in 1995-96. Other (post-secondary) vocational courses count as destinations, together with apprenticeships, training schemes and third level education;

c) France: young people who left general or vocational full-time (excluding general *baccalaureat* and agricultural courses) or apprenticeships in 1993-94. The survey was conducted in spring 1997 but the destinations in the data set refer to autumn 1996. Unlike the other surveys, the French (CEREQ) survey is based on labour market entry groups and does not include those who continued in the education system – for example, at university (see Becker et al. 1999);

d) The Netherlands: young people who left secondary education (including MBO) courses in 1995-96, surveyed in autumn 1997. The data set excludes those who reentered another form of secondary education (e.g. those who entered MBO). Apprenticeships count as destinations, together with higher education;

e) Sweden: young people who completed lower-secondary education in 1993, surveyed in spring 1997. Since most upper-secondary courses lasted two or three years, most sample members who entered upper-secondary education had left by the time of the survey, but a few were still there.

Therefore, while each survey covers a sample of young people in a given period after making a transition, the length of this period and, more importantly, the destination definitions of the transition, vary across countries. However, each survey effectively covers the school-to-work transition process – either prospectively or retrospectively – and therefore provide relatively sound comparable databases.

An inherent defect of the proposed study will be that its design neglects the direct observation of the behaviour of one crucial group of actors decisively influencing the ET-LM rela-

tionship on the side of labour demand: the strategies and selection preferences of employers in their personnel recruitment and job allocation decisions, which – as we have outlined above – are very likely to vary across countries. We recognise the importance of such information on the demand side of the labour market, and we will draw on research done by others on these issues insofar as this is possible.

The research maximises the potential of the labour force survey to ground our specific analysis in the broader European context, and uses the school leavers' surveys in the five countries to develop a conceptual and methodological framework for analysing youth transitions across Europe. One aspired objective of our research is to help move the existing national surveys towards greater comparability, as well as to help the development of such surveys in other EU countries initiating surveys of school leavers – for example, in Belgium and Portugal.

This research develops upon a substantial body of comparative research already carried out by the project partners. The network made an exploratory attempt to construct a common dataset, using a small number of variables for the Dutch, Irish and Scottish data on school leavers at one point in time (1991) (Hannan et al. 1993). In addition, a common dataset covering a range of variables has been developed for the Irish and Scottish surveys over the period 1980 to 1991 (Smyth and Surridge 1995; 1996). Two of the project partners (CES and ESRI) have carried out research for OECD on developing a conceptual framework for examining school to work transitions and have been involved in planning meetings for the OECD's current *Thematic review on transitions from initial education to working life* (see Hannan, Raffe and Smyth 1996). In addition four of the project partners (CES, Edinburgh; ESRI, Dublin; DESAN, Amsterdam; CEREQ, Marseilles) have completed a four nation comparative study on early school leaving for DG22 under the Leonardo *surveys and analysis* programme (1996-98.). This comparative research is based on a four-nation comparative dataset of school leavers' surveys in France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland. Some results from this comparative study are given at the end of this paper.

The following figure broadly indicates the type of information which will be used from the school leavers' surveys.

Data sources: School leavers' surveys for France, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland, Sweden. Integration of three to five year follow-up surveys where available.
Sample characteristics: National samples of secondary level school system leavers.
Education and training characteristics: Level achieved; type of school/curriculum; general versus vocational education; vocational speciality; examination outcomes.
Individual and background characteristics: Age, gender, age of completion of education; parental socio-economic status and education for some national surveys.
Labour market entry characteristics: Labour force characteristics for first year in the labour market. Work careers available in follow-up surveys for three to six years in the labour force for France, Ireland and Sweden.
Labour market 'success': Employment status; type of job (full or part-time); occupation; industry, wages.
Periods covered: 1980 onwards for Ireland, Scotland; 1988 onwards for the Netherlands. Current data for Sweden and France.
Other outcomes: Household status; marital status; migration characteristics, etc.

Country selection

The selection of countries included in the study is partly based on the fact that these are the main countries that carry out school leavers' surveys on a regular basis and that researchers from these countries have been cooperating to explore their potential for comparative analyses. (Pottier 1993; Raffe 1993; Hannan et al. 1993; Smyth and Surridge 1995; 1996; Hannan, Raffe and Smyth 1996). The countries included do not represent all

the important dimensions of variation in ET and LM links in Europe but do differ substantially in these respects.

Ireland is perhaps at one extreme of the continuum where the second-level educational system is dominated by the vertically organised 'general education model', with a low level of horizontal, curricular/examination differentiation. Most schools are privately owned and managed, though highly State regulated. The curriculum and examination system is highly centralised and standardised (by State regulation), with State examination results being the main 'market signals'. The development of more general rather than specific (vocational) human capital is emphasised. The second level ET system is neither institutionally linked to employers nor formally differentiated to cater for occupational labour markets, although there has been some recent expansion of vocational training courses at upper second level. Although there are practically no institutional links between schools and labour markets, third level entry requirements and employment selection procedures pay particular attention both to level of examination taken as to grades in such examinations (Breen et al. 1995), with apparently little attention to vocationally specific specialisations, except in a limited range of craft and professional occupations.

In *Scotland* secondary schools are State-run and comprehensive (except for a very small private sector). The curriculum is general and follows national guidelines. There are vocational elements in the curriculum, but they are integrated into the general curriculum. There is no occupational specialisation or tracking as in some continental countries. Schools may have links with employers – for example, in the provision of 'work experience' which all secondary pupils are expected to obtain – but these tend to support the broadly general objectives of schools. This relative absence of formal curricular differentiation means that in Scottish, as in Irish, schools the vertical dimension is dominant. Progression either into further education or into the labour market is strongly influenced by the level of attainment in 'academic' examinations taken at the ages of 16, 17 and 18. In the past, the main exception was that younger (16-year old) school leavers sometimes had an advantage compared to older school leavers, because of their opportunity to enter age-restricted apprenticeships or training opportunities. These opportunities have declined, and a majority of young people now stay at school beyond 16.

In contrast to Ireland, the Scottish system offers vocational alternatives to school at the upper-secondary level. Further education (FE) colleges provide full-time courses, typically in broad occupational areas or in 'transferable' skill areas such as catering or business and administration. Many younger school leavers enter work-based training programmes (apprenticeships or youth training programmes known as 'skillseekers') which may include part-time studying at FE colleges. This training is typically occupation- (or employer-) specific. It is based on standards which are, in principle, 'employer-led'. Within this work-based sector 'horizontal' differentiation is more important (Raffe 1992). As in the rest of the UK, the labour market in Scotland is weakly regulated and structurally diverse; it is not easily classified in terms of ILMs or OLMs, although some studies (such as Marsden and Ryan 1990) characterise the UK in terms of decaying OLMs.

Traditionally, the educational system in *France* was strongly dominated by schools of general orientation with little formal vocational training. Since World War II, France has developed a vocational training system at all levels, which is closely connected to the general education system: training of workers and employees at the end of the first cycle (CAP, BEP), technical baccalaureate, then further training as technicians (BTS, DUT). Today more than 40% of school leavers have a technical or vocational diploma. Whereas general education is of greater value within the education system, technical and vocational diplomas have better recognition on the labour market. In large French firms, the predominance of internal labour markets has led to poor qualification/occupational 'matching' at entry level and to a late articulation between qualifications and job classifications. However, the current employment crisis has

mostly penalised young people and led public authorities to promote measures developing sequences of school-based and in-company training courses alternately (e.g. *BAC* professional, apprenticeships extended to technical and engineering training, and a range of work/school based training arrangements).

With the growing shortage of jobs, decision-makers adopted a certain number of measures supporting labour-market entry. These interventions are focused strongly on the interface between the educational system and the labour market which has two important consequences. The first one is that the very existence and content of these measures, often based on 'alternance' models, reveals apparent deficiencies in the existing educational and training system. The second consequence is that some of these programmes designed to assist labour-market entry, based on alternance training approaches, have had feedback effects on initial education/training, – encouraging further reorganisation according to the new public model. All processes at work in France attest to a significant change in the conception of the aims of the educational system, now vested with a double mission: the traditional one of transmitting knowledge, and the more recent one of fulfilling a broader social function through the development of more vocationally relevant and effective education/training for labour-market entry, especially amongst young people with particular difficulties.

In some respects, *the Netherlands* is similar to Germany. The Dutch educational system is highly differentiated and standardised. It also has a strong vocational component, which at the same time is strongly segmented horizontally in many vocational specialities and a similar degree of stratification of general education. In contrast to Germany, however, the vocational training system of the Netherlands is school-based, has a low degree of overlap with workplaces and also much lower employer involvement. Besides school-based vocational training, it also has a system of apprenticeship, although small in comparison to Germany. This has, of course, consequences for the structure of the labour market. Recent research shows that ILMs and OLMs have almost equal shares in the Dutch economy (Dekker, de Grip and Heijke 1994).

These characterisations of countries will probably need revision with further analyses. At this stage, however, they may be sufficient to indicate the variation across the countries in the main variables and outcomes of interest.

4. Progress to date: construction of the comparative databases.

Four main issues arose in constructing a comparative database from five national school leavers' surveys:

a) definition of populations and samples;

b) timing of interviews – in terms of years in which school leavers were sampled and in terms of post-school labour market exposure;

c) variable definitions and specifications; and

d) overall design of database.

Population / samples. The population aimed at is all full-time initial second level system leavers – rather than school leavers. The concept of second level system leavers is used because of possible confusion where some potential respondents leave one school or school type, and enter another second level one – particularly in highly differentiated systems such as the Netherlands where national surveys made this possible. Such 'reentry' school leavers are excluded from the comparatively defined population/sample. They are included only when they subsequently exit the total system. We therefore aimed only to include those who leave the full-time second level system for the first time ('initial' leavers). Those who leave but who continue in post-school, part-time education or training are, however, included – this generally 'mixed status' being regarded as a 'post-school' destination.

The selection of samples for the national surveys may be from national registration lists or through a process of initially sampling schools/systems and then 'school leavers'

within these schools. In most cases the sample is designed to cover all those who left the full-time second level system in the preceding academic year – i.e. those sampled and interviewed in May 1998 would have completed their initial full-time second level education in the academic year1996/97. Most are then in a 'post-school' status (usually on the labour market or in further education or training) for at least nine months to a year. Interviews at that point are designed to measure respondents' 'post-school' education, training and labour market outcomes and experiences subsequent to leaving school.

For the most recently surveyed, the samples include all those who left (completed course or left during course) their initial full-time (second level) education in the 1993/94 session in France and Scotland, and the 1995/96 educational session in Ireland and the Netherlands. The samples of respondents selected were interviewed between one year to one and a half years subsequent to their completion of second level education. The surveys were carried out by personal interviews in Ireland, by mailed questionnaires in France and Scotland and mostly by telephone interviews in the Netherlands.

4.1 Variable list and definitions in common database

Essentially we need as much detailed comparative information as possible on *five* areas;

a) the social background of school leavers;
b) their educational/training experiences and achievements/qualifications;
c) the nature and extent of post-school education and training;
d) their labour market experiences and outcomes; and
e) their current household formation patterns and migration experience.

There are ca.100 comparatively defined variables in the combined datasets (see Appendix):

a) the social background of school leavers (about 15 variables);
b) *household status* and, to a limited extent, migration status (about 5 variables);
c) *educational background/achievement* (about 12 variables);
d) post-school education, training achieved (about 26 variables);
e) current employment status characteristics (about 20 variables);
f) labour force history characteristics since leaving full-time education (about 20 variables). See Appendix for details of common variables.

Clarifying these definitions and concepts took some time and intensive discussion; and in coming to common definitions we lost some important information. For instance, because the Irish and Scottish surveys covered only school leavers' defined in a conventional way, all post-school youth training and further education (in, e.g. further education colleges) is defined as a 'destination' for school leavers and, since a significant proportion of these are still in training or further education at the time of the interview (a year later) we have no information on their subsequent labour market outcomes. One way to correct this is to follow up such initial school leavers for a number of years (five or six) to measure such long-term outcomes. This is done periodically in a number of countries (UK – including Scotland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden).

National surveys varied significantly in the nature and extent of social background data gathered. While the usual socio-demographic data (age, sex, age of completion of schooling) is present, there is a lot of missing data on social class of origin (for only two countries), ethnicity (for one country only), educational level of parents (two countries), employment status of parents (three countries). The more complex, multivariate analyses using these variables cannot, therefore, be as comprehensive as we would have wished. One of the main aims of future collaboration would be to increase the comprehensiveness and comparability of variables covered.

Educational experiences and achievements are generally well covered in most surveys: type of school and curricular track, highest level of

Table 1: Time series of SLS surveys in Scotland, Ireland and the Netherlands

Year of Survey	Scotland	Ireland	The Netherlands
1979/80	a (1979)	a(1980)	-
1985	a	a	-
1989	a	a	a
1993	a	a	a
(Current) 1995/97	a (1995)	a(1997)	a(1997)

education achieved (CASMIN and ISCED measures); type of qualification achieved – vocational/technical or academic/general; grades/awards achieved in examinations and/or detailed educational achievement levels – i.e. from incomplete lower second level, 'failed' lower second level, 'passed' lower second level examination, to 'passed' or got 'honours' in upper second level examination. (See Appendix for details of variables covered by country).

4.1.1 Post-second level education and training

Extent and nature of participation, type and level of course; full-time or part-time, degree of vocational/occupational specificity of course, length of course, whether successfully completed, type and level of qualification achieved, etc. Extent to which education involved work experience and nature of work experience; apprenticeship training; extent and nature of involvement in 'mixed statuses' – (work and education). There is significant variation in variable coverage by country.

4.1.2 Labour market outcomes

Labour market entry outcomes: initial and current employment status. Extent of employment/unemployment; characteristics of jobs – occupation, industry, earnings, etc.; location of first and current job, etc. Details of the combined variable list are in the Appendix.

4.2 Time series

The most extensive information is available for the current (1993/94 to 1996/97) SLS databases. France (CEREQ) has carried out school leavers' surveys since the early and mid 1970s. Most of these, however, are only partial samples of the population of leavers – the French samples are excluded from the time series. For Ireland and Scotland such national school leavers' surveys have been carried out since 1970/71 in Scotland and 1980 in Ireland – and in both cases sampling is national and covers all second level leavers. The first national sample for the Netherlands is available from 1988 only. The Dutch sample is very large, is nationwide and comprehensive but is not initially selected as a national sample. Since it, however, covers all institutional distinctions, all regions and all levels of second level leavers it can be reweighted to approximate a national sample. The following table indicates the time series being used.

As already indicated the current, late 1990s, comparative data set has been constructed. The time series was constructed in September 1999, and analyses have started on the current database.

4.3 Construction of comparative labour force survey (LFS) datasets (coordinated by MZES, Mannheim)

Two data sources are used for LFS analyses: the EU community LFS through data requests to Eurostat in Luxembourg, and national micro data sets for Germany and the SLS project countries (France, Ireland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, SW) and some other EU countries (Denmark, Spain, Italy, Austria and Portugal). LFS surveys for two time points will be used for most of these countries (from early 1980s and mid-1990s). Both cross-sectional stock analyses and some restricted synthetic 'flow analyses' will be carried out – using expected minimum age of completion of highest level of education achieved, and consequent estimate of amount

of time in the labour force. The European Community LFS (CLFS) provides a common database for the most important labour force characteristics for all EU countries. It is limited in its coverage of educational and training variables, and has very limited retrospective data. Access to individual level micro data is only by request to Eurostat. The individual national labour force surveys generally have much more information – though variable coverage and cross-national comparability of variables differs widely. In most cases, however, anonymised micro data sets are available from national census offices. In the CATEWE project, these micro data sets are now available at MZES, Mannheim – with the full set of comparable variable specifications to be completed shortly. Obviously much more complex analyses can be carried out on such a comparative European micro data set.

4.4 Progress on analyses of LFS and SLS surveys

Substantial progress has already (June 1999) been made in the analyses of the *CLFS,* and in both assembling and aligning the country level LFS micro data sets. Analyses of the CLFS has already commenced and – papers are being prepared for the September transition in youth (TIY) conference in September 1999 in Oslo. First drafts of five papers reporting analyses have already been discussed and critiqued (June 1999):

a) changes in educational participation and qualifications over time in EU countries;

b) national differences in youth labour markets and in transition trajectories;

c) 'gradualism' in labour market entry: double statuses in transitions;

d) labour market segmentation and the structure of youth employment in EU countries;

e) educational achievement and initial labour market outcomes: national and institutional contextual effects.

Reanalyses and redrafts of these papers were prepared and second and more comprehensive drafts were given at the European TIY[4] conference in September 1999. It is hoped to publish the contents of these papers in journal articles as soon as possible thereafter.[5] These analyses of the European Community LFS (CLFS), dealing as they do with all EU countries, will set the wider context for both the more detailed analyses possible with the individual country LFS micro data sets as well as the five country SLS data analyses. These later micro data LFS studies started in late 1999 and are to be completed by mid-2000. The analyses of the current SLS has already started and analyses of the time series and comparative follow-up surveys started in September 1999.

4.5 Analyses of school leavers surveys

The four country comparative database (France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland) of current (1995-97) school leavers surveys was constructed by the end of March 1999. Swedish data was added in August 1999.

Construction of the time series data sets has started but will not be completed until end of June 1999. The construction of the French-Irish six year follow-up comparative data set has also started but will not be completed until September 1999.[6]

Analyses of the current four-nation data set started in May 1999. A division of labour on analyses has been agreed, with first drafts of papers reporting results to be completed by

[4] The European network on Transitions in Youth (TIY) has been holding annual European research workshops/conferences on education/work relationships and transitions since 1993. Initially funded by the European Science Foundation (1994-96) the subsequent workshops have been partly supported by national funding in Ireland, Scotland and in 1999 in Norway. Copies of workshop papers up to 1996 are available from the ESF in Strasbourg, from 1996 from CEREQ Marseilles, from 1997 from the ESRI Dublin, from the CES, University of Edinburgh in 1998.

[5] Copies of papers now available as CATEWE Working Papers, from Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung (MZES), University of Mannheim, Postfach 10-34-62, D-68131 Mannheim.

[6] This paper refers to the project results available until mid-1999.

September 1st in time for the September TIY international workshop:

i) Comparative analyses of the relationships between initial educational/training achievements and 'post-school' educational and training outcomes;
ii) Comparative analyses of the relationship between educational/training achievements and post-school labour market outcomes;
iii) Comparative analyses of the relationships between initial educational/training outcomes, initial labour market integration processes and the extent to which State training/employment schemes mediate difficulties in transition;
iv) Comparative analyses of gender and social class inequalities in educational achievements and in education-to-work transitions;
v) Comparative analyses of both youth/adult and general labour market segmentation processes in the five countries;
vi) Comparative analyses of the nature and extent of labour market exclusionary processes amongst the least qualified.

As of mid 1999 there were no results from these analyses. But the papers were subsequently revised and are now available as CATEWE working papers.[7]

One clear result, however, is the fact that it has proved possible to construct cross-nationally comparable microdatabases from both national labour force surveys and school leavers surveys. Although there are serious missing data problems for some important variables (particularly social background variables) in the school leavers' surveys this database is still a very rich one for research and policy purposes. The earlier Leonardo study, reporting analyses of a more restricted cross-national data set based on the same type of surveys, however, indicated some important policy relevant results and conclusions. Some of these will be discussed next.

[7] Available as a CATEWE working paper from the ESRI, 4 Burlington Rd., Dublin 4, April 2000.

5. Results and conclusions

Although there are as yet no results from our analyses of the CATEWE comparative databases some conclusions from our work on comparative database construction are important. In addition some results and conclusions from an earlier, though more restricted, comparative study of school to work transitions amongst early school leavers, under the Leonardo surveys and analyses programme, (1997-98, VTLMT[8]) appear very relevant.

Two comparative micro data sets on school to work transitions have been or are being constructed using existing national surveys. The first is based on national labour force surveys for most European countries. The Eurostat Community LFS data set is available only for a limited set of variables, and in any case is not directly accessible to the research community – although Eurostat has been very helpful in making detailed cross-tabulations available. The national data sets are generally much more comprehensive and, for most EU countries, are available as anonymised data sets to the research community. So a comparatively defined LFS data set is being set up for the majority of EU States. The initial work on the CLFS (Eurostat) database indicates not just the value of cross-sectional analyses of the existing variables, but also the value of constructing and using other more complex variables – for instance, in using expected ages of graduation and entry to the labour market in identifying recent (young) entrants to the labour market – to estimate differences in labour market outcomes for

[8] ***Vocational Training and Labour Market Transitions.*** This was a project funded under the Leonardo 'Surveys and Analyses' programme, DG22, 1996-98. Contract N° – IRL/96/1/10074/EA/III.2.a/FP1. Final report Dec. 1998. The research project was based on comparative analyses of school leavers surveys in France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland – primarily focusing on the education–labour market relationship amongst those who left full-time education before completing upper second level. The project was coordinated by ESRI, Dublin in partnership with CES, University of Edinburgh; DESAN, Amsterdam; and CEREQ Marseilles.

young versus older labour market entrants. These analyses show clearly the underutilised value of the existing labour force surveys for research and policy analyses purposes.

The second main methodological finding is that the existing national school leavers' surveys carried out in five EU countries (France, Ireland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom (Scotland), Sweden) – and prospectively in Belgium (Flanders) and Portugal – provide a rich comparative database for studying the longitudinal/panel aspects of school to work transition processes in a range of EU countries. These mainly cover the post-school education/training and labour market history characteristics of school leavers for one to one and a half years after they complete their second level education. Combined with the cross-sectional LFS analyses of current status characteristics of individuals these detailed 'flow data' on educational and labour market history provide for very comprehensive analyses of school to work transitions across the European Union.

Although there are many sample and variable comparability problems arising from constructing a comparative database from such national surveys – with many 'missing data' gaps, for instance – both the process itself of constructing such a database and the initial raw results illustrate clearly the advantages of such approaches. In constructing comparatively defined, meaningful variables – which capture both the common and, as far as possible, the unique in each system – overarching concepts and variables need to respecified in ways that are not otherwise obvious. For instance the concept of 'level of education' does not always make clear whether the person reaching level 'x' has actually taken and 'passed' the relevant examination at that level. Equally, differences in the significance of different national ways of measuring educational achievement – whether, for instance, grades achieved in examinations, or 'levels' taken in courses/curricula are important/relevant – have to be dealt with in ways that are not always revealed in cross-national surveys where the lowest common denominator approach to variable definitions is often used.

Besides these comparative data construction issues, one of the main advantages of such cross-cultural (or cross-national institutional) studies is the classically stated advantage of additional insight into national characteristics gained from comparing one national system to another quite different one. By shedding normal ethnocentric conceptualisations engendered by national studies or even by limited comparisons with similar type systems, intensive comparative studies much more clearly reveal national differences. For instance, the overarching significance of 'grades achieved' in examinations in the Irish, and to a lesser extent in the Scottish system, in selection/progression to higher levels of education/training and into the labour market – and their apparent lesser significance in the Dutch or French systems – illustrate clear national system differences in educational assessment and selection. The relative significance of these different kinds of selection mechanisms becomes very obvious in any detailed comparisons – but they are very easy to miss in less detailed ones. The necessity to specify a wider range of social background, educational, training and labour market variables to capture the most relevant aspects of each national system, while at the same time trying to integrate these into an overarching, common set of concepts/measures is one of the main tasks of such detailed comparative analyses. Hopefully, these initial findings will show more insight and lead to a more comprehensive comparative analyses than would otherwise be the case.

The Leonardo VTLMT study - 1997-98

The earlier comparative European study of school to work transitions using school leavers surveys was funded under the DG22 Leonardo (Surveys and Analyses) programme (VTLMT[9] 1996 to 1998). The empirical analyses were based on a comparative data set based on school leavers' surveys in France (1995), Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland (1993).

[9] *Vocational training and labour market transitions in Europe* – coordinated by ESRI, Dublin in partnership with CES, University of Edinburgh; DESAN, Amsterdam,; CEREQ, Marseilles.

The main focus of the study was on the relationships between initial educational/training outcomes and qualifications amongst school leavers and subsequent, post-school, labour market and education/training outcomes. In this case the main interest was in 'early school leavers' or those who left the educational system with no or poor qualifications. The final results and conclusions are included in the final VTLMT report to DG22 in December 1998, and are to be published as separate journal articles.

Four main hypotheses guided the analyses:

1. gender and social class inequalities in the type and level of educational achievement are greater in the Netherlands – the country with the most differentiated and selective ET system (Blossfeld and Shavit 1993);

2. the educational qualification distinctions amongst 'early school leavers' (or, more technically, lower second level leavers) – in terms of examination grades or 'pass'/ 'fail' distinctions – will almost have the same effect on labour market entry as the distinction between lower and upper second level leavers (Breen, Hannan and O'Leary 1995);

3. controlling for educational level and grades achieved in examinations, it is expected that those specialising in vocational/technical curricular 'tracks' will have significant labour market advantages over those in general tracks (Shavit and Mueller 1998);

4. the labour market effects of educational failure (early 'dropout' or 'fail' in lower second level examinations) are expected to be greater in national systems with less differentiated ET systems and less 'occupationalised' labour markets; i.e. more serious in Ireland and less serious in the Netherlands.

Main results

While the proportion of those leaving school in Scotland with only a lower second level qualification or less (40%) were almost twice as high as in the other three countries, the extent of post- school education/training participation rates were much higher there – so reducing national differences considerably. Such post-school provision and participation for the most poorly qualified was lowest in Ireland – with less than one in four of early school leavers entering alternative education/ training pathways compared to almost one in two for their Scottish counterparts. There are then substantial national differences in the provision for and participation in such post-school ET interventions.

Gender and class of origin differences in levels of educational achievement are much greater in Ireland than in the Netherlands or Scotland. Irish lower level leavers, particularly those without qualifications, are more likely to be male, working class and have parents that are unemployed. At least in terms of the first major educational transition therefore, our main hypothesis is not supported: the least differentiated system – though one with strong inter-school competitive effects (Smyth 1999) – is the most gender and class discriminatory. The Irish system is also the most highly unidimensionally stratified – a highly hierarchical general system. It appears as if the highly differentiated and early selective Dutch ET systems have both lower initial educational failure rates amongst the total school entry cohort, but also class and gender selectivity appears to be lower at that basic level. Of course in terms of type of education/training and in terms of later progressive transitions – such as to the completion of upper second level or entry to third level – these national differences may be reversed.

The four countries differ substantially in the level and quality of post-school 'corrective' ET and active labour market provision. Labour market entry (whether at work or looking for work) is most likely to be almost the only opportunity available in Ireland for those not going on to third level. There is a much more elaborated, State funded and better organised set of both ET and work-based training/employment scheme provision in Scotland. Employment chances are maximised in the Netherlands but alternatives to unemployment through apprenticeships and State training/

employment schemes are much richer. France equally, although with the lowest employment chances for early leavers, has the most elaborated and best funded system of post- school training. The extent and nature of State intervention in the labour market for early and poorly qualified school leavers is, therefore, one of the most variable aspects of school to work interventions.

What effect has examination performance on labour market access or access to more valuable post-school ET pathways? In fact 'passing'[10] lower second level examinations – so distinguishing between those who either left school before taking the examination or having 'failed' the examination and others who at least got a 'passing grade' in such lower second level examinations – has a significant positive effect on employment chances in all four countries; and in all except France on access to apprenticeships also. For other less valuable traineeships or post-school training/ employment schemes the effects are negative for Ireland only – a not unexpected result given that recruitment to these schemes is targeted on the more poorly qualified with the poorest employment histories in Ireland. What is significant here as in some other research (see Breen, Hannan and O'Leary 1995) is that level of performance in lower second level examinations is almost as important in labour market access as proceeding to upper second level, particularly amongst those with below average educational performance.

A State policy geared to maximising upper second level educational participation, without paying equal attention to improving the basic educational performance levels at primary and early post-primary levels, appears therefore to be a seriously mistaken one. There is little added value in keeping young people with poor performance histories in school up to 17 or 18 unless basic educational achievement levels significantly improve. Improving the basic educational and personal and social development skills of the lower performing 10 to 20% of the cohort at lower second level is a far more fundamental educational goal than just increasing the compulsory ages of attendance to 17 or 18. The second hypothesis is, therefore, strongly supported.

Are there effective alternatives to vocation/ technical tracks or post-school vocational training programmes – such as apprenticeships – in non-differentiated systems such as the Irish or British ones up to age 16 ? Recent research has corrected for earlier negative assessments of assignment to vocational/ technical 'tracks' within the more general and more comprehensive systems of the English-speaking countries – particularly for 'non-college' bound youth – (Shavit and Mueller 1998; Kerckhoff et al. 1998 Hannan and O'Riain 1996). Effectively these results indicate that although such vocational/technical 'tracking' may divert a significant proportion of working class children away from proceeding to upper second and into third level education (and so increase social class inequality at these higher levels) successfully completing such programmes does in most (though not all) cases increase access to skilled manual and service employment – or in escaping from the lower skilled and less secure sectors of the youth labour market. Our results strongly support the latter view. Such specialisation in second level, vocational/technical subjects significantly increases access to skilled manual occupations for males in all four countries– though it has no effect on employment access as such, controlling for the effects of most other relevant variables. Again this hypothesis is strongly supported, though for males only.

There is no evidence, however, that the relative effects of educational 'failure' – no qualifications or 'failed' qualifications – on employment chances are any higher in Ireland, though the extent to which this occurs is greater in Ireland and Scotland. The fourth hypothesis is not, therefore, supported, although this hypothesis is harder to test given

[10] 'passing' in this sense has a clear meaning in the French and Dutch systems; but in the Irish and Scottish systems has to be somewhat arbitrary – so the older definitions are used as in the Irish case where a minimum of five Ds in the junior certificate (and equivalent in the Scottish GCSE) examination is regarded as required to get a pass.

the various different interpretations of educational 'failure' in Ireland and Scotland versus France and the Netherlands.

The results of this initial study of early school leavers encourage optimism about the future results of the larger CATEWE project. Combining both LFS analyses of education/training and labour market relationships in all countries, with more detailed analyses of school-to-work transitions in a smaller number of countries – using both time series and longitudinal analyses – the project should yield valuable comparative European analyses of education/training and labour market relationships by the end of the year 2000.

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Appendix: Variable specification for currrent SLS database

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
			Constructed variables			
Country	land	1. Ireland 2. Netherlands 3. Scotland 4. France	Compute land=1	Compute land=2	Compute land=3	Compute land=4
Weighting	euwgt			*		
Sample exclusion		[Individual country vars]	* Excludes those who never left second-level system and those over 22 on leaving school	* Excludes those who never left second-level system and those over 24 on leaving school	* Excludes those still in school at time of survey and those over 22 on leaving school	* Excludes those over 24 on leaving school
			Personal characteristics			
Month of interview	msurv	Codes 1 to 12 by month	L1_2	Ddbinnen	Recmth * Date received questionnaire	Compute msurv=11 * For France, time of survey is set at Nov. 1995
Year of interview	yrsurv	Code actual year (4 digit)	Based on L1_2	Ddbinnen	Recyr	Compute yrsurv=95
Month of birth	mborn	Codes 1 to 12 by month	L2a_1	Not available	Brthmth	Mnaissq1
Year of birth	yrborn	Code actual year (4 digit)	L2a_2	Not available	Brthyr	Anaissq1
Month left school	mleft	Codes 1 to 12 by month	L5_1	goeim	Termlft * recoded into proxies	Msoreco1 or mfinapp1
Year left school	yrleft	Code actual year (4 digit)	L5_2	goeij	Termlft	Asoreco1 or afinapp1
Age at time of survey	age	Derive from month/ year of survey and month/year of birth		* Base on self-reported age (lft)		
Gender	sex	1. Male 2. Female	s11	Gesl	Gender	Sexe___1
Ethnic group	ethnic	1. Not ethnic minority 2. Ethnic minority	Not available	n_etni	Not available	Not available
Immigrant status	immig	1. Not immigrant 2. Immigrant 3. Child of immigrants	L2b * Only born outside country; not parents	Not available	Not available	Based on denaiss1, denaisp1 and denaism1

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Ethnic/ national grouping	nleth freth	Use within-country group codes	Not available	etni1 2 Dutch Antilles/ Aruban 3 Surinam 4 Turkish 5 Moroccan 6 Chinese 7 Belgian 8 German 9 Other	Not available	Portuga1 to langaut1 * Based on language spoken at home 1 Portuguese 2 Other European 3 Arab/semitic 4 Asian 5 African 6 Other
Marital status	marital	0. Single 1. Married (incl. living as married/ separated)	L2c	Not available	Marriedz * Note only asked in FU for S6 leavers	Based on viecoup1 with corrections using avicoup1, mvicoup1, vicoupa1, asepara1, msepara1
Has children?	child	0. No children 1. One or more children	Not available	Not available	Anykidz * Note only asked in FU for S6 leavers	Based on enfants1 with corrections using mnai1en1
Left parental home? (at time of survey)	lefthome	0. Still in parental home 1. Left parental home	L2d	Not available	Staynowz * Note only asked in FU for S6 leavers	sitfami1 * But refers to time of survey rather than fixed time-point
Household situation (at time of survey)	House	1. With parents 2. With in-laws/other family 3. In own household (with/out spouse) 4. Sharing house (other than spouse) 5. Hall of residence/ other institution 6. Other	L2d	Not available	Staynowz * Note only asked in FU for S6 leavers	sitfami1 * But refers to time of survey rather than fixed time-point
Location of current residence	Irarea Nlarea Scarea Frarea	Country-specific categories	Based on L3a, L3b and L3c Categories 0. Rural 1. Urban	Urbannl 0. Rest 1. West	Urbur 1. 1million + 2. 100,000-999,999 3. 10,000-99,999 4. 1,000-9,999 5. Under 1,000	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Moved from local area?	Leftarea	0. No 1. Yes	Based on L3a, L3b and L3c	Not available	Not available	Not available
Emigrant?	emig	0. No 1. Yes	L3c	Emignl	Not available	Not available
			Family background			
Employment status of father	empfath	1. Employed 2. Unemployed 3. Retired 4. Not in LF (home duties/ill/disabled/in training) 5. Other 6. Deceased	L43_1	Not available	Dadnow	Sitpere1
Employment status of mother	empmoth	1. Employed 2. Unemployed 3. Retired 4. Not in LF (home duties/ill/disabled/in training) 5. Other 6. Deceased	L43_2	Not available	Mumnow	Sitmere1
Occupation of father	Occfath	10. I - Upper service class 20. II - Lower service class 31. IIIa - Upper routine non-manual 32. IIIb – Lower routine non-manual 41. IVa – Small proprietors 42. IVb – Self-employed 43. IVc – Farmers 50. V – Lower technical / manual supervisory workers	Based on L44 and L43_1	Not available	Dadsoc, dades	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
		60. VI - Skilled manual workers 71. VIIa - Semi-/ unskilled manual workers 72. VIIb – Agricultural workers				
Occupation of father – France only	froccf	1. Professional 2. Self-employed 3. Other non manual 4. Skilled manual 5. Unskilled manual 6. Other	Not available	Not available	Not available	Sitfape_1
Occupation of mother	Occmoth	As occfath	Based on L45 and L43_2	Not available	Mumsoc, mumes	Not available
Occupation of mother – France only	froccm	As froccf	Not available	Not available	Not available	Sitmere_1
Education of father	edfath	1. Less than/ incomplete upper secondary 2. Completed upper secondary/ Third-level education	Not available	Not available	Daded	sitpetu1
Education of father: age left school (Scotland)	scedf	1. 15 years or less 2. 16 years 3. 17 years 4. Not answered	Not available	Not available	Daded	Not available
Education of father: level (France)	fredf	5. No schooling 6. Primary school 7. Secondary-4th/5th year 8. Baccalauréat 9. Higher education 10. Not answered	Not available	Not available	Not available	Sitpetu1
Education of mother	edmoth	As edfath	Not available	Not available	Mumed	Sitmetu1
Education of mother: age left school (Scotland)	scedm	As scedf	Not available	Not available	Mumed	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Education of mother: level (France)	fredm	As fredf	Not available	Not available	Not available	Sitmetu1
No of siblings	sibs	Actual number	Not available	Not available	Brothers, sisters	Nbfrere1, nbsoeur1
			Educational background			
Type of school	schtype	1. Academic 2. Comprehensive 3. Vocational	School	Based on school ID NIschtype	Set to 2 (Comprehensive)	Based on typetab1 with corrections for strate_1
Private/public school	privat	1. Publicly owned (public authority) 2. Privately owned but subsidised 3. Privately owned fee-paying school	School	Based on school Ids NIprivat	Schstat	Typetab1
Religious denomination of school	relig	4. Catholic 5. Protestant 6. Interdenominational 7. Non-denominational	School	Based on school Ids NIrelig	Schdenom	Not available
Age left school	ageleft	Derive from date of birth and time left school.	Mleft, yrleft and mborn, yrborn	* Proxy based on self-reported age and time left school, mleft, yrleft, msurv, yrsurv	Mleft, yrleft and mborn,yrborn	Mleft, yrleft and mborn,yrborn
Highest stage: CASMIN	levcas	1. 1ab. Compulsory education 2. 1c. Basic vocational training 3. 2a. Advanced vocational training 4. 2b. Academic secondary intermediate 5. 2c. Full maturity certification	Based on L6a with correction for L9b	N_gorpli	Totscep and nummod	Casmin

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Highest stage: VTLMT	levvtlmt	1. Incomplete lower secondary/Took no formal exams 2. 'Failed' lower second-level exam 3. 'Passed' lower second-level exam 4. 'Failed' upper second-level exam 5. 'Passed' lower second-level exam	Based on L6a and exam grade variables (I7_3, I7_6, I7_9, I7_12, I7_15, I7_18, I7_21, I7_24, I7_27, I7_30, I7_33; I7c_1 to L7c_7)	nllevtvt	Based on stage, termlft and totscep	frlevvt
Type of programme	currtyp	1. Vocational/ technical 2. Academic	Based on subjects taken (L7_1, L7_4, L7_7, L7_10, L7_13, L7_16, L7_19, L7_22, L7_25, L7_28, L7_31) with correction for L9b	N_gorpli	Number of modules and Higher passes Nummod, totach56, totach5	Classec1
Subjects/courses taken	Coursci Cournlan Courlang Courbus Courtech Courmath Coursoc Courart Courtot	Actual number of courses taken	As currtyp	Subject variables	Based on SQA data	Not available
Curricular level	Ircurlev Nlcurlev	Country-specific classification	Based on L6a and subject level variables (L7_2, L7_5, L7_8, L7_11, L7_14, L7_17, L7_20, L7_23, L7_26, L7_29, L7_32) Categories: 0. Pass junior cycle 1. Hons junior cycle	Nl_level VBO and MAVO only. Only categories 5 and 6 for MAVO 1. A 2. A/B 3. B 4. B/C 5. C 6. C/D 7. D	Not available	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
			2. Pass senior cycle 3. Hons senior cycle	1 is Lowest		
Grades/awards received	Irgpav Nlgrade Scgrade	Country-specific scale	Based on exam grade variables (I7_3, I7_6, I7_9, I7_12, I7_15, I7_18, I7_21, I7_24, I7_27, I7_30, I7_33; I7c_1 to L7c_7)	Based on exam grade variables (excennl to excvnn2) * For MAVO, HAVO and VWO only	Based on SQA data – exams last sat	Not available
Last exam taken (Netherlands only)	Nlexam	0. MAVO 1. HAVO 2. VWO	Not applicable	N_gorpli * For MAVO, HAVO and VWO only	Not applicable	Not applicable
Part-time job/ work experience?	Ptime	0. No part-time job during school 1. Part-time job/ work experience during school	Not available	Not available	Not available	Based on jobvaca1, jobwend1, staentr1 and petboul1
			Employment characteristics			
Principal activity: time of survey	Activ	1. Working for payment or profit 2. Apprenticeship 3. Youth programmes/ Training/employment schemes 4. Unemployed 5. Student 6. National service 7. Other	Based on L11a_9 to L11a_20 with corrections based on L41 and L10_2	Based on n_mpl with corrections based on hdvb1l	Based on donow with corrections based on ytpart and apprent	* Situation at Nov. 1995 Based on sizp26 (new version of sit126,sit226, sit326)
Principal activity: May of year after leaving	Actmay	As activ	Based on L11a_12 with corrections for previous participation in schemes and apprenticeships (L13c, L32a_1 to L32a_8) * May underestimate apprenticeships and schemes	Based on mp9705l * But can't distinguish those on schemes	Based on donow with corrections for ytpart and apprent	Based on sizp20 (revised version of sit120)

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Employment status	Status	1. Self-employed 2. Employee 3. Employed through agency 4. Assisting relative 5. Apprentice 6. On scheme/ youth programme 7. Other	Based on L15 with corrections from activ for schemes/ apprentices.	Based on n_hdvb1l with corrections from activ for schemes/ apprentices.	Not available	Based on sizp26 with corrections from activ for schemes/apprentices.
'Mixed status': student in part-time job	mixed	0. No 1. Yes * Filtered on student as principal activity.	Based on activ, L13a and L13b.	Based on activ and vwbw	Based on donow and ptjob	Not available
Mixed status 2 (all those in part-time education)	Mixed2	0. No 1. Yes	Based on activ, nowed and nowpted	Based on activ, nowed and nowpted	Based on activ, nowed and nowpted	Not available
Current job(i.e. time of survey, Nov 95 for France):						
Permanent/temporary	perm	0. Temporary 1. Permanent/regular	L13a	n_hasd	Not available	Sizp26
No hours	hours	Record actual number of hours	L18	n_hau	hrswork. * But there is truncation on full-time work	Based on nbheu__1, nbheu1_1 to nbheu4_1
Collapsed No hours	nhours	1. Less than 15 2. 15-29 3. 30-39 4. 40-49 5. 50+	hours	Hours	hours	hours
Full-time/part-time (full-time is greater than 30 hours per week)	ftime	0. Part-time 1. Full-time	Recode of hours	Recode of hours	Based on donow, ptjob and hours	Recode of hours
Earnings	irearn nlearn scearn frearn	Earnings are calculated on different bases across countries (see note).	L20a	n_hbi * Data for IVBO (hni) is not comparable	Earnpnds and earnpenc	Based on salai__1 and salai1_1 to salai4_1.

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Occupation: social class	sclass	10. I - Upper service class 20. II - Lower service class 31. IIIa - Upper routine non-manual 32. IIIb – Lower routine non-manual 41. IVa – Small proprietors 42. IVb – Self-employed 43. IVc – Farmers 50. V – Lower technical / manual supervisory workers 60. VI - Skilled manual workers 71. VIIa - Semi-/ unskilled manual workers 72. VIIb – Agricultural workers	Based on L14 and L15	nlegp	Jobsoc No Employment Status so assume all are employees	Not available
Occupation: social class (9 categories)	Sclass9	1.I 2.II 3.III 4.IVab 5.IVc 6.V 7.VI 8.VIIa 9.VIIb	Recode of sclass	Recode of sclass	Recode of sclass	Pcsag__1
Occupation: status	occstat	Based on Ganzeboom's scale	L14	N_hber	jobsoc	occisco
Occupation: ISCO-88 equivalent	Occisco	Map to ISCO-88 codes	L14	N_hber	jobsoc	Iscocom3

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Occupation: segment	occseg	Gordon's schema: 1. Indep primary prof tech 2. Independent primary craft 3. Subordinate primary 4. Secondary	occisco	occisco	occisco	occisco
More accurate version of Gordon's schema for Ireland	iroccseg	As occseg	L14 and L16	Not available	Not available	Not available
Alternative occupational classification	occalt	1. Semi/unskilled occupations to depend on industry coreVperiph 2. Other	occisco	occisco	occisco	occisco
Industry: group by type (VTLMT classification)	indtype	3. Agriculture 4. Manufacturing 5. Construction 6. Distribution 7. Transport/ Communication 8. Finance 9. Public administration 10. Professional services 11. Personal,other services 12. Other	L16	n_hbra	Jobsic	Based on acten__1 and acten1_1 to acten4_1
Industry: segment	indseg	Based on core/ periphery distinction adapted by Hughes & Nolan	Indtype	Indtype	Indtype	Indtype

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Size of firm	firmsize	1.1 person 2.2-9 people 3.10-19 people 4.20-49 people 5.50-99 people 6.100-499 people 7.500-999 people 8.1000 + people	Not available	Hpo	Not available	Not available
Related to employer	relate	0.No 1.Yes	L17	N_hdvb1	Not available	Not available
Related to anyone in firm (France only)	frrelate	0.No 1.Yes	Not available	Not available	Not available	Trpar__1, trfam__1
Time in current job	timeemp	Record length of time in months.	Based on L13c and msurv, yrsurv	Based on hbgj, hbgm and msurv, yrsurv	Not available	Not available
How found current job	jobfind	1.Un/employment agency 2.Newspaper ad. 3.Contacting employers 4.Personal contacts 5.School 6.Work experience placement 7.Private agency 8.Other	L21	Based on n_hwv for MBO and hwv1ao for VBO agriculture	Not available	moytr__1
Relationship between education and current job content	edjob	0.Education not related to job 1.Education related to job	L22b	n_haso * MBO only	Not available	Not available
Satisfaction with current job	satis	0.Dissatisfied 1.Satisfied	L49a	Not available	Not available	Not available
Job search:						
Currently looking for work?	look	2.No 3.Yes	L23	bwzk4w	lookjob	Based on reche__1 and tjsrec_1. * Only available for employed and unemployed.

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Availability for work, if currently looking for work	avail	0. Not immediately 1. Immediately/ 2 weeks	L24c	bwbsb	Not available	Not available
Job search methods	search1 to search9	Dummy variables for: 1. Employment agency 2. Private agency 3. Newspaper ads 4. Contacting employers 5. Personal contacts 6. School 7. Placed ads 8. Other employment measures 9. Other	Based on L31a and L31b_1 to L31b_9.	Not available	Not available	Based on moye1__1 to moye4__1, moyre1_1 to moyre4_1
Post sec. ed. edcuation/training						
Full-time education (current participation):						
Currently participating?	nowed	0. No 1. Yes	Based on activ, L33 and L34a	Based on activ, vvod, vvovt, vvogev	Based on activ	Based on activ
Type of institution	edinst	1. University 2. Other third-level 3. 'Multi-level' (i.e. provides both 3rd and 2nd level courses) 4. Second-level: general 5. Second-level: vocational 6. Other	L34a	Not available	Instname	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Level of course	edlevel	7. 3rd level degree (3 yrs +) 8. 3rd level sub-degree (diploma or certificate; <3 years) 9. Upper second-level: general 10. Lower second-level general 11. Upper second-level: vocational – industry 12. Upper second-level: vocational – services 13. Upper second-level: vocational – field not specified 14. Lower second-level: vocational – industry 15. Lower second-level: vocational – services 16. Lower second-level: vocational – field not specified 17. Other	Based on L35a, L35c, L35d and edinst	Based on n_vl1 and n_secvl	Not available	Diplet_1
Subject area of course	Edsubj	1. Agriculture/Science 2. Engineering/ architecture 3. Business studies 4. Medicine & related 5. Humanities/ Social Science 6. Art 7. Law	L35a	Based on edlevel and n_secvl	Not available	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
		8. Second-Level General 9. Second-level Vocational 10. Other				
Occupational specificity of course (NL only)	occspec	0. Not occupationally specific 1. Occupationally specific	Not available	Based on n_vl1 and n_secvl	Not available	Not available
Full-time education (previous participation):						
Ever participated in full-time education?	evered	0. No 1. Yes	Based on L36, L39, L11b_1, L11b_2, L11b_3, nowed	Based on vvod, vvovt, vvogev	Not available	Diplet_1
Type of institution	Previnst	As edinst	L37	Not available	Not available	Not available
Level of course	Prevlev	As edlevel	L38	Based on n_vl1 and n_secvl	Not available	Diplet_1
Whether completed course	prevcomp	0. No 1. Yes	L39	Vvod	Not available	Based on dipoet_1
Subject area of course	Prevsubj	As edsubj	Not available	Based on prevlev and n_secvl	Not available	Not available
Apprenticeship training						
Current participation	Appr	0. Not an apprentice 1. Apprentice	Based on activ	Based on activ	Based on activ	Based on activ
Leaver from apprenticeship – CFA (France only)	frappr	0. No 1. Yes	Not available	Not available	Not available	
Status of apprenticeship	Appemp	0. No employment contract 1. Employment contract	L13a and L15	Llwwk	Based on donow	Set to 1 (Employment contract)
Certification to be obtained	Acertir Acertnl	Country-specific categories	L41 1. Statutory apprenticeship 2. Non-statutory apprenticeship	Llwn 1. Primary level 2. Secondary level 3. Tertiary level	Not available	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Previous participation in apprenticeship (incomplete)	Appdrop	0. No 1. Yes	Not available	Llwdc and llwgev	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
State training/ youth programmes:						
Currently participating?	Nowsch	0. No 1. Yes	Based on L10_1 and L10_2 with corrections for appr and nowed	Based on activ	Based on activ	Based on activ
Content of scheme	Schcon	1. No training (work experience only) 2. General training 3. Specific skills training	L10_2	N_hdvb1	Set to 3 (specific skills)	Based on sizp26 and mesurd_1
Institutional arrangements	Schinst	4. Classroom-based 5. Workplace-based 6. Alternance	L10_2	N_hdvb1	Based on wheretrn and onjobtrn	Based on sizp26 and mesurd_1
Certification to be obtained	Schcert	7. No 8. Yes	L10_2	N_hdvb1	Set to 1 (Yes)	Based on sizp26 and mesurd_1
Previous participation in schemes	Prevsch	0. No 1. Yes	L32a_1 to L32a_9	Not available	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
Other employment-related training (current):						
Currently participating?	Nowtr	0. No 1. Yes	Based on L33, L34a, L35a, L40 with corrections for appr, nowsch, nowed	Cbog4w	Based on wheretrn and onjobtrn	Not available
Part-time education (current participation):						
Currently participating?	nowpted	0. No 1. Yes	Based on L33 with corrections for nowed, nowsch, appr and nowtr	Based on vvod, vvovt and vvogev	Ednow	Not available
Type of institution	ptinst	As edinst	L34a	Not available	Instname	Not available
Level of course	Ptlevel	as edlevel	Based on L35a, L35c, L35d and ptinst	Based on n_vl1 and n_secvl	Not available	Not available
Subject area of course	Ptsubj	as edsubj	L35a	Based on n_secvl and ptlevel	Not available	Not available

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Occupational specificity of course	Ptspec	as occspec	Not available	Based on n_vl1 and n_secvl	Not available	Not available
			Labour force history			
Changes in labour force status since June of school-leaving year	chstat	Changes between five comparable statuses: 1. employment/ apprenticeship; 2. unemployment/ scheme; 3. student; 4. inactive; 5. other/ military service	L11a_1 to L11a_20	mp9606l to mp9712L	Not available	sizp09 to sizp26
No of changes in status since June of school-leaving year	irchstat nlchstat frchstat	Uses country-specific categories for changes in status	Based on L11_1 to L11a_20	Based on mp9606l to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp09 to sizp26
No of changes in status over whole of labour force history	chstat2	Changes between five statuses over whole period	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
No of changes in status over whole of labour force history	nlchst2 frchst2	Uses country-specific categories for changes in status	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
No jobs since leaving school	nojob	Number of different jobs from time of leaving school to time of survey.	Not available	Not available	Not available	Derived from mdemp__1, ademp__1, mfemp__1,afemp__1
Time to first job	timejob	Time taken to enter employment (or apprenticeship) from June of the school-leaving year	Based on L11_1 to L11a_20	Based on mp9606l to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp09 to sizp26
Time to first job	rtimejob	Time from leaving education to first job	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
Proportion of time in specified statuses: Employment Unemployment	premp prun	Proportion of time in specified status since June of school-leaving year	Based on L11_1 to L11a_20	Based on mp9606l to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp09 to sizp26
Proportion of time in specified statuses: Employment Unemployment	rpremp rprun	Proportion of time in specified status since leaving education	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
Unemployment:						
Duration of current spell	durat revdur	No of months currently unemployed; revdur sets <0.5 months to 0.5 months	Based on L12b and msurv, yrsurv	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
Receipt of social welfare payments (unemployed only)	welfare	0. No payments 1. In receipt of payments	Based on L12c and L12d	Not available	Not available	Based on indemc_1
Ever unemployed since June of school-leaving year?	everun	0. Never unemployed 1. Employed (one or more spells)	Based on L11a_1 to L11a_20	Based on mp9606L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26 variables
Ever unemployed over whole period?	reverun	0. Never unemployed 1. Employed (one or more spells)	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	everunz * FU var for S6 leavers only	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
No of previous spells since June of school-leaving year	unsp	Number of previous (separate) spells unemployed	Based on L11a_1 to L11a_20	Based on mp9606L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp09 to sizp26
No of previous spells over whole period	runsp	No of previous spells unemployed	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26
Amount of time spent unemployed since June of school-leaving year	dursp	No of months unemployed	Based on L11a_1 to L11a_20	Based on mp9606L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp09 to sizp26
Amount of time spent unemployed overall	rdursp	No of months unemployed	Not available	Based on mp9509L to mp9712L	Not available	Based on sizp01 to sizp26

continued

VARIABLE	VAR NAME	VARIABLE CATEGORIES	IRELAND	NETHERLANDS	SCOTLAND	FRANCE
			Filter variables			
Remove those in continuing education	edfilt	Select if (edfilt eq 1).	L11a_5	Mp9610L	Dooct	Sizp13
Principal activity is employment	empfilt	Select if (empfilt eq 1).	Activ	Activ	Activ	Activ
Eurostat definition of paid work	hrsfilt	Select if (hrsfilt eq 1).	Hours	Hours	Hours * Problem of truncation	Hours
Principal activity is employment, apprenticeship or scheme	wkfilt	Select if (wkfilt eq 1).	Activ	Activ	Activ	Activ
Lower level leavers	lllfilt	Select if (lllfilt eq 1).	Levvtlmt	Levvtlmt	Levvtlmt	Levvtlmt

Missing values (for all):
-9= not answered
sysmis=not applicable

Education and labour market change: The dynamics of education to work transitions in Europe* A review of the TSER Programme

Damian F. Hannan, Patrick Werquin

Abstract

The education / employment relationship and the transition from school to work has been the subject of substantial research over the last decade. This is mainly because of its priority in policy making for a number of reasons (see paper).

One of the main policy research questions remains whether there is one or a number of different and equally effective solutions to these problems in different EU countries.

The underlying sources of these difficulties in different country labour markets within the EU are difficult to disentangle. They are not equally serious in all countries. They also tend to have different patterns in different countries, and there is no agreement on the exact source of the relative lack of job vacancies for young people.

Successful policy interventions also tend to differ across countries. Not all EU countries reacted the same way to the crisis, nor do or can they have the same kind of effective policy solutions: the seriousness and nature of the problem varies across countries; countries have different youth / age profiles, somewhat different economies, and clearly different institutional systems.

In these circumstances comparative cross-country research is of particular interest to learn to what extent and why some policies appear to be generalisable, while others appear to be effective only in particular country / institutional contexts[2].

This requires that research should aim at a clear understanding of the impact(s) of institutional contexts on education and training (ET) and labour market (LM) outcomes.

* The quality and comprehensiveness of this paper is a result mainly of the critiques and suggestions of our colleagues funded on TSER projects, who attended a preliminary meeting in Brussels at DGXII on Nov., 19th 1998. Any remaining inadequacies or faults in the paper are due entirely to the authors. Our particular thanks are due to T.F. Brandsma, University Twente, Enschede; P. Dubois, Facolta' Scienze Politiche-Sede di Forli, Bologne; W. Houtkoop, Max Goode Centre, University of Amsterdam; S. Lindblad, Uppsala Universitet-Depart. Education; W. Müller, Universitat Mannheim; H. Oosterbeek, University of Amsterdam-Faculty of Economics; W. Pelgrum, Universiteit Twente; C. Bedwe, LIRHE, Univ. Des Sciences Sociales, Toulouse; J. Planas, Universite Autonome de Barcelone; D. Raffe, CES, University of Edinburgh; J.P. Reef, MENFP, Luxembourg; H. Schomburg, Universitat Kassel; C. Sofer, LEO CRESEP, University of Toulouse; and E. Willems, ROA, Universiteit Maastricht.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

Bac	Baccalauréat (France)
BEP	Brevet d'étude professionnelle (first French vocational level)
CATEWE	Comparative Analysis of Transitions form Education to Work in Europe (TSER project)
Cedefop	Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)
Ciretoq	Cedefop network
COMPETE	Competence Evaluation and Training for Europe (TSER project)
DELILAH	Designing Evaluating Learning Innovations and Learning Applications (TSER project)
DG	Directorate General
ET	education and training
EU	European Union
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union
EVALUE	Evaluation et auto-évaluation des universités en Europe (TSER project)
LM	labour market
NatCCC-PS	New Assessment Tools for Cross Curricular Competencies in the Domain of Problem Solving (TSER project)
OECD	Organisation for economic development and co-operation
STT	Schooling, Training et Transitions (TSER project)
TSER	Targeted Socio-Economic Research
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
VTLMT	Vocational Training and Labour Market Transitions (Leonardo project)
WORKTOW	Working Life Changes and Training of Older Workers (TSER project)
LFS	Labour force survey
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD project)

1. Introduction

This paper has three main objectives:

a) It reviews the main research findings, conclusions and general direction of the Targeted Socio-Economic Research (TSER) Programme under the Fourth Framework Programme of DG12, dealing with research on education/employment relationships and, in particular, transitions from education to work in Europe and places it in the context of the wider research literature and policy priorities in the area;

b) It highlights the main areas where policy needs are well served by research, and other areas where research is poorly developed;

c) It suggests the main areas of research and policy analyses that need to be addressed in the next 5th Framework (TSER) Programme (1998-2002), particularly under the Horizontal Programme for Improving the Human Research Potential and the socio-economic research base. (O.J. c506/99, 13.01.1999).

The paper does not attempt to evaluate nor comprehensively review the main TSER research on education-employment relationships, but to summarise the main findings in the context of comparative European research and related policy preoccupations on the relationships between education/training system outputs and labour market entrants and outcomes at an individual and system level.

The education/employment relationship and the transition from school to work has been the subject of substantial research over the last decade. This is mainly because of its priority in policy making for a number of reasons. Firstly, most European countries have had persistent high youth unemployment rates for almost two decades, with the time between leaving full time education and securing a regular job also increasing significantly. With a substantial proportion of young people entering the labour market (LM) either never finding secure employment or being intermittently unemployed – particularly amongst the least educationally qualified – both policy makers and researchers have focused a lot of attention on the initial school-to-work transition process. Initially substantial state investments occurred in LM interventions such as state employment and training programmes, but gradually shifted to more active and more effective labour market interventions as the long-term secular rather than temporary nature of the labour market problem became increasingly apparent. As a result, in many EU/OECD countries participation in such state programmes became a regular feature of many young people's transition between leaving full time initial education and either getting a regular job or effectively withdrawing from active participation in the labour market. Besides the immediate social consequences of such effects, these issues are of continuing policy relevance since, when economic growth resumes, countries will need a full working population complement in a situation of generally low replacement rates. Even in present circumstances labour shortages have emerged in some countries such as the Netherlands, so that state and European Union (EU) policy needs to be geared to address the medium to long term effects of declining demographic trends with improving economic growth.

Besides the current employment crisis, a rapid upgrading of education and training (ET) is required in most EU countries given the poor competitive position of EU countries for low skilled production and high global competitiveness for high skilled production and services, particularly from the USA and Japan. Given these policy priorities, transition from school to work has become a very important policy issue in most EU countries. One of the main policy research questions remains whether there is one or a number of different and equally effective solutions to these problems in different EU countries.

The underlying sources of these difficulties in different country labour markets within the EU are difficult to disentangle. They are not equally serious in all countries. They also tend to have different patterns in different countries, and there is no agreement on the exact source of the relative lack of job vacancies for

young people. Successful policy interventions also tend to differ across countries. Not all EU countries reacted the same way to the crisis, nor do or can they have the same kind of effective policy solutions: the seriousness and nature of the problem varies across countries; countries have different youth/age profiles, somewhat different economies, and clearly different institutional systems. In these circumstances comparative cross-country research is of particular interest to learn to what extent and why some policies appear to be generalisable, while others appear to be effective only in particular country/institutional contexts[1]. This requires that research should aim at a clear understanding of the impact(s) of institutional contexts on education and training (ET) and labour market (LM) outcomes. The main aim of this paper is to summarise some of the main lines of comparative European research on school-to-work transitions, with particular attention to research on these issues funded by the European Commission under the Targeted Socio-Economic Research (TSER) Programme of DGXII.

This paper has 8 sections:

1) The wider economic and policy context within which research on education to work transitions takes place.

2) A set of categories is proposed to define between country difference in national institutional arrangements.

3) The nature and extent of change in economic or labour market demands for different kinds and levels of education/training or skills/knowledge; as well as the extent these might vary across different labour market systems.

4) Changes in education/training outputs and the relationships and linkages between the ET system and changing labour markets and employers/firm behaviour; as well as the extent to which these also might vary across different national ET institutional systems.

5) Comparative analyses of the nature, extent and severity of educational and labour market failure/exclusion and the associated social exclusionary processes; as well as the relative effects of national institutional systems on such processes and relative effectiveness of interventions.

6) Research on the effectiveness of education/training programmes and of labour market intervention programmes.

7) Gender and class inequalities.

8) Conclusions, and proposals for future comparative research and policy analyses work under the aegis of the Vth Framework Programme of DGXII: Improving the Human Research Potential and the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base (1998-2002).

1.1 The policy contexts of education to work transitions

Increasing globalisation and competitive pressures combined with rapid technological change[2] have, according to conventional economic wisdom, made education and training – human capital growth – of increasing if not paramount importance in securing modern economic growth.

State policy responses to the growing unemployment crises of the 1980s and early 1990s gradually changed over time to a recognition that the problem was not only cyclical and, therefore, could be adequately handled by temporary employment/training measures, but was also structural: with rapid technological change and increasing competitive pressures bringing about long term secular declines in certain industries and unskilled and semiskilled occupations. This realisation shifted policy emphases to supply side meas-

[1] Research on youth unemployment has largely used the fact that minimum wage has been lowered in the Netherlands without any clear evidence of success in terms of unemployment. The idea of the labour being too expensive for young people does not seem to work from the Dutch experience.

[2] See comprehensive review by Lundvall and Borrás (1997).

ures in education and training and to active labour market programmes. The main concerns were not only that the ET system was not changing fast enough to keep pace with rapid economic and technological change, but that changes in the organisation of production itself would also be necessary to guarantee continuing competitiveness. (Janoski, 1996; OECD, 1995; EU, 1994; O'Connell and McGinnity, 1997).

The European Commission's White Paper (1993) on *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*, following on the Copenhagen summit, proposed a number of policies to tackle the EU economy's slowdown, with increasing unemployment and declining competitiveness. This White Paper was more innovative than preceding EU documents. Three chapters appear most relevant: Chapter 7 deals with education and training system, chapter 8 on the link between job creation and economic growth, and chapter 9 on labour costs (see also Meulders, 1998).

With an increasingly more knowledge-based economy, an accelerating pace of technological change – and consequent changes in jobs, firms and ET requirements – the necessity for substantial change in ET policy was proposed. This was proposed as necessary both to increase the level of knowledge/skills of the youth labour force, but also to change radically the nature of the 'once-and-for-all' full time ET provider systems, toward a more open and more flexible one.

This was seen as necessary both to increase the chances of returning to post-school education/training and to orient systems of ET provision more toward life long learning and continuing re-education/re-training (p. 16). In addition the White Paper emphasised the necessity to substantially reduce the level of educational failure/underachievement amongst school leavers in most European countries and to improve transitions to work. In pointing to the very negative unemployment and other economic and social marginalisation effects of educational failure, and the subsequent difficulty in re-integrating such poorly educated youth back into the society, the White Paper prioritised the need for effective educational interventions (p. 124). Besides these obvious negative effects of educational failure and the necessity to effectively tackle its causes, the overall rapid pace of economic/technological change required much more forward planning than previously; hence the priority placed on research and new knowledge on occupational/work changes and attendant ET requirements. The increasing dynamic relationships between the ET system and the employment system in modern economies also required much greater levels of co-operation between them. But also much greater responsiveness and flexibility in instructional/learning and qualification systems to the changing economic/employment needs; as well as to the individuals needs for re-education and re-training over the life-course.

The White Paper also suggested the necessity for improvements in the fit between the tax and social protection system and employment in order to encourage job creation: suggesting, for instance, a decrease by 2% in social insurance contributions, and targeting it on youth and low skilled employment. It also suggested policies to reduce the disincentive effects of unemployment benefit on job search – though a clear disincentive effect of unemployment benefit has never been proved.

In addition to increasing the sensitivity of tax/insurance systems to LM needs, increased LM flexibility and less regulation is suggested to help creation of part-time and temporary contracts etc. as well as workers' temporary withdrawal on a voluntary basis from the LM (e.g. for sabbaticals, training etc.). In addition improvements in active labour market policies and in employment/job placement processes/agencies are suggested.

In addition to lowering tax/insurance contributions, a slowdown in wage increases was suggested, with wages not allowed to increase more than the increase in productivity. The level of wages appeared to be perceived to be one of the main reasons of low job creation, with minimum wage regulation/legislation also perceived as constraining employment growth. Again, none of these policy recommendations have any solid basis in the research/econometric literature. On the contrary, in the

meantime, recent OECD publications (*Employment Outlook*, 1998) have been more than cautious about the minimum wage as a general brake on jobs creation.

Following along the lines of the White Paper suggestions, the Essen Summit (1994) adopted five priorities in December 1994:

a) Improving the employability of the labour force through the promotion of investments in vocational training. Young people to be especially targeted.

b) Increasing job creation associated with economic growth through a greater flexibility of the labour force, by increasing wages by less than productivity growth and by encouraging regional and local initiatives, especially in the fields of new jobs (environment, social services etc.).

c) Reducing the labour cost, especially for unskilled jobs.

d) Improving the efficiency of public employment policies by switching from passive to active policies.

e) Improving the targeting of intervention programmes for those most affected by unemployment: young people, long term unemployed, unemployed female and older unemployed people.

The White Paper of the European Commission (1994) on *Education and Training: Toward the Learning Society,* proposed four main policy priorities. Firstly it indicated the necessity to have a balanced set of ET policies which both emphasised the necessity for increasing levels of general education combined with an increasing mix of employment linked vocational training in ways that minimise the dominating status/ethos of the former. In addition the White Paper (1994) recommended the creation of new and bridging curricular/course and assessment/certification arrangements between the two, normally divorced, education and training provider systems. The creation of new and more effectively integrated pathways between the different education and training systems, and the creation of a more open and flexible life long learning system is one of the main policy aims of the paper. Thirdly the necessity to anticipate and to adequately provide for new knowledge/skill needs was emphasised, as technological change accelerates and the necessity for constant upgrading of the workforce requires substantial changes in both the state and EU policy and ET provider systems. Fourthly the necessity for state and EU policy making, and budget allocation, as well as private sector employers, to more adequately recognise the necessity to treat human capital investment with the same priority as physical capital investment was emphasised. Finally the White Paper emphasised the necessity for states and the EU to prioritise interventions to radically reduce the level of educational failure and the resultant high levels of unemployment and social exclusion characteristic of most EU states.

After the Essen summit the next step was the Amsterdam summit in June 1997. A new chapter on employment appeared in the New Treaty for Europe; unemployment becoming one of the main policy priorities for the EU. Following the Amsterdam Treaty, the first European Summit for Employment was held in Luxembourg in November 1997. At this occasion, 4 guidelines were adopted:

a) Improving employability. This guideline follows previous White Papers' ideas on training and active LM policies.

b) Encouraging entrepreneurial activity: by simplifying regulations, improving access to funding, tax reductions etc., and by developing local initiatives.

c) Improving the adjustment capability of employers and employees: by modernising work organisations through increased flexibility, reduction of the number of hours worked; reducing over-time and increasing part time work; facilitating temporary withdrawal from the labour force and encouragement of retraining and life long learning etc.

d) Strengthening gender equality in the labour force; and improving the linkages between family life and working activity.

The Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme (1994-1998) proposed by DGXII invited proposals for research from the European research community on three main areas of economic and social research: in science and technology policy, ET and LM integration, and social integration and social exclusion. The increasingly severe economic and social problems facing European societies required a more co-ordinated and better funded and targeted research and policy response than hitherto. Increasing global competitive pressures, the necessity for continuing productivity growth, the consequent need to expand and improve the effectiveness of European ET systems and the necessity for ET systems and enterprises to adapt readily and effectively to rapid technological and economic change to ensure sustainable long term growth, all indicate the necessity for co-ordinated, effective comparative research for national and European policy making.

EU economic growth increasingly depends on scientific/technological development, education/training systems which encapsulate this into human capital growth, and the development of a market and institutional framework which effectively integrates both into modern productive economies and welfare enhancing civil societies. To do this research needs to be of high scientific quality, comparative, have significant added value and help develop comparative data bases and effective and comparative conceptual/theoretical models and methodologies (TSER programme).

Besides the economic growth imperative high levels of persistent unemployment and associated economic and social exclusionary pressures in most EU countries also emphasise the necessity for high quality comparative economic and social research on national similarities and differences in the effectiveness of economic and social policies in tackling such exclusionary processes (TSER, 1996). The threats to equality of opportunity and to economic and social cohesion not only place European civil society under increasing pressures, but directly breach some of the central values and goals of European integration.

The main objective of the TSER (1994-1998) research programme was to build up both the knowledge base and research infrastructure for high quality, policy relevant, comparative European socio-economic research at both national and Community level. In Area II, education and training, the objective is to help link advances in science and technology and rapid economic/technological change to the effectiveness of the linkage/relationship between ET systems – in building up human capital stock – and labour market entry and in-firm insertion/training processes in attracting and using high quality labour. Within this broad area of research the Programme had three main objectives – to strengthen the European research base and improve communication and networking amongst European researchers, to develop and strengthen the knowledge base and to improve its quality and comparability, and help apply it to the challenges facing European economies and societies.

There are three main objectives of TSER Area II (Research in Education and Training):

1) the nature and extent of skill change and of labour demand in the economy and the effectiveness and nature of the responsiveness of ET systems to these changes;

2) The development of ET effectiveness/evaluation models and methodologies – both in terms of conventional schooling/training as well as in life long learning/instructional arrangements;

3) Transitions from school to work, and the nature and extent to which ET systems and their relationships to employment systems positively or negatively affect inclusionary or exclusionary processes.

Even before EU and OECD prompting, most European states had instituted substantial changes in educational and training arrangements and in the level and length of participation in initial full-time education and training. So substantial expansion in educational participation at upper second level and third level had occurred in all EU countries, though significant national differences still exist in

the nature, pace and extent of change in all these respects. In many countries the rapid increase in the level of education of the youth labour force has outdistanced the changes in occupational demand as previously defined – with significant 'educational upgrading' of many low and medium skilled occupations (Robinson 1997; and work of Ciretoq network); with most of the upward shift in the educational level of the work force occurring within existing occupations rather than in the expansion of new or more technologically advanced ones. Besides the concern about under-qualification, therefore, some concern has also been expressed about the extent of 'overqualification' amongst the young work force, and under-utilisation by firms of this newly upskilled and better educated young labour (Krahn, 1997; Ashton and Green, 1996; 1997). The extent to which and the effectiveness with which employers use the substantial recent improvement in human capital in their recruitment, training, work allocation and promotion policies, and in their general human resource management and innovation processes, deserves equal attention in policy and research agendas as do ET policies and practices.

To conclude then, the TSER research programme (Area II) has substantial complementarity with the policy priorities of the various EU White Papers on education/training and labour market integration policy. Despite the evident weakness of research/policy institutional linkages at EU level – compared to its national or OECD equivalents – at least the content of economic and social research promoted by TSER (DGXII) appears relatively closely linked to EU policy priorities.

1.2 Demographic and economic context

The demographic and economic context within which change is occurring is now described according to the main usual sources such as Eurostat and OECD, as well as a number of TSER funded projects.

The economic and socio-demographic contexts within which school-to-work transitions occur within Europe have changed significantly over time, and these changes also vary significantly from country to country. Four aspects of these appear most relevant:

1) relative youth/adult demographic and unemployment rates and characteristics;

2) significant increases over time in the median ages of entry to the labour market, as young people stay longer in full-time education and search longer for a permanent acceptable job, but also increasing variances in the age of entering the labour market;

3) wide national differences in unemployment rates by level of education (Eurostat, 1996 and 1997; Freysson, 1997; OECD, 1996 and 1997).

4) Finally there is a significant growth in the extent to which 'mixed statuses' (e.g. work and education) occur, particularly amongst those completing upper second level education/training as well as those going on to third level education.

Not only is the demographic and economic context within which transitions are being negotiated rapidly changing over time and highly variable across countries, but the shape and nature of that transition itself is also radically altering. It is significantly lengthening, and the socio-cultural and institutional context within which that lengthening socialisation occurs is also rapidly changing. Transition is no longer easily conceptualised as a 'rite of passage', or relatively unproblematic status change from dependent youth to independent adult statuses. It is now one in which the 'youth stage' is continuously being extended, mostly outside familial control; and in which educational and work roles are increasingly intermixed and negotiated or constructed over a much longer time period in the more family-independent contexts of educational institutions, stronger peer groups and part-time work roles. This 'youth/adult' stage of intensive socialisation, now less culturally reproduced than in previous generations, occurs in a much less predictable and controlled environment than previously. Besides these more general socialisation trends in transition, there are however very significant differences in the demographic and economic contexts within which such youth/

adult transitions occur in most European countries.

There is very wide national variation in the proportion of 15-29 year olds in the total population, as well as the relative size of youth inflows into the labour force across the European Union. This age group comprises only 22-23 percent of the population in Germany and Finland, but over 32 percent in Ireland (Freysson, 1996). So the relative size of the youth inflow into the labour force has different economic and policy implications in different countries; particularly so if one also includes in the equation the extent to which the older outflow on retirement comes from economic sectors – like agriculture – which are not being reproduced (as in Portugal, Spain, Greece and Ireland, for instance).

Allied to the demographic variable is the relative difficulty of access to the workforce faced by young people, or the relative ease of job loss, compared to older people. This also varies substantially across the Community: with the relative youth/age unemployment risk for Ireland for instance being twice that of Germany or Austria (Freysson, 1996). It is hypothesised that the extended apprenticeship arrangements of the former countries provide a more highly institutionalised, segmented, 'protected' and secure labour market access route for young job seekers (Müller and Shavit, 1998).

Finally the rate of return – in employment terms – to increasing educational levels also varies substantially across countries for youth entry cohorts: from around a 4/1 unemployment ratio between those with third level qualifications and those with less than upper second level in Ireland, to 3/1 for Germany and Denmark and less than 2/1 for the Mediterranean countries (OECD, 1997; Freysson, 1996; Eurostat, 1997). These differential employment returns to increasing levels of education are not highly correlated with national rates of completion of upper second level education (i.e. with their relative scarcity) as one might expect, with these rates being maximised in Germany, the Benelux, Scandinavian countries or France, and lowest in Portugal and intermediate in the UK or Spain. In the former countries, however, such qualification rates had already been very high by the mid 1980s, while quite dramatic changes have occurred in the level of education of youth cohorts in Portugal, France, Ireland and the Mediterranean countries. These rapid changes imply substantial young/old employee replacement issues within firms and between old and young industries etc. in these latter countries, with the consequent implications for human resource development and management within firms.

2. National institutional differences

There are substantial differences amongst countries in how they responded to this unemployment crisis and to secular economic change – not unexpectedly given the substantial economic and institutional differences amongst European countries, not only in their ET systems but more importantly in the interconnections or linkages between the latter and the main economic agents. In addition not all EU and OECD countries have moved in the same direction or at the same speed toward to a high skill and high value added production system (Ashton and Green, 1997; Steedman, 1997; Steedman and Wagner, 1987, 1989).

There are least three respects in which national differences in education/training systems in Europe make it unlikely that the same policy priorities can be implemented in the same way in all countries:

a) Their degree of *institutional differentiation* – at both lower and upper second level, with very clear 'tracking' from ages 11/12 onwards in Germany and the Netherlands for instance, and comprehensive systems at least up to age 15/16 in France, Britain and Ireland;

b) The extent of *institutional linkage* between the ET system and the employment system. This may be highly linked/coupled as in the German dual system – with a substantial degree of ET provision being jointly provided in the apprenticeship system. At the other extreme, the ET and LM

systems may be completely 'de-coupled'; with an institutionally separate educational system providing educational outputs or qualifications which are then 'marketed' in a separate labour market.

At one extreme the German dual system – provides a model of a highly differentiated ET system from the beginning of second level education, which at the same time provides the strongest connection/linkage between employers and education/training providers in the apprenticeship system. At the other extreme are the comprehensive and relatively undifferentiated ET systems of some of the Scandinavian countries, or more weakly (at upper second level education) as in Britain, Ireland and France. Here there is a much weaker linkage with the labour market.

c) Finally, compared to the American/Canadian ET systems most European systems are highly *centralised and standardised* (in curricular/pedagogical and examination/certification terms). In these respects the significance of examinations/qualifications, and of examination grades, are likely to be far greater in European countries than in the unstandardised American second level system (Rosenbaum and Kariya, 1991; Kerchoff, 1990, 1995; Breen, Hannan and O'Leary, 1995). Some significant differences amongst European countries, however, exist in both the nature and degree of differentiation of examination/certification, and in their significance in the labour market: the extent of differentiation in examination grades, for instance, being highly variable, as well as their use/significance in selection for further education/training and entry to the labour market (Breen, Hannan et al., 1995). Recent work also shows that such standardised and certified examination grades are important to employers even amongst lower level school leavers (Hannan et al., Leonardo, (VTLMT), Final Report, Dec. 1998; Smyth, 1998; Becker and Rutjes, 1998).

Given these wide institutional differences amongst EU countries in their ET systems and in the nature and degree of interconnection between the ET systems and their LMs, we do not assume in this paper that one system is necessarily more effective than another in terms of either generating high levels of human capital or of inserting it into the labour market: i.e. that functionally equivalent mechanisms of both generating and integrating human capital into the economy are likely to occur across the different EU countries. What seems to be crucial in building up and maintaining a high skills, high value added production system, is the construction of strong systemic relationships between the education/training provider system and the main economic actors (individual or corporate) – but that there are many different institutionalised ways in which this can occur. This may be done by the highly regulated German dual system model, or by the semi-corporatist and formalised Dutch model of high 'occupationalisation' of the labour market dependent on a supply of specifically educated/trained labour from the full time educational institutions; or the almost equally corporatist but more informal linkages of the Japanese models (see Hannan, Raffe, Smyth, OECD, 1996; OECD, *Employment Outlook*, 1997). And, given the success of the American model – with an almost completely de-coupled ET system with minimal standardisation at primary and second level, obviously there is something they are doing right – though most analyses would suggest that this occurs mainly at third level. Successful European type models appear to be characterised by a much higher level of integration/co-ordination between the state, education/training providers and employers – particularly for countries that are 'late starters' or those rapidly adjusting to modern economic competitiveness. Significant government planning, regulation, investment in and co-ordination of education/training, combined with corporate agreements with employers, education/training providers and trade unties etc. appears to characterise many of the most successful European economies, particularly as economies move into high value added production. (Ashton and Green, 1996). Recent research throws a lot of cold water on the older orthodox neo-liberal economic theories of economic development, showing no clear relationship between neo liberal or modern (European

type) corporatist models of state/economy relationships and economic or employment growth. (OECD, *Employment Outlook*, 1997): that both are equally likely to be effective, though in substantively different national cultural, institutional and historical contexts.

If we assume the continuing significance of national institutional differences in ET and LM systems, which most current studies support (Shavit and Müller, 1998) – though with some growing similarities as mass educational participation extends to third level and increasing global competition forces adaptation – then the 'dual system' and Dutch education/training (ideal type) models will remain quite different from those countries with more 'general education' type ET and LM models: where most specific occupationally relevant training takes place within firms. If this remains the case then the greater degree of both 'level congruence' and 'content congruence' (Almendinger, 1989) between ET outputs and labour market integration outcomes, will continue to remain much stronger in the former countries. (Shavit and Müller, 1998). However, it is important to get clearer conceptualisation and measurement of these educational/working relationships. It is clear, for instance, that there are analogues or 'functional alternatives' to the greater 'content congruence' of 'dual system' countries existing in the more general educational/training systems; but these may not be measured by conventional variables. For instance, it is clear that those students who do choose to take a greater concentration of vocational/technical subjects at second level do appear to increase their probability of escaping low skilled and insecure employment, controlling for other educational achievement differences. (Müller and Shavit, 1998; Hannan et al., VTLMT, Leonardo final report, Dec. 1998). However, it is also appears clear that greater labour market competition occurs between school/college leavers for the same occupational niches in the more general educational countries, particularly at the beginning of the occupational career and particularly for low skilled jobs (Borghans, Hughes and Smits, 1998; Hannan, Raffe and Smyth, 1996; Hannan and McCabe, 1998).

As will become clear in the next section, if most secular change in the technical characteristics of work – and therefore in its educational/training requirements – occurs within occupations, and by and large within firms rather than between firms, then it appears reasonable to conclude that the more closely linked the ET and employer systems are the more adaptable the overall system. However, the opposite conclusion has also been proposed: that the more general educational systems – providing higher levels of initial general education – give a better base to further in-firm training and retraining: though most existing cross-national data (OECD, *Education at a Glance,* 1997,1998) generally indicate higher levels of in-firm training in dual system countries. This is an area however, where good quality cross-nationally comparable data are very poor, and research rather limited.

3. Changes in labour market, skill demands and relationship to education/training outputs

To what extent does economic and social research lend support to the hypothesis of rapid technological, economic and occupational change underlying the substantial increase in the skill education/training requirements of the European work-force?

Research work carried out by LIRHE (University of Toulouse) and funded by Cedefop, and other work funded by Cedefop [3,4] shows clearly that the rapid growth in the supply of workers with higher educational levels across most EU countries has not been equalled by an equally rapid growth in those occupations which 'require' – or had previously required – such high levels of education/training (Béduwé and Espinasse, 1997; Monacorda

[3] Béduwé et al.

[4] This study was funded by Cedefop and directed by L. Mallet, Univ. of Toulouse. A brief summary is given in Béduwé and Espinasse, 1996. See also work by Ciretoq network also partly funded by Cedefop – e.g. Borghans et al., 1998.

and Robinson, 1996; Robinson, 1997). Considered over the decade from the early 1980s onwards, upward shifts in educational qualifications had been general throughout Europe, but most educational change over the period had in fact occurred within 'old' occupations rather than in new occupations, or growth in occupations that had previously required a high level of education. So, if we measure technological change as reflected in equivalent change in occupations with higher technological/training requirements, most of the educational change had not been due to technological/occupational changes in demand, but to changes in the relative supply of more highly educated labour.

This research, therefore, gives no support to the demand driven 'technological change' hypothesis: one that appears to underlie most of the EU and national policy documents. The alternative, 'credentialist' hypothesis – of an over-supply of highly educated labour being absorbed in occupations for which they are not in reality required, on the other hand – receives some support in these studies: provided one assumes that the task complexity, 'difficulty' and degree of responsibility of work tasks within similarly named occupations remains the same over time – say a 10 to 20 year period [5].

Most educational/training growth, in fact, appears driven mainly by other considerations, however: underlying, economic, political, institutional and socio-cultural factors such as higher youth unemployment and rapid expansion in upper second and third level educational provision partly driven by the necessity of keeping young people out of the labour market for as long as possible; some undoubted upward shifts in skill demands as well as high individual rates of return to increasing levels of education, and the obvious strong relationship between low levels of education and high unemployment/exclusion rates. In addition in many countries rapidly increasing levels of parental education also increase demand – the result of rapid expansion in second level education in the 1960s and 1970s in most OECD countries. So, at a minimum there is no evidence in these studies that skill shortages or skill deficits in general has significantly constrained higher/skilled occupational expansion (though this may well be the case in particular occupational/industrial sectors); and that such skill shortages have been significant in educational expansion. Indeed the opposite proposition is given significant support – that an increasing supply of highly educated labour has substantially outstripped conventional occupational demand (Ciretoq network research; Béduwé et al., 1998; Robinson and Manacorda, 1997; Steedman et al., TSER research 'Newskills'; Sofer et al., TSER research 'STT').

However, these studies do not show any decline in the individual earnings rate of return to more highly educated labour – as one might expect if the increase in higher qualifications were diffused evenly throughout the occupational distribution. Indeed there is significant evidence that educational inequalities in earnings returns have in fact increased in some countries over time (Robinson, 1997). Analyses of occupational/industrial differences in rates of return in earnings indicate that in the modern expanding corporate managerial and professional-technical occupations sectors, the rates of return to higher levels of education have in fact increased. In those intermediate (status) occupational niches, however, particularly in the services sector, where there has also been a substantial upgrading in the level of education/training of the workforce, there is some evidence of a relative decline in earnings returns to higher level qualifications. Some evidence, therefore, exists that it may well be the increasing supply of more highly educated la-

[5] The argument has also been made that since a significant proportion of 'future jobs' do not yet exist – and that, even within current occupations, job tasks are becoming more complex and more subject to change over time, it is necessary to produce graduates surplus to current or historical requirements. In addition such an increasingly highly qualified young labour force will over time influence occupational change and so influence the future demand side. Given rapid technological/occupational change, therefore, one could argue that it would be prudent to anticipate this and produce at least a temporary 'over-supply' of highly qualified school/college leavers.

bour that has facilitated such recruitment – particularly in occupations in the services sector where not previously required – and where such a recruitment choice would significantly decrease training costs for employers (Robinson, 1997; OECD, 1996, 1997 and 1998). No evidence here, therefore, in wage rates at least, of increasing productivity and technological sophistication within these intermediate service occupations, but more of a rational response by employers to an oversupply of more qualified labour where the relative price of such labour has decreased. Of course, as will be discussed later, the time that young 'over-qualified' people spend in such jobs may be restricted to a short period at the beginning of work life.

In a number of longitudinal/panel research studies on labour market transitions of school/college leavers over a 3-5 year, a majority of the more highly educated who initially took up lower status occupations, for which they were clearly 'over-qualified', subsequently became upwardly mobile out of them; with the rate of 'overqualification' declining rapidly with time in the work force. (See Hannan et al., 1998). Not only have employers upgraded their recruitment 'requirements' for intermediate and lower status occupations, but many of them – particularly in the 'secondary sector' – have transformed these occupations into temporary and part-time jobs, recruiting more highly educated school/college leavers on a temporary basis and 'churning' these jobs over for succeeding cohorts of school/college leavers – as well as substituting older and more highly educated women workers returning to the labour force on a part-time basis (Green, Ashton et al., 1997; Hannan et al., 1998). In periods of high youth unemployment, particularly in open economies – as in the English speaking countries, employers disproportionately pick young employees 'off the top' of labour queues. So, with increasing competition for non-skilled jobs from the more highly qualified, the less qualified tend to be disproportionately excluded from the work force in times of high youth unemployment. This process however does not appear to occur to the same extent in Mediterranean countries – where unemployment rates for recent graduates appear particularly high (OECD, EAG, 1996 to 1998; Schizzerotto and Cobalti, 1998).

There is some evidence for Britain and France that the 'closeness of fit' between level of education and occupational status of first job has declined over time.(Heath and Cheung, 1998; Goux and Maurin, 1998). This however does not appear to be the case for Germany, Müller, Steinmann and Ell, 1998). In addition there is clear evidence that the correlation between educational level and occupational status varies significantly across countries – particularly for first jobs: apparently greater in the more educationally differentiated and more 'occupationalised' labour markets (Shavit, Müller, 1998).

Of course occupational categories, especially highly aggregated one, include a wide range of work and firm situations. As a result many workers who may appear (statistically) to be 'over-educated' for their jobs/occupations may in fact be jobs that do demand their level of education/training. However, most studies on the earnings of people in jobs in which there are 'over-qualified' indicate a much lower rate of return to increased educational credentials than in 'matched' jobs. See review by Groot et al, 1998 in the STT, TSER project; Cohn and Khan, 1995; van der Velden and van Smoorenburg, 1997).

These changes in employers' recruitment behaviour and in patterns of access to employment are proposed to have a number of significant economic and social effects:

- Increasing levels of 'qualification inflation' and of competition for low status occupations from the more highly qualified have increased the labour market exclusionary pressures on the least qualified; particularly in the context of a decreasing supply of unskilled and semiskilled manual and service occupations. (These effects however appear to be nationally and institutionally sensitive).

- Lowering of rates of return to more highly qualified labour markets entrants to intermediate/low status occupations in non goods-producing sectors.

- Potential lowering of upward – career and inter-firm – mobility chances amongst older and less poorly educated workers as the rate of increase of educational/training qualifications of the younger work-force disproportionately increases (Béduwé and Espinasse, 1997)[6].

Many studies of occupational/educational change and increasing 'overqualification' levels assume, however, that the same occupational titles/categories retain their content/meaning over time. However, a number of sociological studies of perceived skill requirements for jobs, both within and across occupations/industries, indicate that these assumptions may be invalid. (Ashton, Green et al., 1997). These studies have shown significant growth over time in required skill levels within occupations, both for occupational entry and to carry out work tasks: i.e. in skills/qualifications to get jobs, skills/qualifications necessary to carry out the work, extent of training needed to effectively carry out work tasks etc. (Gallie, 1991; Ashton, Green et al., 1997). With minor exceptions this growth in skill requirements, qualifications and training – and a set of social and other cross-curricular skills such as problem solving, communication and interpersonal skills, etc. – appeared to occur in a wide range of occupations, at least in Britain. Partly as a consequence of such change in skill requirements within occupations there was no evidence of increased levels of experienced/perceived 'overeducation' in jobs from the mid 1980s to the late 1990s – despite the clear evidence that most qualification growth in that period took place within occupations rather than in new occupational niches or in niches previously requiring higher levels of education/qualifications (Ashton, Green et al., 1997). These increases in skill requirements were experienced across most occupations/industries, with the exception of some industries in the non-exposed sectors.

Some of the comparative European research on this issue shows substantial inter-country variations in the linkages between educational level (and type) and occupational level or status achieved. British and French studies, for instance, show a significant decline over time in the correlation between level of education and the occupational standing or status of first job (Heath and Cheung, 1998; Goux and Maurin, 1998). German studies on the other hand not only show a substantially higher correlation between the occupational status of first and educational level achieved, but also show no evidence of any decline in returns to third level education –though a clear decline in returns to the completion of upper second level (Abitur) appears to have occurred (Müller, Steinmann and Ell, 1998). The institutional structure of education/work relationships in the German dual system countries not only appears to lead to much higher levels of correlation between the level and type of education achieved and the status and type of first job entered, it also appears not only to have led to much lower youth/adult unemployment ratios than in other systems but also to much less change over time – or economic cycles – in the returns to higher levels of education. (Konietzka and Solga, 1995; Müller et al. 1998; Shavit and Müller, 1998).

A significant number of TSER research projects directly address these issues of the relationship between growth in the level of skills and educational levels of the European workforce and concomitant occupational change[7].

[6] These and other recent studies of 'over-qualifications' and of competition between school/college leavers of different educational levels for the same occupational openings, repeat old themes from American research on the extent to which third level graduates take up 'high school' jobs. They also indicate however the necessity for fieldwork and research designs in studies of transitions to the labour market from third level education, for instance, to be based on samples of graduates from *both* third level and lower educational levels.

[7] The following is a list of the relevant TSER research project contract numbers together with the name of the main contractor, the title of the project and the years covered: 1. CT 95-2006; Steedman, 1997, LSE, London, 1996-1999, «*Education and Training, New Job Skills Needs and the Low Skilled*». 2. CT 97-2019, Hannan, ESRI, Dublin, 1997-2000, «*A Comparative Analysis of Transitions From Education to Work in Europe*». 3. CT 97-2023, Teichler, University Kassel, 1997-2000, «*Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe*».

The partially completed work of the network of European researchers – from the UK, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and France – working on the 'New Skills', TSER project (Steedman, 1997) includes analyses of:

a) the nature and extent of change in labour market demands in Europe,

b) the extent to which supply or provision of skills/competencies is changing to meet that demand.

c) Later work will explore the extent to which it is possible to specify a 'minimum learning platform' for EU countries.

Using LFS and IALS, individual level country data on occupations and wages etc., a series of 6 different across-country comparative research projects are carried out around three themes:

1) Changes in the demand for low skilled jobs (LFS), as well as other demand change in skill levels etc, particularly for new jobs/ hirings;

2) Changes in the supply of more highly educated/trained labour, and particularly changes in post-compulsory educational participation; and

3) Earnings inequalities.

Three aspects of the findings are of particular importance:

i) There has been a significant decline in low skilled jobs over time, though this is not apparent in new hirings (in the UK).

ii) New hirings/jobs tend to have declined in relative terms over time – though this ratio is highly sensitive to the business cycle – and to be of lower skill and job complexity levels. Since these 'new jobs' are disproportionately concentrated amongst young school/college leaver entrants to the labour market there appears to have been a relative decline in the quality of such entry jobs over time – or at least from the early 1980s to the mid 1990s. New job tenures, for instance, appear to be fewer than the US, and appear to have decreased in relative terms since the mid 1980s.

iii) In relative terms wage rates for new hirings amongst younger workers have declined; with 'wage drops' more severe. So greater inequality in earnings have opened up over time; and in general a growth in poorer quality entry level jobs – more part-time and more temporary and a greater extent to which both of these are involuntary (Steedman, 1997).

Given these changes in the nature of demand, particularly for young entrants to the labour market, how has the supply of different educational levels been changing? Again the work of the 'New Skills' TSER project is revealing (Murray and Steedman, 1997). The analyses of the European Labour Force Surveys shows that all countries show substantial growth in educational participation rates at upper second level and higher, but that there are significant inter-country differences: the UK and Portugal have significantly lower upper secondary and higher education completion rates in the 26-28 year old age group. In Germany, France and the Netherlands on the other hand both state policy and institutional provision has been geared to maximise at least upper second level education and training provision/participation.

But even within these three countries very different policies and institutional arrangements underlie these provisions. Apprenticeships and other occupationally specific vocational education/training, shared instruction/ training provision between employers and ET providers characterises the German dual system countries. An almost equally high degree of institutionalised agreement exists between both of these partners on both the content and quality of ET provision for a wide range of occupations in the Netherlands; though most education/training is provided in the full-time ET system. In both cases also a high degree of educational differentiation occurs at a very early stage in schooling – where students are allocated to different curricular tracks. Such occupationally specific education or vocational training assumes a high degree of concomitant 'occupationalisation' in the work place: of agreement amongst employers within industries of the division of labour and the broad content of different occupations etc. – as well,

of course, as the minimisation of 'free riders' in sharing training costs for the agreed set of occupations. In these training/employment contexts occupationally relevant 'qualifications', which are tradable across companies are the norm (Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre, 1986). France and Britain on the other hand show little if any educational differentiation at lower second level, and significantly less occupationally specific vocational training at upper second level – within the full time system. French policy and practice, however, is clearly geared to maximising upper second level, full-time education. Although with some vocationally relevant tracking at upper second level most vocationally relevant vocational training in France takes place within firms – with qualifications less tradable across firm boundaries. Britain, on the other hand, has geared a substantial proportion of post-compulsory educational and training policy toward both in-firm and other out-of-school provision for a substantial proportion of each youth cohort: though a much smaller proportion of this post-school and in-firm training appears to be tradable across company boundaries than in the German case. In all cases third level provision/participation has increased substantially over the past two decades.

Germany, the Netherlands and France have, therefore, clearly changed policy and ET provision and practice to a high skilled/educated young workforce, while other countries – like the UK and Portugal – have not to the same extent, with projections for 2020 showing these national differences continuing (Steedman, 1997; Steedman and Wagner 1987, 1989). Why do such national differences persist? Are they determined by governmental policy in terms of the provision/funding of places/institutions, or to what extent institutional or cultural – in choices made by families and pupils amongst the educational/occupational opportunities available? Obviously state policy, extent of resource provision, the extent and nature of alternative opportunities, but also the way parents and children react to or use the opportunities available, all affect outcomes. Such familial/pupil choices may be quite constrained as to whether one can freely go on to a comprehensively provided full-time education/training system to the completion of upper second level education: whether highly differentiated as in the Netherlands, or more comprehensively so in some Scandinavian countries, France or to a lesser extent in Ireland. In all these cases state policy and full-time educational provision is geared to maximise full-time participation to the end of upper second level education. Highly institutionalised apprenticeship training – in shared education/employer provision arrangements – characterises around half of German, Austrian and Danish upper second level provision. Britain's policy, although constraining full-time upper second level participation and optimising in-firm training and part-time education/training provision, does not result in equal rates of qualification from its education/training system as does Germany. Besides national institutional differences in such policy/provisions there are also very substantial differences in post-school, part-time provision: with the UK in general showing very high levels of such provision (Hannan, Raffe and Smyth, 1996; OECD, 1996; Kerchoff, 1995).

4. Conceptualising and measuring skills, 'skills gaps', changing skills requirements; and corresponding educational/training qualification levels

A large number of recent research studies, including ones financed by the TSER programme, deal with the conceptualisation, measurement and certification of knowledge/skill levels and types; and the way in which these are inserted into the labour market. Conventional schooling/training qualification/certification frameworks – mostly based on achievements in specific curricula/course assessments, have expanded to cover more general and more cross-curricular skills, less based on formal instructional/assessment processes. In addition the processes by which the skills/qualifications of those leaving full-time education/training and entering the labour market are matched up with subsequent jobs/occupations need to be studied in detail: from the purely 'open market matching' proc-

ess characteristic of most entrants to the labour market in most of the English speaking countries, to the quite closely linked or 'matched' education/training and job entry processes characteristic of the German dual system countries (CATEWE project proposal, TSER, 1997). In the former case job offers and employers (buyers) decisions amongst those looking/searching for jobs (sellers) is a relatively autonomous decision making process in which the task complexity, responsibility and 'difficulty' of the job is matched with the 'required' knowledge/skills and competencies of job seekers through a generally unequal bargaining process – particularly in periods of high unemployment. With the exception of a minority of apprenticeship positions and of professionalised occupations or those with high levels of technical skill, this 'at arms length' and open market model would generally hold for the majority of such initial 'job search' transactions in English speaking countries and to a lesser extent in France. Here the education/training systems are largely institutionally de-coupled from the employment/production system. This is quite different to the German dual system, or the high degree of institutionalised employer/provider agreements in the Netherlands which underlie the provision of specific educational/vocational training for a large proportion of occupational entry positions.

The main starting point in sociology to this kind of research was the seminal work by Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre (1986) which, in comparing the French and German education/training and labour market systems, distinguished the high 'qualification space' relevance of education/training qualifications in the German system – a high degree of occupationally specific education/training linked with an equivalent 'occupationalisation' of its labour market (an 'Occupational Labour Market'); and the low degree of such cross-firm occupational specification of work in the French system, combined with a high degree of in-firm training and a more substantial in-firm career structure – 'organisational space' within internal labour markets.

A substantial amount of research work within this tradition has been carried out on the extent and nature of 'matching' between both the level and content of education/training received in full-time education and the subsequent extent it was 'matched' to the job/occupation entered. The sociological research refers both to the extent to which the 'level' of education and the level/status/'difficulty' of occupation entered was correlated – the extent and nature of 'level congruence' between education/training and jobs/occupations, as well as the extent and nature of 'content congruence' between the content of education/training received and jobs subsequently taken up (Almendinger, 1989 and 1997; Schupp et al., 1994; Konietzka and Solga, 1995; Müller and Shavit, 1998; Hannan et al., 1998). The main cross-nationally applicable hypotheses guiding the research is the significance of linked ET and LM institutional arrangements: i.e. in maximising both types of 'matching' in the German 'dual system' countries and the Netherlands (Müller and Shavit, 1998; Müller, Steinmann and Ell,1998); and the relative dominance of 'level of education' in job entry and occupational selection in the more 'open labour market' economies with minimal 'occupational labour markets' (Hannan, Raffe and Smyth, 1996; CATEWE TSER proposal, 1997, and 6 monthly report, June, 1998). The significance of these national institutional distinctions is clearly evident, particularly in the German/British and German/American comparisons – with the correlation between both level and type of education and occupational status and type being much greater in the German case – particularly for first jobs. (Müller, Steinmann and Ell, 1998; Heath and Cheung, 1998).

These national institutional differences in ET systems and their linkages to the labour market obviously have other effects which have also been studied in some detail – though the quality of cross-national data sets to adequately test the relevant hypotheses is rather limited. There are important policy areas where this research is very relevant:

- That both 'content' and 'level congruence' rates are greater in those countries with more differentiated/selective ET systems with elaborated and linked labour markets. (Almendinger, 11989 and 1997; Müller and Shavit, 1998). The matching of ET qualifi-

cations with occupations is more efficient when institutionally mediated.

- That social class and gender inequalities in upper levels of educational achievement and in the quality of labour market opportunities are greater in more selective and differentiated systems. Early selection into different educational tracks, with their associated occupational outcomes, increases the overall degree of class and gender selection into upper levels of educational achievement. (Blossfeld and Shavit, 1993).
- However, this does not necessarily hold for educational and employment/social exclusion. Here the main hypothesis is that economic and social exclusionary processes – for those with lowest or no qualifications – are more severe in national systems were the educational systems are more general/comprehensive and labour markets are less occupationalised (Hannan et al., 1995; CATEWE proposal, 1997, and 6 monthly June report, 1998).

  This is hypothesised to occur for two reasons. Firstly in differentiated ET systems with strong vocational/technical options, early selection into such differentiated curricular tracks, although increasing the probability of working class children taking such options and consequently increasing class inequality at upper levels of educational achievement, does significantly increase the vocational qualifications and employment chances of such working class youth. In addition such vocationally relevant qualifications increase the chances of access to skilled occupations and secure job opportunities – significantly decreasing the probability of channelling into low skilled and insecure job sectors. (Arum and Shavit, 1995; Blossfeld, 1994; Shavit and Müller, 1998).

  Within general ET systems on the other hand, with low occupationally specific vocational training and minimal occupational labour markets, competition between job seekers with different levels of education for low skilled jobs is maximised – particularly at times of high youth unemployment. In the former countries the pronounced institutionalised connections between ET qualifications and occupational entry requirements significantly reduces competition from the more highly qualified for such low skilled jobs. The correlation, for instance, between level of education and occupational status of first job is much higher in Germany than in Britain or France. (Müller et al., 1998; Heath and Cheung, 1998). Although overall class and gender inequalities in educational/occupational achievement tend to be greater in the German system, the greater institutional strength of ET/Occupational equivalencies there tends to protect low skilled market entrants from competition from the more highly educated to a greater extent (Blossfeld, 1994; Arum and Shavit, 1995; Shavit and Müller, 1998).

Besides the issue of 'matching' educational outputs with labour market inputs the explicit study of skills and skills needs has been the subject of a lot of research (Green, Ashton et al., 1997). Two of the recently TSER funded research projects deal explicitly with this issue: 'COMPETE', *Competence Evaluation and Training for Europe: Assessing 'Skills Gaps'* led by the Tavistock Institute, London[8]; and NATCCC-PS, *New Assessment Tools for Cross-Curricular Competencies*, Federal Ministry for Education, Luxembourg, 1998[9].

The former study is about the processes of skills acquisition, of skill growth/up-skilling and technological change by firms. The way in which firms/organisations facilitate or constrain technological change, and up-skilling of the work-force is to be explored in depth. With an ageing workforce, around 80 percent of the work force in small firms, and most of these at least 10 years out of full-time education, but with a high percentage of firm technology now less than 10 years, old Europe faces a serious skills/training and competitiveness problem. 'Skills' in this sense is taken to mean not only the explicit knowledge and manual/technical/professional skills that can be taught through formal curricular/instructional programmes,

[8] Contract Number: ERB-SOE2-CT98-2038.

[9] Contract Number: ERB-SOE2-CT98-2042.

but also the often equally important implicit skills which are learned informally and that cross curricular/course and occupational boundaries. The returns to apprenticeship in Germany for instance, even in occupations for which not matched, suggest high returns to such cross-curricular and non occupationally specific in-firm learning. The issues of how to measure, accredit and certify such skills require attention (European Commission, 1995).

A rough categorisation of such general skills is proposed in the 'COMPETE', TSER project: basic or foundation skills, as well as learning models/orientations that lead to effective learning/re-learning; basic vocationally specific skills – such as basic literacy and numeracy; the effective use of modern information technology skills etc.; problem solving skills; complex social-technical skills – of how to work in the complex work environment – or skills in the application or operationalisation of knowledge in the workplace; plus a set of more general/implicit skills: – like social interaction and interpersonal relationship skills, personal resource management skills etc.

What are the likely effects of national/local ET institutional arrangements or national/local 'learning patrimonies' on both the effectiveness of learning of these skills and their integration into work life? These national instructional/learning systems reflect long historical processes which are sometimes very difficult to change. Besides the need for good comparative research and monitoring/evaluation of the outputs of the different EU educational and training systems[10] there is a clear need for further comparative research work on more general 'core skills' and cross-curricular competencies – such as the TSER project carried out under the co-ordination of Reef (Luxembourg) (ERB-SOE2 – CT98-2042).

Even in states with relatively de-coupled ET systems there tends to be strong reciprocal relationships between the educational/training systems and certain industries and firms – of skills growth and science/technology partnerships – particularly in industries subject to more rapid technological change as in chemicals, pharmaceuticals and computers etc.; less in the non competitive services where most small firms are located. However, there are clear national institutional differences in these respects, with much stronger ET and LM linkages in the dual system countries; particularly at the intermediate skills level. Obviously the way in which firms/industries divide up work into jobs/occupations, and how they define, assess, develop and use the 'skills' of their workforces will vary enormously. Some of variation is national – in the sense that the degree of cross-firm 'occupationalisation' of work will be greater in countries like Germany or the Netherlands – where there is also a high degree of occupational vocationalisation of education and training (Shavit and Müller, 1998).

The British vs. German, and Irish vs. Dutch and Danish studies on manufacturing industry and firm specific skills (Birnie and Hitchens, 1994; Steedman and Wagner, 1987 and 1989; Daly, Hitchens and Wagner, 1984) clearly indicate a much higher degree of manual skill precision and of supervisory/management skills in 'dual system' countries where both prior education/training and in-firm training is both more focused and more prolonged. However these studies cover a limited range of industries and firms. It appears that technological change can be built into training and retraining more easily and more formally in the dual system countries. On the other hand the dependence on higher levels of more general education in France, Ireland and to a lesser extent in Britain may mean a more flexible and more effective re-learning system in these firms – though the comparative data on in-firm training show much lower levels in both Ireland and Britain (OECD, EAG, 1995 to 1998; O'Connell, OECD, 1997).

[10] The European Network for educational research on Assessment, Effectiveness and Innovation (EU-AEI), in which all EU countries participate, has developed a framework on which all participants agree that the major areas in which monitoring of educational progress should be focussed. Initial statistics for most European countries are available on the Network's Web site. The final report of the network identifies three areas for urgent attention: a European instrument bank for educational indicators, development of measures of 'added value' in educational achievement, development and improvement of valid and culture fair tests of student achievement.

5. Education to work transitions

5.1 Conceptual and methodological approaches

Transition may be best considered at the individual, school leaver level as a configuration or sequence – without any implication of necessary order – of status changes over time through which young people move from participation in initial full-time education to a subsequent point at which they have achieved a stable status/position in the labour market – or have withdrawn permanently from participating in it. These status changes are not necessarily progressive or irreversible. One can, for instance, leave school at an early age, enter the labour market, become unemployed and again re-enter full-time education 5 to 10 years later.

The concept has its origins in the anthropological literature on 'status passages', or rites of passage, with previously dependent young people incorporated as independent adults into the tribe/community, usually through a highly ritualised ceremony. The older ideas presumed that both 'childhood' and 'adulthood' were unproblematic statuses which, in the more modern/industrialised cultures of the time, had a short intervening 'adolescent' period of revolt/growth before young people were successfully incorporated into adult society. The problem is that all these relatively stable 'stages' of being human obviously no longer exist in most industrialised cultures. Economies, cultures/ideologies keeps changing, what it is to be 'adult' keeps changing. School to work transitions, access to stable employment, sexual activity, courtship, living together arrangements, marriage and new household formation are no longer ordered/structured in the same way – or in the same order. (See Buck et al., 1994). The relationship of sexual activity and procreation to stable and institutionalised marriage relationships, for instance, is no longer structured in the same way; or the meanings, feelings and norms associated with these status changes are no longer socially constructed in such a consensual way as appeared to have been traditionally the case. Educational, cultural/normative and economic change – and even more substantial change in the relationship between the sexes – have so dramatically shifted the 'rules of the game', or the underlying principles of order, that these transition sequences have both become more individualised, and more variable than previously.

If one starts off from a position of a young person still in full-time education and we study only school-to-work transitions, at any one time subsequent to school/college leaving a person may be in any one of 5 broad statuses: initial job search, employed or unemployed, in full-time education, or left the labour force and not in full-time education. If we continue the sequence until the person has achieved a full-time 'permanent' job, or appears to have achieved another stable status (such as unemployment or withdrawal from the labour force), there can obviously be quite a wide range of status sequences – each status of varying length and order.

Figure 1 below briefly illustrates the possibilities with 3 years observation after full time education.

Statistical methods to analyse such transition sequences have become very sophisticated – from the older adaptations of factor and cluster analyses methods (to initially cluster/aggregate the total set of sequences into a smaller manageable group of categories), to 'event history models', to the newer optimal matching analyses models (Halpin and Chan, 1998).

At an individual level such variation in status sequences tends to be highly structured by level and type of education and training, with the more highly educated generally having shorter and more direct transitions to secure and status congruent employment (OECD, *Employment Outlook*, 1997, 1998). Exceptions being in Spain and other Mediterranean countries – though with long term high returns to the successful completion of university education (Sofer et al., TSER, TSS project[11]; Breen

[11] Contract number ERB-SOE2-CT95-2012.

Figure 1

(i) *Education – job search .... stable employment.....(end of period)*

(ii) Education- job search...part time job.....unemployed...training scheme .....employed.....unemployed.....(end of period)

(iii) Education – job search...unemployed..... employed.....unemployed.....back to education .....(end of period).

(iv) *Education – job search, including part time jobs.....unemployed..... withdrawal from the labour force.....(end of period)*

(..... = no. of months in status; See Iedema et al., 1997).

et al., 1998; Minguez, 1998). Access to employment after a (generally) short period of job search is the usual situation for the majority of school/College leavers – particularly for the better educated (though mainly in Northern European countries), and particularly in periods of low unemployment. Unstable employment interspersed with periods of unemployment and periods on government funded training/employment schemes is a normal situation for the unqualified. Return to education is least characteristic of the initially poorly qualified. Withdrawal from the labour force is most characteristic of poorly qualified females with poor labour market histories.

Accompanying, and highly interrelated with, these basically economic status changes are changes in other important statuses: movement out of home and migration, new household formation – including housing rental/ ownership status as well as in household property and consumption patterns, changes in sexual behaviour and relationships and in the establishment of stable unions or marriages and subsequent procreation behaviour, etc. Only a minority of studies have researched these patterns of change in detail (See British ESRC studies, Buck et al 1994; Iedema et al., 1997). There are significant national differences in these transition sequences – with such household formation changes sensitive to third level educational policy (in terms of expansion and so encouraging young people to leave home at an early age, for instance), but also to state family support policy – with young women for instance less likely to leave the labour force for family formation reasons in countries where family and child support policies help women to combine work and family and child-rearing roles (Iedema et al., 1997; Trappe, 1995; Trappe and Rosenfeld, 1998).

Theoretical developments have not kept pace in either economics or sociology with such methodological advances – at least not in the empirical literature. Underlying most of economic analyses in the area have been 'Human Capital' theories (Becker, 1973), which in the case of transitions essentially applies utilitarian neo-classical theory to explaining the motivations of learners – as to what and how much education/training they purchase, and the way in which the supply/demand relationship in the market between job-seekers and employers works out. Such theories are at two levels, the first being individual based and the second one at a more macro-economic level. They are not necessarily opposing – with the general lack of job vacancies (labour demand side factors), for instance, usually put forward well before individual skills and competencies (supply side factors) are put forward as causes of low job growth and high youth unemployment.

Sociological theories tend to be at a lower level of abstraction, quite applied to the research task at hand, with little even middle range

theorising – except at a higher (and usually non-operationalisable) level of abstraction. Many of the hypotheses flowing from the older functionalist modernisation theories have been rejected by the evidence, while many of the newer 'partial theories' – such as the 'increasing individualisation' hypotheses are not unambiguously supported by the evidence. (Furlong et al., 1997, 1998; Shavit and Müller, 1998; Iedema et al., 1997).

In its attempt to be universally generalisable human capital theories essentially ignore national differences in education/training institutions and in labour market institutional arrangements. The sociological literature has almost the opposite set of fault lines, tending even at its most sophisticated to be too focused on understanding and explaining national institutional differences, without successfully tackling the essential cross-country similarities in social patterns of education/training and labour market integration and in subsequent career mobility patterns (See Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Shavit and Müller (eds.), 1998).

The set of theories relying on individual approaches start from a strong differentiation between individual job seekers. This individual level heterogeneity is usually advanced as the main cause of varying levels of access to work in a full-employment economy, or to high levels of unemployment when economic crises occur. In the latter case, employers are facing an abundance of job seekers and they may hire whomever they wish according to observed/perceived productivity characteristics – using their standards/norms of jobs/qualifications matches. One may note three main consequences of this individual oriented point of view:

a) Because none of the solutions used in the various European labour market interventions have proved to be really effective in tackling unemployment, public policy has more often than not focused on the definition of high 'at risk' target groups. Applied economists and sociologists have thus shown great ingenuity and ability in developing tools to both identify and help test the effectiveness of interventions with these 'at risk' groups; using highly sophisticated statistical or econometric tools. Equally the improvement of research designs and data collection, with the greater availability of longitudinal data particularly, has characterised research activities.

b) The bias towards individual level research is somewhat misleading, however, in terms of overall public policy: giving the impression that, since research is mainly targeted at the individual level, the main cause of unemployment are individual characteristics – and that public interventions should, therefore, be individually oriented. Initial education, training, improved circulation of information on availability of jobs, improved job experience and job search skills etc., are all very relevant, of course, but the overall lack of jobs is given by macroeconomic conditions, and developing/changing individuals abilities merely shift the burden of unemployment around. Even if all young people were provided with adequate training and up-to-date skills, this would take quite some time to shift overall labour demand from the current situation to a full-employment one: even if such positive macro level employment effects were to occur.

c) The main rational economic reason for state intervention in giving young people access to such effective training or work experience – besides the equity arguments and the minimisation of the negative social effects of long term unemployment – is that, when economic growth resumes, countries may well need all the labour force available, given the downward youth labour supply curves in most EU countries. In other words, any response to unemployment based on correcting for an individual levels of heterogeneity of skill/competency – particularly for those with very low competency – although only initially leading to a re-shuffle of employment/unemployment, the policy does allow such otherwise excluded young people to learn more, to be more educated/trained and qualified and to have more work experience. As a consequence it does allow such young people not only to increase employment chances for

them – though at a minimum this may merely shuffle the available jobs around – and reduce unemployment but also increases their employment chances when economic growth resumes.

Thinking in terms of individual difference, one may note that there is no uncontested evidence of a segmented youth/adult labour market. While there is evidence of a disproportionate concentration of young workers in low skilled service employment in most though not all EU countries (OECD, Employment Outlook, 1997,1998), it is also obvious that most of them appear to be upwardly mobile out of such employment in subsequent years – though a significant proportion of such low skilled service jobs appear to be continuously 'churned' amongst succeeding cohorts of young people: with the consequent employment exclusionary effects on the least qualified as they continue to fight for non-skilled jobs with succeeding cohorts of job entrants with higher levels of education (Hannan, Raffe et al., 1998).

Two related, recent theoretical orientations in sociology (Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997; Goldthorpe, 1998) have suggested some useful guiding theoretical orientations. Both distinguish between structure and agency. Structural variables index both the pre-established or ascribed order of distribution of resources/ constraints of social background, schools attended and associated rule governed behaviours – or constraints on behaviour – that govern educational provision and its relationship to further education/training and labour market entry. In addition labour market opportunity structures tend to be structurally givens, particularly for young people who do not migrate. There are substantial international differences in both he nature and structure of educational-training systems and their relationships to local, regional and national employment systems. The Anglo-German comparisons are particularly revealing in these respects (see Bynner and Roberts (eds.),1991; Shavit and Müller,1998; CATEWE, TSER, project proposal and June 1998 report).

'Agency' refers to individual choices within the constraints (resources, opportunities) established. It is only within the constraints of local/regional educational, training provision and opportunity structures can individual behavioural strategies or individual/group 'strategic action' take place. The degrees of freedom which bound individual's or family's knowledgeable, planned, motivated action to achieve pre-planned goals – those 'transformation actions' which change otherwise apparently pre-determined outcomes – are severely constrained (Bynner and Roberts, op.cit.). The authors study of the extent to which such personal motivations/expectations, and planned actions to achieve these objectives revealed that they were only of an great significance for those going on to University and entering professional or higher technical/managerial positions. The relative significance of such 'transformation acts' was minimised for those entering most clerical, skilled manual and most lower skilled manual and service jobs. This study, however, refers only to Britain where, at that time, the proportions going on to complete upper second level education and going on to third level were rather low compared, for instance, to the much longer periods of extra-familial and extra communal (of origin) socialisation characteristic of the USA and of many other European countries. Here the degrees of freedom in access to other non-familial resources and other supports for non-traditional choices may be much more elaborated.

Using rational action theory, Breen and Goldthorpe (1997) and Goldthorpe (1998) suggest that individuals exercise of rational choice, utility maximising, behaviour can only occur within the constraints of the resource levels they possess, the alternative opportunities open to them at particular choice points – which again might be tightly institutionally constrained, and the costs of these different alternative courses of action. Ascribed class background factors determine the resources available. Macro level, institutional factors, for instance, may also tightly constrain or ration choices amongst alternative pathways within a highly differentiated education/training system even by age 11 or 12. The relative costs of these pathways and – and ability/resources to take them up – may again be tightly constrained by class differ-

ences amongst families. The Shavit and Blossfled (eds.,1993) studies clearly indicate substantial inter-country differences in class inequalities in educational achievement which appear to be highly correlated to these highly institutionalised national differences in ET systems.

At a macro, overall systems, level the relationship between education/training systems and labour markets is perhaps best thought of as a medium to long term secular and reciprocal one – in terms either of the supply/demand relationships, but also of the changing effect on firms behaviour and productivity of an increasingly more highly educated labour supply; as well as the consequent effects of such gradually cumulating level of human capital on firm productivity, behaviour and subsequent labour demand. The way in which employers/firms react to this increasingly more highly educated/trained labour force – and the apparent differences between different sectors and firms in this respect (Green, Ashton et al, 1997) – is a crucial aspect of economic and social research in terms of the productivity and competitiveness growth of European firms and industries.

5.2 State strategy

Relevant state strategy appears to vary widely – from countries where worries of 'oversupply' and attention to issues of more balance in supply and demand for differently educated labour – or the issue of 'adequatisme' in the French case ('adequatisme' refers to the idea that the ET system produces as many graduates as necessary for each level of qualification[12]). This indicates an underlying assumption of a relatively stable equilibrated state of supply/demand – where a system might well be producing too many more highly educated young school/college leavers in one area and too little in others. In other words, the number of graduates is given by the LM and the adequate provision is made by the ET system. This had been a strong assumption for over a decade in the '70s in may other countries. Research tends to show, however, that this view of 'adequatisme' ignores the way/extent to which enterprises train their own recruits: many of them hiring young people of good general educational levels and then giving them specific training, and continuing to re-train them over their life cycle in the firm. As a consequence, executive or responsibility positions are mostly filled through an internal process of acquiring skills and competencies and consequent promotions. Within such an 'internal labour market' perspective, 'adequatisme' appears too strong a term to describe the nature of demand and supply on the LM. Such views also ignore the extent to which firms/industries adapt to technological change and to a rapidly increasing level of education of their younger workers. Given the pace of technological and economic change, therefore, it makes more sense for states to plan (or to assume as necessary) for a current 'oversupply' of more educated school/College leavers – as judged by historical standards.

However, in at least one respect 'adequatisme' still makes a fair amount of sense: in training fields that are highly technical, where demand is relatively stable and where such training is very expensive – as in some highly professionalised areas where increased supply, for instance, merely increases overall costs without any evidence of increased competition leading to lower costs and where there is no apparent overall social benefit. In these areas it is obviously necessary to closely monitor, and control the demand/supply balances.

In other respects, however, many countries appear to have taken a strategic decision to constantly increase the supply of more highly educated youth – irrespective of current demand/supply imbalances. This most often appears to be done on the assumption that supply will, over time, change demand; and increasing education and potential productivity of new workers will, over time, significantly improve labour productivity – irrespective of immediate issues of 'overeducation'. However, there is a very clear shortage of com-

[12] Lower level leavers would become unskilled workers, intermediate vocational training leavers skilled workers, higher vocational leavers technicians and so on.

parative research work in this area – particularly in the context of the substantial institutional differences between national systems within the EU. The crucial role that firms play in converting that rapidly increasing human capital into increased productivity and increased levels of innovation and market competitiveness, as well as the way this interacts with national institutional variation needs to be studied in detail.

A number of TSER research projects deal directly with these issues, particularly

i) *Schooling, Training and Transitions (STT),* co-ordinated by C. Sofer, Univ of Orleans (contract number ERB-SOE2-CT95-2012);

ii) the CATEWE[13] research project; as well as some aspects of the NEWSKILLS, project (contract no. ERB-SOE-CT95-2006).

A summary of the results to the intermediate stage of the 3 year STT project on comparative economic research on European schooling and transition systems focused on three issues:

a) A meta-analyses of studies on 'overeducation'. This showed that the extent of overeducation in Europe was no higher than in the United States, and that its prevalence appear to have stabilised if not declined over time: a finding which appears to contradict other research reported here. It also noted that the rate of return to higher levels of education also appeared to have increased over time (Groot et al., 1998).

b) A second hypothesis explored was that higher educational investments (mostly state) would be positively associated with higher educational achievement levels and higher returns to education. Analyses of British data did not support either hypothesis – a not surprising results to sociologists, where such resource allocations, per se, have been shown by research since the 1960s not be associated with improved educational outcomes. The nature and effectiveness of the use of such resources appears to be the crucial variables, not the amount per se (see Mortimore et al., 1998).

c) The third controversial hypothesis – to institutional economists or sociologists – is that national institutional differences in ET systems and ET and LM relationships are irrelevant to educational outcomes, once resources are held constant; and that market forces not institutions determine educational outputs.

Another set of STT papers deals with school-to-work transitions. They are considered either as a discrete and sequential process of movement from one full-time status stage to another, or as a possible jointly occurring set of changes in statuses as persons move from full time education – with part-time work – to a joint work/employment-training status (in apprenticeship for instance) to, perhaps, finally into a full time job and part time education. One of the main questions explored is whether there is any additional advantages to such 'mixed statuses', such as part-time work while in full-time education or in more formalised apprenticeship type arrangements? The results of three studies are reported for France and the Netherlands. Results appear to indicate that for France those with pre-BAC educational qualifications, apprenticeship improves employment chances and job security over those with school level vocational education only – even though there is some negative selection amongst apprentices (Bonnal et al. 1999; Sollogoub and Ullrich, 1999). Apprentices appear, however, to have a higher probability of exiting from initial unemployment.

Youth unemployment rates in Spain are the highest in Europe and twice as high as adult in Spain, as they are also in France and, up to recently, in Ireland. However on initial entry to the labour market there appear to be comparatively low returns (in terms of employment chances particularly) to higher educational qualifications in Spain (OECD, EAG, 1996 to

[13] Comparative Analyses of Transition of Education to Work in Europe, (CATEWE), co-ordinated by ESRI, Dublin and directly involving 7 EU countries.

1998). In the long term, however there are substantial labour market returns in (both employment and occupational status and wages) to higher levels of education in Spain – but the period of transition for third level graduates seems extraordinarily long by other European standards, with the exception of Italy: almost one year to enter the labour market to first job and almost three years to first permanent job (Minguez, 1998; Jurado-Guerrero, 1997, see also Schizzerotto and Cobalti, 1998). The role of family/kinship status systems in maintaining and supporting children in 'holding out' for a higher status and more 'level matched' jobs appears to be much stronger in both Spain and Italy than in most other European countries (Schizzerotto et al., op.cit.).

In some respects the Italian labour market entry system behaves in a similar way to the German one – although for quite different institutional, and underlying cultural reasons. Access to many non-manual occupations depends on educational qualifications and is regulated by law. Contractual arrangements and labour legislation make for a high degree of labour market regulation and make it unrewarding to hire third level graduates for temporary and poorly paid work. And both sets of influences, combined with a high degree of status maintenance pressures at a family and local informal level, make for high levels of correspondence between educational status and occupational status achieved due both to expectational and informal pressures to maintain status levels as well for formal lab our market regulation reasons. Combined with apparently stronger family/kinship support levels – in the much higher rates of staying at home amongst 20 to 30 year old Italians, for instance – these institutional and status maintenance processes lead to much longer periods of initial job search and initial unemployment rates amongst third level graduates in Italy – as well as in Spain than in other European countries (Schizzerotto and Cobalti, 1998). Over time however the occupational and earning returns to University education in both countries appear particularly high.

The main objectives of the CATEWE, TSER project (1998-2000) are to study the mediating effects of national institutional differences on school to work transitions in northern and western EU countries – France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland and Sweden. Using both 'stock' (Labour Force Survey) and 'flow' (school leavers' surveys and follow up surveys) data sources the study's objectives are to analyse the mediating effects of national institutional factors on:

a) the extent and nature of 'matching' between educational/training qualifications (qualification type and level) and subsequent occupational/industrial locations;

b) the extent to which educational/employment exclusionary processes vary by institutional arrangements – particularly the way in which they are class and gender structured; and

c) the way in which social origin (class and gender) are mediated by institutional arrangements. The project is yet only at a data construction phase and initial results will not be available until mid 1999.

What appears clear from this short overview of research in this area is that it is mainly concentrated at the individual level of analyses and mostly focuses on the 'supply side': of individuals exiting educational/training systems and entering the labour market. There are very few studies of the 'demand side': the recruitment and promotion practices of firms, changes in their organisational arrangements, their utilisation of the constantly increasing level of human capital amongst young entrants to the labour market etc. Under what conditions (of industry and firm) does it lead to increasing labour productivity, to increased – or decreased – in-firm training and increased adaptability, flexibility and growing productivity of the work force?

6. Evaluation and effectiveness research

There is a long tradition of school/organisational effectiveness/evaluation research within sociology and social-psychology – at least back to the 1950s, perhaps at the earliest best typi-

fied by Coleman's (1966) famous study of the effects of schools on educational inequality in the United States. He effectively concluded that schools and the level of resources at teacher/school level had no mediating effect on educational achievement or reduction of educational inequalities – whether race, gender or social class. Later work, however, which focused specifically on school and teacher/instructional organisational processes, and the way in which and the effectiveness with which resources were used by schools, did find clear though modest school effectiveness outcomes on educational achievement as well as mediating social origin effects.

This tradition of research is well typified by the work of the European Network for Educational Research on Assessments, Effectiveness and Innovation (EU-AEI), funded by the TSER programme (contract ERB-SOE2-CT85-2001: 1996-1998). The EU-AEI network also focuses on European educational and school organisational monitoring, supporting cross-national comparative research on these issues and providing comparative data bases for their comparative analyses – both in terms of constructing 'bottom up' comparative surveys – from individual country studies, as well as encouraging 'top down' international empirical studies on in-school instructional/learning processes.

The Brandsma et al. project (TSER project, SOE2-CT95-2003, 1996-1998) is an analysis of the factors influencing the effectiveness of vocational training interventions for the long term unemployed in seven EU countries. A very sophisticated conceptual/theoretical model is used; including a lot of the necessary social background, organisational and curricular/instructional processual data, data on the interface with local employers and labour markets, and importantly the nature/quality of the relationship (guidance/counselling) of the training organisation (TO) to the individual trainee. The method is based on surveys of selected 'case study' TOs – including interviews with trainees, trainers, and employers etc. Preliminary results indicate some positive effects of very focussed guidance/counselling – toward developing competency in problem solving, handling interpersonal conflicts and work disciplines, and job search training situated near the point of market entry.

There is a large body of research work in both economics and sociology on the effectiveness of training and on the appropriate and effective methodology in cases where the trainees may be a highly selective group (Ryan, 1997). The unavailability of experimental approaches (particularly random assignment to the 'treated' and untreated group) toward evaluation in Europe, as compared to American studies, means that researchers have to be extremely careful and cautious in assessing the effectiveness of training programmes (Ryan op cit.; O'Connell and McGinnity, 1997). However, the research on this issue is much less sophisticated, both conceptually and methodologically than the research on school effectiveness – with equal pupil/school selectivity problems. More of the work also has been put into developing sophisticated statistical models – to try and take care of both selectivity biases and unobserved variables for instance – and much less attention to the effects of curricula, instructional arrangements and pedagogy, learning reward systems etc. as well as the quality of provision/instruction (see O'Connell and McGinnitty for review).

Related to – and indeed included within – this type of research is that focusing both on the nature, effects and effectiveness of the different ways in which pupil achievement within courses of study are assessed and certified; as well as the nature, manner and effectiveness with which schools and Colleges themselves are assessed. EVALUE (ERB-SOE2-CT 95-2004; 95-98) is a French led TSER study of the nature/patterns, effectiveness, and effects of new ways of evaluating Universities in 8 European countries and in five aspects of their operation – evaluation of their instructional/learning systems, of research output, of teachers/instructors, of university organisation itself, and of college/university and employer/industry relationships.

Universities have radically changed their functions as they shifted from elite to mass educational providers. They have become much larger and much more complex in their

objectives and their organisation. Such increasing complexity of function and structure has been allied to substantial changes in their relationships to the state – as the main funder/developer, to the older professional, academic and scientific communities, but mainly to employer and market forces. As the proportion of their graduates having privileged access to the professions and public employment declined, for example, and as their potential significance as centres of new knowledge/skills generation grew as well as potential development centres for their localities/regions – at least in public debate – so difficulties in managing these often contradictory roles also grew. The necessity to maintain academic autonomy while at the same time having to adjust to substantially greater state and market pressures created great difficulties for universities. The way in which this pressure is managed, while maintaining standards, is one of the main aims of the EVALUE research.

The university – employer/industry relationship is one of the main topics of the research (pp. 85-98 of final report, 1998), and is more developed in two 'ideal types' of universities identified – in universities (or other equivalent technological colleges) specialising in applied science, business studies and educational studies and ones established with a strong economic/employment development logic. The employment/occupational integration of graduates of such colleges – and the role and responsibility of university authorities and lecturers to maximums such employment possibilities – appears to be highly variable; even to the extent to which the latter take such responsibilities seriously. The more traditional 'elite' universities, of a more academic character, are much less concerned with such employment outcomes.

The university/regional relationship is also studied in the EVALUE project. The project studies the complex relationships between third level colleges, established specifically for regional development purposes, and local/regional authorities and employers – in terms both of the expectations and support of the latter for such colleges, as well as the reciprocal expectations and behaviour of college authorities and lecturers etc. – and the strength and effectiveness of the partnership between the colleges and local/regional communities. The expected potential of such new colleges for regional development needs to be studied in detail – in terms of increasing local human capital resources, of decreased outmigration, the potential contribution of such increasing human capital to regional productivity growth – as well of course as the direct local returns to the increased employment created by the presence of the college itself. Some of the British and Irish studies in this area, however, are at best neutral in their conclusions about such local/regional returns to such educational investments.

The DELILAH TSER project (ERB-SOE2-CT95-2002) on *Designing and Evaluation of Learning Innovations* had three main objectives: develop a new conceptual/methodological approach to innovations in ET – particularly the idea of 'learning patrimonies'; carry out case studies in four ET sectors in Germany and Britain; and draw out the implications and policy conclusions.

The qualitative research indicated both the difficulties and different dynamics of change and innovation in the different institutional systems. First is the relationship of the state to schools – in, for instance, the increase in school autonomy that has occurred in some systems (such as the British), making them more responsive to both state (in effectiveness audits) and market pressures. At the same time increasing managerial control within the school reduces the autonomy of the professional role of teachers, creating countervailing pressures.

The study raises some important questions about the main purposes of education, particularly the potential negative effects of increasing instrumentalism and financial pressures on schools in a situation where the significance of familial socialisation is declining; and the ideational, identificational, normative and general socio-cultural roles of schools have probably become more significant. As other institutions like the family and community systems realign and decline in relative significance the effect of increased

instrumentalism on overall socialisation/ school effectiveness needs to be studied in detail.

Although the evidence appears somewhat thin and not sensitive to varying institutional contexts this research does have some important messages, if not clear conclusions:

- The demand for increased educational levels has increased faster than the school system can effectively adapt. As a result, as those who previously could get unskilled jobs with no/poor qualifications declined substantially, schools did not adapt fast enough or effectively enough to cope with this problem. Most interventions with this educationally deprived group have occurred at a post-school level. The serious dangers in focusing interventions on such post-school interventions, usually in non-formal and temporarily organised arrangements, mostly dependent on year to year precarious funding, has become obvious in most EU countries where this occurred. More fundamental in-school innovations appear necessary – at pre-school, early in-school, and early second level school levels in order to reduce the incidence of in-school failure, which although relatively small in percentage terms (less than 10 percent in most systems), appears to have equally serious labour market integration effects on the lowest qualified in most systems. (Smyth et al.,1998; Martin and Raffe, 1998; Becker and Rutjes, 1998; Recotillet and Werquin 1998, final Leonardo, VTLMT, report, 1998).

- Overemphasis on instrumentalism, and market readiness, not paying sufficient attention to general education or the particular personal/social development needs of educationally and socially damaged adolescents.

- The new political economy of schooling may very well lead to increasing class inequalities as funding arrangements change in some systems to be more school competitive and market sensitive (as in the UK), and such modern technological aids as IT and self learning etc. become increasingly important in schools without compensating resource allocation – with the middle class more likely to gain advantages.

7. Class and gender inequalities and social exclusion

The major secular shifts in economic structure in western industrialised countries over the past 20 to 30 years have led to substantial changes in occupational/class structures – particularly a decline in lower working class (particularly unskilled manual) positions, and substantial growth in middle and upper/middle class positions. This change in the nature of flow of children out of families into schools, combined with equally rapid changes in the structure and costs of schooling – with free education gradually being extended in most cases up to the end of upper second level, with substantial growth also in the importance of education in occupational allocation and promotion was all expected to have significantly reduced class origin inequalities and greater equality of opportunity in levels of education achieved (Boudon, 1974). Yet most of the international research on this issue indicates that despite substantial growth in average levels of education, and of greater relative growth in participation by children from working class origins at the lower levels of achievement in most countries, there is little evidence of overall decline in class inequalities in educational achievement levels – particularly at upper second level and at third level (Blossfeld and Shavit, 1993). Raftery and Hout (1993) proposed a radical hypothesis to explain this phenomenon – that inequality in educational opportunity is *maximally maintained* – with effects of social origin at all levels of education maintained to the point where the participation of advantaged groups is maximised and further expansion in participation can only come from those with lower working class origins. At this point the more advantaged groups push for further expansion of ever higher levels of education in order to maintain their advantage. So many international studies show positive effects of educational expansion at lower levels of education on equality of opportunity, but little change in class inequality at higher levels.

Little consistent change over time in class inequalities in educational achievement in most countries – with some notable exceptions such as Sweden and the Netherlands. In both cases, this decline appeared to be due more to an equalisation of life conditions between the different social classes than to any educational policy changes (Blossfeld and Shavit, 1993; Erikson and Johnson, 1996). In most countries, therefore, where social selection was most severe at the beginning of the educational career, the point of selection has been pushed further up the educational ladder.

Gender differences in educational achievement on the other hand show a much greater equalisation over time – with in some cases, the gender gap being reversed, with girls doing better particularly those from working class origins. Gender differences also appear to be greater in more differentiated systems at lower or upper secondary level – as in Germany and UK, whereas in France, Sweden, Portugal and Ireland it is the other way around (Freysson, 1996); mainly it appears because of the dominance of general educational models in the latter countries.

One of the main hypotheses of the CATEWE project (TSER, CT-97-2019, 1997-2000) relates not so much to overall class inequality effects on educational achievement, but on the effects of national institutional ET differences on educational/employment exclusion processes. The hypothesis is that such educational and labour market exclusionary processes are both more severe and more class origin biased in countries with less selective and less differentiated systems – Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Britain and France; or that it will be less severe in selective/differentiated systems as in the Netherlands and Germany, despite their greater class differentiating effects in overall educational achievement. In the latter cases early differentiation into selective educational/vocational tracks are closely linked to accessing segmented labour market outlets, segments/occupations with significantly lower levels of competition from the more highly educated. This is suggested to be particularly true for non-skilled manual/service occupational positions. The expected effects of this would be to leave more uncontested 'room' in the labour market for poorly educated youth, with the consequent effect of higher employment expectations motivating in-school learning. Shavit et al. (1993), for instance, find positive effects of vocational tracks on access to skilled occupational outlets and avoidance of low skilled and insecure employment.

Initial results, however, from a related Leonardo-da-Vinci project (VTLMT, DGXXII, 1996-98; Final Report, Dec. 1998; Martin and Raffe, 1998; Smyth et al. 1998; Becker and Rutjes 1998; Recotillet and Werquin, 1998) indicate ambiguous support only for the initial hypothesis on exclusionary effects – with the most poorly qualified in the Netherlands suffering almost equally high levels of employment exclusion as in Scotland, France and Ireland. However in other respects the results support the conclusions on the positive effects of vocational/technical qualifications on employment chances, but also indicated the almost equal importance of 'passing grades' in lower second level examinations in accessing the labour market. Access to apprenticeships, however, tend to be negatively selective in the Netherlands and France while it is positive in Ireland and Scotland (Smyth et al., 1998).

There are also quite substantial country differences in occupational allocation amongst these 4 countries – with a much higher proportion of lower second level leavers in non-manual jobs in Scotland (who have 'passed' their lower level examinations – at 16) than in the other countries. These latter differences appear not only to be due to national differences in the availability of such jobs to school leavers in general – a function of both the economic cycle and the extent to which public expenditure funds such occupations, but also the relative proportion of all school/College leavers entering the labour market who only have lower second level qualifications. This tends to be much higher in Scotland (Smyth and Surridge, 1995 and 1997). But in the latter case a much higher proportion of such early leavers are in alternative learning routes – apprenticeships, Youth Training and other full and part-time educational courses outside the conventional school system. The Scottish and British system then maximises out-of-school education and training for the

post compulsory years whereas the French, Dutch and Irish systems maximise full-time educational attendance up to the end of upper second level education (Martin and Raffe, 1998). Whether the increased level of education and postponement of labour market entry – as in the latter countries – has the moderating effects on class and gender inequalities in educational achievement and labour market success, as has been proposed and found in other research (Blossfeld and Shavit,1993; Shavit and Müller,1998) has to await further research.

Such lower level leaving is highly gendered and class differentiated in all countries: predominantly male, and predominantly from lower working class or unemployed family backgrounds, with parents having lower levels of education. Even given the large institutional differences between, for instance, the highly vocationally differentiated Dutch system and the more general educationally based and undifferentiated Irish one, it appears that the extent and nature of social class selectivity of successful educational progression in both countries appears remarkably similar; though paradoxically gender differentiation (positively) and class selectivity (negatively) factors appear more pronounced in Ireland. This would accord with our hypothesis – though the statistical significance of these inter-country differences has not yet been tested (Martin and Raffe, 1998).

Lindblad et al. TSER reseach proposal (SOE2-CT97-2028,1997/8 – 2000) main proposition is that increased economic/political pressure on schools/universities, and increased 'marketisation' of resource allocation, evaluation etc. significantly change the organisational characteristics of the school/College away from its public service functions/practices as a 'rule governed' to a market led system. As a result this makes it more difficult for the school/college to meet its new targets/objectives on reducing social exclusion. This will be investigated in 8 countries. Their method is to review the research literature, carry out comparative analyses through individual country 'case studies' of governance structures of schools/colleges – including 'discourse analyses' of existing policy etc. papers. Evaluations of national experiences with new governance structures, and research on national data/studies of social exclusion and class inequalities is also to be carried out. Implications of governance changes for social class inequalities and evaluations of new programmes of intervention targeted to improve the situation are to be carried out. This study in nine or ten countries appears to be inductively based, generalising from comparative national case studies of what interventions work or do not work in different contexts.

The ways in which, and the organisational effectiveness with which, schools/colleges are organised and managed do have significant impacts on student outcomes. (Mortimore et al.,1998; Smyth, 1999). It may well be that modern state led concerns about school management effectiveness and changes in their operating and governing arrangements toward 'market led' rather than 'rule governed' behaviour would have significant negative impacts as hypothesised here. Certainly the original British 'market led' arrangements for publishing crude examination results by individual school and the use of state vouchers in purchasing school places – expected to increase inter-school competition and overall school effectiveness by improving families/pupils choices between 'effective' and 'ineffective' schools – would neither have positive system effectiveness outcomes and would certainly increase class inequalities.

Nevertheless as third level educational participation becomes more 'universal' substantial changes are required in the way the originally elite and autonomous universities are run – and in many European countries the rallying cry of negative 'marketisation' appears far too self interested; with new instruments to ensure effective responsiveness to economic and societal needs badly required.

8. Conclusions and issues to address in the next TSER programme

There are four main themes in the "Improving Human Potential" part of the Fifth Framework Programme (1999-2002):

(i) Societal Trends and Structural Changes;

(ii) Technology, Society and Employment;

(iii) Governance and Citizenship;

(iv) New Development Models Fostering Growth and Employment.[14]

Three of these are clearly related to our theme – (i), (ii) and (iv).

The issues of school to work transitions, labour market integration, human capital 'creation' in education and training systems and its effective integration into the economy, variations across EU regions in their ET and LM institutional arrangements and their differential effects on labour market integration etc. fit clearly within these themes but need to be spelled out and applied to the new Vth Framework Programme. There appear to be at least five broad areas where high quality comparative economic and social research is urgently needed and would fit within the broad remit of the Vth FP:

a) Since the relationships between rapid technological change, education/training provision changes and economic/occupational changes are very complex – and not readily 'read off' from technological change – there is an urgent need for high quality comparative European research on these issues. There are wide national, industrial and between-firm differences in how, and how well, workers with higher levels of education/training and new technology are inserted or used within firms/industries. The way in which both technical and educational changes are related to firm/industry strategies of adaptation to rapid market changes should be a priority in future research. Current research on these issue has to depend too often on inferring such firm/industrial behaviour and strategies from data on individual workers' labour market histories.

b) The issue of new development models and economic/employment growth – a main theme of the new research Programme – needs to be explored in depth on a comparative national basis across the EU. The wide national institutional differences in ET systems, their varying labour market integration processes and the extent/nature of their open-ness to life long learning processes, suggest substantial national differences in economic and employment growth models. There are large national differences in, for instance, the extent and nature of provision for life long learning systems, and in the way they are integrated with employment/work systems. These national differences are likely to be strongly related to both the participation rate and the effects of life long learning opportunities: with some national systems being highly 'user friendly' over the life course, highly integrated with both work life and careers. Other ET systems appear inflexible and unrelated to life long individual career and firm/industry re-skillling and up-skilling needs. The issue of 'life long learning', of its linkages to in-firm training and to the institutional flexibility of educational providers and qualification frameworks – to effectively optimise such 're-learning' occurring over the life cycle, though such a dominating theme in EU policy documents, has received little comparative European attention; though significant cross-national differences do exist in the extent to which it occurs.

c) Equally comparative research at a firm and industrial level on the human resource management of increasing levels of education/training amongst young work forces is urgently needed. Given rapid market and technical change the extent and nature of adaptations by firms and industries needs as much study as has been given to the behaviour of individuals in their transitions from school to work.

d) Equality of opportunity in education, occupational achievement and earnings – by gender, social class of origin, ethnic group etc. – as well as the equally important issue of educational and labour market exclusion appears to be quite sensitive to both

[14] EU Council Decision adopting a specific programme of research, technological development and demonstration on 'Improving the human research potential and socio-economic knowledge base. OJ. C506/99, 13.01.1999.

economic/technological change as well as the way in which the national ET systems for initial and continuing re-education/ training effectively provide opportunities. Again single national models appear unlikely to be generalisable to the whole Community – given the deeply rooted institutional differences involved. Besides the obvious injustice of high levels of inequality and its obvious negative social effects, the systemic and often deeply institutionalised nature of the under-utilisation of human capital involved – particularly amongst the most educationally/economically excluded – appears glaringly inefficient in both economic and social terms. The need for good quality comparative research on this issue appears obvious.

e) Comparative European Data: Besides the Eurostat data bases (particularly the Labour Force Surveys and Community Household Panel surveys) there are very limited comparative European data bases available on some of the most important education, training and labour market integration policy research issues that affect the European Community. Compared to the United States, for instance, or to a majority of EU states, there are no comparative surveys or data bases on longitudinal (flow statistics) on educational/training processes and outcomes and education to work transitions, no comparative data on life long learning processes – or adaptation of firms/industries to rapid technological and human capital changes etc. Improvements in Eurostat surveys – including the new, year 2000 transition module on transitions – will be some help in correcting for this deficit, but in a very limited way. In addition there appear to be far more serious constraints in making such (suitably anonymised) Eurostat data sets available to the research community than is true of most individual countries within the EU. These issues will be discussed in more detail below.

8.1 Educational level and labour market success

Although variable cross-nationally there is generally a close relationship between level of education, employment chances and evel of occupation (status or quality) achieved; i.e. a moderate to high level of 'level congruence'. However there is a substantial (though varying) degree of overlap within educational levels of occupational statuses achieved in all systems; i.e. of 'overqualification' of workers within occupations or 'under-utilisation' of education/skills by employers, varying considerably cross-nationally. (see Shavit and Müller, 1998; Borghans, Hughes and Smits, 1998). The degree of occupational 'overlap' between different educational levels, or the degree of labour market competition between them, obviously reflects national institutional differences, cyclical employment rates as well as life cycle factors – being greater in periods of high unemployment and at initial stages in the labour market. The varying nature of such 'overlaps' and their effects on labour market flexibility, labour productivity and turnover, employment exclusionary processes etc. all need to be studied in more detail.

Further cross-national study is also needed on the extent to which the content/level/difficulty of 'within-occupational/industry' categories remains the same over time or, as Green et al. (1997) study indicates for Britain, or the extent to which technical change/upgrading also occurs within occupations; or the extent to which occupational boundaries remain impermeable. In addition the extent and nature of productivity growth and organisational and technological 'response effectiveness' of firms/industries to the constantly improving quality of labour market entrants, needs detailed study. The 'under-utilisation' of skills by firms/industries needs as much attention as the 'overqualification' of young workers.

8.2 The content of education/training and occupational/job congruity

The issue of 'content congruence' (Almendinger, 1989 and 1997) has not received much comparative research in the EU. This may be a more relevant question in some countries such as Germany and the Netherlands or other countries with extensive occupational labour markets. To measure the nature and extent of the linkage between the content of what young people learn in initial education/

training and what knowledge/skills they actually use at work has usually been studied by linking field of study to the nature of the work/occupation taken up – either where institutionalised linkages exist as in apprenticeships, professional/technical occupations or otherwise where the educational/occupational connection can easily be estimated. More subjective approaches have also been used – by asking individuals in specific jobs/occupations to what extent they use their ET gained knowledge/skills in their work etc. However, in neither case is the research methodology without fault – with little cross-national comparability. In addition it is clear that a lot of occupationally relevant learning is implicit and unmeasured by educational/training qualifications – e.g. the significant advantages of apprentices in some cases in the labour market even in areas in which they have not been trained. The nature and significance of such non-formal and currently non-certified learning at home, in school and at work is recognised in some current cross national projects both in terms of content and learning style and motivation (Reef, Coord. of TSER project on cross-curricular competencies CT98-2042); with some evidence that some aspects of learning style – particularly the conformist and reproduction oriented style – may be functional for educational achievement in some settings but dysfunctional for subsequent labour market success. (Semeijn, van der Velden et al., 1997; Semeijn and van der Velden, 1998).

To over-value a narrow concept of 'content congruence', therefore, would be unwise: while initially functional for the overall system it may well have serious negative consequences for individuals' career mobility and, if education and training is too narrow, also limit infirm re-training and firm adaptability.

Additionally the discrepancy between the education/training provision of a national system and the needs of the productive system can be estimated (Kirsch and Werquin, 1995): the French idea of 'adequatisme'. Because many French firms recruit young people at a given level and then train them within the firm – paying attention to the general educational level on appointment – the older 'manpower planning' idea of 'adequatisme' does not work. The most recent and relevant issue about 'adequatisme' is about what other, often implicit and informal, things young people learn while in school and what they use at work. The example of the German car producer which recruited most of the apprentice/trainee bakers in the region indicates that while the training system was not efficient in terms of field of vocational preparation it was obviously effective in other respects that were very relevant to car makers (for example work disciplines and shift/night working etc.). The informal/implicit learning of work relevant skills that are transferable to other occupational/industrial settings needs much more research.

Another example comes from Kirsch and Werquin (1995). They have shown than in France, most young people exiting the training system at the BEP level – first vocational level – did not use their specific skills and competencies in the first jobs they got, when/if they got one. Even taking subsequent occupational mobility into consideration they are not generally mobile into jobs directly connected with their first vocational preparation subjects. There is need for further comparative research of the nature of both the explicit (certified) and implicit training/education provision/socialisation provided by the ET system, and the interpretation/use made of it by the employer/productive system.

Informal transferable skills – or personal and interpersonal skills which are the result of non-formal learning experiences both in the formal schooling setting as well as in related interpersonal socialisation, which are not measured and certified by schools, and which may therefore be less institution and country specific than formal schooling outcomes, is now the subject of a lot of research (e.g. OECDs, new PISA programme; COST Action AII etc.; Reef et al., TSER project,1998).

8.3 Youth schemes, evaluation and selectivity biases

One of the most relevant aspects of youth schemes is their function in handling the increasing duration of job search and higher

rates of unemployment between the end of initial education/training and the first permanent job. As young people's status in the labour market dis-improved most States strongly intervened with various types of training/employment schemes. Many evaluation studies of the effectiveness of these schemes have taken place at the national and EU level (see Brandsma et al., TSER project CT95-2003,1995-1998). The issue of selection bias in that evaluation is critical. Most such youth schemes are designed to ease transition from school to work for those with poorest qualifications and those least likely to be perceived as productive within an enterprise. Of course recruitment and progression within such schemes may be selective on both measured an unmeasured (usually social-psychological) variables. And since firm recruitment from such schemes is highly selective even amongst those employers think are the 'better' amongst applicants, selectivity bias may be quite high. In theory training schemes are designed to help young people who need further education/training. In practice, even if there is no selection by such schemes, employers selection may only take those who otherwise would have got the job anyway – the scheme has high 'deadweight'. Ways both to measure and control for these selectivity biases have been developed, but their applicability and validity need much more development and evaluation in comparative cross-national work.

There is therefore an urgent need for effective comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of these schemes in different EU countries (Grubb and Ryan, 1997). Heckman and Smith's (1995) dictum that 'The fundamental evaluation problem arises from the the impossibility of observing what would happen to a given person in both the state where s/he receives a treatment and the state where s/he does not. If a person could be observed in both states, the impact of the treatment could be calculated by comparing his or her outcomes in the two states, and the evaluation problem could be solved'. Given that participants are not observed in both states, a large literature has been developed to help control of the consequent selectivity biases. The use of experimental methods (in the random assignment of participants to treatment and control groups, for instance) to control for such biases has been very limited in Europe.

However before proceeding to such experimental methods it might be more advantageous to increase the conceptual, measurement and analytical sophistication of the evaluation research in this area to that characteristic of the older tradition of related research in 'school effectiveness' – paying much more attention to the nature of the curriculum and pedagogy, course organisational characteristics – including sensitivity to the often quite different social psychological characteristics and needs of the lesser qualified youth that take up such training courses. There is a need to get beyond the question 'do these programmes work' to the question of what kinds of programmes work with what kind of 'clients' – curricula, pedagogy – including the quality and relevance of both, the nature and quality of linkages to firms/employers and real work situations (see O'Connell and McGinnity, 1997; Ryan, 1998; Brandsma, Coord. TSER project CT95-2004).

Cost-benefit analysis has become the dominant mode of evaluation in the United States. This method has some limitations, however: arbitrary shadow pricing for valuing many costs and benefits, inadequate duration of measurement of outcomes, relative neglect of the variance of outcomes and the underlying reasons for these and so on. It tends to neglect, for instance many of the social, social psychological and even educational outcomes of interventions in focussing only on labour market outcomes. And it overemphasises the efficiency criterion, and often under-emphasises the equity/egalitarian criterion – a much greater priority in most European studies.

Besides the effectiveness and costs/benefits of such schemes little comparative work has been done on the institutional, organisational and curricular-pedagogical characteristics (including the content effectiveness) of these schemes (but see Brandsma et al., TSER, SOE2-CT952003). The relationship of such post-school schemes to initial education, the extent to which they are designed to correct for initial educational failure – and whether

the original system remains unchanged, the extent to which the organisations delivering such schemes are linked to the ET system – providing pathways back to it or in co-operation with it, and the extent to which linked in with employer and labour market systems. Since policy on state/EU interventions on transitions from school to working life are political imperatives in most countries, but such interventions cannot rely on solid, comprehensive and efficient theoretical or conceptual models – or a solid research base, the filling of this theoretical and research lacuna should be a priority issue for future research.

Besides the transition between education/training and the labour market, as well as transitions from and into unemployment, there are many other important transition issues that need investigation: returns (occupational/earnings) to different types and levels of education/training, migration and job search, movement out of the labour market and its relationship to new household formation – particularly for poorly educated young women, housing changes, changes in living together and marriage arrangements and so on. Studies of labour force withdrawal of young women, for instance, appears to take place in some countries only after a significant period of initial employment difficulty (Hannan and O Riain, 1993), but in other countries entry to the labour force itself upon completing education – particularly amongst females with low levels of education – appears to be much more problematic (Canada Vicinay et al., STT Working Paper 07-98, 1998).

8.4 Earnings

Most of the research being done in the field of school-to-work transitions has been focussed on the probability of getting a job. Given the high unemployment rate across Europe this is not surprising. Job search is important not only in terms of its length and difficulty but also in terms of the quality of the match between school leaver and job – whether in terms of 'content and level congruence', the extent to which it is a marginal job, its occupational status and subsequent career mobility chances, wages and wage growth etc. (Atkinson and Micklewright, 1991).

Wages also need to be studied in greater detail for other important reasons: The issue of minimum wages and of minimum wage legislation, unemployment benefit, wages on state programmes etc. The issue of the relative effectiveness of different active labour market programmes and the role played in labour market demand for young and older workers in a situation of overall low demand needs also be studied in more detail.

Finally wages have to do with the cost of labour which is often decried as too expensive as far as the low qualified labour force is concerned. The issue to address here is clearly whether Europe should lower the wage of poorly qualified young people or increase their skills through training, and what effect either policy would have on overall economic effectiveness. In addition the extent to which similar policies have similar effects in different national/institutional contexts also needs to be studied in detail.

8.5 Data issues

One of the main issues that arise in testing cross-national hypotheses is research/data quality. Usually the phenomena being dealt with are very complex and linked in complex ways to several origin, process and outcome variables: initial 'ability' and family background variables, ethnicity and gender; differences in the nature of educational/training programmes and processes and outcomes; differences in labour market history as well as opportunity characteristics; and personal outcome differences in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics. Given this complexity and the different national systems within the EU it is difficult to answer many important research and policy questions with existing data sets. The following data questions appear very important for future research work:

- While obviously rational to build on existing data sources at an EU level (such as the Labour Force Surveys –LFS- and the European Community Household Panel Survey), as well as on relatively comparable national data sources such as the follow-up school/College leavers' surveys –

carried out in six countries, the weakness of EU data sources on educational/labour-market relationships compared to that of our main competitors such as the USA needs to be corrected. Even where cross-national databases exist crucial variables are often 'missing' and comparative measurement difficulties arise where systems vary widely.

- Most of the current TSER quantitative research, for instance, is based on existing national and international data bases. There are some exceptions, such as the study of graduate employment in Europe (CT2023, 1997/8-2000). All of the evidence suggests the necessity to build comparative European data bases on the central policy/research issues involved; rather like those already existing in the Europanel and LFS household income/expenditure data bases.

- The significant improvements planned in the coverage and comparability of the Eurostat LFS data base, and particularly the additional information on transitions planned to be available from the 2000 LFS, potentially means that a lot of new comparative research work can be carried out; provided of course that 'public use' files, at the individual level, are made available to the research community as already happens in most of the EU countries. The development of more liberal Eurostat access regulations, such as those governing researchers access to such data sets at national level in most EU countries, is an important research and policy analysis priority.

- Besides the 'stock data' available from the LFS, good comparative 'flow data' on school/college to work transitions over the first 1 to 5 years or so in the labour market are urgently needed. These could be based initially on the current school leavers' surveys carried out in six EU countries (CATEWE, TSER project, CT97-2019), as well as the TSER funded third level leavers, follow-up surveys in 12 countries (Teichler et al, TSER contract CT-2023). However in the former case these studies cover a small set of countries and vary significantly from each other in sample definitions and variable coverage etc., though sufficient similarity exists to yield rich comparative sources of information on transitions. (Final Leonardo VTLMT report, Dec. 1998 available as an ESRI Working Paper, Dublin). One data strategy would be to improve the comparability of these surveys and increase their country coverage. The alternative, however, of 'top down' surveys either based on the planned, year 2000, Eurostat LFS module on transitions – though the planned set of variables is very restricted – or on new occasional cross-national surveys (such as the 'Teichler survey') should be actively explored.

- EU strategies on European data bases should, therefore, be as much concerned with 'making data European' as with creating new European data banks: with maximising the cross-national comparability of current national and international surveys on specific issues (such as the OECD and IEA co-ordinated studies), as well as creating new policy/research data sources for priority areas where this is necessary. Such a strategy would require a comprehensive assay of current and projected surveys, as well as determining areas where important data is missing or non-comparable.

The work of the TSER funded CATEWE project and the EU-AEI network shows both the importance and the possibilities for building on existing national and international surveys. The continuing work of the latter indicates, for instance, the necessity of continuing assessment of changing national objectives, strategies, contents and outcomes of educational interventions. Current methods for doing appear highly inadequate, with a need for European wide methods – for educational indicators, methods for measuring 'added value' and development of reliable and cross-nationally valid and culture fair tests etc. on an equivalent basis to that provided, for instance, by the United states or indeed other developed countries within the OECD system of monitoring educational and labour market changes; comparable for example, to

the work of Networks A to C within the OECD educational directorate, for instance.[15]

The two main players in the area of international educational comparative educational assessment/testing research for instance are the OECD and the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement). Besides the issue of ensuring that cross-cultural reliability and validity of the instruments as well as their national institutional sensitivity (by ensuring that EU countries are adequately represented on the planning committees etc.), these organisations also normally allow participants to add so- called national options to their ongoing international survey instruments. The European 'added value' of such surveys would be greatly enhanced if the EU Commission would co-ordinate national efforts, ensuring that such instruments are adequately generalisable across EU systems, and that they provide data that is attuned to the main policy and research questions in the area (see Reef et al, TSER project,1998).

In addition many national surveys are carried out on the same set of themes, and with much the same set of objectives by individual countries. The EU wide utility of these national surveys on educational achievement and labour market entry could be significantly improved if an 'added value' EU comparability dimensions were developed for the important variables. The costs involved would be marginal (to total costs) but the 'added value' return would more than compensate.

The national longitudinal studies (in at least 6 EU countries) which follow young people from an early age (e.g. 15) in the ET system to a point in their labour market career where their status has stabilised (usually 3-5 years after entering the labour market) provide invaluable information on transitions which is not available from other sources. Usually these surveys include not only labour market history information but also the crucial social background characteristics and educational formation data on individuals. Since educational and labour market history itineraries are increasingly prolonged and individualised, cross-sectional, snapshot surveys give a highly inadequate picture of transition dynamics – or transition difficulties or success. Such longitudinal surveys should ideally follow young people for five to six years after leaving school, a minimum period to estimate 'final' transition outcomes (Werquin, 1997).

A good final benchmark to use is the age at which the unemployment rate of the cohort equals the adult one. Although the cost of such surveys is high and they cover a longer period of observation before results become available many EU countries already carry them out for their own policy purposes (France, the Netherlands, the UK, Ireland, Sweden and now Flanders), while partial or regional surveys are carried out in many other countries. Although there are some serious 'missing data' problems for some countries and other methodological difficulties the results of analyses of these comparative sets appear important and quite robust (Leonardo final VTLMT report 1998; and CATEWE, TSER project 1997-2000). An EU policy of 'adding value' to these national surveys (by increasing their variable coverage and data/sampling definitions for instance), and encouraging their expansion to other countries, would be a very cost effective method of increasing the availability of valuable comparative European data.

Besides such 'objective' and standardised surveys further comparative studies of individual strategies for, and experiences of, transition need to be carried out, such as in the Anglo-German studies (Bynner et al.,

[15] The work of the EU-AEI network for instance, shows the need for continuous assessment of the status and trends of educational objectives, contents and achieved competencies at primary and secondary educational levels. The conclusions of this, partly TSER funded, network are the existing tools for this are inadequate and that it is necessary to:
i) set up a European instrument bank for educational indicators;
ii) develop adequate methods for measuring added value in educational achievement;
iii) develop reliable and valid methods and instruments for culture fair testing on a comparative European basis for both student achievement as well as, for instance, for adult literacy testing.

1991). Comparative research of other important policy issues also appear important. The issue of guidance and counselling, for instance, urgently needs attention – particularly as it relates to the transition of the less academically able students within school; and the general finding that in most countries such in-school services appear comparatively irrelevant to the great majority of school leavers in transition (Hannan et al., 1983; Becker and Rutjes, 1998). This contrasts sharply with the situation in many other countries – particularly Japan – as well as perhaps in vocational training and other educational programmes which have a large element of work placement/experience – which require close contact between schools and employers.

The Fifth Framework Programme – particularly the Key Action – Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base – could thus be more focussed on some central economic and social policy issues: education/training and labour market relationships, the issue of technical/educational and firm industry change, the issue of state training/employment initiatives in the context of high youth unemployment, the issue of educational and life chance inequalities and educational/social exclusion, and the micro-macro issues of the relationships between educational/training change and rapid technical and market change at both firm/industrial and individual levels. Cross-national comparative research on these and other related issues should be a high priority for the new Vth FP.

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CT97- 2019: 'CATEWE': Comparative Analyses of Education to Work Transitions in Europe. Coord.: Hannan, ESRI, Dublin

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CT97-2012: 1996/7-1999: STT: The Comparison of Educational Systems – Schooling, Training and Transitions. Coord.: Sofer, Univ. of Orleans.

CT97-2028: 1997/8-2000: Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe. Coord.: Lindblad, Uppsala Univ.

CT98-2038: 'Compete'. Competence Evaluation and Training for Europe. Coord. – Cullen, Tavistock Institute, London.

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[16] See synopses of TSER Programme
i) 1996: First call for proposals, March 1995 to June 1995;
ii) 1997: Second call for proposals, October 1996 to January 1997;
iii) 1998: Third call for proposals, September 1997 to January 1998.

Selection, social exclusion and training offers for target groups

Jan Vranken, Mieke Frans

Abstract

This paper discusses the key concepts of social exclusion and inclusion, the potential target groups and their specific problems. Target groups are underrepresented in labour market and training programmes. The crucial factors of exclusion are analysed from an institutional, an economic, a psychological, a socio-cultural and a policy perspective.

Discussed are the accessibility of programmes and the difficulties to comply with administrative selection criteria. The most important factor of exclusion programmes is the need for efficiency that is imposed on the programmes and their organisers. The shift towards privatisation and the tightening of the funding requirements results in creaming off effects and reduces training to a short-term solution. Any gap between restricted selection possibilities and strict output targets creates a 'double bind tension' for the training organisation that has negative consequences for the trainees.

Policy recommendations refer to:

- *efforts to re-integrate the 'hard core' target groups by using their problems as benchmarks;*
- *taking account of the cultural dimension by the development of clearly defined 'management cultures' or 'organisational cultures';*
- *decreasing the gap that separates the employment situation from the training situation, directly through financial and other support and indirectly through a secure job perspective;*
- *the development of the long-term dimension of 'trajectory guidance'.*

Table of contents

Introduction

This contribution addresses exclusion from the labour market and the role of certain forms of vocational training in promoting inclusion into the labour market. This implies that we will focus on the role of specific training offers in preparing socially excluded persons for a job. The field of inquiry is restricted to

- forms of training with a strong vocational focus;
- forms of training that are specifically organised for persons outside the labour market;
- external training initiatives. Training at the workplace is taken into account insofar as it is linked to external training offers. Social economy initiatives, however, also are included because of their importance for our target groups.

Our approach is rather conceptual and theoretical. Although it was one of the aims at the onset of this contribution, the situation and policies of different EU countries are not described. Neither did we include empirical data concerning participants in training programmes or national evaluations of measures. On the very specific strand of vocational training that is the subject of this contribution no overall data are available, even not at the national level, mainly because of the extremely large array of types of initiatives and the fact that they are often very locally embedded. In Belgium alone, 141 schemes to facilitate the transfer to the labour market have been identified and most of them imply some kind of vocational training. General data on participation of target groups and evaluation of measures relate to 'traditional' forms of vocational training. They were discussed by Nicaise and Bollens (1998) in their contribution to the 1998 background reports.

How will we proceed?

- *Firstly,* a coherent conceptual framework that focuses on the concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion is developed. This framework presents an overview of general causes of exclusion from the labour market and of exclusion from training initiatives.
- *Secondly,* the groups affected by social exclusion, paying special attention to the labour market dimension, are discussed, taking account of institutional and other contextual factors such as the selection procedures. Special attention is paid to employment niches for target groups, especially the social economy sector.
- *Thirdly,* a general typology of these measures is elaborated, taking account of economic, psychological, sociological and institutional variables.
- *Fourthly,* the conditions for a framework to coordinate policies at several levels will be discussed.
- *Lastly,* activation policies are discussed in terms of their possible impact on vocational training. It is quite clear that they will constitute the intellectual and policy-making framework for future training programmes or policies.

1. The context

1.1 From social exclusion to social inclusion

The concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion are relevant at the theoretical and the policy-making level, particularly with respect to the relationship between the labour market and vocational training.

1.1.1 Social exclusion

Two main definitions of social exclusion are commonly used. One is inspired by the Anglo-Saxon tradition of citizenship, the other by the continental idea of societal gaps. From the first perspective, social exclusion is described 'in terms of denial or non-realisation of social rights (Room, 1991: 5), such as 'the right to a certain standard of living' or, more specifically, the right to labour, to housing and to educa-

tion. Social exclusion, then, implies that access to these rights is, knowingly or unknowingly, restricted by the manner in which social services are organised or by the vulnerable economic, social and political position of certain citizens.

For the other, continental, tradition the notion of social exclusion concerns the gap that exists between situations or groups in one or more areas of social life. This notion of social exclusion can refer to situations and processes such as polarisation, discrimination, poverty, and inaccessibility. In order for society to arrive at such a situation, it must be structured according to a centre/periphery relationship, while society's means (economic, social and cultural capital) must be distributed unevenly. Of crucial importance in this respect is, of course, the fault line, which may manifest itself as a gap, a wall, or a barrier.

The distinction between relational, spatial and societal fault lines (Vranken, 1997) is an answer to what is probably the most crucial question with regard to social exclusion, namely exclusion from what? (see among others Silver, 1995: 60). Indeed, the reference points of social exclusion are situated at the micro-level (of individuals and their networks), at the meso level (of groups, institutions) and at the macro-level (of society).

The first reference point is that of the individuals and their networks. Relational fault lines refer to the fact that poor people's networks provide no, or very limited, access to important social commodities (or to economic, social and cultural capital). Social exclusion may, then, be seen as the result of exclusion from the exchange in relationships that is part of participation in social networks. 'Gatekeepers' have the power to decide whether or not to allow through the flow of commodities persons or institutions, because they occupy a central position within a social network. By depriving people or groups (the lowly qualified, immigrants, the homeless) from social commodities (employment, housing, education, income, status, power) they create social exclusion (see also Vranken, Steenssens and Pultau, 1996: 57). With respect to the labour market, we are referring to personnel managers, labour exchange administrators, project managers, vocational trainers. Although they are bound to existing legal and administrative rules, many ways remain open to exercise a determining impact on selection processes and procedures regarding training, such as regarding the information that is provided, the linking of particular persons or groups to job opportunities, etc.

A second reference point is groups or group-like phenomena. Social closure is the process whereby social groups attempt to acquire, increase, or maintain rewards by restricting access to sources or opportunities to a small circle of a happy few. The purpose is to monopolise opportunities in life which others too find desirable, i.e. the *closure* of such opportunities to outsiders (Weber, 1922/1956: 201). Groups which fail to achieve any monopoly must compete with each other on the open market and are subjected to its levelling effects. The groups thus excluded often respond by imposing boundaries on even weaker groups, which results in so-called 'dual closure' (Parkin, 1974). The consequence is twofold: the creation of an uneven distribution of opportunities in life and of closed social relations and communities. This form of social exclusion is not unknown on the labour market; some 'closed shop' strategies or forms of ethnic discrimination are illustrative.

The third point of reference concerns societal structures and processes. The central question in case of societal fault lines is whether society as a whole or important areas of it are divided into subsocieties. Illustrations are the dual labour market or the increasing opposition between 'earned' income versus 'welfare' income, in terms of power and status.

1.1.2 Social inclusion

Inclusion, as with social exclusion, is a multidimensional concept. A high density of co-operation within the group, a strong identification with the group, and a large set of shared values and orientations are usually taken as signs of inclusion. Active participation is also a crucial issue; it implies a socialisation process, which incorporates individuals and groups at different levels of society. These

forms of social inclusion already refer to more than mere bonds between the individuals and include relationships between individuals and institutions.

Inclusion in society takes place through different sets of roles. The first set is related to the roles that people adopt from their position as producers. The second set refers to their position as consumers. The third concerns their position as citizens and the fourth their position in different 'public' social networks (such as associations, but not family networks). It is commonly accepted that overall social inclusion is fundamentally rooted in labour market inclusion (or economic inclusion in a larger sense).

Different forms of social inclusion are present in these sets of roles: cultural, normative, communicative and functional inclusion (see also Landecker, 1951). Cultural inclusion is about the concordance between different cultural standards (such as between that of the labour market and that of the long-term unemployed or subsistence beneficiaries, or between the dominant culture and a so-called 'culture of poverty). Normative inclusion refers to the concordance between these standards and behavioural patterns (does the 'management culture' of training initiatives exist just for the public eye or do trainers behave according to these standards?). How deep are common symbols embedded in society and groups and how widely are they accepted is what communicative inclusion is about? The degree of reciprocal dependence is the subject of functional integration: does the labour market need vocational training initiatives and is this the case for all types of vocational training? These forms of exclusion will underlie a number of discussions in this paper, particularly those in chapters 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

1.2 The labour market

1.2.1 Problems of specific target groups

The list of population groups affected by social exclusion is long, very long indeed. It includes larger or smaller sections of the elderly, the disabled, the illiterate, most of the homeless, people living in institutions (psychiatric wards, prisons), people living in ghetto-like neighbourhoods, asylum seekers, most of the long-term unemployed or low-skilled, and the poor in general. Their exclusion is the result of insufficient economic, social or cultural capital in one or more of the important societal domains: housing, health, social networks, income, and – last but not least – education and work. Being excluded from any of those fields generates problems, the more so if it is about exclusion from education or work. Overcoming any form of social exclusion nearly always implies external help, be it social work, special housing programmes, special training programmes or the creation of jobs adapted to the particular skills and handicaps of the persons concerned.

Target groups with respect to the labour market refer to persons who have a considerably smaller chance of finding a job; if they succeed in doing so, the jobs they access are usually marginal ones. Their marginal character refers to characteristics such as employment insecurity, low pay, bad working conditions, low degree of social protection, very high flexibility or low degree of unionisation; in short, characteristics of the secondary labour market. Target groups thus are 'groups at risk' and have been identified on the basis of numerous analyses of statistical, administrative and other databases. It is not our intention to reproduce these results in detail; we suffice with a general picture. We will, however, elaborate on some of their specific problems.

The usual criteria for defining risk groups regarding the labour market are: gender, age, educational level (or level of qualification in general), household status, nationality, occupation, and economic sector. The groups at risk then are younger or older employees, women, the unemployed in general and the long-term unemployed in particular, the low-skilled, early school-leavers, sick or disabled persons, people on means-tested benefits, political refugees or asylum seekers and ethnic minorities in general; they may also be combinations of these subgroups. The 'poor', for example, are disadvantaged in many respects.

Although these people form a heterogeneous group, most of them have one common char-

acteristic: low educational and skill level. This common characteristic, however, presents itself in many forms. Let us mention an inadequate knowledge of the native language (migrants, asylum-seekers), obsolete vocational skills (older workers, the long-term unemployed), lack of work experience (the young and, again, the long-term unemployed), and loss of appropriate work attitudes. The loss of appropriate work attitudes constitutes a particular handicap that is often underestimated. Indeed, it usually takes a rather long period to familiarise the target groups with things such as sticking to time schedules, meeting strict requirements, integrating into a team, accepting authority, and concentrating on one task for a longer time.

Next to these handicaps regarding job requirements, a series of other deprivations outside the work situation permanently threatens their work capacities. Bad housing conditions, bad health and insufficient health care, family problems, household responsibilities (for women), and (ethnic) discrimination are just some of the many factors that could be mentioned in this context.

Only a few Member States retain women as a target group for training measures (Joint Employment Report, 1997). In Luxembourg, several training programmes which focus on women (including women returnees) have been created. In the context of the European year on lifelong learning, a special project for (young) women was established. In Ireland, 'back-to-work skills' are provided for women who have been out of the labour force for a long period of time. The integration of women returnees is also a priority in Austria, where more than 7,000 women found a job through career guidance courses, skill training opportunities and employment projects.

Of course, not all of the socially excluded are target groups for vocational training, although most of them would benefit from some form of training. Later on, we will discuss target groups for training that are expected to reintegrate into the labour market, either the dominant one or some alternative labour market ('social economy').

1.2.2 'Social economy'

When can a certain activity be labelled as 'social economy'? The classical definition of the social economy is that it 'brings together the economic activities generated by co-operatives, mutual insurance organisations and associations with the following ethical principles:

- service to the members or the community rather than profit;
- autonomous management;
- democratic structure;
- priority of labour and people over capital in the sharing of profits' (Defourny, 1997: 51).

The definition of newer forms of social economy, as they have manifested themselves over the past few decades, is a combination of criteria from the above classical definition and of new elements. The latter can largely be inferred from historical developments, and more particularly from the renewed interest in the 1970s.

First of all it could be stated that the initiatives in the 'new social economy' should reasonably not belong to the 'established' social economy. In addition, the organisations are to be involved in an economic activity and should neither belong to the public nor to the private sector. This positioning of the social economy *vis-à-vis* the private profit maximising market sector, on the one hand, and the public sector, on the other, remains one of the most important identifications of the third sector. In contrast to what happened in the 19th century, the social economy of today does not want to take the place of the capitalist system, but would like to function in a complementary manner (Monzon Campos, 1992: 25).

Beside their economic objectives, these organisations wish to accomplish social objectives. These objectives are related to the problems generated by classical economic models that apparently cannot be solved by the public sector. The issue here is a shift in sectors where new needs have arisen. The 'old sectors' where the social economy attempted to meet needs

were as follows: savings and credit; social housing; consumer goods; social and medical care; culture, information and press; mutual and co-operative insurance; and employment. The needs of today, however, are to be found in different sectors: ethical savings and investments; renovation; recycling; new care needs; and employment. Present initiatives undoubtedly focus most of their attention on the unemployment problem by creating employment and taking special care of people in high-risk groups. In the industrialised countries a rising number of co-operatives and associations are being established with the aim of social integration through labour. This employment creation is also often linked to environmental objectives by the pursuit of environmentally friendly production processes, products, and integrated environmental protection. This is how the new social economic sector of nature conservation, recycling, and renovation came about. Depending on the problem that needs to be solved, the nature of the social-economic organisation varies, although certain problems can be tackled simultaneously. In this way, the social economy has absorbed a number of functions from the public sector, which is increasingly withdrawing from certain areas of social life.

A second characteristic that has clearly been placed to the fore is the local nature of the activities, although this feature is not really new. In spite of increasing economic internationalisation, the third sector remains primarily rooted in local or regional initiatives. This is a response to the call for local identity and solidarity as a result of that globalisation. Through their ties with new or old social movements, initiatives are chiefly started from the base. This also results from the need for influence on the production process and the need for transparency, which led to the foundation of numerous consumer organisations. The relationship with consumers is also given special attention by the newer forms of social economy.

In addition, the new social economy has kept a number of criteria of the classical definition. First of all, service to the members or the community is still taking precedence over profit making, and there is a related priority of labour over capital. The pursuit of a democratic structure is considered equally important. Because most of the organisations are created from the base, it can also be assumed that the principle of management autonomy is preserved, even though it will appear that contemporary forms of social economy often do not match this criterion. According to international discourse on the subject, the legal form of the initiative is of lesser importance in the contemporary forms of social economy than in the classical forms (Westerdahl, 1998: 197), even though the organisations concerned have a strong tendency to assume certain forms of legal incorporation.

On the basis of the above definitions a number of questions can be formulated, which should allow us to distinguish social economic organisations from other organisations. Is the organisation concerned engaged in economic activity? Is this activity situated between that of the private sector on the one hand and that of the public sector on the other? Is this activity linked to social objectives? These objectives can be related to a number of factors: (un)employment; social integration of the socially excluded and the poor; ecological objectives; the provision of services that respond to a pressing individual or collective need, neglected by the public sector; durability of production quality; or a combination of these objectives. Does the realisation of these objectives take priority over making a profit and does labour take priority over capital? Is there management autonomy? Is there an endeavour to establish a democratic structure? Is any attention paid to transparency and the quality of relationships? Was the organisation founded bottom up? Does the organisation assume a legal form typical for the social economy (cooperative society, mutual insurance organisation, non-profit organisation, registered charity)? And finally, in order to be able to distinguish the classical from the new social economy: Does the initiative belong to the 'non-established' (or new) social economy?

Depending on the number of positive answers to these questions, an initiative will be further from or closer to the ideal type and thus to the core of social economy. Social economic organi-

sations are therefore 'different' from the other two sectors in relative and not in absolute terms (Seibel and Anheier, 1990: 12). Also, the criteria were more or less formulated in order of importance. It should be clear that an initiative that does not match the first criterion, does not belong to the 'third sector' at all.

1.3 Training for the labour market: a typology of relevant training measures

As discussed in the introduction, we are focusing on training of a vocational nature provided by external training organisations to persons who are out of work. Training at the workplace is taken into account insofar as it is linked to external training courses. Initial vocational training thus is not considered in this contribution for two reasons. It would widen our target population too much. Indeed, although youngsters on initial vocational training posses a number of characteristics that are typical of risk groups, they still have the capacity to prevent their exclusion from the labour market. Moreover, the introduction of initial vocational training would increase the institutional and programmatic array of our field of research to such an extent that it would become unmanageable. We prefer to focus on more acute situations of exclusion.

External training courses for excluded people are usually designed and managed by organisations that do not offer permanent jobs themselves; that is, except for social economy initiatives. Given the type of training that is needed, the provider then acts as an independent training centre. At best, the training initiative focuses on a certain sector but mostly, there is no direct relation with a specific enterprise. This does not prevent training being organised within a particular enterprise of the sector that is targeted by the training, such as hospitals or related institutions in a programme to train 'logistic health assistants' for example. In many cases, the accumulation of problems in the target group requires training in many respects: work attitudes; vocational training; work experience; and sometimes even literacy training. This means the planning of a 'trajectory' or 'pathway' with successive periods of training, coaching, teaching or practical experience, of using the tools of work, either at the training centre or in the work situation. (European Commission, 1997: 85)

Training in a work situation is less relevant for excluded people, except for social economy programmes. It means that training is organised in an environment that largely resembles the likely place of work of the future; this environment may even be simulated. Training in a work situation possesses a number of specific features. It often includes practical experience using appropriate tools. Often, it is very specific to the future work of the trainee. Its primary purpose should be the development or improvement of skills. In the case of a 'social economy enterprise', however, it also contributes to the enterprise's output. In this case, however, the enterprise itself can be considered to be a 'learning experience'. Because social economy initiatives provide us with a stimulating context for vocational training initiatives, we will pay specific attention to them.

1.4 Exclusion from the labour market and from training programmes

Unemployment and exclusion from the labour market has been a major social issue in European welfare states for the past two decades. A first explanation lies in the fact that we have come to regard unemployment in a different light. In the 1980s, policy-makers tended to reduce the unemployment issue to a question of market trends. And even if unemployment was referred to as a structural problem, it was in terms of a mismatch in the labour market to which the appropriate schooling and training policies could formulate an answer.

Unemployment rates have always been unevenly distributed among different population groups. Crucial factors in determining the unemployment risk are gender, age, health situation, educational level, and ethnicity. These lead to an overrepresentation of women, elderly, disabled, lower educated and migrants in unemployment statistics. It was not until the late 1980's, however, that policy-makers came to fully recognise the structural

nature of unemployment and more in particular of the rather permanent exclusion of certain population groups from the labour market. That period was characterised by the phenomenon of jobless, and even job loss, growth. Besides of the recognition of unemployment as a structural and qualitative problem, a consensus grew about new fault lines and high-risk groups. It became clear that the poorly qualified were finding it the most difficult to keep their jobs, let alone to re-enter the labour market.

This large gap between high skilled and low skilled and the question of how to bridge this gap, is often called the 'new social issue' (Rosanvallon, 1995). Usually, the term is narrowed down to the question of how the growing group of poorly qualified and/or long-term unemployed people and individuals who are totally dependent upon income support can be re-involved or more closely involved in society, through the (labour) market or otherwise. Thus, the problem is restricted to the structural gap between predominantly highly skilled insiders and a (growing) group of mostly unskilled outsiders. Training, in this respect, is seen as the ultimate instrument to bridge this gap.

1.4.1 The recruitment behaviour of firms as a factor in selection processes

Reasons for this uneven distribution of labour market exclusion have been looked for at both the supply and demand side of the labour market. On the demand side, recruitment behaviour of firms has been the subject of much research. Main conclusions have become part of the theoretical framework of labour (market) sociology. A useful framework to understand the relative importance of these factors and their interrelations, is that of the segmented labour market, such as the typology developed by Mok (1994). Selection processes that lead to social exclusion will take place mainly within both the internal and external secondary labour market segments; the firms' recruitment behaviour will be different according to whether the internal or external segment is involved. This is so because the type of jobs, and thus the type of workers the firms are looking for, are different in both segments. The secondary internal segment is made up of lower skilled operational staff whose knowledge is largely based on workplace experience. This segment is very sensitive to technological developments. These have resulted in a decreasing demand for specialised workers. Since the supply remains high, employers possess a high degree of choice. The secondary external market is populated with an even weaker set of population groups: marginal workers who lack specialised vocational skills and who have been stigmatised by social or physical handicaps.

Phenomena such as 'statistical discrimination' and 'crowding' are frequently used as mechanisms for selecting workers in both segments. Statistical discrimination refers to the fact that employers do not employ certain categories of workers because they suppose that they are less productive or do not show the behavioural pattern that is expected, because of their ethnic characteristics or gender. These characteristics thus become stereotyped and are used as arguments for not employing migrant or women workers, irrespective of their individual capacities.

Crowding (or vertical segregation) is rather typical of recruitment behaviour regarding women. It is based on certain stereotypes regarding women (emotionality, lack of dominance, manual dexterity, moral behaviour) and leads to a negative selection, directing women to less qualified jobs and obstructing their access to more desirable jobs.

Labour market research also has illustrated a third mechanism; that employers prefer workers that already have a similar job over unemployed workers. This has been compared to a train in movement: it is easier to move from one compartment to the other than to jump on the train. The long-term unemployed are particular victims of this mechanism and are the more so, the longer they remain unemployed.

A more general factor is that of 'social closure', which is operated not only by employers but also by workers and their organisations that are already 'in'. Access is limited by defining

conditions of entrance that are not related to the job capacities that are required. These conditions can be formal (diploma, age, unionisation) or informal ones. The latter relate to personality or attitudes.

Substitution effects are another important element. With the recent return to higher and sustained growth figures, the related improvement of the labour market and policies that are supportive of the reintegration of low skilled workers into the labour market (activation, reduction of the labour costs of lower paid employees), however, these effects seem to become less important. These developments have had an impact on both the substitution of the lower skilled in their jobs by higher skilled personnel, and the replacement of the lower skilled through machines.

From this brief review of the recruitment behaviour of firms, it should become clear that it is not sufficient to increase or to ameliorate the human capital of persons excluded from the labour market. More structural and institutional barriers are at stake in overcoming the gap between 'out' and 'in' in the labour market.

1.4.2 Trapped between unemployment trap and training trap

Traditionally, poverty policies have discussed how to avoid the 'poverty trap', which prohibited escape from poverty because of the attractiveness of subsistence income and related poverty schemes compared to the alternative. Lately, the focus has shifted to a comparable 'unemployment trap'. In general, the unemployment trap refers to the fact that an unemployed person is not significantly better off when he takes up a job, and sometimes is even worse off. The factors that account for are, firstly, the relationship between wage and unemployment benefit or subsistence income. Sometimes, the worker also loses related benefits such as higher family allowances or lower tax impositions. Finally, additional costs, such as travel or child care, often reduce the improvement in income obtained by the shift in status or even offset it totally. The question remains whether the non-financial dimensions of a job, as listed in Jahoda's 'latent deprivation model' (Jahoda, 1982), are enough to compensate for the absence, or low level, of a financial stimulus. Specifically, this refers to the labelling the unemployed as compared to the status of having a job, in combination with socio-psychological impacts of unemployment, the obsolescence of skills and the disappearance of work experience and work attitudes. If the total advantage is insufficient to stimulate the transition from unemployment to employment, unemployment beneficiaries are trapped in their unemployment. This unemployment trap may imply a poverty trap when both unemployment benefits and wages are insufficient to guarantee a subsistence income. This is supposedly the case at the lower end of the US labour market, where even a double income sometimes does not suffice to obtain a decent level of living.

A similar effect has been found when target group individuals taking up training courses are worse off, at least financially, than when on benefits. We could call this the 'training trap'. When benefit is supplemented with earnings from informal or black work, training can lead to a substantial income loss. In short, sometimes a financial stimulus to take up training is absent and the person on a minimum income scheme or on unemployment benefits is trapped in his/her jobless situation.

Even if training allowances are provided, however, other financial constraints remain. Participation in training programmes could be considered a 'risky investment'. Indeed, training implies an investment because participants have to meet a number of expenses (such as transport, childcare, learning materials) and are at the same time expected to postpone job-seeking activities. Moreover, a 'deferred gratification pattern' is usually not one of their characteristics. At the same time, training carries a risk because the outcome is far from certain. This is particularly so in periods of low economic activity and high unemployment.

On the other hand, remuneration while in training can not be too high. In that case, the inflow into training programmes would be very much stimulated but outflow from training to a job would be obstructed. This perverse

effect is usually avoided by the fact that training schemes are limited in duration and accessibility. However, both considerations imply that an adequate remuneration while in training means that both the 'unemployment trap' and the 'training trap'[1], are to be avoided.

2. Labour market policies and training policies need coordination

Why is coordination so important in this matter? Society has become more differentiated and therefore more complex; vocational training and labour market policies are embedded in these developments. The structural nature of long-term unemployment, the gap between skills and schooling, new forms of social exclusion, the number of actors involved and the shifting balance of power between them, the development of new policy instruments, the definition of new policy objectives, the call for 'inclusive' policies and for integrated 'trajectories' or 'pathways' for the target groups are but some of the relevant developments. All in all, it is possible to identify four types of this increasing complexity (differentiation) and of the resulting need for (more) coordination. They are the result of the combining of two dimensions. The first refers to the axis vertical/horizontal, the second to the axis actors/fields. The table provides an illustration of the four types.

In the end, these aspects can be subsumed under two types of coordination: 'inclusive policies' and 'governance'. The former is in the coordination between sectors, especially between the so-called 'soft' (training) and 'hard' (employment) sectors. In Belgium this has led to a debate about the need for 'inclusive' policies. 'Governance' is mainly about the *coordination* between agencies, institutions, and programmes in the administration of policies. Coordination is particularly considered a problem in the field of social policies because of the many institutions and agencies that are

Table 1: Coordination – levels, actors and fields

Levels	Actors	Fields
Horizontal	Private and public actors	Integration trajectories
Vertical	Multilevel actors	'Hard' and 'soft' sectors

Source: the authors.

active in the field. The number of relevant decision-making levels (European, national, regional, and local) particularly increases the need for crossovers between policies.

Let us first discuss the vertical dimension of coordination and continue with the horizontal dimension. Policies often are strongly top-down in character. Recently, new programmes have given more autonomy to local authorities. Ideally, central government should develop the general policy framework and define objectives; this policy should then be implemented and realised at the local level, through partnership with private agencies and by choosing means adapted to the local situation to achieve the identified objectives. Results then should be evaluated by central government.

NGOs (non-governmental organisations) are important providers of different kinds of vocational training. They are largely financed from national, regional or local public authorities and they often are obliged to act in accordance with the regulations of these authorities, especially regarding labour exchange, unemployment provisions and other labour market regulations.[2] The strictest regulations, however, are administrative and budgetary ones and concern the realisation

[1] This means that three traps have been identified: the benefits/training trap, the training/job trap, and the benefits/job trap that is more than just the sum of both former traps.

[2] In a recent comparative research report, Frade and Darmon conclude that, with regard to the organisations providing training, a considerable shift in the status of these organisations has taken place: from the public to the private and/or voluntary sector. Furthermore they notice the increasing introduction of competition in the sector, in the form not of a proper training market, but of quasi or pseudo markets differently defined according to the rules for tendering (Frade and Darmon, 1998: 1).

of higher targets with fewer and stricter controlled means that cannot be used as flexibly as is needed, given the target groups' characteristics and needs. Some experiences suggest that NGOs must often take on the responsibilities of (local) public authorities that are often more concerned with obtaining their full share of available funds and then spending it, not on new projects, but on their regular activities.

Sometimes, actors from civil society oppose the public authorities' idea of what vocational training policies should and could be. This can be explained by the fact that they possess the professional capacity and do most of the work, whereas the other side gets the money. NGOs however, at least not the ones that are active in training, do not control the levers of power. Some do, such as pillarised[3] organisations. The plurality of these welfare organisations and their different organisational interests adds complexity to coherent planning and coordination and common initiatives.

Decentralisation is primarily a vertical process, influencing the way in which policies are formulated: from the top down or from the bottom up. However, it has an important horizontal dimension: it necessitates (better and more) coordination between authorities, public services, social partners and NGOs at the local level. This coordination is complicated by a large variety of institutions and agencies operating at an intermediate level; these are public, semi-public and non-governmental organisations. Do local authorities have the powers for this? Does the central (regional) government offer new possibilities to local authorities so as to develop more autonomous policies, or are local authorities rather used as an instrument to get more grip on the heterogeneous and incoherent field of initiatives?

[3] Pillarisation refers to the vertical segmentation of civil society according to ideological lines, a phenomenon that still dominates Belgian society and used to be even more important in the Netherlands. It implies that the whole range of organisations (labour unions, mutual aid societies, social, economic, cultural and even leisure associations) is duplicated for each 'pillar' (the catholic, the socialist and the liberal) and that they are financed from public funds.

What is the position, the role of the 'regular' (subsidised) private welfare sector in these programmes? With concepts such as 'policy networks' and 'inclusive policies', some participants try to structure the new framework that has emerged from the recent changes in institutional relationships and the socio-economic conditions.

The crucial question is how the different actors co-operate in order to achieve a coherent policy with common objectives, a coherent set of measures and a smooth partnership between the different actors.

Two levels can be distinguished: the policy level and the service level. For each level we have to define the coordination objective separately:

Approaching vocational training policies from the point of view of coordination (between different fields, between different levels) helps us to identify several crucial problems. We mention the most important ones:

2.1 Coordination or 'creaming off'

One of the problems is that the success rate of policies and projects is often influenced by the fact that the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged groups are not only marginalised in the labour market. They also are at a disadvantage in selection for reintegration programmes, and thus further excluded from the labour market and society as a whole (Nicaise et al., 1995: 70-82; O'Connel, 1997: 122, 135).

A bottom-up approach that focuses on the most marginalised groups (people on means-tested benefits) should enable us to find examples of good and bad practice. These refer to measures that have been taken in order to promote access for these groups to the different programmes, or to examples of why this access is not successful in employment measures that should be accessible to people on means-tested benefits.

2.2 Coordination or a lack of continuity

The majority of the people receiving means-tested benefits have been excluded from the

Table 2: Different levels and outcomes of coordination efforts

Level of coordination	Result of coordination
Policy level (national and/or regional government, local authority)	Development of a clear policy perspective and of concrete policy objectives. Translation of these objectives into a coherent set of policy programmes and measures (including avoiding of perverse effects, such as 'training traps' and 'unemployment traps').
Service level (service providers can be national or regional employment offices or welfare offices, local services administered by local authorities or by NGOs)	Offering a complete and coherent set of services to people of working age receiving means-tested benefits. Focus on organisational and institutional dimension.
Individual level (target group level)	Develop 'trajectories' or 'pathways' according to the individual needs of the applicants so as to improve their (social, cultural, economic) capital needed for integration on the labour market.

Source: Vranken and Geldof, 1999.

(primary) labour market for a long time. They were excluded because of their lack of skills and during the – sometimes extended – period of exclusion, they added a number of other deprivations. They have lost their self-confidence, family problems have arisen, often resulting in psychological problems. Strategies that were developed for coping were perhaps very effective for non-labour market issues, but constitute a problem for getting a job. Thus, diverse inputs are necessary to redevelop their employability and reintegrate them into the labour market, such as work ethic and work attitudes, vocational training, on-the-job training, work experience. A crucial question concerning coordination, therefore, is whether these different activation measures can be integrated into a coherent pathway or trajectory for the participants. Are the different measures meant for promoting re-entry to the labour market sufficiently complementary in time and content? Are perverse effects identified and taken into account? Important perverse effects are the 'unemployment trap' and the lesser-known but evenly important 'training trap'. A bad trajectory from labour market exclusion to labour market inclusion gives participants the impression that they are turning around in circles or 'invites' them to step out of the process and return to their former state.

An important problem for many participants in vocational training is the lack of perspective: training or some work experience is offered for a certain period (a number of weeks, months, and sometimes one or two years). During this programme, or at its end, a number of participants find their way (with or without guidance) towards the labour market. Another group of participants, however, is not able to bridge this gap or is unable to remain in the labour market. Their only perspective seems to offer a return to unemployment schemes or means-tested benefits.

2.3 Coordination or perverse effects (unemployment and training traps)

Coordination between the different benefit schemes and employment and training programmes is crucial to avoid or reduce unem-

ployment and training traps. These traps should not be restricted to their direct financial impact; they also include the indirect financial consequences of taking up a job and the social and socio-psychological facets of this change in status (see above). We are referring to the status of the job offered, the work satisfaction, the trade-off between care for children or parents and the income and status that accompany a job. These non-financial dimensions do not always aggravate the gap, they sometimes compensate for an insufficient income gain or even for an income loss.

2.4 Coordination with other services

Employment services traditionally care for the unemployed, social services for people on means-tested benefits. The reason for this distinction is that people on means-tested benefits usually are not considered to be fit for the labour market. Moreover, employment services often are linked – directly or indirectly – to a logic of contributions, whereas other social services are financed from general revenues (taxes).

Recently, social services have become increasingly involved in employment programmes. Coordination between these two government services is crucial. Furthermore training and employment programmes are often realised in cooperation with NGOs. In this case coordination becomes even more important.

2.5 Coordination at the local level

The local level often is described as the only one at which coordination is realised in a more substantial way rather than just formally. The reason is that the local level is the meeting point for concrete actions by different actors (clients and providers) and programmes; it is the level that relates directly to the level of practices. This means that the results of efforts to coordinate immediately become visible.

In many European countries this level has become more important in the fight against poverty and also in the development of local employment policies. Another aspect is that the NGOs have become more prominent because of recent welfare state developments. These provided them with the means to keep, and to increase their hold on, numerous aspects of the citizen's life. Government subsidies and private initiative go side by side in a number of fields. This means that a relatively autonomous field of 'training and employment programmes' has developed from private initiative but it survives thanks to support from public authorities. Private initiative and public subsidy often form a particular relationship. Formal policy objectives are often adapted under practical pressure and power relationships. Recently, many initiatives, agencies, and projects have developed outside the traditional structures or are only loosely related to them.

This often creates coordination problems on two different levels: between the policies of the central or regional government and the local authorities, and between local authorities and other local actors (NGOs). To start with the latter, the training initiatives we are discussing here were often initiated by small NGOs. Once they became successful – partly due to the structural character of high unemployment, partly to the innovative ways that training was organised and inserted into local social and economic networks – local authorities tried to recover these initiatives. They have a number of levers to assist this aim, such as control over the input of clients (unemployed, social assistance beneficiaries).

Public authorities at higher institutional levels want to maximise the input of funds, at the same time exercising a degree of control over local training initiatives. They promote new institutional arrangements and partnerships. One strategy is the promotion of institutional coordination. Other strategies include the redefining of the institutional and legal framework, the introduction of new incentives (such as output ratios) or the creation of new institutions that act as 'gatekeepers' in the local network. Special funds intended to combat poverty and social exclusion at the local level – such as the 'social impulse fund' in Flanders or the 'big cities' programme in the Netherlands – can bring about a new relationship between the central and local levels. At the

national and regional levels, new forms of co-ordination has been established. Initiatives of this type imply some kind of contract between the different levels. The existing legal and institutional framework, the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures of the public sector and rooted traditions, however, can create barriers to institutional cooperation.

In order to achieve good collaboration, certain conditions need to be fulfilled. The different measures offered or proposed, the obligations they imply, and their interrelationships should be clearly defined. From the point of view of the clients, it should be known if these measures are coherent, and that the different actors and/or organisations involved are not using opposing logic.

Several aspects are relevant to evaluation of training measures from this point of view. We mention:

a) the financial consequences of participation (or non-participation) for the beneficiary, including access to or loss of secondary rights;

b) prospects or perspectives for the future after participation; access to other programmes, measures or jobs, including the degree of personal choice in participation;

c) the impact on forms of 'social inclusion', including the reduction of psychological consequences of isolation, the development or strengthening of social networks, the adaptation of the (working) environment to the specific problems and characteristics of the target groups.

Coordination then should be seen as a condition for successful initiatives linking vocational training to employment, and from the point of view of the beneficiary or participant.

This includes:

a) coordination at the policy level;

b) and coordination at the service level;

c) in order to guarantee to the participants;

d) a coherent supply of vocational training initiatives;

e) which improves their situation (financial, social, personal, employability);

f) and provides a real prospect of integration;

g) in collaboration with all other relevant actors and institutions.

In other words, neither the existence of different coordination initiatives, nor the question of the identity of the service-provider, is in itself relevant; the results are, certainly from the point of view of the beneficiary. Only if the result is a coherent and well coordinated set of measures for the clients does the organisational setting offer an example of good practice. If the result is not coherent from the point of view of the participant, whether or not coordination initiatives have been taken, the measures will be considered as examples of bad (or insufficient) practice.

A last but important point is the question of whether coordination was a policy objective in setting up the programme or organisation, or whether local or other actors took on that responsibility on their own, in order to meet an existing need. We are interested to know if, in the programme or the organisation, someone is made responsible for the coordination aspects and why (not).

3. Exclusion from training programmes[4]

Participation and non-participation in training schemes is influenced by the same set of variables that, in the same way, determine exclusion from the labour market in general; gender, educational level, age, ethnicity, health situation. The following groups are underrepresented in training programmes; women, the lower educated, the older unemployed, the migrants, and the disabled. In short, certain groups of unemployed to be more excluded than others.

[4] This chapter will mainly be based on Darmon and Frade, 1998, pp.69 en; Nicaise et al., 1995, pp. 146.

Exclusion from training offers for target groups and its causes can be studied from different perspectives: an institutional, an economic, a psychological, a socio-cultural and a policy perspective (see Nicaise and Bollens, 1998: 121-153). The institutional point of view explains how people are excluded by not complying with administrative selection criteria; being officially registered as unemployed, the minimum duration of unemployment and additional criteria. The need for economic efficiency obviously constitutes the most important single factor of exclusion from training programmes. Stricter funding frameworks seem to result in processes of creaming-off the target group. From a psychological point of view it is the non-correspondence of training provisions to the needs and motivations of the unemployed that mainly cause exclusion. These psychological factors – needs and motivations – will be illustrated by different typologies of the unemployed with regard to their motivational level (see paragraph 3.4).

The cultural factor has been somewhat underestimated in these processes of exclusion and inclusion with respect to (selection for) training offers. Indeed, the process (sequence) of 'input-throughput-output' of target groups in training initiatives carries an important but underestimated component of cultural confrontation. This can be subsumed under the question: how do training initiatives succeed in overcoming the confrontation between the target group's 'culture' and that of the dominant labour market (we are not referring to 'social economy' initiatives'), if, indeed, they aim to bridge that gap. In this part, exclusion through cultural clashes between the dominant culture of the training staff and the subculture of the unemployed, will be discussed.

In the last paragraph the effects of general (labour market) policy with respect to exclusion from training programmes will be discussed. From this policy point of view, attention will be paid to the recent trends in policy. Among them are budgetary constraints, activation in labour market policy, decentralisation, the emphasis put on a preventive policy by the European countries and the 'hot topic' of the unemployment trap.

3.1 Exclusion through selection procedures (institutional)

3.1.1 Who is entitled to participate? Administrative criteria

Eligibility for training programmes not only depends on a person's position in the labour market but also on more general characteristics, as is shown by training for immigrants, drug addicts, disabled people, social welfare recipients, ethnic minorities, or gypsies. With respect to labour market position, three main categories can be identified: persons employed in the regular labour market, persons employed in the black labour market and the unemployed. There are, however, important subdivisions within each category. A first type within the first category is the employed who work full-time in the formal or regular labour market, which is supposed to be the ideal labour market situation. In a lesser position within this category of the regularly employed are those who work part-time. Those who are engaged in temporary employment, seasonal employment, homework, or other kinds of atypical work constitute the third category of the employed in the formal labour market. These forms of atypical work are not necessarily informal jobs or illegal/black market activities. Jobs within this informal or 'black' labour market are not regulated or protected by work legislation or other forms of social security and suffer from poor working conditions. On the other hand there are the unemployed, with one group that are registered as such and another who are not. The registered unemployed, in turn, can be entitled to a benefit or not. Schematically the following labour market positions can be discerned:

- full-time employed in the formal labour market;
- half-time employed in the formal labour market;
- employed in the informal labour market;
- registered unemployed entitled to a benefit;
- registered unemployed not entitled to a benefit;
- unregistered unemployed.

3.1.2 Officially registered unemployed

In most European countries only one of these six categories is able to participate in a training programme: the registered unemployed entitled to a benefit.[5] Although there seems to be a recent trend to open up training initiatives for social assistance beneficiaries in some countries, most of the training programmes focus on the officially registered unemployed only. This is a consequence of the way in which labour market programmes are often closely linked to the social benefit system. Only when an individual is allowed to claim an unemployment benefit can she or he gain access to training programmes with the aim of reintegrating them into the labour market. As a consequence the most vulnerable groups – those employed in the informal labour market, the registered unemployed not entitled to benefit, and the unregistered unemployed – are excluded form the programmes.

In addition, this group of unregistered unemployed seems to grow every year, causing most European countries feel the need to brighten up their unemployment statistics regularly. This is less the case for countries that have a limited duration for entitlement to unemployment benefits, because most individuals are no longer registered as unemployed after the termination of their period of entitlement. In other countries, the official unemployment count has been subject to all manner of artificial intervention in order to avoid further inflation of the unemployment rate. This means that a number of people who would, under other definitions, belong to the category of registered unemployed receiving benefit are referred to other categories that are ineligible for programmes designed to combat exclusion from employment. Single parents in the UK, the 'disabled' in the Netherlands and the older unemployed are examples of groups that are considered as being out of the labour market (Nicaise et al., 1995). Their total number is regarded as 'global underemployment', which can be estimated in Belgium, for example, at about double the number of the officially registered unemployed.

In addition to this, vulnerable people can also be found in the category of those already engaged in paid labour (Beweging ATD-Vierde Wereld, Lutte Solidarité Travail, 1998). The intensification of international competition has led to a growing need for labour market flexibility. Flexibility of the organisation of production seems necessary in the face of technological change. Flexibility of workers is expressed in terms of multi-skilling or mobility from task to task; flexibility of jobs, in terms of ease of hiring and firing or of changing working hours and the upward and downward flexibility of wages (Delsen, 1995). This flexibilisation trend results in an increase of atypical employment relationships. These differ from the traditional model of employment relationship, which was characterised by the fact that the worker had only one employer, worked full time on the employer's premises and was expected to continue doing so indefinitely. Part-time work, labour-on-call contracts, fixed-term contracts, seasonal work, agency work, home-based work, telework, freelancers, self-employment and informal work all are forms of employment that deviate from full time open-ended wage employment. Many of those who engage in these forms of flexible labour do not have a secure status within the work force but occupy only a marginal position: they are lowly paid and do not enjoy legal rights or social status arising from their employment (Alcock, 1997: 259). These individuals are unable to take advantage of most labour market programmes because they are considered as 'employed', although the employment is inadequate because it is marginal. It can be expected that this group will keep on expanding in the near future because of the growing need for flexibility.

[5] For those working in the formal labour market (other types of) training programmes are also accessible but they are less relevant with respect to the theme of social exclusion and therefore they will not be discussed in this contribution. This contribution will focus on those training programmes that strive for full-time employment in the formal labour market for their trainees, a position which is already being achieved by the category of full time working people in the formal labour market.

3.1.3 Minimum duration of unemployment

Except for being officially registered as unemployed, a candidate has to comply with a number of other administrative criteria before he or she is able to participate in a programme. In particular, all those who are funded by public authorities (local, regional, national or European) have to comply with a minimum period of unemployment. Two opposite goals are at stake here. On the one hand, the longer the required minimum duration of unemployment, the lower the threshold for weaker groups since they do not have to compete with better trained groups. If the minimum duration of unemployment is put at one year, it is very likely that a training provider will prefer someone with the minimum period of unemployment to someone who has been unemployed for over two years. As a consequence the (unequal) competition for those unemployed for two years is reduced when the minimum period of unemployment is fixed at two years. So, the longer the minimum period of unemployment, the less those with the longest period of unemployment (the most vulnerable) are excluded. On the other hand, these face the risk of being labelled since they become more visible through their participation in specific programmes.

The answer to this dilemma seems to be to offer training for all after a short period of unemployment, as for example proposed by the Commission. Early intervention could prevent the occurrence or increase of a number of problems, such as loss of work experience, interiorisation of a negative self-image, reduction of network, and loss of capacity. Problems here are the dead-weight effects, since the probability for a short-term unemployed to become a long-term unemployed cannot be predicted, so that limited resources could have been spent on persons who would anyhow have reintegrated the labour market before the end of the training programme.

If access to training programmes is linked to the time a person has been registered as a beneficiary (to unemployment benefits), other problems arise. If the period referred to is a period of uninterrupted unemployment, then each interruption starts a new period of unemployment. A person with short spells of employment between longer and frequent periods of unemployment will never reach the threshold. He is, in a way, handicapped by his eagerness to find a job and by his success in doing so. This concept of taking into account not only the last period of unemployment but the '(un)employment career' over a longer period is very important. Empirical data do exist (in longitudinal surveys such as the ECHP[6] but have not yet been properly analysed. This becomes all the more problematic with respect to marginal workers who perform temporary or seasonal work.

In short, the mechanisms and criteria of labour market training programmes are related to the very foundations of our social protection systems: the meritocratic rules of access to continental social security are implicitly transposed into the reintegration programme. These criteria are tailored to the needs of the median (unemployed) worker: the full time, registered, healthy, insured unemployed (thus, the previously full-time, stable, healthy worker) (Nicaise et al., 1995).

3.1.4 Different selection criteria acting as a filter

Despite the maintenance of large public or quasi-public training institutions for the unemployed, training activities are increasingly provided by voluntary, private and non-profit (or 'social profit') organisations. They are funded by a mixture of public authorities; local, regional, national or European (see paragraph 3.2), which all put forward their own selection criteria. These criteria have to be met by the organisation in order to receive the payments of a given funding body. It is, however, often the case that the selection criteria of the different funding bodies are not concurrent or are even in opposition to each other. In this way, a double/triple/quadruple filter is being created, depending on the number of sets of criteria put forward by the different funding authorities. As a conse-

[6] European Community Household Panel.

quence, many people do not make it through the selection and are being excluded.

The manager of a Flemish training provider organisation, studied within the CASEL project (Darmon, Frade et al., 1998) describes this problem very clearly:

'(I: Are there different criteria imposed by different organisations?) R: These criteria vary according to the organisation that imposes them. But in the case of input criteria they are very different. Every organisation sets up its own requirements and you have to comply with all of them. As a consequence you have to create a lot of filters with respect to the participants. This means that you sometimes have to reject people whose ideas may fit perfectly within the organisation, but whose duration of unemployment is three days too short or too long or because they don't fit in the right pigeon-hole. So, if you depend on three different financing institutions then it is as if you put three different sieves above each other and in the end nobody gets through them anymore.'

Selection criteria, imposed by who pays for the training – be it local, regional, national or European authorities – can be regarded as one (institutional) explanation for exclusion from training programmes.

3.2 Exclusion through the need for (economic) efficiency

Because of the general decrease in the funding available from public sources and the tightening up of the access to it, training providers are forced to organise training programmes in a cost-efficient way. Employment services in European countries are increasingly aimed at maximising the 'penetration rate' of the unemployed into labour market training programmes. The training programmes' funding requirements and monitoring procedures are more and more based on targets, output-driven indicators of performance, stringent conditions of payment and other controlling devices. The evidence gathered as regards (un)employment and training policies in Europe, clearly shows that the greater the emphasis public employment officers place on the efficiency of the schemes they run, the more the people targeted – especially the most vulnerable – tend to be excluded from the schemes.

Public versus private training schemes

With respect to constraints coming from the funding structure, a distinction has to be made between public (governmental) institutions on the one hand and private (voluntary, local, non-profit, social profit) organisations on the other hand. The first – also chronologically – type of training programmes, provided by the public institutions, suited national and public policy to combat unemployment. They were aimed at teaching the job seeker skills and qualifications required by the labour market. The main objective was to combat unemployment as efficiently as possible by meeting an explicit demand for workers in a specific sector. Public organisations were getting paid by public authorities, who controlled and managed the budgetary means and financial resources to achieve this. As a result of this labour market orientation, the most vulnerable were often excluded.

Private, voluntary organisations were consequently created to compensate for the selection procedures applied in the public sector, by focusing on the most disadvantaged. Unlike public training projects, financial support from public authorities for private organisations is given in the form of a grant and comes from different administrations (local, regional, national, European) sometimes supplemented by alternative resources. Instead of a labour market orientation, the private organisations showed a job seeker orientation

In recent times, two important developments occurred. First of all there has been a shift from public to private or voluntary status (Darmon, Frade et al., 1998). Organisations have recently been created as voluntary or private bodies, whereas those with a longer existence sometimes have lost their status as public or 'quasi-public' institutions. Despite the maintenance of large public or quasi-public training institutions for the unemployed, training activities are increasingly provided by voluntary, private and non-profit (or 'so-

cial profit) organisations. Developments in this private sector have been enormous in recent years and seriously undermined the previous monopoly position of the public-training providers. Secondly, those organisations which previously had a remit towards the most vulnerable – private organisations – have increasingly tended to direct themselves towards the better off, as a result of the increasing orientation of funding requirements towards output/performance criteria. The harsher the funding requirements, the more the most vulnerable are excluded from training programmes.

3.3 Funding requirements and the need for efficiency

In assessing the harshness of the funding framework (and thus the possibility that exclusion occurs in a given training programme) a number of crucial factors can be discerned. The extent to which these factors are present in a given funding structure will determine the harshness, and thus the effects on training provider organisations, with respect to exclusion from training programmes. In the following paragraphs, we focus on the development of an analytical framework that needs to be applied to a complete and comparable data set. The impression indeed arises from reading case studies that the situation differs internally in each country, according to the type of initiative, and that these differences are sometimes more relevant than the ones between countries.

3.3.1 Targets and creaming off

The most important factor in this respect is whether or not the funding is target-based. In target based training programmes, subsidies are directly linked to the number of trainees that find a job (and/or the number of people that engage in further education) after finishing a training programme. The organisations have to show results before they are paid. As a logic result of this criterion, training provider organisations do not have the urge to pick unemployed people who are the most disadvantaged or who have been out of work for the longest period of time. Instead, they will select those candidates that have the greatest chance of achieving the targets put forward by the funding bodies. The more the emphasis is placed on reaching targets, and the higher the targets, the tighter the funding framework. Compulsion from funding bodies is less strong, on the other hand, when a training provider organisation is subsidised on anther basis, for example on the basis of past results, on the basis of the number of trainees participating in the training, or of the kind of training provided. This variation should first be analysed at the national level.

If the short-term return-to-work rate is used as a funding criterion, training providers will almost inevitably resort to a selection procedure oriented to the labour market, that is, focused on employability, on how job-ready the unemployed are. By so doing, providers expect to increase their success figures, above all the percentage of jobs obtained by the unemployed, which is the key for them to survive in a training market shaped by the funding frameworks. These strong selection procedures and a creaming off the target group to restrain only the most employable, can be seen as a natural reaction to the need for efficiency, enforced by the funding institutions. Creaming off can take extreme forms, such as subjecting potential trainees to medical, psychological and technical tests and by using assessment scales, whereby the way of selecting only the best people is further being improved.

The problem of rigid targets can be remedied through the use of differential targets. This means that when placement results are used to assess the effectiveness of an employment initiative, this has to be done on not in absolute but in relative terms. The number of people who have benefited from the programme should therefore be put in relation to those who did not benefit but who have the same characteristics as those who have.

3.3.2 Tendering and competition in the training market

Another factor that has an impact on the tightness of funding mechanisms is whether or not the funding is based on tendering and contracts. The establishment of new forms of pub-

lic expenditure, based on cost-efficiency, seems to prefer competitive tendering as a way of allocating public funds. On the other hand, the funding framework is less controlling when payments are made on the basis of an agreement between the training provider organisation and the funding institution. One-to-one agreements between public or private funding bodies (such as sectoral funds in Belgium) and training providing organisations also remain an important basis for funding. However, there seems to be a general trend towards public tendering processes which means that the training providing organisations are increasingly competing for public funds.

Whether funding is directly linked to the achievement of targets or not, all organisations, because they have to compete in the training market, are forced into marketing through placement rates. Indeed, even though targets may not be put forward by the financing bodies, private training provider organisations will try to increase the percentage of trainees that find a job after finishing the scheme. The trend away from public providers and towards the generalisation of public tendering processes inevitably increases the competition between training organisations to obtain 'scarce' public money. When subsidising bodies have to choose which training project to finance, this percentage is regarded as one of the most important – if not the most essential – indicator. To use this short-term return to work rate as a success criterion will lead training organisations and public services responsible for intake to use strong selection processes and creaming-off practices (Nicaise et al., 1995). Because of this competition for public funds among training providers, a training market has been created. This has resulted in the introduction of the need for efficiency and the assertion of a 'competitive advantage' in those organisations that were previously oriented towards the most disadvantaged. The involvement of the private sector in thsr search to secure funds has also resulted in increased competition and market strategies directed to employers. If the employers' view of the training organisation is positive the organisation can even take over the function of selecting and hiring possible employees.

3.3.3 Funding insecurity and short term solutions

Besides the impact of result-oriented funding, the period for which subsidies are given and the way in which subsidies are paid are important variables. In general, support from government is given in the form of a grant to be negotiated and renewed each year. Insecure and irregular funding, resulting from precarious contracts with public authorities, seems as problematic as the lack of sufficient funding for training organisations. This short-term funding very much reduces an organisation's capacity to work on the basis of a long-term plan. It also hampers its ability to react quickly to a changing labour market situation, be it on the part of the supply side (the job seekers) or on the part of the demand side (the employers). If training organisations are not allowed to build up reserves, they are totally dependent on what they receive from the funding bodies. As a result, delays with money transfers to local projects can have dramatic consequences for the organisation.

Financial insecurity linked to short-term subsidies also renders it very difficult for the organisation to find highly qualified staff. Contracts offered to the staff are only for short periods of time and their salary is much less than they can earn in other sectors of the labour market. The quality and qualifications of the staff, in turn, influence training programme results. Underpaid staff, or those with a precarious status, do not ensure professionalism and continuity. In addition, staff have to spend a lot of time and energy meeting all of the necessary requirements of funding bodies, looking for supplementary sources of funding and trying to gain control over their organisation's expenditure.

Short-term based funding has implications not only for the staff but also for the trainees. Funding only covers the training itself and is often inadequate to finance additional services that can be necessary to lead the trainee to the labour market. Because of the lack of money, organisations are sometimes unable to guide the unemployed socially or to develop and apply a trajectory. Follow-up care also has to be dropped in this case. If this results in

continued unemployment after successful completion of the scheme, the trainee is sometimes worse off than before the training. Consequently, for the unemployed, too, training can be a short-term solution.

3.3.4 Possibility of selection and 'double bind tension'

The possibility of selection implies room for manoeuvre for the training provider and thus compensates for the tensions arising from a target-based funding framework. If this possibility does not exist, providers are expected to take on any person referred to them. When this lack of selection possibility is combined with the requirement to achieve certain targets, it can lead to a 'double bind tension'. Indeed, training providers in such funding structures are bound in two ways: on the one hand they have to accept all those referred to them – including the least employable – and on the other hand they have to meet certain placement results. As a consequence organisations sometimes face a dilemma: either losing the funding (by not reaching the targets) and thus seriously putting at risk the survival of the organisation or reaching the targets and thus putting the unemployed at risk. The decision is often made at the expense of the unemployed, by prioritising the achievement of placement results. The problem with 'double bind tension' is not so much the creaming-off effect excluding the most vulnerable, as is the case when there is a selection possibility. It is the quality of jobs the trainees take up after finishing their training programme. A case study of a London training provider organisation within the framework of the CASEL study is a clear example of this kind of tension faced by the provider. Pushed by tight funding conditions they were paying trainees between GBP 100 and GBP 180 if they accepted a job, no matter how precarious this job might have been (Darmon and Frade, 1998).

In the end, it is important to identify the degree and kind of the 'double bind' character of funding frameworks. Is there a correlation between the type of selection, the type of training chosen and the forms and degree of social exclusion/inclusion? Indeed, the fact that every unemployed person has to be accepted can be a positive feature, but this is not the case at all when it is combined with rigid targets.

3.3.5 Range and kind of activities

In situations where there is a lack of funds and training initiatives are populated by volunteers, there is much more room for engaging in specific societal and political projects. Once the main yardstick in assessing the success of a training scheme is the rate of job placement, the training landscape changes drastically. Targets, combined with competition for funds in a very competitive market, encourages suspension of certain activities simply because the expected placement results cannot be met, even though these activities might have been crucial for the reintegration of certain groups of unemployed. Contract renewal is increasingly based on the previous years' results and projects with 'easier' targets will be preferred. As a result, training projects are accepted if they fit with the organisation's survival needs rather than if they are the most promising answer to the unemployed's training needs.

Another result of this drive for efficiency is called, in managerial terms, product differentiation. This refers to a number of activities provided by the training organisation that are sufficiently differentiated. The trend is definitely towards larger organisations that cover a wide range of activities. They usually organise several or even all of following activities; basic education, training for job search, teaching basic work habits, vocational training leading to certified qualifications, advice and guidance, 'social employment' (protected employment, either temporary or permanent) and even constancy. The presence of an array of opportunities can mean that the selection threshold is kept lower, because alternatives are present within the organisation. Different training programmes are offered according to the degree of employability, differing in their effectiveness as to job placement. The distance between the unemployed and the labour market (employability) and between the training and the labour market seem to go together. In this way, the most

employable candidates can be directed to the programmes with the strictest targets, most directly linked to the labour market. Less employable candidates can be led to less directly work-oriented programmes (or even 'social employment') where target-based pressure is not that high.

3.3.6 Managerialism

Under the pressure of more and more stringent funding regimes, there has been a shift towards managerialism. Managerialism refers to the adaptation of training activities to stringent output-related monitoring, targets and indicators (such as 'placement rates'). It is concerned with compliance with external procedures imposed by funding frameworks, with promoting the organisation in the training market and competing for funds. In a managerialist mode of organisation, the role of training managers is particularly difficult since they are responsible for making their project sustainable and they can be held responsible for that. The renewal of staff employment contracts is usually directly linked to the renewal of the contract by the funding bodies, and thus is very precarious.

The problem, then, becomes to combine the goal of 'efficiency' with more social considerations. The economic goal and the social goal are often regarded as opposites: the more a certain initiative attains its first objective of economic viability, the less it achieves the second one of reintegrating the unemployed, especially the most needy, into the labour market. The problem of unemployment is defined in managerial terms. It is about matching employers and potential employees, for whom the path to employment is strewn with all kinds of barriers. The unemployed and companies are considered as two 'customers' between whom no tension should exist since the goal of the training initiative it to match the needs of the one partner with those of the other. In that way, those who participate in training are seen as 'products' that can be delivered at the request of the employers. Are the unemployed to become – preferably good – 'products' that have to be delivered to the companies where jobs are available? If, however, these training organisations have to satisfy firstly their efficiency criteria, is not the social concern then threatened and consequently the position (selection) of marginalised groups/persons?

3.4 Motivation and (non-) participation (psychological)

In the selection of possible candidates it is not only the administrative criteria imposed by public authorities that play an important role. Most of the organisations have freedom to apply their own selection criteria. 'Motivation', in the meaning of the will to improve one's situation, is the criterion that seems to be paramount importance for the training provider in selecting trainees. It is also a subject of discussion, for example, when complaints are made by training organisations for not being able to fill the vacancies in their training programmes. Are the unemployed not motivated anymore and do they not want to participate? How can non-participation in training be explained? And how can participation be fostered?

3.4.1 Typologies of motivation

With respect to the motivation levels of the unemployed, different attempts have been made to distinguish different groups of unemployed and thus to develop a typology of motivations. An attempt to develop a typology of the unemployed has been carried out by De Witte (1992). The author distinguishes five types of unemployed. The first group is called the 'moderate optimists' because their concern for work is only moderate, although most of them would like to work in the near future. Their expectations of finding a job are favourable and they do not have problems with respect to their situation of unemployment. They show a positive attitude towards labour market programmes, though they seem only willing to participate when it fits within their plan for the future. The 'desperate seekers', the second type of unemployed, are very much concerned with work, actively look for a job and experience unemployment as very negative. They feel frustrated in their search for a job and are clearly aware of the barriers that hamper their entrance into the labour market. Because of this, willingness

to make sacrifices to find a job and their need for guiding and counselling are considerable. The 'discouraged' also have a positive attitude towards work, although they only search for it in a moderate way. Their experience of unemployment, however, is less problematic than in the group of the desperate seekers. The most obvious characteristic of this group is their pessimistic view of the future. They also ask the institutions to guide them in their search for a job in the area of work mediation because they have given up hope of realising this on their own. The attitude of the 'adjusted' towards work is positive but they have given up searching for it. They differ from the discouraged with respect to the experience of unemployment because they seem to be adjusted to the situation of being jobless. The combination of this unproblematic unemployment experience with a negative view of their chances in the labour market explains their lack of interest in training programmes. The interest in work of the last group, that of the 'withdrawers', is quasi non-existent, just like their search behaviour. In addition they experience unemployment as unproblematic and are the least willing to make sacrifices to find a job, nor do they ask social or employment services for help. On the contrary, they would rather 'get them off their back'.

Another study on AIF (*Actions d'insertion et de formation*) in France reveals four types of trainees with different motivations towards training (Verdié and Sibille, 1992). The first group does not regard training as an investment but as a way of spending their time. They are well aware of their unfavourable position in the labour market (because of a handicap, health problems, or age). Their attitude towards the labour market is fatalistic: they don't see any chance of finding a job at all. The second group are those who would like to work immediately but engage in training to improve their employment chances. The third group accept training as a last resort. They have been unemployed for a long time and, because of repeated failure, do not expect to find a job. Their attitude to training and the labour market can be regarded as very negative. The last group sees training as a way of coping with uncertainty related to unemployment.

In a study done by Kroft et al. (1989) a typology was drawn up of six different 'groups of unemployed'; conformists, ritualists, withdrawers,) enterprising, calculating, and autonomous. They differ in the way they handle the three main problems associated with unemployment: work (and the search for it); time (and how to pass it); and consumption. The different types of unemployed place a different emphasis on these three values and experience them differently. With regard to the attitude towards 'work' and 'consumption' and their view of the labour market and society as a whole, the authors have derived the following typology:

First of all, the 'conformists' show a positive attitude towards work and consumption and try to achieve both but only by accepted legal means. The 'ritualists' seem to be indifferent to work and consumption because they have given up hope of ever achieving it. If they want to improve their work situation of and consumption, they use only accepted means. The 'withdrawers' attitude towards work is one of withdrawal (they see no further chance for them in the labour market) and their attitude towards consumption is one of resignation. If they want to improve their situation, only accepted means are used. The attitude of the 'enterprising' towards work is instrumental. Because they show a positive attitude to consumption, they regard work as an instrument to achieve a higher level of consumption. To realise this, informal and/or illegal means are also used. The attitude of the 'calculating' towards work is conditional, which means that it is considered positive on the condition that it increases the level of consumption. For them, consumption is more important than work and all means are used to achieve this. Rejection of both work and consumption is the attitude of the last type of unemployed, the 'autonomous'. Their rebellious – even revolutionary – attitude of rejection of both values, imply no use of informal means.

The type of unemployed an individual belongs to strongly influences the willingness to make sacrifices in order to find a job. This can be the case with regard to the income level, the contents of the job, the duration of the contract (limited or unlimited duration), dura-

tion of employment (full time, part time), the necessity to move or to commute. Because of the great value attached to work by the conformists and the ritualists they are willing to make many sacrifices. They are willing, for example, to accept hard and rather dangerous forms of jobs, they are ready to move somewhere else or to travel long hours in order to find a job. Even their demands concerning income are quite small. Compared to the ritualists and conformists, the willingness to make sacrifices is a lot smaller in the individualist unemployed. The exercise of a job is conditional and instrumental for the enterprising and the calculating: only when their high demands concerning contents and type of jobs and level of income are guaranteed are they are ready to take the job. Trainees also belonging to the fatalist category, place great demands on a job, but for reasons other than the enterprising and the calculating. Their low willingness to make sacrifices can be explained by the existence of a defence mechanism. They make such high demands to defend themselves against the reproaches of their social environment for their continuing failure in the labour market. By placing relatively high requirements on work, they justify failures to the outside world in a dignified way. The autonomous, finally, are only prepared to make minor concessions, because they are not interested in any kind of job. These requirements are formulated in such a way that their current situation prevails over a formal work situation.

3.4.2 Motivation and (non) participation in training programmes

This perspective of the unemployed on work (work ethics, work attitudes) and their (un)willingness to make sacrifices to achieve this, has a direct impact on whether or not they participate in training and, equally, on the reasons they have for actually taking part. Trainees who belong to conformist, ritualistic, enterprising and calculating types are more likely to engage in training, whereas the withdrawers and the autonomous are less likely to participate (with the fatalists showing the lowest rate of willingness to participate). When they actually do take part, the motives are diverse. They can be pushed by their social environment to engage in training or they can see training as a means to earn money, as the only way to a job and thus as a means to access a higher consumption level. They can be obliged by social or employment services or they can see training as a means for self-development.

This can be considered important because the motivations and aspirations of the trainee will determine whether the training results in success or failure for the trainees. As a consequence, they have to be treated differently by the trainers and to be handled according to their background. For example, withdrawers have withdrawn themselves from the labour market because of the many rejections they experienced from employers. As a consequence, their self-esteem and self-confidence are very low. Therefore, it can be useful for them to participate in training to enhance their ability and their confidence. For the autonomous, on the other hand, it is important that trainers take into account their alternative labour ethics. Conformists, in turn, easily become withdrawers as the duration of their unemployment goes on: they experience continuing failure in the labour market, high social costs with regard to their search behaviour and their social bonds are gradually destroyed. They slowly arrive at a situation of resignation and dependence on social services. Individual guiding of the trainees into a regular job could be helpful in slowing down, halting or even reversing this process.

3.4.3 Correspondence of provisions and needs

Obviously, there seems to be a close relation between the type of unemployed and his or her needs and motivations. This relationship should be taken into account when offering particular services to the unemployed. Few long term unemployed or persons on minimum benefits require only vocational training; most of them also need work experience and even basic education. Consequently, training should be considered as a trajectory that, step-by-step matches the needs of the labour market with the needs of the job seekers. In short, a training programme not adjusted to the needs and motivations of the

unemployed can explain a great deal of the non-participation in training programmes. When training courses are not tailored to the needs of the individual, the individual is not motivated to participate. Therefore it seems to be important to take into account – along with the needs of the demand side of labour (the employers) – the needs of the supply side of labour.

These typologies do not take into account a number of 'contextual' factors, such as the family context of the unemployed. It is clear that the motivation to participate in training or to search for a job also depends on whether a family member – spouse – is employed or not. If this variable is not taken into account, aspects of social exclusion may be biased.

3.5 Exclusion through cultural clashes (socio-cultural aspects)

A somewhat underestimated factor in these processes of exclusion and inclusion with respect to (selection for) training offers has been the socio-cultural aspect, though it can explain a great deal of the exclusionary practices in labour market programmes[7]. This socio-cultural perspective concentrates on training organisations as actors in an acculturation process. The interplay between the unemployed and the training providers and staff takes the form of an acculturation process, that is an interaction between a dominant culture and a subordinate one. This process can take different forms ranging from assimilation – which leaves no room for differentiation – through to inclusion – an incorporation which demands some form of adaptation but accepts the permanence of differentiation – and, in between those two extremes, different levels of inter-penetration. This is a relevant perspective, given that it has become quite clear that many initiatives have failed – as programmes and in assisting the target groups – not because of their educational, practical or organisational failures but because they did not take into account this 'hidden agenda'.

3.5.1 Socialisation and acculturation patterns

The specific question then becomes: does the organisation providing training choose for the target groups' 'culture', for the labour market's culture or does it successfully bridge the gap (if any) by integrating both cultures into a proper 'organisational culture'? And how do they handle the contradiction between the mainstream cultures' dominant value of work and the reality of lack of work? To find an answer to this question, nine training schemes were investigated and thus nine case studies were carried out in four countries within the CASEL-project. In the comparative interpretation of these nine case studies, diversity in the interaction between the most important actors – the staff and the trainees – could be observed: four different patterns of socialisation-acculturation occurred.

These four socialisation-acculturation patterns (SAP) are in turn specific and complex constellations of relational characteristics. These characteristics are the underlying ethos of the training provider organisation, the kind of training and the approach of the trainees, and the trainees' relationship to and reaction to those aspects.

The SAP of 'identification' (or extreme assimilation) overrides the difference represented by the individual trainees and ultimately seeks to transform their personalities into that of the 'ideal employee'. This type of SAP occurs in organisations which have a management ethos; this means that the dominant characteristics of these organisations are efficiency, management, and precarious working conditions for the staff. The motivational approach of the trainees, that accompanies identification, is underpinned by a sort of 'idealisation' of the labour market, as the unquestioned reference. In this kind of organisation the lack of jobs is totally denied. Consequently, the emphasis is put on behaviour and attitudes rather than skills and qualifications. The reaction of the trainees in the pattern of

[7] This paragraph will mainly be based on a research carried out by the CASEL-consortium (1998), of whom CASUM has been a member, about the socio-cultural aspects of labour market (re)integration.

identification is one of polarisation in attitudes, which corresponds to the categorisation of the unemployed by the staff. One group of unemployed were very enthusiastic and identified themselves very strongly with the staff. The other group rather showed passive and sometimes even critical accommodation.

The pattern of assimilation seeks to fashion the trainees' attitudes and conduct according to a predefined model of attitudes and conduct required by the labour market (autonomy, motivation, and self-confidence). There is no recognition of differences between the trainers and the trainees, and no attempt to override it either. This type of socialisation-acculturation is also the result of a managerial ethos and a motivational approach and a strong polarisation between assimilating and passively accommodating trainees.

Inclusion, the third SAP, seeks to teach already employable trainees techniques and 'tricks' to facilitate access to the labour market, but allows for mutual differences. Crucial factors in this pattern are the 'elitist ethos', which promotes individual autonomy of the trainees. Because they have 'room for manoeuvre', these organisation show the urge to select only the most employable and thus are 'elitist' in a certain way. Their view of the labour market is more realistic: the lack of job is acknowledged but access to the labour market still seems possible for them because the most job-ready are selected. In this instrumental approach trainees do not have to identify with the rules, which consequently leaves room for mutual differentiation. The trainees actively adapt in order to learn to play the game, to learn the tricks.

In a pattern of adaptation-accommodation the aim is to make the best possible match between adaptation to the labour market and accommodation to the individual trainees. The training schemes where such a pattern was found are based on a 'service ethos'. This means that they have a special remit towards the most marginalised. In addition their aim is not mere labour market integration but integration in society as a whole: a global approach to the trainees. Training is, therefore only one of the possible means fo realising the social as well as the professional integration of the trainee. This SAP comprises an easy relationship between actively adapting and more passively accommodating trainees.

3.5.2 Implications of this approach towards the unemployed

The main causal factors for the occurrence of different types of socialisation-acculturation are undoubtedly those stemming from the policy and funding framework and its consequence of competition in the training market. The existence of this link between the different patterns and the policy and funding framework is very strongly suggested in the case studies. If the funding framework is considered according to its degree of harshness (see paragraph 3.2.2) it could be said that, the tighter the funding framework, the more likely that a pattern of identification or extreme assimilation occurs in a given training (provider organisation). Thus the funding framework explains variation between the ethos of the training organisation, the type of approach of the trainees, and the trainees' reaction, constituting the specific socialisation-acculturation pattern.

The most important implication of this sociocultural approach is that the three crucial elements, constituting a specific kind of pattern – the ethos of the training organisation, the approach of the trainees, and the trainees' reaction to both – are regarded as a relational property. They are not understood as much as an attribute of a particular actor, whether the training staff or the unemployed. In current policy, however, trainees' attitudes and reactions are often seen as a result of their specific characteristics: they are seen as lacking crucial work attitudes, for which they must be punished or of which they must be cured by different kinds of training programmes. Instead of underpinning this 'individual deficiency model', the attitudes of trainees should be treated as a relational factor. This means that they reflect the position of those actors in the mist of a network whose main domains are the policy framework and the market. It should be taken into account that the motivations and attitudes of the unemployed should not only be understood on a

psychological/attributional basis but all the more on a relational/socio-cultural basis.

3.6 The social and policy context

From a policy perspective, different developments can be discerned that have an impact on training provisions and exclusion from it. In the first place, in a number of European member states national budgets are under great pressure, which indirectly affects social and employment policy. The trend of active labour market policies also has a direct impact on provision of training programmes. Perverse effects become all the more obvious when activation policies inhibit disciplinary characteristics, especially when the availability and quality of jobs, which training should lead to, is taken into account. The emphasis put on a preventive policy by European countries and the 'hot topic' of the unemployment trap, in addition, influences the occurrence of exclusionary practices.

3.6.1 Budgetary constraints

High unemployment is a burden on social security budgets. This became especially problematic in the 1990s, when most member states of the European Union were implementing strict budget controls with a view to attaining the so-called '3 per cent norm' as laid down in the Maastricht Treaty; this norm prescribes that a member state's budget deficit should not exceed 3 per cent of GDP if this state is to participate in the European single currency. Assigning an unemployment benefit to each and every unemployed person turned out to be very costly. Unemployment benefits – and thus passive labour market policies – are under ever-increasing pressure. Policy measures eagerly try to reduce the pool of unemployed in order to brighten up their unemployment statistics and to ensure the financial sustainability of the system of unemployment insurance. The development of active labour market policies should also be seen as potential saving of expenses in the unemployment insurance system. In consequence, the breaking up of a passive system goes hand-in-hand with the development of active policies, for they serve the same purpose of budgetary savings.

Cutting budgets also has had a direct impact on training policy in the sense that one tries to achieve the greatest results with the least possible means. This principle of efficiency, applied within the domain of training, resulted in a tightening of funding requirements and monitoring procedures. As mentioned in paragraph 3.2 these are increasingly based on targets, tendering, stringent conditions of payment, and other controlling devices, with all their consequences for the targeted unemployed.

The impact is different according to the specific funding mix in a particular country. State regulations and programmes, social-partner regulations, individual financial contributions, enterprise funding (joint or individual), tax incentives, and vouchers all play a part. Although 'comprehensive, systematic and longitudinal empirical data are in short supply', Kath (1999: 42) endeavours a 'tentative evaluation' on the basis of an analysis of the situation in Germany, the U.K., France, and Denmark. He asks the question whether the use of inappropriate instruments of funding is responsible or whether it is, as often claimed, an expression of conceptual and organisational weaknesses in the system of vocational training. His answer is negative 'since it reflects a much too narrow viewpoint, inadmissibly instrumentalising vocational education and training policies with their different funding regulations as deciding factors in solutions. Actually they can only help offset existing imbalances within the framework of a comprehensive labour market policy' (Kath, 1999: 42). This framework is perhaps provided by 'active labour market policies'?

3.6.2 Active labour market policies

Parallel with the pressure upon the passive system of benefits, the activation discourse has, in a relatively short space of time, become fashionable amongst all those involved with policies concerning benefit recipients and the unemployed. Public budgets spent on active labour market measures keep on growing year after year. There is a growing attention towards activation not only in the policy world but also in the academic world, as part of the debate on the future of the welfare state

and the 'new social question'. More generally, one speaks of the activation of social security or of the welfare state: income support policy, welfare policy and unemployment policy. Usually, the term is narrowed down to the question of how the growing group of poorly qualified and/or long-term unemployed people and individuals who are totally dependent upon income support, can be re-integrated in society, through the (labour) market or otherwise. Thus, the problem is restricted to the structural gap between predominantly highly skilled insiders and a (growing) group of mostly unskilled outsiders.

Within the scope of the more narrow approach of this so-called 'new social question', policymakers and social scientists in various European counties have, in a relatively short period of time, adopted the notion of social activation into their own vocabulary. Today, they take activation measures or they underpin the activation discourse. Generally speaking, this concerns policies aimed at the speedy reintegration into society of people who are excluded from the labour market and are living off an allowance. This reintegration can and must, according to most programmes, happen exclusively via the labour market (Geldof, 1999).

3.6.3 Training as an active labour market policy

Activation in employment policy can take different forms, ranging from training and schooling to counselling, work experience and employment (in the normal labour market or in the alternative sector also called the 'social economy'). However, it always aims at increasing labour market participation by job seekers and thus stimulating labour supply. Instruments for active labour market policy have rapidly gained popularity in European countries, especially the instrument of training. Since it became clear that the poorly qualified were finding it increasingly difficult to cope in the labour market, more and more emphasis is placed on training. This was clearly shown at the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on Employment, held in Luxembourg on 20 and 21 November 1997. In the conclusions of the presidency, we read the following:

'Transition from passive measures to active measures.

Benefit and training systems (where that proves necessary) must be reviewed and adapted to ensure that they actively support employability and provide real incentives for the unemployed to seek and take up work or training opportunities. Each Member State will endeavour to increase significantly the number of persons benefiting from active measures to improve their employability. In order to increase the numbers of unemployed who are offered training or any similar measure, it will in particular fix a target, in the light of its starting situation, of gradually achieving the average of the three most successful Member States, and at least 20%.'

(Conclusions of the presidency, Luxembourg 20/21 November 1997, 53-54)

Putting forward this percentage, as a result of which most countries have to push up their efforts substantially, implies that the number of unemployed who will be able to participate will also increase considerably. This evolution exhibits positive features for the most disadvantaged because the chance of participation will increase, but a number of dangers are lurking with regard to compulsion in activation and the contradiction of activation with the lack of jobs.

3.6.4 Compulsory features in active labour market policies

The range of measures in activation policies is very broad, but it always concerns combinations of employment and benefits, even in the case of training. Workfare in the strict sense, where one is forced to work in order to maintain the benefit, is still, for the time being, rather exceptional in Europe (certainly compared to the American situation). However, workfare in the broader sense is increasingly common. In the broad sense it means that welfare recipients are expected to make efforts for re-employment and reintegration (Andries, 1997). European countries, however, are moving more and more in the direction of learnfare: the beneficiary can be obliged to follow training in order to receive benefits.

The improvement of opportunity in the labour market (via training) can be accompanied by the threat of a sanction: diminishing or ending unemployment benefit. Thus, increasing pressure is exerted on the (long-term) unemployed and there has been a shift in the meaning of the concept: besides the emancipatory angle, it now also includes a disciplinary element.

Compulsion to participate in training schemes has created much controversy, however, because it can be used as a means of testing the willingness to work, and thus a means of suspension from benefits. The mandatory nature of recent programmes carries with it the danger of generating additional risks of exclusion for those who do not follow the rules of the game properly. In addition, studies have shown from the literature that mandatory schemes are often ineffective. The fact that the supply of clients is guaranteed for training providers and thus that there are less incentives to improve the quality of training, can be one explanation. Secondly, compulsion can lead to stigmatisation of the trainees in the eyes of the employers and thirdly, the mere fact of obligatory attendance can demotivate the trainees, especially when the programme is not suited to their needs. Consequently, an equilibrium should be established between the duties (to engage in training) and the rights (the freedom of choice) of the unemployed.

3.6.5 Activation and the availability and quality of jobs

The stimulation of labour supply by active measures, however, is very much in contrast with the actual lack of jobs and high unemployment rates. Indeed, unemployment is basically a situation of excess supply and/or depressed demand in labour markets. The low-skilled sector of – where the most of the trainees will end up – is already characterised by a situation of excess supply. So, on the one hand, training can be the answer to the new social question by bridging the gap between low-skilled and highly skilled workers but, on the other hand, this can only be done efficiently when jobs are actually available.

So, does the Centre for Social Policy at the University of Antwerp (UFSIA) believe that activation towards the labour market is the answer to the 'new social question'?

'This new social question requires a truly new approach. We must move towards a policy of activation; a policy that is targeted at all individuals with poor qualifications, including poorly qualified housewives, and not just those who are officially unemployed. A policy of activation is also necessary for reason that marginalisation of the poorly-qualified is not merely – not even primarily – a question of poverty. The aspect of poverty has, in fact, been adequately addressed. It is now primarily a matter of social integration and socio-cultural cohesion. If a further economic and political polarisation is to be avoided and the ideal of the welfare state safeguarded, then a radical choice for *jobs* for the poorly qualified is indispensable' (Cantillon and Marx, 1995).

Cantillon and Marx's plea for activation indicates that there is an essential distinction to be made in activation policy. The word *jobs* in the final sentence of the quote is important: it signifies a much broader concept of activation than is evident in many current activation measures, which are almost exclusively aimed at the activation of benefit recipients. If one takes the option for jobs seriously, then this firstly implies an activation of the labour market rather than – or even contrary to – activation of benefit recipients.

Not taking into account the current situation of high unemployment rates eventually leads to a further marginalisation of the already disadvantaged, for the trainees may be forced to accept any jobs, no matter how precarious they may be in terms of working conditions and wages. The pressure to accept lower-standard jobs, manifested itself in a very extreme way in the London organisation already mentioned, where under the 'British job start schemes', the long-term unemployed were offered allowances should they accept a job within three months.

The quality of employment is not only brought into question in general job-search training, that does not train for a particular types of

work. Questions can also be asked in the case of training programmes with a specific professional outcome: 'For what kind of jobs is the training a preparation? For a pool of unspecified (very) precarious jobs? Or for specific jobs?' In this wide field, a relatively recent trend exists towards training for 'new' occupations. One reason for this development is that changes in the structure of publicly accepted needs requires new services and therefore new jobs and qualifications to carry them out. These new jobs can result from the splitting up of the job description of an existing profession into a more qualified and a less qualified component, or from the combining of several such job parts. These are mostly 'intermediate' jobs, which require a combination of general and technical skills ('logistic assistant' in Flanders, *auxiliaires de vie* or 'mediators' between neighbours in peripheral estates in France). The question is whether this new labour market that is developing and that is accessible to people without necessarily high skills (women returnees, young people) will integrate the segment of the secondary labour market?

With regard to jobs in the so-called third labour market circuit, those created for the unemployed who are not considered able to move into a normal job ever again, the status of the jobs can be questioned too. These projects are very much dependent on subsidies because self-sufficiency is hard to achieve. Therefore, they are not always able to do any more than propose temporary, subsidised and informal work of a marginal type. In addition, the transition from this third labour market to the regular one seems almost impossible and no effort is made to try to realise this transition. Unless the status of the jobs provided in this segment of the labour market is changed into stable, normally-remunerated jobs fully covered by social security, (full-time) employment in the formal labour market must still be the aim for every individual unemployed.

3.6.6 Reasons for increasing popularity

Training has become a most important part of the 'activation' of employment policies and is therefore geared to reintegration into the labour market in the most cost-effective way. Budgets spent on active policies are growing rapidly, whereas those on passive policies are decreasing. This evolution is not very surprising given the current policy context of budget savings and the fact that this kind of policy is very visible. Policy makers can actually show that they are doing something about the problems, and even quantify their effort.

This approach is characterised by an individual deficiency model. According to this model unemployment – especially of certain disadvantaged groups – is the result of individual events or the lack of individual qualities, such as an appropriate attitude towards work and the working environment. There has thus been a shift in responsibility from the policymakers to the unemployed individual; The responsibility of the authorities lies only in the provision of training opportunities and the person who, despite those efforts, remains unemployed is suspected of not being willing to work.

3.6.7 European guideline for a preventive policy

The statement 'You can't bail out a leaking boat without plugging the hole' of Allan Larsson, Director-General of DG 'Social Affairs and Employment' of the European Commission clearly illustrates the European idea of a preventive policy. The idea is that the longer the duration of unemployment, the more difficult it will be for the unemployed to get out of it. Intervening at an earlier stage of unemployment should prevent this. The 'plugging of the hole' therefore should happen by means of offering every young person a new start before they reach their sixth month of unemployment and every unemployed adult before reaching twelve months of unemployment (guidelines 1 and 2). This policy trend, again, is contrary to a policy targeted to the (long-term) most disadvantaged unemployed or who show the highest risk profile: a curative policy.

The problem with a preventive policy, when it is translated into early intervention, is that chances are high that dead weight will occur. Dead weight relates to the fact that benefici-

aries of a programme, who would have found a job without following the training too, fill the jobs. As a result of the much larger target group, in which the most employable are over-represented, the threshold for the long-term unemployed will be much higher because they have to compete with more job-ready unemployed (see paragraph 3.1.1). The long-term unemployed will be neglected in a preventive policy. The group of unemployed will be filtered and those who remain in unemployment will be the hard core unemployed. Early intervention can only be justified when the unemployed are screened on risk characteristics: those characteristics that result in a higher chance of drifting into long-term unemployment. However, these risk categories are difficult to measure.

4. Conclusions

Both participation in the labour market and participation in training programmes are unevenly distributed among different population groups: women, elderly, disabled, lower educated and migrants are underrepresented. Gender, age, health situation, ethnicity and educational level are thus of crucial importance in explaining non-participation in the labour market and in training schemes. Accumulation of these factors increases the risk of becoming unemployed and decreases the chance of participating in training. In this way, a hard core of unemployed and untrained is been created.

The crucial factors that generate this unequal distribution are institutional, economic, psychological, and cultural. Persons who are most likely to be excluded from training programmes do not comply with the administrative criteria (from an institutional point of view). Moreover, they have fewer chances of finding a job after finishing the training and thus contribute to lower placement rates (from an economic point of view), they are less motivated (from a psychological point of view), and they identify less with the labour market (from a socio-cultural point of view). As a consequence the most vulnerable of the unemployed – who share these characteristics – are being excluded from training initiatives. Therefore, continuing efforts should be made to re-integrate these 'hard core' unemployed and untrained. This is not an easy task, at least if we take the definition of 'social exclusion' seriously. Social exclusion, indeed, is not only about unequal access but mainly about 'fault lines' between these groups and the rest of the population, between their behavioural patterns and the dominant ones, between them and the institutional and cultural framework of society. Social exclusion often does not present itself in one domain. It is not about employment or training, but about employment and training. Moreover, both training and employment are often embedded in a larger network of exclusions that encompasses other fields of the individual and social life of the target groups of this contribution: housing, health, associational life. This reality implies that research, policies and social action have to take account of many initial factors in order to understand and remedy exclusion from training initiatives. Moreover, the opposite of social exclusion – the process of social inclusion – is not just 'the way back'. Additional obstacles can be expected, such as the restoration of the former roles or of the different forms of inclusion (cultural, normative, communicative and functional).

In spite of the strong interrelation between the implications for research, policy-making and social action, we intend to specify our conclusions and proposals according to these three dimensions.

4.1 Conclusions for further research

What is lacking, is a more profound understanding of the structures of daily life in the target groups. We are referring to their social networks, their interpretation of the direct and indirect societal environment, and their coping strategies. This kind of knowledge cannot be obtained through traditional surveys. A more qualitative approach is needed here, based on in-depth interviews and analysed with the help of specific methods (network analysis, grounded theory, structural analyses).

Another focal point for further analysis is the institutional framework of training. We refer

to the different 'management styles' that are being used by training initiatives. Some of them are more appropriate to helping the target groups bridge the gap between their deprived situation and typical behavioural patterns, and the training initiatives and/or the labour market than others. An adapted version of the Bourdieu & Passeron concept of 'cultural deficit' could be productive in this context, referring to the difference between the culture of the training initiative and the trainers and that of the trainees.

4.2 Conclusions for policy makers

Of the many important points in this respect, we would like to stress the need for coordination of legislation, of initiatives. There is an urgent need for a governance approach to vocational training initiatives, integrating the different stages leading from social exclusion to social inclusion, the different levels of decision-making (from the European to the local level) and the multiple actors (public and private) engaged in this venture.

Integration into the labour market alone should not be the sole objective of VET. The ultimate goal is integration into society. We acknowledge the importance of work, of a job in this respect – Jahoda's 'latent deprivation model' has to be used as a frame of reference. There are, however, parallel routes in this respect and the organisation of a social economy sector is an important one. Social economy should no longer be seen as a temporary solution, to be developed in times of economic crisis and high unemployment. Its logic should no longer remain the 'lower productivity' of a growing part of the 'active population'. It should become, instead, the mix of the different goals discussed.

What about 'active policies' or 'activation', policy objectives that have become very fashionable today? The most important point in this debate concerns the interrelation between the client, the vocational training initiative and the labour market: the need to increase the emancipation dimension of vocational training and the potential for the trainee to have a job at the end of her/his trajectory. This implies not only adaptation at the actor dimension (training the trainers), but, even more so, adaptation in the cultural and institutional training framework and larger societal context.

4.3 Conclusions for people responsible for training organisations

What kind of vocational training model is to be developed, so that accessibility for risk groups and their successful participation increases? Méhaut presents us with one possible answer: the integrated training model. It refers to training that is more integrated into the working situation, through its relations with 'the organisation (and content) of work, job mobility and pay conditions' (Méhaut, 1999). The problem with this model is that it only refers to the relation with the (potential) work situation, whereas it has become clear that social inclusion of the target groups usually implies taking account of multiple exclusions. The *holistic* model of Ott provides us with an alternative. 'Holistic vocational training is not just oriented towards the acquisition of technical competences. It seeks to actively encourage the self-determination of individuals, their social co-responsibility and democratic co-determination of the worlds of life and work' (Ott, 1999). This model, however, is too much focused on the individual dimension; it does not sufficiently take account of the institutional, cultural and larger societal requirements that are needed to organise successful vocational training initiatives for our risk groups. The approach that is needed here has been discussed in terms of 'inclusiveness' 'governance' or 'mainstreaming'. At the level of specific organisations, this approach is to be translated into the development of coherent trajectories, that take account of the multiple and specific problems encountered by long-term unemployed and subsistence income beneficiaries. It also means that these trajectories should not only take account of personal strengths and weaknesses of their clientele. The behaviour of the actors that organise these trajectories (managers, trainers) and the institutional settings also have to adapt to the specificities of situations of social exclusion.

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Training and employment perspectives for lower qualified people

Jittie Brandsma

Abstract

Learning and a qualified labour force become increasingly important in our societies. At the same time, European countries are still confronted with relatively high unemployment which in particular affects the least qualified or low-skilled workers. The combination of a weak labour market position and low education achievement levels, might further marginalise these groups of low-skilled workers in the future if learning becomes a necessary precondition for gainful employment. Appropriate training models for developing the skills of these workers remain lacking.

This paper addresses the labour market position of low-skilled workers and factors in the functioning of the labour market that might further weaken their position. It goes on to discuss the issue of training the least qualified, drawing upon European research in the area of the effectiveness of training for the unemployed and exemplary models developed in different European Member States.

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1. Introduction

Learning becomes ever more important in our society. Policy documents from both the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, stress the importance of a well, if not highly, qualified labour force for the competitiveness of national economies (EU, 1996; OECD, 1996). At the same time various European countries are still confronted with relatively high unemployment levels, which in particular affects the least qualified or low-skilled workers. The combination of a weak labour market position and low education achievement levels, might further marginalise these groups of low-skilled workers in the future if learning becomes a necessary precondition for gainful employment. Appropriate training models for developing the skills of these workers remain lacking.

This chapter first addresses the labour market position of low-skilled workers and the factors in the functioning of the labour market that might further weaken their position. Next, the issue of training of the least qualified is addressed, drawing upon European research in the area of the effectiveness of training for the unemployed and exemplary models developed in different European Member States.

2. The low-skilled in a changing and dynamic labour market

2.1 Low-skilled: possible definitions

Before launching into an analysis of the changes in the labour market, and the implications these might have for the least qualified, it is necessary to provide a definition of the least qualified or the low-skilled. The terminology of the 'least qualified' underlines that education and training, or the level of educational attainment, is, to a certain extent, a 'positional good', in the sense that the link between a certain level of education and a certain job level can vary over time, and what, at a certain moment, is considered, for instance, as being a middle-skilled level depends on the qualification demands in the labour market vis-à-vis the supply of workers with lower or higher levels of educational attainment (Brandsma 1993).

'Least qualified' or 'low-skilled' elicits, certainly nowadays, a connotation of being 'at risk' of unemployment, social exclusion or at least being referred to those parts of the labour market with relatively little job stability, low paid and low-skilled jobs (cf. Hannan et al. 1998). What is considered to be low-skilledalso depends, partly, on policy targets and on national systems. In the Netherlands, for instance, the 'common sense' connotation of being low-skilled would refer to those who dropped out of lower secondary education (or even earlier) without having obtained any diploma or formal certificate. Or to those employed in jobs which, at face-value, do not require much general education or job specific training. At the same time, educational policy defined the 'at risk' group as being all those that did not succeed in obtaining a certificate from any upper secondary programme, with upper secondary education encompassing the apprenticeship system, school-based secondary vocational education and the last two or three years of general secondary education. This establishes a rather heterogeneous group, encompassing (cf. Bock and Hövels 1991):

- the real early leavers from lower secondary education;
- those leaving the education system after having obtained a certificate from lower secondary education;
- those leaving the education system after having spent some time in upper secondary education (including vocational education);
- those leaving the education system after having failed the final examination in upper secondary education (again including vocational education).

Defining the 'at risk' group in this way, the policy target is set such that every school leaver should enter the labour market with a

so-called 'starting qualification'. This is defined as being the equivalent of a two-year vocational (apprenticeship) programme, which is considered to be the minimum level necessary in order to have an adequate chance of obtaining a job in the labour market. It will, however, be clear that there are major differences within this target group. Those who achieved some years of upper secondary education (the latter two categories), have a different starting position in the labour market from those who did not. Those in vocational education, for instance, sometimes drop out during the period that they receive practical training within an enterprise, because the employer offers them a job (cf. Brandsma 1999), while those who have received some years of general upper secondary education appear to have more chance on finding a job in which continuing training is provided and, with that, opportunities to build a career through the internal labour market (Meesters 1992).

In attempting to define 'low-skilled', various methods could be applied ranging from the use of formal level of educational attainment within the national education system to more direct measurements of actual skills (like numeracy, literacy or computer literacy skills). Hannan et al. (1998) underline the differences and difficulties, as outlined with regard to the Dutch example, in their comparative analysis of 'early leavers' in France, Scotland, Ireland and the Netherlands, and indicate that terms like 'at risk groups', 'early leavers', 'unqualified leavers' or 'persons inadequately prepared for labour market entry' are problematic and value-laden. They also point out the heterogeneity of the at-risk group labelled in this way. What is considered to be at risk depends on the policy targets and on supply and recruitment behaviour, which tend to change over time. Hannan et al. (1998) propose – in the context of their research project – the following definition of what they call 'lower level leavers':

> 'Those who leave initial full-time education without reaching the first point of (or first opportunity for) certification within the upper second-level system'.

With this they deliberately take on board the earlier mentioned heterogeneity of this group. They discard the International Standard Classification on Education (ISCED) level categories, which they consider as being too broad and too imprecise to capture the full meaning of 'lower level leavers'. Their definition, therefore, also captures those that passed lower secondary examinations or passing grades and those that left upper secondary education before the final examinations at this level.

In their work for the Newskills project, Murray and Steedman (1998), McIntosh (1998) and Leuven, Oosterbeek and van Ophem (1998) took various approaches in order to define where the cutting-off point for the definition of low-skilled should be set. On the basis of this work, they conclude that, though using recognised qualifications obtained as a proxy for the skill levels of people is less accurate than actual measurement of such skill levels, application of the ISCED levels can be considered an acceptable solution. Apart from the fact that data on ISCED-level attainment are collected on a regular basis, thus providing up-to-date information on the proportions of national population for each level of attainment, ISCED does take into account the differences between educational systems in different countries (cf. Newskills 1999). Using the ISCED levels, the cut-off point for the definition of the low-skilled group in Europe was set at having obtained an educational attainment level of ISCED 2 or less, which equals to lower secondary education or less (with level 1 equalling primary education and level 0 less than primary education). A possible counter argument against this cut-off point could be that specific forms of training, like short continuing vocational training courses or less structured, or formalised, forms of training like attending seminars or on-the-job training, are difficult to classify. Even though such forms of training often are not officially certified, they might be recognised as adding up to the formal skill level of workers, certainly within the company specific labour market. Given that such training is difficult to capture within ISCED, applying ISCED levels might result in a slight overestimation of the number of low-skilled workers (cf. Brandsma 1999).

The two different 'solutions' for this problem indicate the problematic character of demarcating the research (and policy) area of the low-skilled/least qualified. With this, is implied the sensitivity of this area for changing labour market and training policies as well as changing policy priorities. It does not seem to be a wild speculation to suppose that whether the upper or lower boundary of the 'at risk' group – as defined in the Dutch example – will attract most attention and benefit most from labour market measures, partly depends on the overall economic and labour market situation. To be more precise, in situations of high unemployment and a restricted absorption capacity of the labour market, it is likely that labour market measures will – be it intended or not – have a bias towards the upper boundary of the at-risk group, while in situations of a low or rapidly declining unemployment with difficult to fill vacancies, all attention goes to the lower boundary of the at-risk group (cf. Brandsma 1993). The present labour market situation in the Netherlands, for instance, shows these shifts in attention. There the debate presently focuses on the possibility of activating the real 'hard-core' of the long-term unemployed as well as the possibility of offering work to refugees not yet certain of their final status. Notwithstanding these possible shifts in attention, depending on the general economic and labour market situation, there appears to be a growing consensus that, at least, completion of upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) is needed for a good starting point in the labour market, as is reflected by the various 'safety net' programmes established in various countries for young people that do not continue their studies after lower secondary education (e.g.: social guarantee programmes in Spain, individual training programmes in Denmark and Sweden, assistant training programmes in the Netherlands, 'qualification contracts' in France and NVQ/SVQ level 1 programmes in the UK).

2.2 Labour market perspectives for the low-skilled

Even though the economic upswing in many European countries might, to a certain extent, also bring relief for the weak labour market position of the low-skilled and/or long-term unemployed, overall this position is rather vulnerable. Based on IALS-data, the OECD (1998) comes to the conclusion that low skills (defined as ISCED level 2 or less) have a strong correlation with inadequate foundation or literacy skills. This does not only concern the whole labour force aged between 16 and 65 years, but also the younger age cohorts of 16 to 25 years old[1]. Poor literacy skills among young people increase the chance of becoming unemployed. Even if these young people with poor literacy skills find employment, their chance of ending up in unstable and poorly paid jobs is substantially higher than young people with adequate foundation skills.

In their comparative study across four countries, Hannan et al. (1998) show that lower level leavers are more likely to be unemployed or in apprenticeship or labour market schemes than being employed. Here it is necessary to recall their definition of lower level leavers, which states that it concerns those who leave full-time education without reaching the first point of certification within the upper second level, that is full-time education system. Therefore, their conclusion also encompasses apprenticeship, which by definition means that entrants have left school and which is perceived by Hannan et al. (1998) as an alternative post-school vocational training and as an early labour market outcome. However, in countries where apprenticeship training has a strong tradition and is highly institutionalised (like Germany, Austria and also the Netherlands) apprenticeship training is considered an integral part of the upper secondary education system and those who enrol in apprenticeship training are certainly not perceived as lower level leavers.

In countries with high unemployment rates in the youth labour market, those with a higher educational level have significantly

[1] Though there are differences between countries in the sense that in some countries adequate literacy skills have been obtained even if young people did not conclude upper secondary education.

better chances of staying out of unemployment than lower level leavers. At the same time, it appears that the quality of jobs held by lower level leavers is less than the quality of jobs (in terms of stability, income and utilisation of what has been learned) available for higher level leavers. Lower level leavers appear to be more often employed part-time in manual occupations, though on a steady basis. Lower level leavers are also less actively engaged in the search for another job. The findings of Hannan et al. (1998) indicate that unemployment appears to be handed down from one generation to the next. In addition to the relation between parental unemployment and the unemployment of the present generation, it appears that the chance of 'early leaving' (or low level leaving) is related to such background variables as gender, ethnicity[2], and socio-economic background. Young men are more likely to become lower level leavers, as are young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. At the same time young women have a higher chance of being unemployed or in labour market schemes (including apprenticeship) than young men.

These findings, and, in particular, the one regarding the influence of socio-economic background, lead Hannan et al. (1998) to the conclusion that the educational casualties will be concentrated amongst those from the most deprived families. Even though there are differences between countries, this conclusion holds for each of the four countries included in the study.

The previous section mainly addressed the labour market position and perspectives of low-skilled school leavers in a period of increasing average levels of educational attainment. What is the labour market situation of the low-skilled in general, including the other generations? In their work for the Newskills project[3], Murray and Steedman (1998) show that, overall, the proportion of the low-skilled (according to their earlier definition) in the labour force is dropping, with the younger age cohorts (16-28 years old) being substantially better educated than the older cohorts. Again there are differences between countries with regard to both the proportion of low-skilled in the labour force and the speed with which this proportion is dropping. In some countries with a relatively high proportion of low-skilled (ISCED level 2 or less) in the labour force (like the UK) this proportion drops faster than in countries with a relatively smaller proportion of low-skilled (e.g. the Netherlands), but, given the initial higher proportion of the former countries, it will take more time for the proportion to drop to a 10% level than in the latter countries (Murray and Steedman 1998).

Analysing data covering a period from 1985 to 1997, Kirsch (1999) concludes that the labour market position of the low-skilled (ISCED 0-2) is not a prosperous one and has deteriorated during that period (with the exception of Portugal). The likelihood of both unemployment and inactivity are considerably higher for the low-skilled than for the total labour force. Even though in all countries included in the Newskills project the proportion of the low-skilled has decreased, the likelihood of being either unemployed or inactive has increased during the period between 1985 and 1997. This suggests that the low-skilled have faced a further marginalisation during those years (Kirsch 1999).

2.3 Labour market mechanisms; implications for the low-skilled

2.3.1 Upskilling, deskilling and substitution

2.3.1.1 Changing labour market structures

The previous section outlined the relative weakness of the position of low-skilled workers in the labour market as well as the deterioration of this position. The question is whether this can be explained given that, at the same, time the proportion of low-skilled in the total labour force has dropped. It appears that there are several, more or less rival, explanations referring to (among others) economic restructuring, upskilling, substitu-

[2] Ethnicity has only been included as variable in the Dutch data set.

[3] This project encompassed France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK.

tion and segmentation. These possible explanations will be discussed in this and the next section.

Looking at the changes in employment structure during the 1980s and the early 1990s, it becomes clear that there has been a significant redistribution between sectors with regard to employment. Traditional sectors like agriculture, manufacturing and utilities have strongly declined while the service sector has boomed (Robinson 1997). In his analysis for the Newskills project, Kirsch (1999) indicates that employment for the low-skilled (ISCED 0-2) has a rather segmented nature. Irrespective of country specific differences, there is a group of sectors where employment for the low-skilled appears to be concentrated, while other sectors have little or no employment for low-skilled workers. The former group appears to consist of sectors like agriculture, manufacturing sectors like clothing and extractive and process industries, transport and hotels, catering, retailing and small repairs. Apart from the last four service sectors, these are mainly sectors in decline, which, as indicated earlier, can (partly) explain the worsened labour market position of the least qualified.

At the same time, these traditional sectors have been the major providers of employment for the low-skilled. The decline of these traditional sectors appears not to be compensated for by the growth of the service sector, at least not in terms of the employment of the low-skilled, As in other sectors, employment growth in the service sector is mainly accounted for by the increasing number of managerial and administrative functions, proximity services and personal services. It appears that, especially in those non-manual functions, skill demands have been raised as well, both in terms of formal educational attainment requirements and in terms of training time needed to fully master the job (Gallie 1991).

2.3.1.2 The skill-biased technology hypothesis versus the trade shift hypothesis

Wage inequality literature offers two rival hypotheses to explain the rise in skill demands. One the one hand, skill demands have risen as a consequence of skill-biased technology. On the other hand, skill demands have risen due to shifts in the location of production of low-skilled manufactured goods; this is an argument that could be related to what has been indicated with regard to decline of employment in specific sectors (Newskills 1999). Both hypotheses assume that an increased wage inequality indicates a drop in both the wages of and the demand for low-skilled workers. The skill-biased technology change hypothesis mainly focuses on the relationship between technological change (often equated with increased use of computers) and the increasing demand for highly skilled workers (as expressed in increasing wage inequality). Overall, the literature suggests that there is a relationship between computer usage and the increased demand for high skilled labour, if an increasing wage inequality is taken as an adequate indicator for this. However, much of the research undertaken focuses on 'computer-usage' and on subjective judgements of either employers or employees, or both, without taking into account other 'explanatory factors' (like the hierarchy or flatness of work organisations, worker independence in taking decisions, etc.) nor trying to find more objective indicators for actual differences in skill demand levels. As will be argued later on, there is some evidence for contrary developments as well.

The trade hypothesis focuses on the effects of the shift of mass production of low-skilled goods from highly industrialised countries to developing countries. This shift reduces the price of those goods and, in consequence, causes deterioration of the competitive position of such manufacturing industries in highly industrialised economies, since these are confronted with much higher labour costs than developing countries. The evidence to support this hypothesis shows that only a small proportion of the falling demand for low-skilled labour (or the increasing wage inequality) can be explained by this (Newskills 1999). Nevertheless, there are various examples of sectors, or parts of sectors, which completely relocated production to the so-called 'low wage countries' to the detriment of (low-skilled) employment in Western European countries.

The textile industry is a very impressive example in this respect, but it is also the case that various enterprises in consumer electronics replaced part of their production (of half fabricates) to the low wage countries.

The wage inequality approach focuses on wage inequalities as an indicator of, or proxy for, the changes in skill demands[4], but does not measure the actual (changes in) the demand. Other studies, like the earlier mentioned study of Gallie (1991) indicate that there has at least been a rise in the demand for formal educational attainment level. This work also indicates that this is the particular case for jobs in which automated and computer equipment is used, while this is much less the case for jobs in which such equipment is not used. Similar findings with regard to the increasing levels of educational requirements and periods of additional training needed are indicated by Green et al. (1998) and Hasan and Tuijnman (1997). Again, it should be stressed that this work draws to a large context on 'subjective' judgement of the change in skill demands.

2.3.1.3 Upskilling versus deskilling; the role of technology

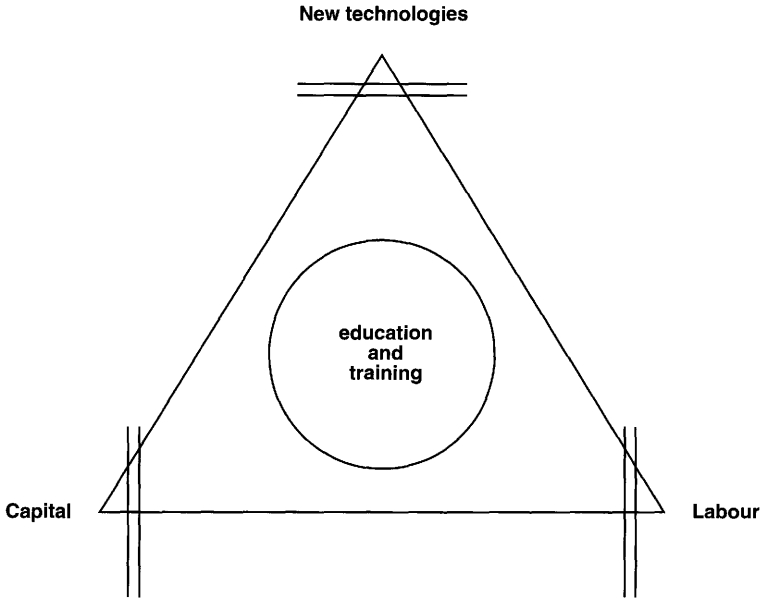
However, there is also evidence which seems to contest such findings. Some studies show that there is complementarity between skills (or skill levels) and organisational change, indicating that organisational change stops when there is a relative shortage of highly skilled workers (cf. Caroli and Van Reenen 1999; Newskills 1999). The question is whether it is the availability of highly skilled labour that drives organisational change, or whether organisational change elicits an increase in demand for highly skilled labour. Currently, evidence seems to support both assumptions without (yet) giving decisive support for either one of them.

Various authors have underlined that technological change does not automatically lead to higher skill demands, but that the effect of technological innovation on skill requirements is mediated by the organisational structure of labour organisations (Carnevale 1991; Brandsma 1993; Keep 1997; Stern and Benson 1991; Tuijnman 1993). These authors argue that the fact that technological innovation has not led to the expected increase in productivity and economic growth could be caused by a less optimal, if not, inflexible and inefficient use of such technologies. Efficient and flexible use of the production factor technology might require flatter and more flexible organisations and additional training of the employees working with those technologies (Tuijnman 1993). Whether or not introduction of new technologies will result in increased productivity and/or increased skill demands, partly depends on the way in which new technologies are employed. Available skills or skills to be developed, design of work processes and the effects of the implementation of new technologies are very much intertwined, as is shown in Figure 1.

In line with this, various authors have argued that whether or not upskilling takes place, will depend on the particular management strategy employed. Technology can be used for further rationalisation as well as for innovation in the organisation, providing workers with greater responsibilities. In this context, Brown and Keep (1998) indicate that it sometimes seems that the new forms of work organisation, which are alleged to be necessary if enterprises want to survive, are primarily advocated by academics and management gurus, but do not (or only partly) reflect practices in business and industry. In less knowledge-intensive sectors in the UK, like the retail sector and insurance companies, there appears to be a tendency to increase scale and rationalise work processes in order to reduce costs and optimise profits. In this

[4] Above all it focuses on wage inequality as an indicator of productivity. Concerning the latter, there is substantial evidence that productivity is relatively low for low-skilled workers if compared with more highly educated workers, though the relative level of productivity of low-skilled workers appears to be influence by the overall level of educational achievement of the total labour force as well (with higher levels of overall educational achievement increasing productivity among low-skilled workers) (Nickell 1998). There are indications that increasing levels of skill demand are related to, or stem from, increasing demands with regard to productivity.

Figure 1: Relations between the three primary production factors and education and training of the labour force



Source: Tuijnman, 1993

context, Brown and Keep (1998) come to the conclusion that Fordism certainly is not dead yet. Similar tendencies are observed for Germany. In sectors where knowledge or competence is a less crucial factor, enterprises try to rationalise their production and work processes in order to increase profits, with the consequence of reducing employment. For workers being made redundant due to these rationalisations, the consequence is often a further marginalisation of their labour market position (cf. Tessaring 1998).

Of course, this might concern specific enterprises or sectors and does not necessarily apply to the whole economy or the macro-level, though there appear to be country specific tendencies in this respect. Some studies indicate that, for instance, British managers appear to require significantly lower levels of skills and qualifications than the EU-average and perceive a skilled workforce less as a source of competitive advantage than their French or German colleagues (Coopers and Lybrand 1995; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 1998). Nevertheless, if the drop in demand for low-skilled workers (which occurs in all OECD-countries) is taken as an indicator, at least at a macro-level there appears a shift in employment structures towards a high-skill, high-performance mode of working (cf. Brown and Keep 1998).

Labour organisations can thus choose management strategies and market profiles that might actually result in deskilling or in a form of polarisation between different groups of employees. An exemplary development with regard to the latter, is the slowly emerging development in some labour organisations that distinguishes between 'core workers' on steady contracts and so-called flex-workers, that are only employed temporarily. Keep and Mayhew (1998) further indicate that there are various alternative strategies to allow enterprises to cope with this competition – alternatives (e.g. like growth through takeover or new forms of Fordism) that are not based on upskilling and higher quality. The strong belief that increasing levels of knowledge and skills are the core factors in increasing and improving performance of enterprises, does not take into account that there are other factors playing a role in this process as well. As Keep (1997) states:

'The other pieces include human resource management systems and policies (...), product market strategies, work organisation, job design, investment in R&D and plant and equipment, supplier policies and the external infrastructure (...). Each element needs to be finely meshed with the other in order to produce the high performance organisation'.

2.3.1.4 Substitution processes

Next to the issue of upskilling or deskilling, there is another phenomenon that could explain the not-so-prosperous labour market situation of the low-skilled. As Hannan and Werquin (1999) indicate various studies show a rapid growth in the supply of workers with higher educational levels across most EU-countries but without an accompanying and similar rapid growth in occupations that require such higher levels of education. Most of the educational change in terms of an upward shift in average educational attainment appears not to be due to an upward change in skill or qualification demand, but to changes in the supply of more highly educated labour (cf. Béduwé et al. 1998; Robinson and Manacorda 1997; Hannan and Werquin 1999; Robinson 1997). Hannan and Werquin therefore conclude that the research in this area does not support the demand-driven technological change hypothesis and that there is also some evidence from the same studies for the credentialist hypothesis (see also Büchel's contribution to this report on the debate on overqualification).

Whereas the demand-driven technological change hypothesis stipulates that increased demand for higher skill levels due to technological innovation has led to increased average educational attainment, the credentialist hypothesis refers to the role educational attainment or diplomas have in the recruitment and selection processes in the labour market. In this instance, education is seen in terms of achieved level of diplomas and certificates are perceived as 'earned credentials' that indicate, for instance, learning capabilities, trainability and perseverance of the candidate. Certainly in situations where employers can choose what they like, such as high (overall) unemployment and/or an oversupply of highly educated labour – and especially the combination of the two – they will opt for the highest credentials. The consequence of this is that the higher educated (or overeducated) substitute those with lower qualification levels by competing with them for jobs formerly taken by less qualified workers, thus pushing the least qualified (or otherwise less attractive workers) out of the labour market. There is substantial evidence that such substitution processes have occurred and most probably still occur in periods of economic recession (Brandsma 1993). At the same time, as Hannan and Werquin indicate, there is quite some evidence that the highly educated may enter the labour market in lower status jobs, but appear to become upwardly mobile after some years in the labour market, moving up to jobs that match their qualification level (cf. Hannan et al. 1998). Similar evidence has been found in various Dutch labour market studies (Brandsma 1993; Hövels and Van den Berg 1992; Hövels and Van Dijk 1989).

2.3.1.5 Segmentation of the labour market

As indicated earlier, Kirsch (1999) states that employment for the low-skilled has a rather segmented character, being concentrated in specific sectors of economic activity. His analysis points at a particular phenomenon in the functioning of labour markets, which can provide an additional explanation for the weak or weakened position of the low-skilled in the labour market. It concerns the segmentation of the labour market into different (sub)segments with differential access.

The labour market has never been homogeneous. In the debates on the match between vocational education and the labour market during the 1980s, critics of so-called planning approaches pointed out the neglect of the segmentation of the labour market as one of the weaknesses of these models. It was stressed that, on the one hand, graduates from a particular vocational programme could end up in completely different jobs (even in occupational areas for which they had not been trained), while within particular occupations or jobs one could have varying educational backgrounds. On the other hand, it was indicated that the extent to which graduates

would have access to that part of the labour market that provides relatively skilled and secure jobs depends on the valuation of their particular training by the labour market as well as other attributes like gender, age and ethnicity (Brandsma 1993). This segmentation of the labour market was considered to be one of the complicating, if not distorting, mechanisms in the match between education and the labour market.

Probably the best known distinction between different segments is the one between the primary and secondary segment (cf. Doeringer and Piore 1971), with the primary segment (or economic sector) encompassing competitive and profitable sectors and enterprises with good prospects, that are able to offer stable jobs, good wages and career perspectives. The secondary segment (or economic sector) encompasses the marginalised sectors and enterprises that have to struggle to survive and mainly offer rather unstable, poorly paid, unskilled and monotonous jobs with little career perspective.

The distinction between primary and secondary segments is slightly confusing in the sense that it actually mixes sectors of economic activity with the distinction between internal and external labour markets. Referring to the latter, Lutz and Sengenberger (1974) assume that labour market segmentation is primarily based on the recruitment, allocation and utilisation of qualifications. In their perception, enterprises have two options for solving problems in filling their qualification demands:

a) recruiting and hiring qualified staff in the external labour market;

b) training their own staff up to the level required.

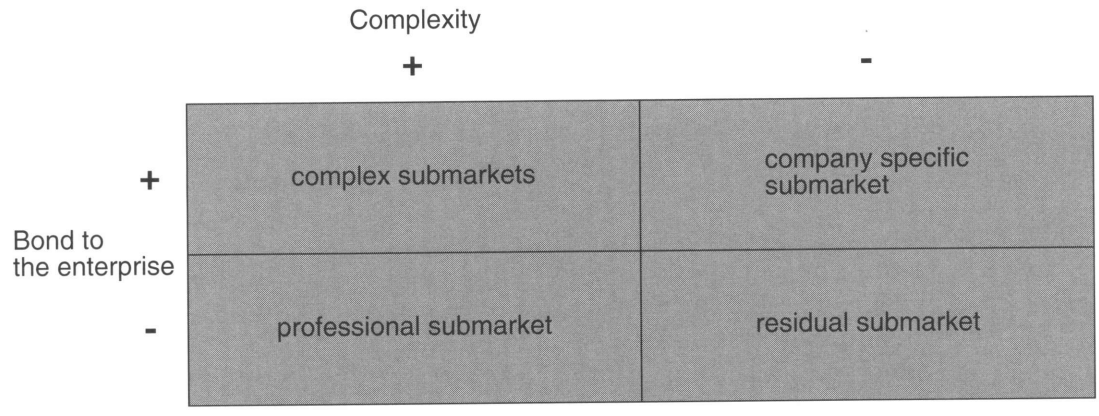
Based on this, they distinguish three segments: the internal enterprise-based labour market (with internal training as the drive for this segment); the external vocation-based labour market (with the availability of external qualified labour as assumption); and the residual market or the market for *Jedermannsqualifikationen*.

Of course, this is not the only typology of labour market segmentation. Althauser and Kallenberg (1981) for instance, indicated that the internal enterprise-based market and the external vocation-based market can be further subdivided into a general external and an internal enterprise-based market, with the latter being characterised by vertical job-chains or career ladders that are only accessible by a limited number of entries at the bottom.

Labour market segmentation has not disappeared and is still an issue, though less pronounced than one or two decades ago when it was strongly highlighted in the context of the match between education and the labour market. What, however, appears to need more attention in this theoretical area, is, on the one hand, the inevitable changes in labour market structures and, on the other hand, the implications for access to (continuing) training and lifelong learning. With regard to the former, Hövels (1999) distinguishes two dimensions for classifying the present labour market into sub-markets. The first dimension refers to the complexity of the jobs or the complexity (or level) of the technical-instrumental qualification requirements. The second dimension is the bond to the company or the firm-specificity of the qualifications. One can argue that the first dimension is too simple and restricted, actually returning to one of the alleged mistakes of previous planning methods by referring only to technical-instrumental qualifications and neglecting the non-technical and non-instrumental qualifications that have become more and more important over the last decade (Brandsma 1993). However, the dimensions as such, can be relevant for identification of emerging sub-market or labour market segments. Applying the two dimensions, Hövels (1999) distinguishes four submarkets (Figure 2).

The professional, company-specific, and residual sub-market are the same as, respectively, the external vocation-based, the internal enterprise-based, and the residual labour market as distinguished by Lutz and Sengenberger (1974). The complex sub-market is a new labour market segment, characterised by Hövels as the labour market where specific

Figure 2: Typology of labour market segments according to dimensions 'complexity' and 'bond to the enterprise'



Source: Hövels, 1999

combinations of professional qualifications and company-specific qualifications are required (Hövels 1990, 1993). As examples he mentions teachers, medical specialists and mechanical engineers, working in changing labour-markets, requiring more and more company-specific skills.

An occupational identity might be relevant for the complex and the professional sub-market, but in a company specific sub-market one could better speak of a corporate identity, while neither of the two concepts seems applicable for the residual market.

A tendency which cannot be fully captured by Hövels' classification of sub-markets, is the differentiation between employees that some authors presume will become more and more important in the near future (cf. Kessels 1996). It concerns the distinction between 'core workers' and 'flex workers'. 'Core workers' are employees with a strong bond to the enterprise where they work, and with steady and gainful labour contracts. 'Flex workers' are employees that either are hired on the basis of a temporary contract or through temp agencies. Though one could argue whether this development is really in existence and affecting all economic sectors to the same extent, or only partly exists on the desk of academics, there are indications that support this distinction. Out-sourcing and retreat of enterprises to their core activities is a development which has been signalled already for a couple of years, though to different degrees between sectors of economic activity. In the areas of the complex sub-markets and professional sub-markets there appears to be a particular tendency for part of the 'non-core' employees to be highly educated workers employed on a temporary basis. Such workers set the present trend of so-called 'job-hopping', moving from one project to another with different employers, accumulating a wealth of experience of applying their knowledge and skills in different settings, and thus accumulating their human capital.

The implications of this development for the labour market position of flex workers, needs further elaboration. The tendency towards flexibilisation of the labour relations does not, by definition, mean a weakening of the labour market position of all flex workers. It is necessary to distinguish between relatively

highly qualified flex workers and low-skilled flex workers. The former will often have no difficulty in finding new jobs for which, given their qualifications and experience, they can demand good labour conditions. Though employed on temporary contracts, these 'job hoppers' have a relatively good labour market position with sufficient opportunities to develop their career as well as their skills and competencies. There is evidence that temp agencies have great interest in these 'job hoppers', providing new market niches for the temp agencies while meeting the demands of the high skilled flex-workers for flexibility and alteration.

The implication of the distinction between core workers and flex workers for less or low-skilled workers, might be less promising. For them, the flexibilisation of the labour market might mean that they will be faced with periods of unemployment in-between periods of temporary work. Given the learning potential of the type of jobs they will take on, and the temporary nature of their employment, neither these flex workers themselves nor the enterprises that hire them will be much inclined to invest in training and learning. For temp agencies too it does not appear profitable to invest in the training of these workers. What the implications of the flexibilisation of the labour market might be in the long run for these low-skilled flex workers, is difficult to say. Nevertheless, developments in the labour market as outlined here, show that the labour market becomes ever more complex and differentiated. This will have implications for lifelong learning.

2.3.2 Summarising conclusions

Summarising the previous, one can say that the deterioration of the labour market position of the low-skilled appears to be caused by a combination of factors. Sectors of economic activity which traditionally employed relatively large proportions of the low-skilled have economically declined or moved to developing countries with lower labour costs, while other (and newer) sectors have not compensated for this, since educational requirements are higher and have increased over the last decades. This segmentation of the labour market, with low-skilled workers being allocated to certain, declining sectors of economic activity and/or jobs that are characterised by instability and little career and learning potential, is another factor in the deterioration of the labour market situation of the least qualified. Tendencies like the distinction between 'core workers' and 'flex-workers' might even worsen their situation in the (near) future.

Economic recessions – the most recent during the early 1990s – have further aggravated the weak labour market position of the low-skilled. Average levels of educational attainment have increased rapidly in most countries of the EU, while job openings matching this increase in educational level, have not kept up with that shift and labour markets have provided insufficient possibilities for the absorption of all the highly qualified labour market entrants. This leads to the (possible and plausible) consequence of substitution. Technological innovation does play a role in this, but not such a straightforward one as is sometimes assumed. Depending on organisational and managerial decisions, and the way in which work and production processes are designed, new technologies can lead to upskilling, but also to deskilling, at least for some of the employees.

3. The increasing importance of training

3.1 Introduction

Concepts like learning organisations, learning societies, learning regions and learning economies appear to have rapidly gained popularity among policy makers as well as researchers. Though some would argue that these concepts are already on their decline, being overtaken by newer 'management' concepts like knowledge management, competence management and competence development (cf. Mulder 1999), this only seems to be a question of 'labelling'.

Though the issues of continuing training and lifelong learning per se are not new, they seem to have settled in the centre of (political and

public) attention more strongly than ever before. Publications like the European Commission's white paper 'Teaching and learning; towards a learning society' and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's report 'Lifelong learning for all' (both published in 1996) reinforce this impression. These are not the only examples. Debates on arrangements and incentives to increase the investment in training are on many a political agenda and in various countries national committees or national action programmes been established during recent years, with the aim of enhancing lifelong learning if not actually establishing a 'system' for lifelong learning (examples are: the UK, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Sweden the Netherlands and recently also France). In the terms of the European Commission's white paper, the aim is to establish a 'learning society'.

The common arguments underpinning the various training and management concepts, refers to the necessity of a continuous development of knowledge, skills and competencies of the labour force in order to sustain and enhance the competitiveness of European economies and individual enterprises. With reference to developments such as the ageing labour force, globalisation of economies and societies, increasingly wide-spread use of ICT and flexibilisation of labour and the labour market, it is stated that lifelong learning is inevitable (European Commission 1996; OECD 1996). In order to be able to maintain the competitive position of European enterprises, it is considered a necessity that these enterprises are both innovative and knowledge-intensive. It is presumed that Western European economies should focus on knowledge-based industry, products and services and discard more routine mass production. The market demands tailored goods and services and the areas of (financial and business) services, and information and communication technology are the most promising sectors for the next decade. The ability to innovate is perceived as a precondition for enterprises to meet new and increasingly differentiated demands.

The implications these developments might have for enterprises and their workers are emphasised in a report from KPMG (1998) on a scenario for lifelong learning:

> '... lifelong learning has meanwhile become a necessary precondition for further economic success. Labour organisations of the near future have definitively said goodbye to the organisational principles of Taylor and Ford. A customer--oriented way of working and permanent innovation are the most important credos of enterprises that are robust enough to face the future. Continuous innovation is not only necessary for satisfying customers, but also for staying ahead of competitors. The goods many knowledge companies produce are, moreover, often unique and only produced once, which makes innovation an integrated part of the production process. Customer-oriented production and permanent innovation require flat organisations with independent, responsible and competent workers, capable of working in varying teams.'

Whether or not this quote reflects the practices in all enterprises or only an elite group of learning organisations – which presently still seems to exist of mainly a relatively small group of large(r) enterprises (Tjepkema 1998) – is difficult to say. At the same time it is not clear yet to what extent developments implied in the quote will permeate all economic sectors and all enterprises, irrespective of their size, profitability or locality. However, it cannot be denied that the increasing emphasis on flexibility, adaptability and continuous learning of the labour force, directly affects the least qualified or low-skilled workers (whether employed or unemployed). Overall, the least qualified have a relatively weak position in the labour market and are more often confronted with (long-term) unemployment, with the risk of social exclusion in the long run.

3.2 Barriers to (lifelong) learning

The necessity for lifelong learning seems to be less homogeneous than often assumed on the basis of the dominant economic perspective on lifelong learning. At the same time, this dominant perspective seems to be based

on an implicit starting point that might not simply be inadequate, but actually ignores important barriers to investment in learning and training. The implicit starting point is that all enterprise and individuals are confronted with a similar necessity for learning and, moreover, that all individuals are equally stimulated to learn, just as all enterprises are equally stimulated to invest in training. It is assumed that increased learning, and increased investment in learning, is good and that we all equally want to learn. With this position, important barriers to participation in training and lifelong learning are denied, which can result in the development of inadequate strategies to implement and enhance lifelong learning.

On an individual level, important barriers to learning are related to motivation to learn, aptitude to learn and assessment of the possible benefits of learning. Individuals that are not motivated to learn, or do not see the value added of learning, will not easily take their own initiatives to start learning. The work environment and the specific job in which one is working can be an important determinant of the motivation to learn. A work environment that does not stimulate people to learn and is characterised by routine jobs will not motivate people to learn. Certainly, if employees have been working for a longer period in such a work environment, they will often have 'dislearned' to learn and need targeted support to pass (psychological) thresholds to start learning again. Often restoring the aptitude to learn and increasing the motivation to learn will take time.

At the same time, the motivation to learn can also be reduced and suppressed by a lack of clarity in the possible benefits of learning. This might be caused by a lack of opportunity to apply what has been learned or by unclear, or even contradictory, expectations from managers and supervisors. In addition to this, it is very difficult for individuals to foresee and quantify the benefits of their private investments. Considering that, individuals cannot, like large(r) firms, spread financial risks, and that it is nearly impossible for them to identify the optimum level of investment – the Pareto-optimum after which costs will exceed benefits – investment in training is an even more risky undertaking for them than for enterprises (Brandsma 1994; Ritzen and Stern 1991).

Lack of motivating work and clarity with regard to the benefits of learning are not the only barriers to participation in learning, though the importance of the motivational factor cannot be underestimated and the work (or living) environment plays an important role in this. There are indications that the unemployed are more ready to enrol in labour market training if there is a guarantee that it will result in gainful employment once the course in finished (Brandsma et al. 1999; Anderson et al. 1993).

Other barriers to participation in training can be the lack of a training offer that matches the interests and capacities of people, the locality where the training is provided (places difficult to reach by public transport, less safe areas, etc.), the lack of practical assistance such as child care facilities or lack of time or energy (Brandsma 1994). Concerning the last of these, Keep (1997) indicates that long-term unemployed or the most excluded, suffering from pure poverty, might not even be able to participate in any learning or training, given that they need all their time and energy just to survive. In a cynical way, some point out that even this is a form of (lifelong) learning (cf. Bolhuis 1999).

3.3 The effectiveness of labour market oriented training[5]

The present emphasis on the importance of training and learning raises the issue whether this can contribute to the improvement of the labour market and the work situation of the low-skilled, and especially the (long-term) unemployed. Nicaise and Bollens (1998) report that, at an individual level, participation in training can have an important effect in terms of obtaining a job, but that, at a macro

[5] This section is based on the final report of the TSER-funded project on effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed (Brandsma et al. 1999).

level, the effects can be offset by dead weight losses and substitution. At the same time, they point at the 'black box issue'. Although there appears to be a substantial body of work on long-term unemployment and training of (long-term) unemployed, theoretical or empirical work concerning the relative contribution of the programmes' organisational, curricular and instructional characteristics and the interdependencies between these characteristics is much less developed (cf. Nicaise and Bollens 1998).

In general, it is known that, on the one hand, the background characteristics of trainees are related to the effectiveness of training programmes (cf. Lee 1990; West 1996), and that, on the other hand, the selection procedures and criteria, used by employers in hiring personnel, influence the extent to which the former long-term unemployed will be able to find a job, once they have finished their training (cf. Van Beek 1993). Various research projects (in the Netherlands, but in other countries as well, cf. Nicaise and Bollens 1998) have shown that in training courses with a mixed population (short- and long-term unemployed, women re-entering the labour market, and those who participate on behalf of retraining), the long-term unemployed have the least chance of finishing the course successfully, while women re-entering the labour market and those participating in retraining are the most successful. These differences in success rates are partially explained by the relatively lower level of prior educational attainment of the long-term unemployed (cf. Den Boer 1995).

Ethnicity and the length of the unemployment period, prior to enrolment in the training course, also appear to have an influence, certainly on the outcome. The longer the period of unemployment prior to enrolment, the smaller the chance of finding a job once training is concluded (De Koning and Van Nes 1990). Ethnic minorities have a lower chance of finding a job after training has been finished; it might be that in this case 'discriminatory creaming' plays a role (Bavinck and Van der Burgh 1994; De Koning and Van Nes 1990; De Koning, et al. 1988; De Koning et al. 1993). In addition to this, results from other evaluation studies indicate that training programmes become less effective with the increasing size of these programmes and with the increasing heterogeneity of the participants (OECD 1998). This indicates that targeted training programmes are needed, tailored towards the specific capacities, interests and needs of specific groups of participants.

There is also evidence of differences between training programmes in their efficiency and effectiveness (e.g. from studies from the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway), which cannot simply be explained by sectoral or regional differences in the labour market situation. But the extent to which process characteristics are taken into account is rather limited (Nicaise and Bollens 1998). The question, therefore, is what causes these differences? If the training (process) as such, is interpreted as a black box, this question could be rephrased in terms of, 'what makes the difference inside the black box?'

3.3.1 A comparative European study into the effectiveness of training for the unemployed

One of the research projects funded under the Targeted Socio-Economic Research programme within the fourth framework programme of the European Commission, specifically focused on the issue of differences in the effectiveness of labour market training for the (long-term) unemployed caused by differences in the training process and organisation. Seven countries participated in this project (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, the UK and Norway). The project was established as a comparative research project aimed at developing a (multilevel) effectiveness model of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed. The study was structured in three stages, encompassing an inventory of the major characteristics of the various labour market schemes in the participating countries, comparative case studies to further develop the conceptual model and a survey among training providers and former trainees that followed a labour market-oriented training course within those training organisations. The last stage was specifically in-

tended to test the model and to test which process characteristics of the training provided influenced the effectiveness of the training. With regard to the 'effects' of the training, a distinction was made in the preliminary model, drafted on the basis of a literature review, between 'output' and 'outcome', which were defined as:

a) output: finalising the course;

b) outcomes: finding a (stable) job related to the course and/or continuing in education or vocational training.

The process indicators included in the study concerned, among others, the availability and offer of guidance and counselling, the inclusion of practical training within an enterprise (and the form of this practical training), the duration and practical orientation of the course, the enrolment procedures and criteria, and the organisation and flexibility of the course.

One of the major difficulties within the project concerned the substantial differences in labour market training programmes run in different countries. Differences were, of course, expected beforehand, as were the problems with undertaking comparative research in the area of education and training, given the differences in the systems. However, in dealing with formalised education and training systems (certainly primary and general secondary education), ISCED provides a certain reference framework for comparability, even though many problems still remain to be solved (Brandsma and Sherman, forthcoming). Where labour market related education and training comes into question, the variety (for instance in specialisations) becomes increasingly more complicated, which is further aggravated if programmes cannot be easily classified within ISCED (which at least gives an indication with regard to the comparability of level[6]). In addition to this, it appeared that there were major differences between countries with regard to the extent to which training schemes were centralised or standardised (according to content) and the extent to which work experience or work placement was included. Concerning the first of these, it appeared that an overall distinction had to be made between:

- national programmes encompassing courses which are provided on a national level (that is: courses which are similar, or more or less comparable, irrespective of the region or place where they are provided);
- national framework programmes, within which actual course decisions and provision are more or less decentralised (or devolved to a lower administrative level, like regional committees), and where courses are not, by definition, comparable between regions;
- decentralised provision of training, characterised by a variety of local initiatives.

With regard to the extent of inclusion of work experience periods, a distinction could be made between:

- school-based courses, with only a small percentage of total curricular time spent on practical training (either within the training centre or within an enterprise);
- mixed type courses, in which a more substantial part of the total curricular time is spent on practical training in enterprises, or in which school-based and work-based training are alternated;
- mainly work-based courses, where the majority of the curricular time is spent on practical 'on-the-job' training;
- fully work-based training or work placements.

This variety made a comparative study particular complicated. This was particularly so since, in some of the participating countries, a rather wide range of different training initiatives existed (e.g. Denmark) aimed at different target groups, while, in other countries, only a few major schemes were run (e.g. Greece, Ireland), though sometimes with sub-

[6] This particularly holds for the revised ISCED 97.

stantial regional variation according to the actual courses provided. The Training and Enterprise Council (TEC)-led system in the UK in particular posed a problem, since variations between regions could be very large without having at the same time a national overview of what was being provided in different regions. This made a comparative research project a particularly difficult undertaking. Though attempts were made to sample training programmes or courses in such a way that comparability on basic issues was ensured (attainment level at the end of the training, main sector of economic activity for which was trained), it was necessary to accept the differences in the labour market training systems between countries[7].

3.3.2 Major results of the study

Differences and similarities between training programmes

Notwithstanding the problems encountered in actually undertaking the research, the study yielded some interesting results. As expected, the training programmes included in the study differed substantially according to organisation, content and process, though differences were less great than expected (only the duration of the course, the flexibility of curricular organisation and the extent to which the training organisation attempted to keep track of former trainees appeared to be significant).

In addition to this, there were some striking and not-expected similarities between the different training programmes studied in the seven countries. These similarities concerned:

- design characteristics of the training courses and, in particular, the extent to which courses were modularised (which held for about two-thirds of the courses). However, it should be taken into account that the concept of modularisation can be confusing. Some understand it as 'cutting' the curriculum into blocks or periods, while others perceive it as a didactical principle as well, where modules constitute relatively independent curricular units encompassing, presentation, practice and evaluation, increasing the flexibility of proceeding through the programme and the trainee's influence on his/her own learning process;
- inclusion of job search training, often paying attention to job search training throughout the whole course;
- provision of guidance and counselling to trainees, again often throughout the whole course. Financial and economic support is one of the lesser support systems and, if it is provided, this is mainly done by specialised staff (counsellors or specific trainers) or the employment service. In addition to this, guidance and counselling during the transition stage, i.e. during the transition from the training into the labour market (of other further training), is rarely provided.

Former trainees

Former trainees were interviewed on behalf of the study. It appeared that the majority that responded had been unemployed for one year or less (with over a quarter of the total response group having been unemployed for less than six months), were relatively 'well' educated, with less than a fifth not having followed any education after lower secondary education and that the number of respondents that left the course was remarkably small (only 12% of all the respondents). At the same time, it appeared that two thirds of those interviewed had found a job once the training was concluded, the majority of which stated that it was a steady job, which they still held at the time of questioning. Those that had lost their job in the mean time, had mostly managed to find another job.

[7] Pure work placement schemes, where training is not included by regulation, have been left out. However, the (then running) Community employment scheme in Ireland has been included, given that it does by definition include training and was during the study, one of the major schemes. The focus of the study was on training for the least qualified (ISCED level 2 or less), but this appeared not to be feasible in Greece, since the major schemes there focus on the large group of young unemployed that has mostly finished upper secondary education, but not gained access to university education.

Given these characteristics, and especially the labour market situation of the trainees after the course and the fact that relatively little drop-out occurred, the possibility that the trainee data are somewhat biased cannot be excluded. It could be that those who dropped out of the course were less willing to cooperate either for reasons of not wanting to admit that they left the course prematurely or for reasons that they did not wanted to be reminded of the course (which might also have been the reason for drop-out). There is also the possibility that those who did not obtain a job after finishing the course were less willing to cooperate. Therefore, there might be a bias towards the relatively more successful trainees. This means that the results of the study have to be interpreted with a certain caution, certainly where generalisations are concerned.

A key problem in finding clear relationships between process characteristics, was the fact that the variance in the 'output' and 'outcome' measure was relatively small, given that the number of trainees that left the course before finishing it was very small (both absolute numbers and proportional) and that a relatively large group of former trainees found a job. Nevertheless, it became clear that the background characteristics of the former trainees were not related to either finishing the course nor finding a job. Age, motivation and the duration of previous unemployment made no difference. Nor did there appear to be a significant difference between those that finished the course and those that did not with respect to finding a job.

Programme characteristics influencing drop-out

Five course characteristics appeared to influence drop-out (that is leaving the training early):

1. the design of the practical training; this influenced drop-out slightly according to its approximation of work practice. The closer practical training was to real work practice, the higher the chance that a trainee would not finish the course, a finding which appears to be in line with the assumption concerning the 'pull impact' of providing practical training within an enterprise (Section 3.1). It also appeared to be in line with the fact that finding a job was the major reason for leaving the course before its conclusion. Whether, in the long run, the jobs found will be steady, full-time jobs, or temporary insecure jobs, could not be investigated. For this a longitudinal design running over a longer period is needed;

2. the flexibility of the curriculum; a distinction was made between flexible and non-flexible modularisation, the former providing trainees with optional modules and the opportunity of setting their own learning pace and sequence. The likelihood of drop-out appeared to increase with an increase in the flexibility of the curriculum. At first sight this seems to be at odds with newly-advocated instructional principles, where trainees' own responsibility for their own learning process is emphasised. However, several scholars have indicated that adults' motivation for learning is essentially 'situated' in the sense that social contacts and learning in a group are important for them (Boshier and Collins 1985). This 'motivation', is lost in highly individualised learning environments. It has also been stated that individualised learning, e.g. by means of modularization, requires 'learning capacities' in terms of being able to plan and steer one's own learning process. These capacities might not have been developed or have been lost by those having acquired little previous education or those having left the education system at an early stage (Brandsma 1994). From research into modularisation it is known that too much flexibility – in terms of individual planning and pace – might have adverse effects on learning achievements (Harms 1995);

3. the way in which job search training was provided; there appeared to be a significant relationship between dropout and the provision of job search training. However, this relation was difficult to interpret. In general, it seemed that the provision, or lack of, job search training will influence drop-out (the likelihood of drop-out increasing with the provision of job search training), but the relationship was less clear in

terms of the stage at which this training was provided. It seemed that job search training towards the end of the course increased the chance that the course was not concluded;

4. the 'selectivity' of the training organisation at enrolment; this also had an influence on drop-out, though the relationship is weak (modest significance). The less selective a training organisation, the bigger the likelihood of drop-out. This would indicate that it could be 'profitable' for training organisations to 'cream';

5. the provision of guidance and counselling; an adverse, and unexpected, relationship appeared, with the chance of dropout seeming to increase if guidance and counselling (in general) was provided. This rather surprising result could indicate that guidance and counselling does not only help trainees to finish the course, but might also contribute to an (early) acknowledgement that the course a specific trainee enrolled in, was not the most suitable for that particular trainee. However, looking at the particular stage in which guidance and counselling was provided it appeared, on the one hand, that if less guidance and counselling was provided during the enrolment stage, the likelihood of dropout increased. On the other hand, the the likelihood of drop-out also increased with an increase in guidance and counselling provided during transition to the labour market. Guidance and counselling during the enrolment stage seems to corroborate the 'early acknowledgement' assumption. Guidance and counselling provided during the transition stage does not seem to fit with this. However, it is quite possible that those who reached that stage of the training are, to a certain extent, 'pushed' out of the training, in the sense that they obtain help in finding a job and that the fact that a job is found is the reason that they leave the training.

Process characteristics influencing the outcomes

In line with expectations, it appeared that the more selective the training organisation was in enrolling trainees, the more successful it was in terms of the number of former trainees finding a job. This was certainly so if, in addition to the general eligibility criteria, additional criteria and an entry test were being applied.

Questions were asked with regard to the type of guidance and counselling provided and the stage at which guidance and counselling is provided. Whether guidance and counselling was provided did not make a difference. However, how guidance and counselling was provided, at which stage and on what topics, did appear to have impact. It appeared that guidance and counselling during the enrolment stage has an influence on the chance of finding a job, but not a linear one. The same holds for guidance and counselling during the course and during the transition stage. There appeared to be an optimum level between little guidance and counselling and too much guidance and counselling, though it was difficult to state exactly where the optimum lies. Providing little guidance and counselling seemed to decrease the chances of finding a job, while 'too much' guidance and counselling seemed to have the same effect. However, increased guidance and counselling during practical training (within an enterprise) improved the chances of getting a job.

It also appeared that whether or not guidance and counselling on personal (welfare) issues is provided has an impact. If provided, it seems to increase the chances of finding a job, especially if provided by specialised staff (that is, counsellors employed by the training organisation or trainers specifically assigned to this task). In addition to this, providing guidance with regard to other or further training enhanced finding a job as well, though the particular direction of the relationship between the two variables is not fully clear. Focussing guidance during the practical training period or work placement, on either solving particular problems (e.g. problems with colleagues or problems of fitting in) and/or technical advice on work related tasks and problems, also enhanced the chances of finding a job.

Where flexibility of training had an impact on drop-out, the relationship with the chances

of finding a job was more complicated. Modularisation per se does not influence the chances of finding a job; whether the modular structure of the training is flexible or non-flexible made no difference. However, it appeared that the extent of individualisation of the training – in terms of whether the duration is fixed or dependent on the trainees' capacities and learning pace – did make a difference. Participating in a training course of fixed duration seems to enhance the chances of finding a job. It also appeared that drafting individual training plans at the start at the start of the course did not have an impact either, but here it is necessary to indicate that developing individualised training plans at the start of the course (or before) did not occur much (mainly in the UK and Ireland, though it has been stated that some individual agreements occur in Greece as well, though these are not formalised).

Does practical training prove to be a vehicle for getting into a job? It was presumed that practical training provided within an enterprise might help trainees into a job. At the same time, the 'practical nearness' of the training appeared to 'pull' trainees out of the training. As expected, it was not as much the issue whether or not practical training is provided that made a difference, but the way in which it was delivered. The closer to the reality of the work practice, the greater the chances of finding a job. In this respect, providing trainees with a practical training period or work placement in an enterprise provides them with more opportunities to find a job, but with the paradoxical effect that it also increases the likelihood of drop-out.

Whether or not job search or job search training is included appeared to make a difference as well. It became clear that job search training provided towards the end of the course increases the chances of finding a job, while job search training provided throughout the course actually seemed to decrease the chances of finding a job.

What final conclusions can be drawn from these results? Among the trainees that responded to the survey, there is a low percentage of drop-out. Also, the number of trainees that found a (steady) job is high, 'staying on' at the employer where the practical training took place, being the most important channel for getting a job. There are, however, differences between countries in this respect, which seem to relate to the extent of formalisation of the labour market, especially the role of the employment service. In countries with a strong and institutionalised employment service (e.g. Norway), the agent has a more important role in getting former trainees into work than in countries where the employment service is not so strong (e.g. the UK). Both in terms of output and outcome, training courses seem to be successful. The question, of course, is what and how did these courses contribute to the labour market position of individual trainees.

If one looks at the extent to which former trainees think that the course was necessary for getting the job they obtained, it appears that nearly half of the trainees think that this is not the case, while slightly fewer are convinced that the course was necessary. Slightly over a quarter of the trainees are convinced that the job is (absolutely) not what they have been trained for (judged on level and content). On the other hand, if one looks at the course characteristics that seem to contribute to either output or outcome, there are process characteristics that do make a difference. The roles of practical training and job search training are particularly interesting. The closer practical training is to the reality of working life and the more job search training is situated at the end of the course, the greater the chances of finding a job. There is a potentially cynical interpretation of these results, in the sense that these two process variables also influenced drop-out. However, there is a (high) probability that the drop-out reported in the survey are those that left the course towards the end and not the early ones (more or less corroborated by the indications from former trainees on the time spent in the training course). In this respect the conclusion concern drop-out during the transition stage. Whether or not this should lead to the conclusion that training as makes no difference to dropping out or staying in is, however, questionable. Apart from the role of practical training and job search training, there is also the influence

of the amount of flexibility and the guidance and counselling. In consequence it would be interesting to gain more understanding of what might cause early drop-out.

3.3.3 Possible implications of the findings

Effectiveness research into vocational training, as performed here, is still rather underdeveloped. In addition to their recommendation of further research into the causes of disadvantage in the labour market, with special reference to the accessibility of labour market programmes for particular target groups, Nicaise and Bollens (1998) point out that the question 'why' something is effective has been little addressed and needs specific attention. From a policy point of view this is an important question, if not the most important question. At the same time it is often one of the more difficult questions to answer. On the one hand, experience of effectiveness research in initial vocational education and training in the Netherlands has shown that it is quite difficult to find specific process characteristics that influence the effectiveness of this type of vocational training and that what does seem to matter varies substantially between specific vocational programmes (cf. Van Batenburg 1995; Brandsma 1999). This might indicate the need for more differentiated effectiveness models that can capture the specific differences between programmes. On the other hand, there are indications, both from effectiveness research in primary education (Doolaard 1998) and some (Norwegian) studies concerning labour market schemes, that effectiveness can change over time (decline, increase) and that changes in effectiveness are not necessarily caused by changes in effectiveness-enhancing process characteristics. To state it more bluntly: once effective does not mean always effective.

Brandsma et al. (1999) state, on the basis of Norwegian evaluation studies, that, in the short run, participants in labour market training have a higher potential for employment than non-participants and that labour market training is more effective than work placement only, with the combination of training and work being the most effective. However, they also conclude that there are major differences in effects, not only between programmes, but also for one given programme if measured at different points in time. Moreover, studies with regard to long-term effects of labour market programmes are inconclusive and sometimes contradictory.

Cynics might conclude that this indicates that it is not very useful to try to detect what causes the difference in effectiveness between training programmes. This is supplemented by the findings of Pedersen and Møller which seem to indicate that the effectiveness of labour market oriented training might be more dependent on the general unemployment situation, than on the process characteristics (or the 'quality') of training. While this is probably true, it does not imply that any additional contribution from the training process itself should therefore be discarded.

It cannot be denied that the 'sample' of former trainees of labour market training schemes is somewhat biased, given that most found a job and a relatively small number dropped out. There are, however, other traits of the trainee sample that pose more fundamental questions; first, the accessibility of training provisions for long-term unemployed and, second, whether or not, and to what extent, the "real long-term unemployed" are reached by labour market oriented training measures. From the study it became clear that training organisations do 'cream'; that is, they try to assess informally the chances of a trainee finishing the course (or even finding a job afterwards). This tendency is all the more strong if the funding for the training programme or the training provider is based on output-related funding (cf. Felstead 1998).

In addition to this, it was clear that, in most cases, eligibility criteria were at stake, not only setting conditions in terms of previous unemployment duration, but also with regard to the actual unemployment situation or labour market status. With some exceptions, training was made available mainly for those registered as unemployed or for the remunerated unemployed. There are some (though relatively weak) indications that motivational

issues might have led to self-selection processes, which excluded certain groups of unemployed. Motivation is an important factor in distinguishing between participation and non-participation. Investment in training is risky, given the uncertainty of the returns participation may yield (cf. Brandsma 1997, 1998). Though one can argue that, in many cases, participation in training for the unemployed does not require a monetary investment from participants, since most costs are born by public funding, time devoted to training can be perceived as lost time in terms of finding a job. This is certainly true if the unemployed have the impression that participation in training does not lead anywhere or can even have adverse effects (as has been proven in some studies; cf. Anderson et al. 1993).

Moreover, training often is not the first priority for the long-term unemployed. In the short term, they may perceive direct employment as the best strategy for getting back into the labour process, training being only a postponement of gainful employment or even a barrier to it. Other, psychological barriers, such as fear of failure, a negative self-image or fatalism, may also demotivate unemployed people in relation to training. If the unemployed have already participated in training without realising their (high) expectations, there is a chance that they will perceive this as a personal failure or as a reinforcement of the belief that training does not pay, reducing their motivation to participate in further training. Though it is difficult to say to what extent motivational issues and self-selection have affected enrolment in training programmes and courses included in this study, it became clear that one of the 'learning effects' frequently mentioned (though perhaps not explicitly intended by the courses) is growth in self-esteem and self-confidence. On the other hand, trainee motivation was an important, if not the most important, criterion in the recruitment and selection processes prior to enrolment.

What became clear from the study is that some sort of enrolment selection, of a more or less rigorous form, takes place and that the expected success of candidates, in terms of finishing the course or finding a job or both, plays a role in this selection process (sometimes by means of various tests to 'measure' the learning capabilities of candidates, but more by 'subjective assessment' of those deciding on enrolment). Some training organisations are very explicit and open on this issue, referring to the need to be selective given the output-related funding regime they are subject to or the specific relationships with (local) employers, which does not allow for 'failure' (or in other words, forces them to maximise their credit-worthiness; cf. Nicaise and Bollens 1998). In this sense, too strong an emphasis on effectiveness in terms of realising set, quantitative targets, could, in the long-term, prove to be counter productive. As has been argued before, it is difficult to decide whether selection in order to optimise the match between trainees and their motivation, capacities and preferences and course content and level, should be judged as wrong per se. Mismatches at this level might lead to a reduction in motivation, early drop-out and discouragement or even reinforcement of disbelief in the benefits of training. However, if selection does result in systematically pushing out the least advantaged, the question is whether this is not an undesirable societal effect (certainly in the long run). Nicaise and Bollens (1998) state in this respect:

> 'Some state that we simply have to learn to live with the trade-off between effectiveness and equity, arguing that it makes no sense to operate an adverse selection system and only provide training to the poorer candidates.'

This might be considered a rather cynical conclusion, certainly if alternatives tailored to, and really reaching, the bottom end of the labour market are lacking. Even though cynical, this statement does raise the issue of effectiveness of training in terms of reaching the intended target groups and getting them back into work. But it also raises the more general issue of whether training does pay off. At the individual level, one can, to a certain extent, answer this question affirmatively. Looking at the results of this particular study, it appears that a large percentage of the former trainees have found a job, with well

over three thirds still holding the job at the time they were questioned. However, less than half of the former trainees are convinced that training was necessary in order to obtain the particular job, and, according to trainee opinion, there is a certain mismatch between the training received and the job obtained.

Does training pay off at a more aggregated level, that is the level of society? It is much less easy to answer this affirmatively. First of all, we have to acknowledge that little is known about the macro-economic effects of investment in training for the (long-term) unemployed. But the macro-economic effects were not the focus of this study either. There are, however, indications that the macro-economic effects of labour market measures for the unemployed are less convincing than the micro-effects mentioned earlier (dead weight and substitution).

If training cannot create jobs, what are the possible policy consequences? The economic upswing in various European countries during the first half of this decade has resulted in the reduction of unemployment even among those considered long-term unemployed. But what if economic growth does not keep its present pace or even turns into a recession? Will this mean that those who have returned to employment after training are the first to be hit by unemployment again? This will depend on various factors such as whether the first job obtained was a steady job or not, whether those former trainees who lost their first job, obtained another job and the characteristics of this job. There are more general factors such as the stability of both the economic sector and the enterprise in which former trainees are employed, as well as the overall vulnerability of the national economy to global economic cycles.

It appears that two basic lines of reasoning can be distinguished in this matter. On the one hand, various (economic) scholars state that, due to the demographic development of ageing of the work force, it will be necessary to get unemployed and 'inactive' labour back into employment – preferably after sufficient training – in order to meet the demand for labour. If this demand is not met, economic decline will occur, not so much as a result of economic downswings, but due to the fact that the labour market cannot match supply and demand. On the other hand, there are (economic) researchers who foresee that those with the most vulnerable labour market position (the least qualified, older workers and workers with an unstable working career) are the first to be hit by increasing unemployment rates. Some of the most cynical among them point out that, due to the lack of quality of the training that has been provided to the former long-term unemployed, these persons tend to end up in the vicious recycling of qualifications (cf. Thijssen 1997). With this (and with the quality of training) they mean that the training provided is too much focussed on getting people back into employment as quickly as possible, without taking into account the long-term employment perspectives of the training provided. In their opinion, the level of training is too low and the scope of the training is too narrow, often focussed too much (or 'customised' too much) towards specific vacancies that exist within certain enterprises or that are expected too arise in the short-term.

In principle, both lines of reasoning once more underline the dilemma to be faced in designing labour market measures for the long-term unemployed, though in the case of demographic arguments it will depend on the particular demand for labour to be met. If labour market measures intend to promote the reentry of the long-term unemployed, and especially the least qualified among them, in gainful employment with the prospect of employment in the long run, and even the prospect of continuing training in the context of employment, the initial investment needed for training these unemployed should be substantial. At the same time, as is seen in various literature sources, the least qualified long-term unemployed often are confronted with multiple problems and do not (necessarily) give priority to training.

Notwithstanding the potential power of training as a labour market measure and the great attention training for the unemployed receives in various European countries, Hasan and Tuijnman (1997) conclude that:

'The learning opportunities open to the unemployed and the disadvantaged groups in the society are far limited in scope and quality than those available to the employed group.'

3.4 Training of low-skilled workers

3.4.1 Who receives training?

Work is an important source for learning in the sense that it is often an important – if not major – stimulus for the motivation to participate in training, and also a major financial source. Hasan and Tuijnman (1997) stipulate that, overall, the role of the government in participation in adult education is relatively small and that 40-60% of adult training is financially supported by enterprises. At the same time, a large percentage of adult training (estimated to be 70 to 90% of the training undertaken by men) is work-related. However, the likelihood of receiving training is not equally distributed among workers and the inequality between workers in this respect appears to be a very persistent phenomenon (Brandsma et al 1995; European Commission 1999; Hasan and Tuijnman 1997; Houtkoop 1985; Newskills 1999; Tuijnman 1989).

Results from the Newskills project (1999) indicate that there is relatively little difference between men and women with regard to the question of who receives additional training within the enterprise. However, given that the labour participation rate among men is higher than among women, the majority of training concerns men. Furthermore, it appears that younger workers receive more training than older workers, better-educated workers have a greater chance of receiving training and full-time employees receive more training than part-time employees – findings which are corroborated by various other studies. The results of the first European Continuing Training Survey, for instance, reveal that those employed as craft and trade workers, operatives or in elementary occupations, participate less in training courses than those employed in higher level occupations. This, however, only concerns formal training courses and not less formal types of training, like training on the job or quality circles. Differences between men and women appear to be small (European Commission 1999).

IALS data reveal, however, that there still is a gender bias in the participation in training. Women are less likely to participate in job-related training and are also more likely to experience lower training intensities than men (Leuven 1997). If the focus is taken away from job-related training only, participation rates of men and women appear to be quite similar, but pattern, type and conditions of participation show a considerable gap between the genders, with women having to overcome more difficulties than men (Valdivielso Gomez 1997). At the same time, data from the IALS data base strongly indicate that the chance on participation in training sharply declines for older workers (over 55 years of age) (Van der Kamp and Scheeren 1997).

Overall, participation in training, be it work-related or other training, shows the following pattern:

- workers in small enterprises have significantly less training opportunities than workers in large enterprises;
- older workers have less chance of participation in training than younger workers (with training opportunities diminishing after the age of 45);
- training opportunities and participation in training increase with the prior level of educational attainment (with the low-skilled, defined as ISCED 0-2, having the least chance of participation);
- workers with a less stable labour relationship with an employer (part-time workers, homeworkers) have less chance of participation in training.

3.4.2 New training models

If the aim of learning, in particular lifelong learning, is the inclusion of the least qualified, or low- and unskilled, into gainful employment and into the learning economy, this has consequences for education and training

policies as well as for vocational education and training systems. VET policies should take into account that the low-skilled might need considerable guidance and support in order to start learning. Rigid divisions between unemployment benefit, training and working are not supportive in this respect. The unemployed often only want one thing and that is a job. Creating opportunities through which unemployed can combine work with motivating training and learning processes, or alternate periods of work with training and learning, might be more helpful than obligatory incentives (like withholding their unemployment benefit) to get them back into work (e.g. the USA). There are various examples of wage subsidy or work placement schemes, but these seem to focus on low-skilled jobs with little or no learning possibilities, often leading to the vicious circle of being employed for a time and returning back to unemployment afterwards.

The training-system as such, should not only provide the basis for lifelong learning for all, but also contribute to the development of the competences of that part of the workforce which presently is perceived as being unskilled. Current training-structures and institutions have to open up and become more flexible, not only in terms of structure and content of curricula and didactical approaches, but also in terms of increasing their own innovative capacity, taking on board innovations such as portfolios and assessment of prior acquired competencies.

Assessment of prior acquired competences (in the UK known as assessment of prior learning) might be a helpful tool for stimulating the learning among the low-skilled. The basic rationale behind assessment of prior acquired competences is that the assessment is independent from the way in which something is learned and that it also takes into account what is learned informally (cf. Klarus 1998). Definitions of 'low-skilled' are mostly based on official educational attainment (like the one given earlier), not being able to take into account what might have been learned outside the classroom (or outside a CVT course). Also, when hiring staff most employers often base their decisions on educational attainment and/or work experience. These are only global indicators, but time and resources are mostly unavailable for assessment of the competences of potential workers in more detail (except in the case of potential staff for highly qualified jobs).

Providing opportunities for assessment of prior acquired competences has various advantages both from an employer's and from an employee's perspective. For employees, it can define and show the competences acquired, whether through formal learning or informal learning. The results of the assessment can, for instance, be included in a personal portfolio, which can be used during applications, in addition to an application letter or interview. For employers, assessment of prior acquired competences can be one of the tools for competence management, identifying available competences and competence gaps. Assessment of previously acquired competences can contribute to individual learning motivation by showing what has already been learned (indirectly boosting self-esteem) as well as indicating potentially powerful directions for further learning on the basis of what has already been obtained.

A possible disadvantage, however, could be that employed (low-skilled) workers fear that the results of such an assessment might get to their employer as well, providing a basis for a judgement of the worker. Experiences with the French 'Bilan de Competence' show that this is not a theoretical disadvantage, but a real drawback. In this respect it is necessary to install sufficient rules and procedures to protect confidentiality (Brandsma 1998). In addition to this, it appears that employers object to assessment of prior acquired competences if it results in recognition of these competencies with wage consequences. Effective implementation of this tool therefore requires that both employers and employees gain from its application (Thomas and Frietman 1998).

Another possible tool is the so-called job rotation scheme. Such schemes as presently implemented in Denmark and some parts of Germany (on an experimental basis) are based on the principle that a worker going off on training, is replaced by an unemployed

worker, who, if necessary, receives training in order to be able to perform the work. These schemes provide the possibility of combining training and work, which appear to be more motivational than pure training without a clear perspective of obtaining work afterwards. If the training of the employed worker aims at, and results in, upward mobility within the enterprise, this might provide a job-opening for the unemployed worker. However, there are also disadvantages. If the trained worker returns to his or her job after training has been concluded, this will most likely mean that the unemployed replacer returns to unemployment if no other job-openings are available inside or outside the enterprise. The extent to which the unemployed worker will be able to find another job, is partly dependent on the training received in the context of the replacement scheme. There are examples from the Danish job rotation scheme which show that the unemployed person received only relatively short training that did not fully match the needs of the enterprise[8]. This makes some employers reluctant to continue participation in such schemes. At the same time, providing more job specific training might be more appropriate from the perspective of the enterprise, but not from the perspective of the unemployed. If training is too job specific, this might be of little help for the unemployed replacing worker at the moment that he or she has to search for another job once the temporary contract has been teminated. In this respect there is a dilemma between providing training sufficiently relevant for a particular job and training sufficiently broad to strengthen the labour market position of the unemployed (Brandsma 1998).

4. Concluding remarks and discussion

The labour market position of the low-skilled is relatively weak and it seems that increasing their skill levels might be the only way to strengthen this position. At the same time it is clear that the low-skilled have a substantially lesser chance of participating in training, at least in work-based or job-related training. With the latter becoming increasingly important, this poses particular challenges for designing training policies to overcome the deadlock.

Various European countries have attempted to develop policies aimed at enhancing lifelong learning. Debates on arrangements and incentives to increase the investment in training are on many a political agenda and various countries have seen national committees or national action programmes established during recent years, with the aim of enhancing lifelong learning, if not actually establishing a 'system' for lifelong learning (examples are: the UK, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Sweden the Netherlands and recently also France). In the terms of the European Commission's white paper, the aim is to establish a 'learning society'. In these attempts a strong emphasis is given to increasing the employability of individual workers. What sometimes makes the potential effectiveness of such strategies (slightly) doubtful, is the fact that core concepts are not clearly defined. Employability, for example, is often equated with employment in the sense that it is assumed that employability will result in employment. However, this will depend on the strategy used to enhance employability and with that employment. Basically two strategies can be distinguished (Thijssen 1996):

a) enhancing job search and job acquisition skills, focussing on the process of getting a job;

b) enhancing work or occupational skills, focussing on the skills needed for performing a job well.

In a cynical way it could be said that the first strategy aims at learning a 'trick', while the second strategy aims at qualifying people in order to get an adequate and more or less secure start in the labour market. In terms of the learning needed or provided, both strategies have profoundly different implications as well.

[8] The training provided is AMU-courses from the standard offer of the AMU-centres. It concerns publicly funded training that is not tailored towards specific enterprise needs.

Learning, in the context of lifelong learning, means a permanent process of learning and of 'learning to learn'. Both 'learning' and 'learning to learn' can have different meanings (Thijssen, 1997):

- learning (to learn) in the sense of acquiring a set of meta-cognitive skills (e.g. problem solving, applying knowledge and skills in new situation, information processing, etc.);
- learning (to learn) in the sense of acquiring a positive attitude towards learning and continuing to learn;
- learning (to learn) in the sense of acquiring a broad set of occupational skills and competencies applicable in a broad occupational domain (as contrasted to job-specific skills);
- learning (to learn) in the sense of acquiring 'coping skills' or 'life skills' as defined within a new OECD project, focussing on the type of skills people need, in order to cope with the modern (information) society (including basic 'computeracy' skills).

It is clear that the last of these seems more closely related to the job search/find strategy of employability, while the third meaning of learning (to learn) is more closely related to the qualifying strategy of employability, with the first and second meanings being more or less preconditions for lifelong learning in the sense of a continuous process of personal development. What makes it all the more important to be crystal clear about which learning is intended, is the expectation that independent and self-directed learning will get greater emphasis (Hasan and Tuijnman 1997). Benefiting from more independent and self-directed learning will require 'learning skills' and the capacity to learn in ways other than traditional classroom teaching. What is presently considered as being effective learning (in the context of learning organisations) is characterised by (cf. Brown 1997; Brown and Keep 1998):

- reflection: the need for a culture inside organisations that values learning and development can be supported by an emphasis on reflection;
- development of thinking skills: the importance of developing learning to learn skills, thinking skills to manage and process information and problem-solving skills is presumed to be crucial;
- development of learner independence: this refers, in relation to the previous, to the need to make learners more aware of their learning processes, as well as making them the controllers of their own learning processes and owner of their own skills, competencies and knowledge;
- teamwork and collaborative learning: if responsibilities are increasingly delegated to workers, this will require better cooperation between workers, which puts new demands on the interpersonal skills of workers and also on their ability to learn collaboratively;
- learning and assessment processes have to be linked: there should be a synergy between the way in which learning takes place and the way in which the outcomes are assessed; too detailed assessment standards, that encourage students as well as assessors to focus on meeting these standards and not on the (de)construction of the learning process behind this, would be counter-productive;
- developing a substantive knowledge base: learners should have the opportunity to develop a substantive knowledge base in order to be able to achieve broad occupational competence (with the latter meaning that learners should really acquire occupational competence applicable in various situations, instead of learning 'tricks' that will get them into a job, but leave them with 'empty hands' once this job disappears).

Learning as presently perceived will be less formalised and rely to a greater extent on self-supported and self-steered learning. In this sense there is a shift away from more traditional school- or classroom based training

(courses) towards informal learning. For individuals to fully benefit from the learning opportunities, this requires a particular learning attitude, which previously has not been incorporated in traditional education and training. In addition, it requires a particular social and cultural capital, that often has not been acquired through education, but through other channels (e.g. family, peer groups). Low-skilled workers in the working age are with respect to this in a disadvantaged situation. Often they have left education, because the means to continue education were lacking, but also because learning was not attractive for them. In order to provide them with opportunities to benefit from the learning options offered, it will be necessary to develop the learning attitude and cultural capital needed.

The fact that work-based training is becoming increasingly important as well, might have (negative) implications for the low-skilled. On the one hand, work-based learning has long been considered as one of the best ways of delivering vocational training. However, the effectiveness of work-based learning has been scrutinised over recent years. Though work-based learning, or on-the-job training, is still considered important model within vocational education and training, it is more and more acknowledged that not all workplaces are effective learning places and that effective work-based learning needs to build upon well-designed learning and instructional models (Raizen 1994). It is in this context that concepts like 'cognitive apprenticeships', 'complex learning situations', 'communities of practice' and 'learner independence' have been developed as alternatives to the more traditional models of either school-based or work-based learning (cf. Attwell and Brown 1998). At the same time, the currently evolving learning society and learning economy is highly work-based. Unskilled, simple jobs have neither high learning potential nor do they stimulate learning outside the workplace. In order to prevent low-skilled workers (whether employed or unemployed) being faced with 'learning exclusion' (on top of social exclusion for those that have become marginalised in the labour market), VET-policies should focus on strategies and tools that can enhance the learning of the low-skilled.

Thus far, the focus of this chapter has been on the options for increasing the skill level of low-skilled workers in order to strengthen and improve their labour market situation. However, Freeman and Gottschalk (1998) indicate that such 'supply-side' policies might (in the short run) be less effective than hoped and, at the same time, quite costly. They argue that it might take a very large investment in skills and skill increase over a long period, to restore the loss in wage American low-skilled workers have experienced due to their low level of skills (and productivity) (cf. Nickell 1998). Their plea is to reconsider 'demand-side' policies, focusing on the increase of demand for less skilled workers, as an alternative for supply-side policies. The studies presented in their book show that such demand-side policies (like: lowering the costs of employing low-skilled workers, creating public jobs, changing pay modes and changing employment regulations) can increase employment opportunities for the low-skilled, but only rather modestly contribute to the increase of wage and skill levels of the low-skilled covered by these policies. Freeman and Gottschalk therefore conclude that such demand-side policies as implemented in the past, do not offer magic solutions for the problems low-skilled workers (in the US) are facing. However, they also state:

> '... several policies that singly contribute only marginally to raising employment or earnings of the low-paid can have a larger effect in combination'.

Improving the labour market position and employment perspectives of the low-skilled is necessary if European countries want to maintain their economic competitiveness and prevent marginalisation and exclusion of a still substantial proportion of their labour force. Taking the conclusion of Freeman and Gottschalk to heart, it seems that policies aimed at increasing the skill level of the least qualified as well as their employment prospects, should not put all the eggs in one basket. Achieving such aims appears to require carefully designed measures, combining the advantages of both supply-side and demand-side policies and geared towards the particular situation of different target groups.

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Part six:

VET research activities outside the European Union

Research on vocational education and training at the crossroads of transition in Central and Eastern Europe

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Abstract

The following analysis provides an overview of state of affairs in vocational education and training research in eleven countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The report attempts to analyse the responsiveness of the VET research to the major socio-economic challenges occurring in the process of transition. The objective of the study is to identify main research gaps and to bring about better transparency on VET research, its achievements and failures in these countries. The report is a first attempt to map the existing research results in the field of VET in the region, and therefore has an illuminative rather than evaluative character.

The author argues that the VET research in CEE has found itself in the middle of a double reform process, where transition from a state planned to a market economy has been multiplied by the global changes. The VET research has successfully reacted to major challenges of the transformation period. It is, however, argued that there have been certain drawbacks, where national research was not in place to justify the transfer of foreign models and had a somewhat passive role in the reform process in the initial stage of the transition. Nevertheless, the recent years demonstrated the growing maturity of the national research and its increasing importance in the support of the reform process. Although there is still a lack of comprehensive conceptual strategies that embrace different aspects of initial and continuing vocational education and training in the perspective of lifelong learning, the shift from highly fragmented research has been noticed.

The report demonstrates systemic inefficiencies (organisational, institutional, financial) that create obstacles to research development. The hardship of the transition period caused many challenges for the research community, the brain drain not being the least. The paper comes with the set of recommendations for the support of comprehensive multidisciplinary VET research in the priority fields, as well as suggests organisational measures to make the research process more efficient.

Table of contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Approach and definition of the scope of the study

This part of Cedefop's research report is a comparative analytical overview of research in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the field of *vocational education and training* (VET). The study covers a wide geographical area of eleven countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The countries were chosen on the principle of the geopolitical 'commonality' of the region of CEE. All countries in question share a socialist past and are undergoing the reform process from a state-owned to a market oriented economy. All countries, apart from Albania, are candidates for membership in the European Union. All countries are covered by the European Community's Phare assistance programme, and therefore, in this text will be referred to terminologically as Phare countries or partner countries. In spite of the certain degree of similarity, the countries of the CEE region differ greatly, and do so from their very point of departure in the pre-reform period, at which time Slovenia belonged to Yugoslavia, (the most democratic and open of all socialist countries), the Baltic republics were part of the Soviet Union, Albania remained in almost complete isolation, and all other countries also differed greatly in terms of their socialist "pathways". The countries undertook different approaches to economic reform, and the reform progress that has thus far been achieved also varies to a great extent.

From a cultural perspective, the region enjoys vast diversity, which has implications for all aspects of society. For this reason, generalisations about the region and the typologies used in the study represent general trends rather than judgements on each particular country, and certain reservations must be considered when looking at different countries.

The paper provides an overview of state of art of VET research against the background of vocational education and training in the context of socio-economic development in the partner countries. The cultural diversity presents a semantic challenge for understanding not only of what vocational education and training is, but also for what research into VET means. In this view, VET is understood in its broader sense, which embraces not only initial education but also continuing vocational training (CVT). The overview analyses research that has been produced so far on the problems, challenges and developments in the relationships between VET, the labour market, and the economic and social aspects of the reform process in the countries undergoing transformation. Therefore, the study also looks at contextual research, primarily dealing with the labour market.

There have been several attempts to give a definition of *research into VET* (e.g. Sellin and Grollman[1] (1999)), but it is difficult to find an exhaustive one. Therefore, we will adopt the following definition of *education research and development* (the 'Frascati Manual'): 'Educational R&D is the systematic, original investigation or inquiry and associated developmental activities concerning: the social, cultural, economic and political context within which education systems operate; the purpose of education; the process of teaching, learning and personnel development; the work of educators; the resources and organisational arrangements to support educational work; the policies and strategies to achieve educational objectives; and the social cultural, political and economic outcomes of education'.

Without attempting to give an exhaustive definition of *VET research*, for the purpose of this paper and with a certain amount of oversimplification, we understand research into VET as those analytical studies that base

1) Sellin and Grollman use a too rigid definition of VET research in the view of the *scientifity* of criteria and methodology. Through this strictness perhaps we will not be able to take count of analytical studies produced in the framework of development projects and even some applied research. The definition also overlooks the labour environment and the world of work as such, looking instead at psychological and behavioural aspects in the socio-economic context (see more Sellin and Grollman 1999).

themselves on accurate methodology and focus on one of two aspects: *the requirements*, and *the process* and *the outcomes* of VET.

The first aspect involves not only research into VET as such, but also and above all contextual research aimed at the identification of social and economic change (both macro and micro), labour market requirements, the development of new technology, the changing nature of work, the shifts in job profiles and qualification systems, the identification of vocational standards and the approximation of curriculum development to meet the needs of employment, key skills and competency-based qualifications, financial incentives to support training provision and access to training, problems of the transition from schooling into the labour market and so on.

The second aspect involves research on teaching and learning methods, mechanisms of quality assurance, evaluation of study results, certification, curriculum innovation, modular training, etc. Although the traditional division between fundamental (or basic) research, applied research and development projects is used hereon in the text, the division is somewhat artificial and must be considered with some limitations. It is rather difficult, or almost impossible, to distinguish pure examples of each type, as most projects contain some elements of another type. Moreover, to draw a strict line between applied research and development projects might in some cases be not only artificial but also misleading. Pure theoretical research is very rare and one may even question the significance of such research without thorough empirical support. Thus, the aforementioned typology is used in very general terms.

1.2 Objectives and hypotheses

The objective of the study is to provide an analysis of current research in the field of initial and continuing VET in CEE with reference to its theoretical and methodological foundations, its research results and its research "efficiency" in policy making and practice. The overview of VET research seeks to identify the structures and "products" of research in VET, irrespective of whether the research has been produced in or outside the region. Therefore, the study covers research at the international level, the national level, and when available also at the regional or local level. Although an analysis of the institutional framework of VET research is not a primary task of the study, the paper does make an effort to identify deficiencies in the research systems of the countries. The paper does not attempt to assess either the institutes involved in VET research or the studies and analyses produced by them. This is not our objective.

The major objective of the study is *to identify the main research gaps* in the field of VET (areas of research, which are insufficiently covered) and systemic drawbacks that create obstacles for further research progress. Furthermore, the overview of VET research in CEE attempts *to bring about the transparency* of analyses in the field of VET produced in the region and to give examples of good practice in VET research where possible.

Thus the study is composed in the following way: first, it looks at the main challenges for VET research in socio-economic context; second, it examines the institutional and financial environment of VET research; then it looks at types of research and topics which are tackled by VET research in CEE, and its basic findings in thematic clusters (research into systems and contextual research) and finally, the paper defines the problem areas in CEE VET, which are not covered by research – the research 'gaps'. The concluding part of the study offers a set of recommendations for policy makers, researchers and practitioners at both the national and international levels.

The paper hypothetically suggests that identified priorities for research into VET will often coincide among the countries of CEE. The nature of the transitional period in CEE along with the process of globalisation and change has placed special importance on socio-economic contextual research as far as VET is concerned. Therefore, priorities will concentrate on the requirement aspects of research (see above). The future priorities of research are not necessarily gaps, i.e. neglected or

abandoned areas of research, and in many cases will be dictated by the challenges of recent developments, introducing either new areas of research or rather new challenges in areas explored. The problems and priorities of VET research in CEE are, hypothetically speaking, not unique to the region, and in the majority of cases they will be similar to ones seen in the EU member states. However, the degree of specificity of the regions and the milestones of recent socio-political and economic change will to some extent render the future needs and objectives of research also specific in nature. Hypothetically we may suggest that VET research has a higher level of production and maturity in the countries where VET itself enjoys a long-term tradition and prestige.

1.3 Methods and sources

The study was commissioned by Cedefop and was supported by the European Training Foundation (ETF)[2] for the preparation of additional short overviews produced either by the National VET Observatories or by experts in the CEE countries nominated by them. The Czech National Observatory of Vocational Training and the Labour Market at the National Training Fund coordinated the work of the ten sub-contractors. National Observatories are small institutions established under the initiative of the ETF in the partner countries to provide accurate and up-to-date information on VET and the labour market. Different types of institutions host the National Observatories, varying between the governmental and the non-governmental sector, research institutes, academic centres, development agencies, independent non-profit foundations and private establishments.

Due to the wide scope of our overview on the state of affairs of VET research in CEE, in most cases only the recent studies and papers were considered, i.e. not extending beyond the period of the last two years, and only in few cases we looked at earlier analyses. The paper is based on four types of sources: National Observatories were sub-contracted

1. for preparation of a short overview on the basis of the standard Terms of Reference, with a commonly identifiable structure; and

2. for delivery of publications and other materials that represent research results in their countries (theoretical studies, surveys, reports, evaluations, etc.

3. The ETF commissions thematic analytical projects mostly with the help and direct participation of the National Observatories, but sometimes with the assistance of other national experts and institutes. On the basis of these thematic reports, cross-country, comparative reviews are produced by international experts or the ETF themselves. The transnational reports and sometimes the country thematic reports served as another important source of information for the present paper.

4. Additionally, studies commissioned by other international institutions as well as international statistics were used (OECD, World Bank, European Commission, Cedefop, ETF, Unesco, etc.).

In respect to the latter, it is important to note that not all, international studies are produced with the direct or indirect participation of national experts. Therefore, the paper might not always provide an adequate impression of state of art of research *within* the countries of CEE. This is especially true in the case of some of the less developed countries, where research has not been a priority in recent years, national analytical works have been largely abandoned and consequently foreign expertise has represented the foremost analytical operation there.

The summary of preliminary findings was presented first at a National Observatories' meeting in Tampere, Finland in November

2) The European Training Foundation is an agency of the European Union which works in the field of vocational education and training in Central and Eastern Europe, the New Independent States, Mongolia and the Mediterranean partner countries and territories. The Foundation also provides technical assistance to the European Commission for the Tempus Programme.

1999, and later at the conference *Shaping social innovation and VET – the contribution of Leonardo surveys and analyses projects* in December 1999, where main priorities of VET research in CEE were presented. Comments from the audience were taken into account as well as commentary on the draft version of the paper, which was distributed to National Observatories and selected experts. The author is extremely grateful to all those who did their best in collecting information and commentary on the paper in the given limited time frame[3]. Despite the numerous contributors to the preparation of the paper, the author takes complete responsibility for statements expressed herein.

The author had to rely mainly on the information provided by the National Observatories, although a great deal of additional publications, expert judgements and comments were used. Given the limited time frame and the broad scope of the study, the analysis could only provide a general overview of the state of art of VET research in the region. The author had to take into account the natural limitations of the study. In some countries more materials were available in English than in others. The country background papers differed in terms of the quality and the scope of information and reference materials provided. For instance, there was very limited access to studies and other research materials produced in Hungary, and the country overview on research provided rather vague information. Another important limitation must be mentioned with regard to Albania, where most statistical data is not available, which made the inclusion of the country in the analysis very difficult.

Therefore, the analysis is not completely balanced and some countries are more comprehensively presented than others. Areas of research might also be presented with a certain imbalance, as it highly depends on the specialisation of the institutes or experts involved in the preparation of the paper. In the identification of country- specific research gaps, the author also had to rely on reporting from the countries, where in many cases, however, this was prepared from the perspective of one institute without a consensus necessarily being reached on a national level. Therefore, the so-called research gaps in the countries may have a different meaning, varying from neglected research areas to topics that have received considerable attention from researchers but need further elaboration. Taking into account all aforementioned shortcomings, we must still point out that this paper is the first attempt to analyse the research situation in CEE in the field of VET and could act as a useful tool for discussion. A more in-depth analysis may be useful in the future, commissioned in a series of papers on specific topics of VET research, in order to avoid rendering the scope of analysis too broad and to a certain extent fusing the task as a result.

2. Context and challenges of transition for vocational education and training in CEE

2.1 Research and democracy

For half a century, scholarly discourse in CEE was dominated by writing in the spirit of official political rhetoric. At the same time one should not ignore the tremendous role the research community and intellectual forums did play in supporting democratic ideas under the previous regime and the role of re-

3) The author would like to express her gratitude to the national contributors in charge of background papers preparation, whose names are mentioned at the beginning, for their solid work and quick commenting and information provision under the given time pressure, and to all National Observatories who took charge of co-ordination and also served as first-hand help desks in author's work. In this respect I would like to mention in particular the following names: Zef Shala, Natalia Zimina, Agnieszka Sokolowska, Danuta Mozdzenska-Mrozek, Juraj Vantuch, Tamas Kopeczi-Bocz. I also would like to express my thanks to all experts, who contributed by their commenting and suggestions, namely Adela Rogojinaru, Vincentas Dienys, and Barbora Kuta. Finally I would like to express great thanks to my colleagues at the Czech National Observatory whose assistance in preparation of the study was highly beneficial: Věra Czesaná., Linda Hrochová and Věra Havličková.

search in the advancement of new ideas immediately after the break-up of the socialist system. Resourceful thinking and an intellectual debate appeared to be the main driving force of change at the end of the 1980s. The new polity introduced new chances for the research but also new challenges.

Of all political arrangements, it is democracy that is the political context most fertile for science, 'because it encourages and strengthens the scientific ethos' (Kazancigil and Makinson 1999 p.261). Approached from the opposite direction, 'democracy requires an interested, competent, knowledgeable, educated public' (Ibid, p. 262). It requires an elaboration of the reform rational by researchers, and researchers seek for recognition and public consensus on the value of this rational. Democratic polity demands a scientific background for political decisions and thus creates a favourable environment for research.

The new universal democratic values in science have introduced the principle of diversity into scientific thoughts and traditions, cultural pluralism, academic autonomy, and scientific freedom. Research in CEE could not remain in isolation, and in the environment of the global internationalisation of the research community, the CEE countries have gained the most from benchmarking comparisons with contemporary international scientific achievements. In the field of VET, the modern Western theories and concepts of the systems and content of education served as a point of reference for an elaboration of the national concept of VET reform. The initial 'stocktaking' phase of the reform has expired in most countries of CEE, and a turning point has now been reached when the scientific community is to elaborate its own national concepts and approaches. Innovation in the field of VET on the basis of foreign know-how turns to original national innovative abilities in research and exchange with the international community on the basis of equal partnership.

This is an important challenge for the CEE research community which is undergoing a transformation itself. In the past, not only political rhetoric dominated the research but in addition the forms of research were influenced by the regime. Applied research had not been sufficiently employed, as the regime did not require support for political arguments with empirical data, or if it did, it often turned to falsification and scientific discourse. VET research, to the same extent as VET itself, served the political power and was fully dominated by it, not being an equal partner of the decision-maker but rather an instrument, serving the needs of the centrally planned economy with the precise provision of the workforce.

At present the research community in CEE is pursuing global developments in science: internationalisation, universal principles and culturally-centred concepts, multidisciplinarity of research, inter-institutional cooperation, diversification of the institutional base of research (incorporation of civil society and the private sector), cooperation in decision-making and in the world of employment, putting results into practice. The transitional context, however, is not always favourable and imposes certain implications on the development of research in CEE at the present time. For instance, the current interests of research are largely defined by their financial needs, and so turn to applied research, while theoretical elaborations are largely abandoned. For many researchers this presents the dilemma of the choice between 'paid' research or other work and private scientific interests. In the following sections we shall see what the main socio-economic and political challenges for VET research are. Further we shall also look at what the shortcomings of the institutional, organisational and financial contexts of VET research are, and where the VET research in CEE has or has not been successfully addressing the challenges of transition.

2.2 Recent socio-economic developments

All eleven countries in question had a four-decade history of socialism before 1989, following either the Soviet pattern or their own socialist path (Albania, Yugoslavia). During socialist rule, the region maintained member-

ship in CMEA[4], which involved a division of labour between the countries, with specialisation in the production of certain goods. Therefore, after the years of cooperation within CMEA, the countries suffered from overspecialisation in particular industries and agricultural products. Vocational training, being closely linked to enterprises, and education in general, and provided in accordance with a meticulously calculated manpower supply for the state planned economy, repeated the pattern of overspecialisation of the economy itself, with narrow branches of specialisation at the top. Training was often directed towards lifetime jobs (ETF 1999a). The nature of the centrally planned economy was reflected in an under-representation of market-oriented branches, for instance in the services sector. Poor technological development in the economy was reflected in poor equipment for education. The school system and as well as the content of education were defined by the state and its structures, neglecting modern innovative methods of curriculum development, teaching and learning. Passive learning and encyclopaedic knowledge (Parkes et al. 1999) along with an old-fashioned mechanical mediation of the knowledge defining teaching methods, were features of schooling prior to 1989.

The process of democratic and economic reform began in CEE countries between 1989 and 1991. The political transition commenced in most countries in 1989 (with the exception of the Baltic states and Slovenia which gained independence in 1991), but substantial market reforms were not initiated before 1991 (with the exception of Hungary and Poland, where reforms started before 1990).

Since the beginning of the process of economic restructuring, the progress achieved in transforming economies into competitive and dynamic markets has differed to a significant extent. The early 1990s were characterised by a collapse in output and a decrease in labour productivity throughout the entire region. GDP in terms of output volume fell by at least 20% in all countries at the beginning of transition, and only in Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia had the GDP by 1998 re-gained its pre-transition level (in Poland it was some 17% higher than in 1989)(European Commission 1999, p. 52). Productivity growth has been a feature of the majority of countries in the region in recent years, although output per person employed in the Czech Republic is still at the pre-transition level. In Bulgaria, Romania (European Commission 1999) and Albania, both output per person and GDP are well below the pre-transition level. These countries have yet to rationalise their economy, making it more efficient, and reducing the excess in manpower in industry and agriculture.

At the beginning of the economic transition from a planned to a market economy, in most CEE countries there was an immense drop in employment in the state-sector industry, which was then followed by a steady decline. Whilst there has been a net creation of jobs in the private sector, it could not absorb the entire labour shift from the state sector. This resulted in continually increasing unemployment. Even in the countries that initiated intensive economic reform in the early 1990s and where growth in employment has been stable over the last four years, this increase in employment was still unable to compensate for job losses in comparison with the situation in 1989. In 1998, the average employment rate in CEE countries (with the exception of Albania, where comparable data are missing) was around 63%, slightly above the EU average of 61%, with the highest employment rates, at around 70%, registered in Romania, Estonia and the Czech Republic (68%), and the lowest, at around 55%, in Hungary (European Commission 1999). In all three countries with a high rate of employment, however, employment declined in 1998. In the Czech Republic and Romania, the deterioration of the employment situation could also be explained by economic decline (GDP fell by 2,5% and 7% respectively in 1998, see table 1), and above all by the delayed imple-

4) Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was established in 1959 and included Albania (only until 1962 when the country stopped any cooperation within CMEA after the break-up of relations with the USSR), Bulgaria, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Romania, USSR, Czechoslovakia. Yugoslavia had a status of associated partner in CMEA, underlying its independency in the socialist path. The latter was a member of the Non-Aligned Countries.

Table 1: Key data

	Population (thousand)	Territory size (km^2)	Working age of population (15-64) (% average annual change)	GDP annual (% change)	GDP per capita in PPP (EUR)	Private Sector (% of GDP)	Inflation (%)
	1998		1994-1998	1998/1997	1998	1999	1998
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
ALB	3 354	28 748	x	8,0	912 [1]	x	8,0
BUG	8 283	110 993	- 0,2	x	3 364	60	x
CZR	10 299	78 864	0,5	- 2,3	11 866	80	10,7
EST	1 446	45 227	- 0,8	1,1	4 000	75	8,2
HUN	10 092	93 033	0,0	5,1	9 186	80	14,3
LAT	2 400	64 589	- 0,9	3,6	2 743 [2]	60	2,8
LIT	3 700	65 300	- 0,1	5,1	2 622	70	2,4
POL	38 667	322 577	0,8	4,8	6 057	65	8,7
ROM	22 500	237 500	- 0,3	- 6,6	3 285	60	59,1
SLK	5 400	49 035	0,9	4,4	8 900 [3]	75	6,7
SLO	2 000	20 250	0,1	3,9	13 700	55	7,9
EU-15	x	x	0,3	2,8	19 007	x	1,6

Sources: A,B,D,E,G : Fact Sheets, European Training Foundation, 1999; C : Employment in Europe 1999, European Commission 1999 F: EBRD Transition Report, 1999 (in Business Central Europe 12/1999); EU 15: OECD National Accounts, OECD 1999, 2000.

Notes: 1) estimation; 2) year 1996; 3) year 1997

mentation of a number of economic reforms (European Commission 1999). The employment situation improved in Poland and Hungary in 1998 (European Commission 1999), the countries that started intensive economic reforms in the early 1990s. A slight improvement in employment situation has also been recorded in Latvia.

As in the EU Member States, unemployment has fallen in most CEE countries in recent years. The exceptions are Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia, and especially Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, where the unemployment rate increased significantly (see table 2, annex 1). The Czech Republic and Romania have still enjoyed the lowest unemployment rates[5], at about 6,5% in 1998, though the tendency toward unemployment is strongly increasing in the Czech Republic. The unemployment rate in Hungary and Slovenia was below 8% in 1998, and in all other countries close to 10% (Estonia, Poland, Slovakia) or above 13% (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania) (European Commission 1999).

In all transition countries unemployment and income decline caused the spreading of poverty and demographic crisis. The demographic situation has been characterized by the sharp fall of natality rates, the rise in mortality in a few CEE countries and the large flows of international migration, particularly from more deprived countries and regions (Ellman 1997). Furthermore, the ageing of the society brings many implications on social policies and the burden on the public budget.

The structure of unemployment has been changing in all countries, manifesting increasingly higher proportion of young people, fresh graduates, people with low or no qualifica-

5) For the reasons of comparability unemployment rates, used here, correspond to the ILO definition. The differences with the registered unemployment rates can be significant in some countries (please, see further elaborated in 5.2.1).

Table 2: Key employment indicators

	Employment rate (% population 15-64) 1998	Share of employment in agriculture (%) 1997	Share of employment in industry (%) 1997	Share of employment in services (%) 1997	Unemployment rate (%) [1] 1994	Unemployment rate (%) [1] 1998	Youth unemployment (15-24% unemployed) 1997	Long-term unemployment (% unemployed) 1997
ALB	x	x	x	x	x	17,7	x	x
BUG	55,2 [2]	11,6	36,6	51,7	20,5	16,0	26,1	56,3
CZR	67,7	5,7	41,3	53,1	3,8	6,5	28,6	31,5
EST	69,1	10,0	33,5	56,5	7,6	9,6	19,9	45,8
HUN	51,4	7,8	33,2	58,9	10,7	7,8	27,5	55,3
LAT	56,0	20,6	26,8	52,6	18,9 [3]	13,8	22,1	62,9 [4]
LIT	64,5	20,5	21,5	58,0	17,4	13,5	26,0	25,2
POL	60,5	19,9	32,2	48,0	16,5	10,6	27,5	34,1
ROM	71,8	39,0	30,5	30,5	8,2	6,3	46,5	51,8
SLK	58,9	8,6	39,2	52,2	13,7	11,9	31,9	57,6
SLO	65,1	10,2	41,6	48,2	9,0	7,7	33,6 [5]	54,9
EU15	61,1	5,0	29,5	65,6	11,1	10,0	X	x

Source: Employment in Europe 1999, European Commission 1999;
Albania – Source: Fact Sheets, European Training Foundation, 1999.

Notes: 1) ILO Methodology; 2) year 1997; 3) year 1995; 4) year 1996; 5) year 1998, 2nd Quarter

tions, elderly, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Youth unemployment increased during the transition period in all countries, and the situation has only started to slowly improve in Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic States. Youth unemployment as a percentage of the unemployed varied in 1998 from about 22% in Latvia and Lithuania to 43% in Romania (European Commission 1999, pp.146-149, see also table 2). In all countries, with the exception of Romania and Slovenia, job losses brought about the withdrawal of a substantial number of people from the labour force, which led to a significant rise in early retirements and the subsequent fall in the employment rates of those aged 50 and over (European Commission 1999, p.60).

The two age groups mentioned above– the young and the elderly – already suffer from a lower level of participation in the labour market, and when this is multiplied by low or inadequate qualifications, they may find themselves as being at a high risk for marginalisation and social exclusion. This challenge has been reported by many CEE experts. Lithuania represents a peculiar example of an even more dramatic situation due to economic disorder experienced in the early transition period, as a large portion of the of youth population (reportedly almost two entire age cohorts) do not possess any vocational qualifications recognised by the state (Gurskiene 1999). Thus if the state will not conceive special training programmes which could help these people to obtain a vocation, they will constantly be found knocking at the doors of the labour exchange office (Dienys and Pusvaskis 1998). The same holds true for the older part of the population, which has an even higher risk of marginalisation in that they face greater difficulties in adapting to the new conditions than do the youth, and also in that they are somewhat disadvantaged in re-training provisions during times of economic hardship, when training authorities often need to prioritise their subsidies for training courses.

In all countries of the region, a certain proportion of the respective age group leaves the general and vocational education system prematurely and without qualifications. It is estimated that this proportion can be up to 20% of the age group in vocational types of education in some countries (ETF 1999b). The factors behind this lack of achievement are essentially not very different from those in EU member states, but obviously, the specificity of the transition period add to their particular dimensions (ETF 1999b).

Although activity rates decreased in all CEE counties in the transition period, employment among women aged 25 to 49 was still higher than in the EU average throughout the entire region (European Commission 1999). Nevertheless, the employment rate among women decreased in at least two countries of the region, Hungary and the Czech Republic, where with the decline in the absorption capacity of the labour market females often withdrew from employment and opted to stay at home. This temporary withdrawal may turn into lifetime exclusion if there are no special supportive measures assisting women in their return to the labour market (including re-integration into the labour market after maternity leave).

The opening up of the economy and the subsequent pressure from competitive markets has pushed the transition process into adjusting to global changes. Although the basic pattern of the employment shift and the restructuring of output and trade was the same in CEE as in the EU and global markets, the excess of manpower in industry and, in some countries, agriculture on the one hand, and the underdevelopment of the services sector on the other, have demanded an even higher rate of adjustment. The characteristics of employment have changed dramatically since 1989, when in majority of countries there was a big shift from the primary and secondary to the tertiary sector.

At least in several CEE countries the issue of unemployment and especially hidden unemployment is closely related to agriculture. A decline in employment in the agricultural sector was registered in the majority of countries, and only in Bulgaria and Romania has employment in agriculture slightly increased (European Commission 1999), absorbing part of the job loss from the industrial sector. Agricultural sector had been overstaffed in the whole region under previous regime, and although substantial shifts in employment from agricultural sector have been marked, still far too many people work in agriculture. In all countries the proportion of employment in the agricultural sector is above the EU average (about 5%), especially in Romania (about 40%), Poland (about 20%) the Baltic States (see more table 2), and Albania. In the situation of reforming economies it is not a facile exercise to provide sufficient amount of jobs in alternative sectors. Therefore, two aspects are important in this view. First, development of infrastructure and agriculture-related jobs in rural areas such as food processing and distribution, banking and other services (Bialecki et al. 1996), agrotourism and other innovative semi-rural activities, which introduce ever-new challenges to traditional skills. In this respect widely available vocational guidance services and re-training courses are crucial. This cannot be implemented without a thorough analysis of regional development and labour market needs. Second, in order to make agriculture more efficient and competitive as compared to a highly subsidized EU agriculture, adaptation of education and training to the new demanding requirements is necessary.

Despite the extensive job losses in industry, the proportion of employment in this sector was still above EU average (about 30%) in the majority of the countries, exceeding 40% in the Czech Republic and Slovenia (table 2). The opening up of CEE markets also introduced an important qualitative shift in the industrial sector, featuring a move from heavy industry and labour intensive production to sophisticated manufacturing and technology and knowledge intensive production. This shift has brought about quickly changing skill requirements in the industrial sector.

Employment in the services sector has risen throughout the entire region since early 1990, although in 1998 it was still far below the EU average (European Commission 1999, for

Table 3: Unemployment by educational attainment, 25-59 year olds, 1997 (%)

	Unemployment rate (%)		
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5-7
BUG	14	10	5
CZR	12	3	1
EST	16	13	7
HUN	14	7	2
LAT	15	14	8
LIT	16	16	9
POL	11	8	2
ROM	4	5	2
SLK	23	8	3
SLO	9	5	3
EU 15	13	9	6

Source: Key Indicators 1999, European Training Foundation, 1999.

1997 data see table 2). Thus the absorption capacity of the services sector still maintains the potential to compensate for job losses in industry and agriculture. Taking into account the underdevelopment of the sector and the negligence in the vocational preparation for it during the pre-transition period, the shift in labour towards the services sector often occurred without any specific vocational preparation and large scale re-training activities (this is especially true for less demanding occupations). In order to cope with the competition in open markets in terms of providing client-oriented quality services, the need to pay particular attention to the provision of training in this sector speaks for itself.

The shift in employment from large to small and medium-sized enterprises followed the pattern of EU countries, but saw a greater rate of change due to the restructuring of large state industrial enterprises. In spite of the significant employment shift towards SMEs, the proportion of those employed in large industries in CEE still remains larger than in the EU. Given that the tendency will continue, it is important to take into account the special skill requirements of SMEs, where highly adaptable manpower with multiple qualifications and the ability to learn during their employment life signifies focal challenges for VET. The latter change is closely related to changes in work organisation with flexible job definitions, greater responsibility and independence of employees, more emphasis on team working and adaptability to quickly changing new technologies with ability to 'undertake a variety of tasks at the shop floor' (ILO 1998, p. 42).

In addition to the specific problems of transition economies, the CEE countries face the same challenges as EU member states, such as facing demands involved with the globalisation of the economy, technological change, and the rise of the information society. These challenges impose a special role on VET, which is to produce a highly qualified, flexible and employable labour force. The figures in all countries show that the higher the level of education attained, the lower the risk of unemployment (table 3)

The consequences of globalisation have an ambiguous impact on education and training. On the one hand, the increasing importance of knowledge-intensive industries, cumulating new technologies and ICT in the production process, the employment shift to the services sector and SMEs, increase the demand for upskilling and multiskilling. On the other hand, globalisation trends cause a more severe competition, which, under the conditions

of the turmoil of transition economies, increases the danger of troublesome access to training, especially after the completion of the initial training, These challenges impose a demand in the elaboration of national policies and the introduction of special incentives for companies to support training provision. The initial education needs to enhance access and capacities at higher levels of education and provide a broad basis as a primary incentive for lifelong learning.

2.3 Initial setting and future challenges

Virtually all CEE countries had an advanced system of education that had developed in pre-socialist times and during the socialist period. Under the communist regime, elementary and lower secondary education was provided on a compulsory basis by state-run schools. Upper secondary education (ages 14-18) was provided in the three main streams of general, technical and vocational education. General education was provided mostly for a small cohort of potential enrolments into higher education, the capacity and selection of which was rather limited. The republics of the former Soviet Union, in particular Estonia and Lithuania, represented an exception, where VET had very low prestige, general education enjoyed higher participation rates and access to higher education was somewhat better. The vocational education and training available was traditionally broad, enjoying high participation rates and relatively high prestige in many CEE countries. VET had primarily narrow specialisation schemes, often attached to state-run enterprises. VET had to fulfil its basic function of producing semi-skilled and skilled workers to meet the occupational needs of state industry and agriculture, based on the rigid, central manpower-planning framework. The process of democratisation had serious implications for VET in CEE countries. The lack of flexibility in training, too narrow specialisation, overproduction of semi-skilled and skilled workers and underproduction of highly qualified labour force werefeaturs of the VET systems in CEE at the beginning of the1990s, at which time VET began to find itself increasingly irrelevant to the quickly changing demands of the reforming economy.

The weakening of state-based enterprises and the process of restructuring the economy worked to fracture the links between enterprises and vocational schools, and as a result the danger of vocational knowledge and skills remaining irrelevant to labour market requirements has increased. Companies, concerned with their own survival on the market have ceased to operate on-site schools and have lost interest in making contracts with vocational schools for the practical training of apprentices. This has led to a situation in which the VET system in CEE countries is predominantly school-based (the case of the Baltic republics, Romania, Bulgaria). In some countries, elements of partial, enterprise-based apprentice training have been preserved, but the extent of this continues to diminish (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland), and only in two countries (Hungary and Slovenia) was the dual system of apprenticeship training either preserved or re-introduced. Hungary is virtually the only country where the attempt to keep enterprises interested in participating in the provision of VET, has been relatively successful as compared to other countries. This is largely due to the early establishment of a system of financing through a national levy fund for vocational training and of tripartite bodies at the national and county levels. Economic hardship in enterprises as well as their shortsightedness have also depreciated training and development in human resources, and participation in CVT in many countries has been decreasing over the past decade.

The communist legacy has had an impact on trends in the participation rates in education even up until the present. The analysis of the Key Indicators (ETF 1998) shows that most of the countries with traditionally high participation in vocational education (ISCED 3) as compared to general education (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia) still have substantially higher enrolments in VET. A shift away from VET towards general education is evident in Bulgaria and Hungary. In all CEE countries there has been an increase in enrolments in general education providing preparation for entry into higher education. Lithuania and Estonia that have traditionally seen higher

participation in general education than in VET, experienced an increase in enrolments in VET between 1993 and 1996, but also a further increase in enrolments in general education. Latvia, the only Baltic country that had somewhat higher participation in VET but still very low prestige of it, has experienced a significant increase in enrolments in general education, and a decrease in enrolments in VET during the same period, which has almost levelled proportions enrolled in the two types of upper secondary education. Another country with substantially higher participation in general education as compared to VET is Albania, which suffered an overall drop in enrolments at the upper secondary level in recent years, especially in VET, although there was a slight increase in enrolments in general education in 1996. Additionally, in all countries (except Latvia and Poland) the proportion of enrolments in VET culminating in final examinations (Matura) has also increased. This demonstrates the increasing demand for higher qualification levels among students and on the market. The limited capacities at general secondary and higher education levels in a vast majority of CEE countries do not correspond to the demand of the economy and the society, and support 'creaming' of small proportions of age cohorts on the one hand and the underskilling of early school-leavers and the low qualified on the other hand.

The process of democratisation and the transition to a market economy presented the VET system with challenges, and instigated the need for substantial reform. The reform process in VET in CEE featured a high rate of diversification in available education, the introduction of private education, an improvement in access to complete upper-secondary education programmes, especially in general education, and subsequently in higher education. The reform encouraged innovations in teaching methods, standards and curricula, promoting the efficiency of VET, putting an emphasis on core skills and on the relevance of skills/capabilities to the labour market. The reform process has not been completed in any CEE countries yet and is considered rather as an on-going process with a long term orientation. In all CEE countries, reform has been supported by Phare and other international donor support programmes.

Preparation towards EU accession introduced new challenges for the VET systems in the CEE countries. The countries stress an objective of focusing on the development of the human capital, prepared to compete at global markets. The competitiveness, based on low labour costs, clearly is not a solution in a longer run. The CEE countries need to concentrate on investment into human resources, the provision of diversification of the training offer, an increase in the suitability of given qualifications to the new competitive requirements and ensuring equality of opportunity in access to education and training for all. The EU policy guidelines increase the demand for the employability of the work force, which must be tackled by reforming the content of education as well as teaching and learning practices. The goals and contents of education need to integrate education for democracy, the European dimension and multicultural aspects in education. The shift from input quality control to output control of education, and the elaboration of vocational and qualification standards shall be enhanced in close collaboration with social partners. The EU accession prospects will introduce greater labour mobility across Europe; under these circumstances a highly qualified labour force is the key to success. In the context of labour mobility it is also important to ensure transparency and recognition of qualifications, provided in the CEE countries and beyond.

Preparation for the EU accession also involves activation of the process of institution building, improvement of systems of social partnership and enhancement of the principle of subsidiarity in decision making. The latter point is especially important in the context of the initiated regional reform in most CEE countries. The specificity of the region is still large hidden unemployment in rural areas and high redundancy in state enterprises that cause significant differences in unemployment rates between regions. The unemployment is especially high in rural areas and in the regions with heavy industries (coal mining and metallurgy). In the disadvantaged areas further shrinkage of employment in ag-

riculture and heavy industries is expected. An elaborate policy, including education and training measures, to promote social cohesion in such regions is important. The process of institution building at a regional level needs to go hand in hand with expert capacity building of institutions and individuals at regional and local levels. The regions need effective collaboration in partnerships, inter-institutional cooperation, exchange of information for analysis and definition of priorities for regional development. The lack of expertise and capacity at a regional level in defining problems and suggesting solutions in a broader perspective ('think globally, act locally'), may become an obstacle in further development. The next stage of the VET reform process needs a great deal of strategic thinking and conceptualisation in order to utilise the human potential in the CEE countries at all levels.

2.4 Conclusions

In all countries of the region, vital changes have occurred since 1990, the lasting importance of which should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, the progress made by the countries during the period of transition varies markedly throughout the region. The countries that have advanced economically are already experiencing some growth in economic output and employment. However, the excess of manpower in the industrial and agricultural sectors is still an issue in most parts of the region, and a further shift towards the services sector could be expected in the coming years. Job losses and a decrease in employment in the early years of transition, though partly compensated for by the expanding private sector, especially in successful transition economies, still affects large portions of the population. Disadvantaged groups on the labour market have suffered from the increasing rates of unemployment in the region, putting young people and the elderly, especially with low or no qualifications, people with different forms of physical and mental disabilities, and national minorities all at a high risk for social exclusion. The nature of the issue of social exclusion and an analysis of the causes and effects of the situation become especially important under these circumstances. The countries have tackled the problem through specific employment and training measures, the effectiveness of which has been measured in some countries (see further), providing a useful benchmarking perspective for the others.

The crucial challenge faced by the counties of the region is to complete the transition to a competitive market economy while at the same time creating sufficient jobs to avoid excessive rates of unemployment or inactivity (European Commission 1999), especially among the risk groups. The analysis of the socio-economic context has provided evidence of *a double transformation in CEE*, in which the countries of the region experience not only the single transition from a state to a market economy, but also undergo (and to no less an extent) a global transformation. The latter involves shifts in employment towards SMEs, deindustrialisation, changes in the world of work with the stress being placed on information technology and knowledge-intensive industries.

The opening up of economies to the highly competitive global markets introduces a dilemma of there being a need for ever higher standards of skills and competences (upskilling) and at the same time a lack of training provision by enterprises as a result of severe competition on the market. The latter point is not unique to CEE, but its severity is certainly exacerbated by the transition period, when many firms are faced with the question of survival. In this respect, the provision of initial and continuing vocational education and training becomes increasingly more important, and for the CEE countries the role of VET in preventing and combating the negative consequences of transformation has additional accountability. The role of the state in providing initial VET and re-training for adults under the aforementioned conditions becomes indispensable, but even more so is its role in the systemic re-organisation of training provision in such a way as to allow for alternative methods and sources of financing the system, better access to training among all age cohorts, and increasing the relevance of education to the needs of the labour market. The VET systems are undergoing tre-

mendous changes, trying to meet the challenges of "both" transformations, and finding themselves in... the middle of the reform process. In the surroundings of such profound and fundamental change the role of research speaks for itself. Research into VET and the labour market must be of sufficient aptitude to analyse the change that has occurred against the background of global trends and suggest further evolutionary steps. But is there a conceptual framework that can allow for this type of thorough analysis? Does research itself in the turbulent times of transformation have the adequate capacity to tackle this challenging task?

3. A conceptual framework for the analysis of change in regard to education and training[6]

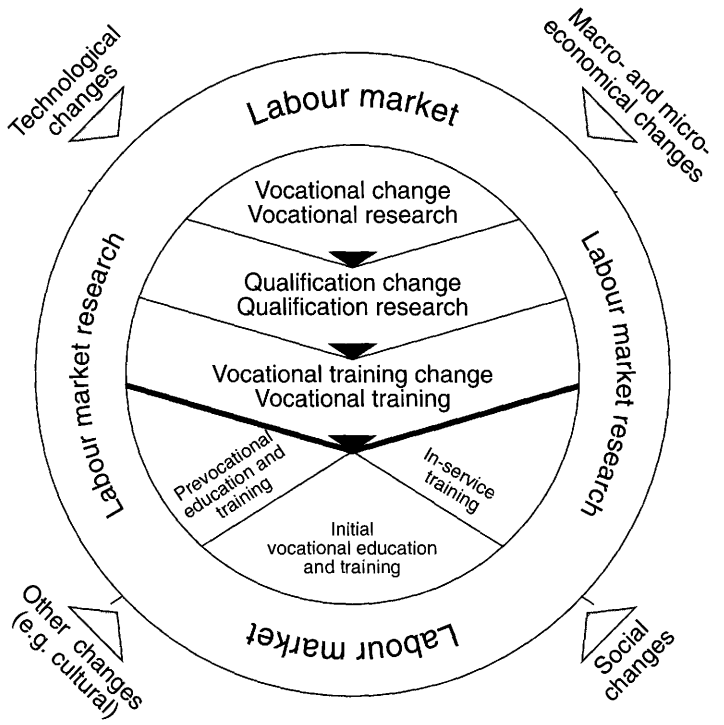
Indeed, the change that had to occur after 1989 was almost taken for granted, without any particular specification of what needed to change and how. In the conditions of global change (see above) the challenge is even to find the point of departure, as well as the one of intention.

A great deal of literature has been written on change and even on the management of change, most of both concentrating on social and political theory and social psychology. The conceptual framework for change from the perspective of transition and with a strong reference to education aspects is missing, especially as far as research in CEE is concerned. Mestenhauser (1998), a scholar of Czech origin residing in the US, sought the answer to this problem in comparative thinking and in the key concept of "culture". He turned to cultural anthropology, using literature (Kluckhol and Strodtbeck 1961) as a reference point, and on this built up the concept of system diagnosis and knowledge recovery by the means of cross-cultural comparison. Indeed, the remarkable post-socialist change appears not to be merely a change within the same system, but rather an unprecedented transformation from one major system to another, which is not a simple linear change (Mestenhauser 1998) but a qualitative shift from one cultural perspective to another. Thus, the cross-cultural analytical perspective is a multi-dimensional variable where each research environment represents certain cultural values not only in a spatial dimension but also in a temporal perspective. Different cultural perspectives have different values of education, work, motivation, achievements, etc. The change in the period of transition, therefore, is an ongoing (non-static) change from one culture to another with the aid of an adaptation of values inherent to other cultures. The latter point is crucial.

The transition period, especially its early phase, was characterised by a high volume of research and development projects, produced with the help of foreign expertise, in which the mechanical transferral of their knowledge and skills could not be directly applied to the environment of CEE countries. While not intending to undervalue the contribution of foreign consultants to the revival of the region, it is difficult to deny that their intervention was not always efficient and workable. There is a great deal of evidence in social and political theory that the mechanical application of replicas of Western conceptual models in societies with different history and traditions may lead to scientific and existent discontinuity. However, complaints about this matter by the Eastern scholars were not accompanied by any elaboration of a local conceptual framework for development, often for the simple reason of a lack of thorough knowledge on strategic development. Dramatic change and profound societal developments require a massive infusion of ideas everywhere. It is, however, a dilemma to find a balance between universal and unique values. This balance is difficult to determine from the outside. The answer is certainly to be found not only in

6) This part is predominantly based on Mestenhauser's essay (1998) on Cross-cultural perspectives of change. The author, however, addressed the essay as a point of reference for conceptual framework, and the following text does not directly repeat Mestenhauser's statements.

Figure 1: Scheme of changes influencing vocational training policy and the supporting research



Source: Lauzackas 1998, p.26.

the mere collaboration of scholars across borders and cultures, but also in effective dialogue, value sharing and a joint search for balance from both sides. This cannot be achieved without a massive "knowledge recovery" programme aimed at assisting Eastern scholars in acquiring intellectual knowledge, critical and comparative thinking and an elaboration of their own insight regarding future evolutionary needs. This will bridge the gap between "external" and "internal" cultural influences (Mestenhauser 1998).

The Lithuanian scientist Lauzackas (1998) pointed out that 'the focus of continuous vocational training change is the preparation of the participants and their predisposition to change themselves and the surrounding environment. Hence, only systematic knowledge of vocational training and anticipated problems can guarantee a well-grounded, strategic vocational training policy' (p.6). Lauzackas attempted 'to develop a complete, systematic, theoretical model of constantly changing vocational training, meeting educational needs of an individual and preparing him for the world of work' (p.6). The change of VET was tackled as 'an all-rounded development, determined by ever-changing relationships between a person and the surrounding economical social environment, as well as personal actions of vocational training participants' (p.11). Therefore 'the main quality of vocational training is the ability to change together with the changes in the surrounding environment so as to confirm to the most general principles of democracy and humanism' (p.21). Thus, provision of general qualifications, lifelong learning and the ability to learn, VET as a continuing process of human development, are crucial principles of contemporary VET (Lauzackas 1998). 'Having described vocational training change presumptions and principles, the object of vocational Education science is defined as the object of interdisciplinary science' (p.21). Therefore, 'labour market research, research of vocations, qualification research and vocational training research' are integral parts of the single system of research objectives.

A comprehensive understanding of the entire system and the dynamics of change is therefore an important aspect. What has been demonstrated in VET research in general and especially in the research in CEE is an examination of the autonomous parts of the system without an attempt to analyse it as one whole consisting of interacting and mutually shaping parts. Indeed, reductionism to one particular field (e.g. provision of initial vocational education at the upper secondary level) in the high dynamics of change and subsequent induction analysis does not allow for an account to be taken of all aspects of systemic change and mutual interference. Deduction from the complexity of system dynamics to the dynamics of its integral parts is an alternative conceptual approach, thus far not sufficiently exploited. This is subsequently reflected in the separation of institutional structures, researching bits and pieces of the system, with a lack of awareness of the achievements, information, knowledge and appraisal of the others. What is even more peculiar and novel for CEE, with the introduction of competitive relationships, the separate institutional structures within one country and one field of VET, including analytical structures, started to act as rival entities, just as though they were not parts of one and the same system. This phenomenon, although not necessarily typical for all countries, was evident in a few, not only in the private sector, where such behaviour could be explained by their market-oriented nature, but also among public or state institutions.

4. Institutional framework, organisation and development of VET research in CEE

4.1 Institutional framework of VET research

The following section is mainly prepared on the basis of a discussion paper written by M. Csako *Identifying and assessing VET research institutions in the Phare and Tacis countries* (1998) and the country overviews of VET research. As the former was commissioned by ETF with the specific purpose of analysing the situation in research institutes and the feasibility of establishing a network of research institutes in partners countries, the country overviews for the purpose of our study did not pursue the objective of assessing the situations of and in the research institutes. Furthermore,, this is not an objective of our analysis. Logistical and financial arrangements are considered only in terms of the constraints or advantages they induce in research. Therefore, information from Csako's paper (drawn from the analysis of two questionnaires distributed among experts in partner countries) was used above all, and only additionally compared with the information supplied by the National Observatories and their experts.

The patterns of institutional organisation for the purpose of the analysis of VET differ somewhat throughout the region. An attempt at typology in the later section of the paper provides only a general framework and is not intended to take into account the entire complex of arrangements of structures involved into VET research, which are at any rate in a continual process of change. Institutional arrangements for the provision of research in partner countries are still suffering from the consequences of the socialist past. 'VET research shared the fate of VET in general amidst the turbulent changes of the transition: many institutions have not survived, others have been reorganised, split into parts or re-emerged into new organisational structures. VET research has no uniform institutional structure throughout CEECs and the CIS. Central VET institutes seem however serving as foci of crystallisation of research efforts where they exist' (Csako 1998, p. 4).

Here it is important to emphasize one methodological remark about what actually Csako looked at in his paper. In the CEE region, he noted that only two countries established an institution called *research institute* in the field of VET: communist Czechoslovakia (in 1950) and Lithhuania (a research centre of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas established in 1993). Other countries have governmental institutions developing and supervising VET, or methodological or academic centres. No matter what the institution was called, our

analysis demonstrated that there is no strict difference between them, and while research institutes deal with theoretical research as well as (and even predominantly) with development projects and applied research, this fact also applies in reverse. Even in countries where there is no institute in the field of VET with a major research capacity (Estonia and Latvia, Jogi 1999; Ramina 1999), other institutions have emerged as substitute structures (other sectoral institutes, universities, and National Observatories that under the circumstances seem to serve as focal points for VET research in these countries). Irrespective of whether the institutions involved in VET research are or are not research institutes, in CEE they have a far better capacity to carry out applied research (e.g. labour market analyses, school to work transition, sectoral studies) or development projects (e.g. curriculum development, elaboration of standards, evaluation of outcomes of education, etc.) and 'less ready to analyse the relationship between VET and labour market and even less fit to do theoretical research of larger socio-economic context of VET' (Csako 1998).

'Research in VET can be **distinctively** [highlighting by OSI] split into two main parts: research in vocational education, (under the Ministry of Education and Sciences) and research in vocational training, (under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or other ministries). The first part is relatively broader than the second one, having qualitative advantages also'.

Mustafai A.,1999,
VET research in Albania

These facts in no way question the aptitude of the research personnel: researchers are of high quality in terms of level of scientific degree, volume of publications, involvement in international projects, etc. A lack of analytical capacity in the countries to cover the multidisciplinarity of the analysis of links between VET and the labour market reveals the traditional, old-fashioned, inductive approach of VET research, also heavily mirrored in institutional specialisation. For instance, institutes of labour and social affairs would mostly deal with research on labour and social issues, VET institutes would concentrate on the curriculum of initial education, pedagogical institutes would deal with didactics, etc. In the countries where there is no special research institute in the field of VET, VET research is sometimes located at institutes of education research. This arrangement also reveals an outdated privileged link of VET to education, along with its separation from the economy (Csako 1998, p.15). This problem is not a specific concern of the CEE region: it is rather a general issue on the European research agenda. Furthermore, in each one of the studied CEE countries there is evidence (mostly recent) of the positive practice of intersectoral, suprainstitutional and multidisciplinary studies, even though it is still rather exceptional. The idea of National Observatories as institutions that work in an intersectoral network of experts and institutions in their countries hopefully contributes to this positive development.

As has already been mentioned, another weakness revealed by Csako (1998) and confirmed by country papers on VET research (1999) is a lack of thorough theoretical works on the larger socioeconomic context of VET. Why this is so could not be straightforwardly explained on the basis of information provided by national experts. Perhaps the financial constraints of the transition period and the consequent prioritisation of projects that can evidently provide immediate results (i.e. ideally applied research and development projects) offer at least a partial explanation. In each country there are again fortunate exceptions, where attempts to undertake comprehensive theoretical research in a broad socioeconomic perspective have been undertaken (more so observed in Poland, Lithuania and the Czech Republic).

In general, the VET research community in Albania is limited, in terms of quality and quantity. Only during the last years, close cooperation of Albanian and foreign VET experts has influenced the improvement of their expertise.

Mustafai A.,1999,
VET research in Albania

The actual research and development work is often hindered because of a lack of researchers. There are only few people who could be called VET researchers and they are either of retirement

age or close to it, while there is no young generation emergin. There are also no schemes at present available or planned for initial training, continuous or retraining the researchers.

Jogi K., 1999,
VET research in Estonia

Although in general the high quality of expertise of the researchers in CEE is not questioned, there are certain limitations to expertise and deficiencies observed and reported by the countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Albania, and Estonia). It is interesting to note that it is for the most part (although not only) in the link itself between VET and the labour market, the world of work, and social partnership and VET, that a lack of expertise is pointed out. The problem is again derived from the same sources: the old-fashioned separation of the research function in education and the employment field. One peculiar complaint is found in the Estonian paper, (Jogi 1999) concerning the lack of training provision for researchers. The intellectual potential in the society actually emerges out of higher education, in which Estonia is not exactly an example of the "creaming" of small intellectual cohorts. According to data, this country enjoys the second highest rate of educational attainment in ISCED 5-7 (tertiary level) among all age groups, although somewhat decreasing among the young (here table 4). The only suggestion is that this is an indication of a lack of preparation at the university and postgraduate level in the field of VET and its macro-context.

There are certainly other reasons for expertise shortages than the lack of appropriate knowledge in the field: the limited number of experts in small countries (the majority of them in CEE) on the one hand, and numerous projects on the other hand, create a deficit among analysts; in some countries also the issue of the brain drain is not of little significance (the latter will be approached further on). Nevertheless, a programme of massive knowledge recovery seems to be a healthy and appropriate measure in all CEE countries, not merely by attracting foreign expertise (this will be further explored later on), but rather by sending existing and future experts for training and temporary work placements abroad (here more Mestenhauser 1998). Joint research projects are another invaluable tool for knowledge recovery and a strong stabilising factor in science: the analysis of data collected in one comparative survey (Bobeva 1997) shows that the higher the participation in joint research projects in the country (e.g. Hungary, CR, Slovenia), the lower the outflow of researchers from science.

'There is no one single central institution dealing with research in the field of VET. In 1990 the Institute of Vocational Education and Training, the only agency in the education sector that dealt with research in this field, was closed. During almost ten years since the institute had been closed, a gap emerged, which has not been really fulfilled'. 'It is also worth adding that at the beginning of the 1990s other sectoral institutes, that operated in such important fields, as education programmes, teachers training and research of youth, were also closed. The reason for abolition of these institutes was low effectiveness and inconsistency with the new conditions of the state functioning. The rational behind these decisions was assurance, that higher education and science will undertake research in this field, but in practice it did not bring about the expected results.' [Translation by OSI].

Drogosz-Zablocka et al., 1999,
VET research in Poland

'It is estimated that actual inclusion of faculties is importantly connected with the interests of their researchers. It has to be mentioned that the most important research projects which led to the introduction of new vocational education and training system were carried out within the research activities at university. Out of three research projects from the field of vocational education and training. currently carried out within the National research programme, two are carried out within university research activities. Research projects dealing with the relation between vocational education and the labour market are also mainly carried out by the researchers at independent research institutes and university research institutes.'

Ivancic et al. 1999
VET research in Slovenia

The analysis of background country reports has demonstrated that in most countries the institutional arrangement is still suffering from the consequences of the socialist period,

when research was separated from universities and placed mainly within the structure of national Academies of Sciences, or was transferred to state ministerial research structures. Pedagogical faculties were often closed under the communist regime, and were re-opened only after 1989. Research at pedagogical faculties, however, mostly tends to cover general and academic education and deals little with VET. Pedagogical research (didactics, educational psychology, etc.) also takes place primarily in the pedagogical faculties of universities.

Exceptional cases are Lithuania, Slovenia and to some extent Romania and Poland, where university VET research is quite well developed. In Slovenia, a great deal of applied research is undertaken at Slovene universities which also actively participate in the development projects of national interest. Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania is a central VET research point where substantial applied and basic research has been carried out. In Poland, schools of higher education are active in research into agricultural training, and in the field of management and human resource development, done mostly by economic schools. A high share of profit from the research activities of Polish institutions of higher education (Drogosz-Zablocka et al. 1999) is an indicator of the activity of research function there, although the data refer to research in general without particular reference to VET.

In Romania, approx. 15% of the state budget for universities is allocated to research (Balica et al. 1999). The orientation of university research toward the field of VET came to be a component of Romanian reform. VET research constitutes a considerable share of the university research in this country. Universities in Romania mostly focus on fundamental scientific research, analysis of programme contents with reference to labour market requirements, regional development and other aspects (Balica et al. 1999). In the Czech Republic, although the Institute of Educational Research and Development at the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University does not study VET as its primary topic, it has played substantial role in strategic studies and the formulation of policy documents working with experts from other institutions.

At present, the research function of universities throughout the entire region is undergoing revival. Although VET research at universities is fairly active in some countries (e.g. Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Slovenia), it still remains inactive in the majority of countries in the region.

The *cooperation of universities with industry and the business* sector in general is very exceptional even in countries where university research into VET is well developed (e.g. Lithuania). Only Romania and Slovenia reported somewhat better cooperation. In Romania, cooperation between universities and the business sector concentrates on human resource development requirements and makes up approximately 30% of university research financed by business (Balica et al. 1999). In Slovenia, universities are involved in developmental and advisory projects for the needs of companies in the field of human resource development (HRD), education provision, career planning, etc. The extent of this cooperation, however, has decreased during the years of transition due to financial constraints in companies (Ivancic et al. 1999). It seems that businesses prefer to work either with private sector consulting firms (applied research and consultancy) or with management development advisors from the MBA type of higher education. Unlike the other countries, cooperation between the university and VET schools is lively in Lithuania, where the results of master theses are often used by VET schools (Gurskiene 1999).

Social partner organisations are involved in VET research still only to a limited extent. During the period of transition, the institute of social partnership had to be re-instituted in the countries of CEE. From rigid, highly politicised and largely discredited structures, social partner organisations had to transform into active organisations representing the interests of the employer and employees at all levels of societal development. This process has been very challenging, and the role of social partner organisations in VET as such is rather limited in all countries (only Hun-

gary and Estonia seem to be more successful in this transformation). Cooperation between research institutes as well as universities with social partners is also very weak. The role of social partners undertaking research into VET is negligible. Slightly more active are employers' organisations, which conduct analyses of enterprise training and qualification needs and their HRD policy (e.g. Czech Confederation of Industry and Transport[7], Latvian Confederation of Employers[8], Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry[9]). There is no evidence of the active involvement of trade unions in VET research in CEE.

The role of *private, for-profit companies* in VET research within CEE is extremely limited. The process by which VET experts working in state institutions go private is only starting. So far a process of accumulation of VET knowledge from the perspective of international achievements and management skills has occurred. Harsh competition in the consultancy market comprised of leading European firms has also not been a supportive factor for entrepreneurship in the field of VET expertise by national specialists. This situation has started to change slowly and we can find a few studies produced by private firms in all countries. They mostly concentrate on applied research, surveying the training needs of companies, supply and demand in education, CVT offer (DHV Prague), assessing competences in the telecommunication sector (Telekomunikacja Polskiej S.A.), elaboration of the system of qualification standards in the banking sector (Polish Foundation of Banking Education and Research), assessing the graduates in enterprises and company skill requirements (AMD and Universitas in the Czech Republic), conducting regional (GAREP – Czech Republic) or subsectoral analyses (Gradua in the CR, AS PW Partners in Estonia). Sometimes private firms combine analytical work with training courses (mostly trainers training) and publishing activities (CIVET in Albania).

Studying human resource management, human resource development in companies, management training needs and management development are other fields where private firms are relatively active. Often national surveys are done by the national branches of international consulting firms, which are already well established and have national experts working with them (e.g. PriceWaterhouseCoopers 1999). Access to the results of such surveys is often hindered either by client-related policy (delivered only to a client, otherwise confidential) or by a strong, for-profit orientation, meaning that the price of the final product is extravagant. It is important, however, to note that private consultants often participate in open tenders announced either by public/state institutions or by agencies with international funds in both the narrowly defined applied research and in comprehensive strategic studies (e.g. Euro-In Consulting[10] in Romania, Deloitte & Touche[11] in the Czech Republic, EMOR Ltd[12]. in Estonia).

7) The company survey was conducted in 1998 by the Czech Confederation of Industry and Transport, examining *inter alia* human resources development and skills needs in enterprises.

8) LSE has conducted two company surveys: *Specialities and qualifications requested in the labour market* - in 1996-1997, *and Links between the labour market and the vocational education system in Latvia* - in 1997 (Ramina 1999).

9) Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised a questionnaire survey among employers on the quality of qualification provided in existing vocational schools in textiles sector (1997) (Ramina 1999).

10) Euro-In Consulting coordinated the *Study on labour market and related implications on the manpower provision by the vocational education and training system within the framework of Phare Project No. RO9405* carried out in 1998 (Balica et al. 1999).

11) Deloitte & Touche produced *A study of needs, demand and supply of management training in the banking and financial sector of the Czech Republic* in 1996 on the basis of a contract with the national Training Fund, Phare HRD programme.

12) Emor Ltd. Conducted qualitative research among SMEs in three focus groups in Tallinn and Rakvere. The study *Training of skilled workers and personnel management of companies* (Tamm 1997) was initiated by Estonian National Observatory. Similar studies were undertaken in 1998: *Using skilled labour in enterprises* (Tamm 1998a) and *Survey on vocational schools* (Tamm 1998b).

The recent strengthening of the private sector of VET expertise (research and consultancy) is evident in all CEE countries, although the extent varies. It depends not only on the level of advancement of the country in terms of the economic transformation, but also on the state tax policy, market competition (both private and public) and the employment environment in public sector research. The private status has its own advantages in VET analysis, as it presupposes independence from state structures, and therefore, provides a good incentive for objectivity and equality in cooperating with all public bodies. However, it may impede the implementation of findings and recommendations insofar as state decision making is concerned. Some of the National Observatories or their host institutions have had or have even recently attained a private non-profit status (Bulgarian Human Resource Development Fund, Czech National Training Fund) or the status of a non-governmental organisation (Estonian Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Reform, Albanian National Observatory, Latvian Academic Information Centre, Polish BKKK-Cooperation Fund). This positive development is also a big challenge, not only for these organisations, but also to the reciprocity of society.

Civil society sector research is still rather inactive in the field of VET (unlike the social sciences in general where quite a few studies have been conducted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This is connected with the insufficient development of civil society institutions and the still rather 'centralised' (state oriented) mentality of the public. Nevertheless, it seems that where funds are available (often allocated from international assistance programmes), NGOs are more active. Apart from non-governmental foundations with partial foreign funding, very few significant research projects undertaken by NGOs are reported.[13]

13) One such project is the research *TOP 500 Gazety Bankowej Kadry*, which has been the first comprehensive analysis of human resources, recruitment and training provision in 500 biggest Polish companies (Drogosz-Zablocka 1999).

4.2 Financial aspects and coordination of VET research

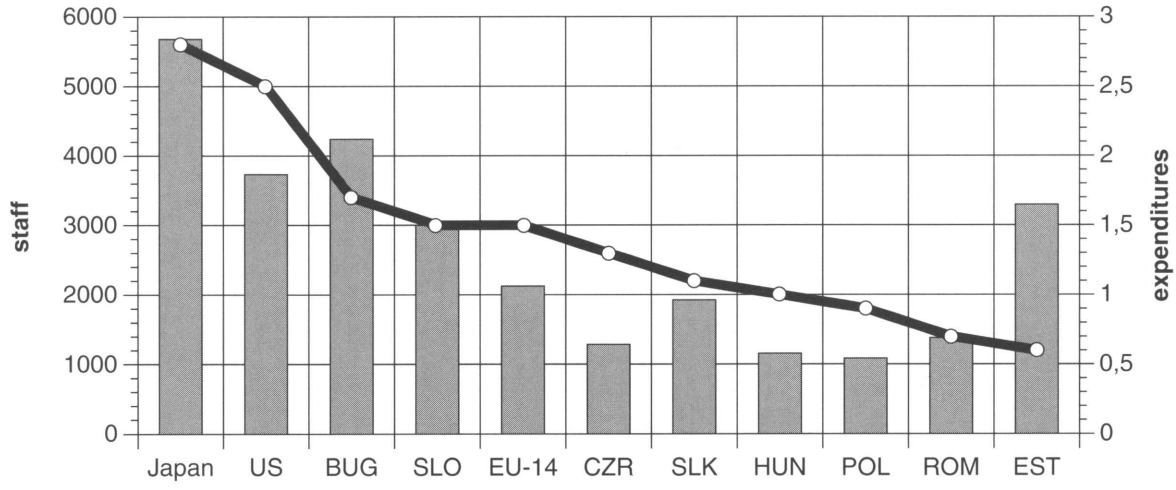
The financial constraints of the transition period affected all sides of research life in CEE. Some institutions have been closed down (e.g. Poland) or were never created after the introduction of state independence (e.g. Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia[14]). All research structures have reduced the number of staff in an effort to make research more efficient. Large research institutes were replaced by smaller, but more flexible and autonomous research units as a logical reaction to a common problem of all post-socialist countries – overstaffing and the too narrow specialisation of research structures (Bobeva 1997). The other side of the coin is that with poor economic conditions and tight budgets in the early transition period, research often failed in the category of least priority areas. Reliable data on the number of staff engaged in VET research are not available, as numerous institutions and individual researchers are involved. We assume that VET research is experiencing the same trends as research in the CEE countries in general. Aspects of financing VET research are also difficult to analyse, as information on this point is very scarce. Therefore, general data on research and development have been used for the purpose of our analysis.

> '...institutions are vastly underfunded and lack a wide range of well-qualified personnel to adequately respond to the complex needs of the VET subsector'
>
> Mustafai A. 1999,
> *VET research in Albania*

Comparing the number of scientists and engineers in research and development (R&D)

14) Slovakia and the Czech Republic are a classical example of the consequences of disintegration. Following dissolution of the federal state in 1992, there is are number of sister institutions in Prague and Bratislava, where only Prague's central VET institute (Research Institute of Technical and Vocational Education) maintains its predominantly *research* identity, and Bratislava enjoys a higher capacity Institute of Labour, Social Affairs and Family than its sister institution in Prague.

Figure 2: Research and development: Number of scientists and engineers per million people and expenditures as % of GNP



	Japan	US	BUG	SLO	EU-14	CZR	SLK	HUN	POL	ROM	EST
staff	5677	3732	4240	2998	2123	1285	1922	1157	1083	1382	3296
expenditures	2,8	2,5	1,7	1,5	1,5	1,3	1,1	1	0,9	0,7	0,6

Source: World Development Indicators (1998), pp.298-300.

per million people, we can see that the CEE-10 average (data for Albania are not available) is about 93% of the EU average (calculated on the basis of World development indicators 1998). The Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania fail in the category of being understaffed. However, the number of scientific staff in Bulgaria is about twice the EU average, in Estonia – about 1.5 times, and slightly above average in Slovenia. The latter two cases are specific examples of very small countries where the reported numbers represent almost the total of the small research community there, while Bulgarian science is clearly overstaffed. At the same time, expenditure on R&D as a percentage of gross national product (GNP) in Estonia (0.6%) and Romania (0.7%) are far lower, not only than the EU average (1.8%), but also than the CEE average (slightly over 1%). In the more stabilised economies, after a sharp reduction of the number of staff at research institutions and the number of institutions themselves during 1990-1997, the number of scientific personnel has started to grow slightly since 1998 (CSO, 1999), building on the rational of development and the consequent necessity of increasing investment into R&D. Indeed, although the number of staff in research had been decreasing in all countries up until recent years, in their efforts to rationalise and make the research field more effective, investment into research increased, at least in some of the CEE countries. Nevertheless, the expenditure of partner countries on R&D still lags behind the expenditure of EU member states, approximately to the same degree as the latter lag behind US spending (2.8%)[15].

15) It is important to mention the relativity of the above statistics as the GNP absolute numbers between CEE and the EU member states differ to a great extent, which is only an additional confirmation of the poor financial conditions of science in CEE.

Thus, in spite of personnel reduction, which occurred in all countries, research is still overstaffed in a few of them, although in several CEE countries the redundancy policy was exaggerated and scientific establishments there suffer from understaffing. In most CEE countries, the academies of sciences and state research institutes were mainly affected by the reduction of personnel, while staff at universities did not experience personnel redundancy to the same extent (Bobeva 1997). The number of staff / expenditures ratio still signals that, in CEE, researchers are poorly paid, and work under poor conditions with very limited funds for undertaking research. Indeed, salaries in the science sector in most countries are low and even lower than the national average salary (Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia), varying from the highest paid research personnel in the region – in Slovenia, followed by the Czech Republic, and the least paid in Lithuania (Bobeva 1997)[16].

Working conditions showed the greatest variety, as revealed by Csako's survey (1998): 'Financial shortages and in some countries organisational limitations also hinder access to modern communication'. Access to modern technology, software, the Internet, the results of international research, etc., directly influences the mode of work undertaken by researchers in CEE (see table 5 on the rate of Internet usage in CEE). The financial constraints of the transition period imposed particular difficulties on the development of research and often prevented the initiation of innovative research projects. In many cases, financial constraints on research activities, low salaries and poor working conditions led to an outflow of experts from the research field and for the most part into the private sector. The big difference between the number of employed researchers and those working on research projects, discovered by Csako (1998), 'supports the assumption that in transitory conditions, with restructuring institutional system, there are far too many factors to keep even prominent VET researchers outside VET research institutions' (p. 16). The situation is so complex that even directors and senior researchers can be seen undertaking private activities at the same time (Csako, 1998). They are mostly involved in research or development projects, conducted by other agencies, and financed either by national sources and granting schemes or, even more frequently, by international ones. This issue is not obvious, and the consequences are rather ambiguous. Indeed, on the one hand, involvement in work of other institutions and especially international projects increases the mutual awareness of ongoing projects and interinstitutional co-operation. On the other hand, it leads to a de-concentration in the work of researchers and the atomisation of the scientific aspirations of research institutions.

The wage gap between the East and the West, as well as the other factors mentioned above, also creates a high incentive for emigration. Research on a problem of the brain drain and brain waste in the period of transition has been largely neglected. The only exception was Poland, where the massive emigration of scientists had been an issue even before initiation of the reform process. In 1997, the European Commission – DGXII supported a collaborative survey carried out in ten CEE countries within the framework of the COST programme (Bobeva 1997). The main findings showed that the highest volume of emigrating scientists out of the overall outflow from science between 1989 and 1995 occurred in Poland (15%), Estonia (14%), Bulgaria and Slovakia (above 11% in each). It is worthy to note that all four countries also belong to the group where scientists' salaries are below the national average. Most of those who emigrated were young (mainly between 30 and 40), with a high professional profile, and prevailingly in possession of doctoral degrees. The analysis of the situation in Albania showed an even more dramatic situation: nearly 15% of the entire population, the most active and qualified, emigrated to neighbouring countries (Mustafai 1999).

The report revealed, however, that internal migration of scientists was a far more signifi-

16) The data used by Bobeva (1997) are outdated (1993) but wage statistics show that the trend remained the same. Data for Albania are missing.

cant problem for the countries than external migration. The internal outflow (internal brain drain) mostly occurred in the direction of the private sector and self-employment, but also into other research institutes, government administration, or unemployment. Unfortunately a large part of the outflow from science proved to be not only a real loss for science, but also a brain waste. Part of the internal brain waste was an outflow into types of work with lower qualifications in the private sector and into entrepreneurship for the sake of higher income. Moreover, the mass outflow of scientists could not be fully absorbed by the labour market, and a considerable proportion of the outflow from research is reported as being unemployed: in Bulgaria – 28% of the outflow, Latvia – 9%, Slovakia 8%, Estonia 4.5%, and Romania 3%. The brain drain primarily affected the natural and technical sciences, but also, though to a lesser extent, social and economic sciences (Bobeva 1997).

Although the outflow of scientists from the sector is declining as a result of stabilising factors, the problem remains significant. At the same time, the opening of borders and the intensification of research cooperation has changed profile of migration of researchers: the number of scientists employed abroad is increasing (especially in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic), where short-term employment or involvement in research projects abroad are especially widespread (Bobeva 1997).

Coordination mechanisms of VET research at a national level vary among the countries. Whatever the mode of research organisation and its coordination at the decision-making level is, coordination was reported as either insufficient or entirely missing in all CEE countries. The problem of research decentralisation was understood by national experts in two distinctive ways: the first tackled general institutional and administrative decentralisation of the state as an integral part of the reform process (positive connotation); the second associated decentralisation with the highly scattered VET research function and very poor coordination of projects among numerous institutions involved (negative connotation). The first meaning was referred to by all CEE countries as virtually non-existent or negligible, while many countries reported the second one as a serious obstacle to greater transparency and cooperation between the institutes. It is peculiar to see that in the countries where VET research is in fact highly centralised and very close to the state sector, a lack of coordination (even under one and the same ministry!) and cooperation between different institutions was reported (Mustafai 1999). The reform process has imposed certain improvements in inter-institutional cooperation, noticed in recent years (Drogosz-Zablocka et al. 1999).

> 'In Poland state budget resources for R&D activities form above 60% of all R&D expenditures, and this is far more than in European Union member states. For comparison in EU member states state budget funds for R&D reach about 40%, and in OECD countries – about 33%.' [Translation by OSI].
>
> Drogosz-Zablocka et al., 1999, *VET research in Poland*

Research into VET in CEE countries is predominantly funded by the state budget and concentrated around the main VET (research) institute or several institutes (e.g. institute of pedagogical studies, adult education centre, etc.), mostly financed by the Ministry of Education. Research into the labour market is mostly organised around the institute, studying issues on the labour market and social aspects, and financed through the Ministry of Labour. This arrangement leads to the fragmentation of research, lack of intersectoral collaboration and a lack of contextual perspective in narrowly defined (as determined by sectoral bodies) research topics.

Research in general is normally regulated by the law on research (Estonia 1995, Czech Republic 1992 with amendment in 1995, Slovenia 1991, Lithuania 1991), although not all countries have reported so. The laws define the status of executive, administrative and advisory structures in the field of research and development, and main financing principles and methods (including granting procedures where available). The state usually provides seed funding for research institutes,

financing its current expenditures and the salaries (fully or partially) of the personnel. Financing is channelled through relevant sectoral ministries, and therefore in the case of VET it is mostly the ministries of education which finance and request for research. Project funding comes from national grant system, state research orders (e.g. ministerial), and significantly from international assistance programmes. Universities as independent entities receive financing for their teaching and research activities as part of their budget (allocated through the ministries of education), but can also apply through the national grant system or participate in tenders for the announced research project. Institutes of academies of science receive separate funding allocated for this purposes out of the state budget.

As the ministries of education are the main funding source for research in education, some countries have an executive body which runs grant procedure under or within the ministry (e.g. Estonian Science Foundation, Grant Agency at the Czech Ministry of Education, Polish Ministry of National Education. the Romanian National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training.): announcing calls for tender, allocating competitive research grants on the basis of peer reviews, monitoring projects and in some countries also identifying the research priorities of the subsector in the coming period. Similar executive bodies operate under other ministries. Their linkage to state level advisory or another type of body (e.g. Governmental Council on Research and Development in the Czech Republic, Estonian Research and Development Council, Polish Committee of Scientific Research, Romanian National Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, Lithuanian Council of Science, Slovak Council for Research and Technology) is to provide coordination at a national level, avoid duplicity in project funding and ensure transparency on research projects already available. Even in countries that have such arrangements it does not seem very efficient, as coordination has been noted as being weak in all countries. The mere existence of research coordination structures at the national level, however, does not mean that they allocate funding or announce research projects in VET (e.g. Poland) and sadly enough they almost never have any reference to VET research.

The crucial question remains as to how these bodies can be made functional and integrate VET issues. Perhaps these structures with a complex hierarchy have become too bureaucratic to be efficient, or VET research has not been a priority. Moreover, coordination of research in the ministerial domain is not beneficial enough for such a multidisciplinary field as is VET. It would seem that the nomination of one of the existing VET research institutes, or even the establishment of an intersectoral group of VET experts and the subsequent nomination of them for the task of coordination, could be helpful, in this way separating the coordination function from the bureaucratic machine. This has been partially achieved in Lithuania where no coordination specifically for VET research is foreseen at the state level. The Centre for Vocational Education and Research (Vytautas Magnus University) is coordinating research in the field of VET, while other leading institutions in the field of VET are responsible for VET policy formulation VET (Lithuanian White Paper 1998). The establishment of coordination structures or the improvement of the existing coordination framework is especially important for Latvia and Estonia, where no major VET institute which could be a focus for all major VET activities in the country exists.

Information provision on the existing or completed research projects is achieved by constantly updating databases, mostly operated by the same (executive or advisory) coordination structures (e.g. Poland, Czech Republic). Without questioning the value of such information systems, we would however stress the importance of broad information provision for the public. This can facilitate not only the mutual awareness of institutions about the research work in the country, but also may help to identify potential partner institutions and individual researchers for future projects, and consequently facilitate cooperation. Some institutions have been publishing for these purposes periodicals with information about ongoing projects and their outcomes. These

periodicals mostly remain based around a single institution and a central scientific magazine in the field of VET research is rarely available (the exception is Lithuania where the journal *Vocational education: research and reality* covers the entire VET research field in the country (Gurskiene 1999)).

The declaration of national priorities for research in general is rather common for the whole region, but the definition of priorities in VET research is systematised only in a few countries (in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Latvia, Romania and recently partly in Poland), though mostly done at the ministerial level without the involvement of other interested parties. Slovenia, for instance, has a National Research Programme, enacted by the parliament, which defines public service in research activity with a definition of the aims and extent of particular disciplines (VET is part of social science research in the programme and deserves about 8% of the budget earmarked for research activity) (Ivancic et al. 1999). In Estonia, identification of research priorities is done in a more 'informal' way through discussion among VET actors in the Estonian Education Forum and subsequent statements on future priorities for research. The latter approach is acceptable as it brings about at least a certain level of consensus, while the mere declaration of research priorities at the political (decision-making) level does not mean that there had been any *identification process* with the involvement of different experts and other actors in VET. In Lithuania, future research priorities were defined in the White Paper – EU Phare 1998, which also presupposes a prior discussion process.

The research institutions and universities in Poland that conduct research projects from their own main budget turn to their founders with the request to define research priorities, but in the end they usually define them themselves. This all leads to the fragmentation of research topics and demonstrates a lack of *policy* in the field (Drogosz-Zablocka et al., 1999)

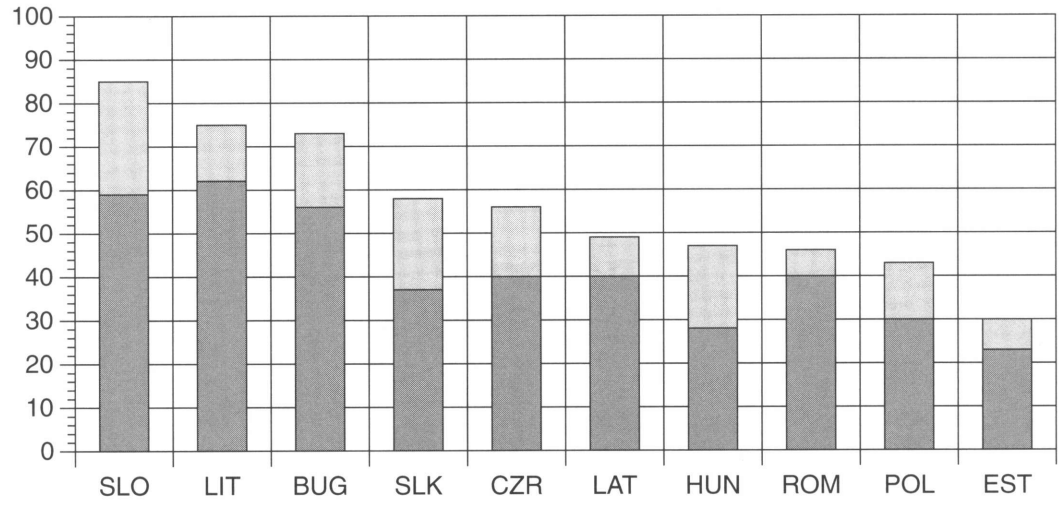
National 'granting' procedures seem to be rather rigid, whereby the majority of research is done either on the basis of an addressed order to a particular institute or on the basis of terms of reference with a tender procedure. There are very few cases in which the state defines only broad research fields (priorities) and announces open calls for proposals. This is the case of Slovenia and the Czech Republic. The former runs such granting procedures for broad intersectoral topics, the latter may change the system due to low transparency and poor practical outcomes of such 'ground-generated' projects. Both of the countries attempt to promote inter-institutional cooperation, taking into account the intersectoral nature of VET research. A balance must be found between assigning the research tasks and allowing the institutes to generate the project according to their understanding of the current needs in research fields broadly defined by the state.

In Albania as in other CEE countries, ministries are the main clients that determine studies at research institutes, but there is no system of national granting procedures for undertaking research in VET (Mustafai 1999). In general, the role of national actors in VET research in Albania was reported as very limited for two main reasons: financial constraints and the absence of the habit of analysing the situation before making a political decision (Mustafai 1999). 'Scientific' culture in political action and rhetoric is still rather low in CEE, and in Albania in particular.

4.3 Role of international activities

As we have seen, the issue of the outflow of researchers from science is directly connected to the level of salaries among researchers, and also to the volume of investment in research. In a period of economic hardship, assistance to research and development by international donor organisations has become indispensable. D.Bobeva (1997) in her synthesis report comes to the conclusion that while the long-term migration of researchers is mainly in the direction of the USA, the exchange of research contacts and cooperation in general ('brain exchange') is more intensive with EU countries. This tendency is reflected in the volume of financing research within the framework

Figure 3: Scientists working on projects financed by EU and USA (%)



	SLO	LIT	BUG	SLK	CZR	LAT	HUN	ROM	POL	EST
EU-15	59	62	56	37	40	40	28	40	30	23
USA	26	13	17	21	16	9	19	6	13	7

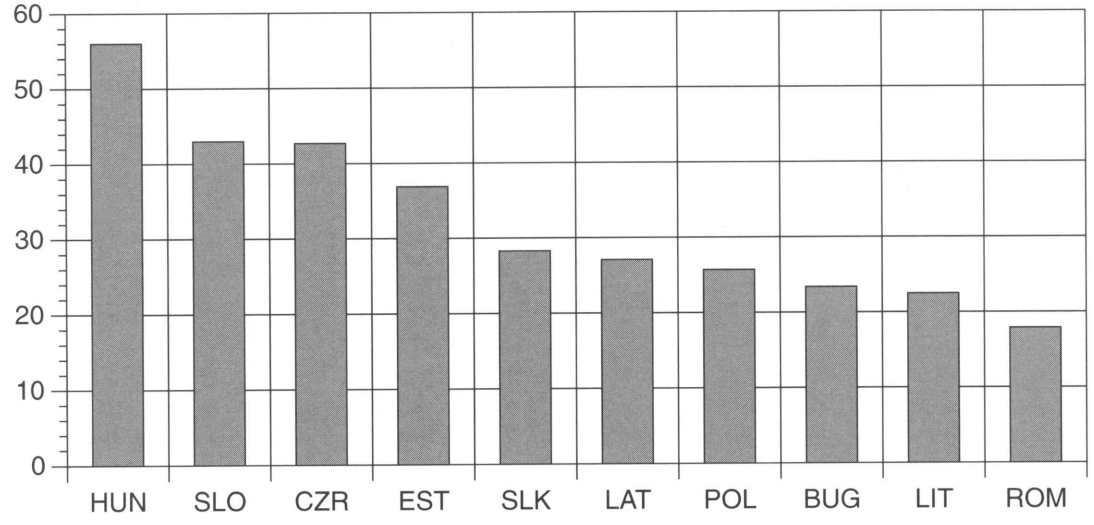
Source: Brain drain survey, Bobeva (1997), p.21.

of support programmes by the EU and the US. In all CEE countries, financial support from the EU has been far more substantial than from the USA.

Financial support from international donors has often been a major source of sustainability for research institutions and researchers themselves. We would have suggested that this has especially been the case in those countries where national resources have been very limited, but the available data do not actually confirm this. Only some donor organisations have clearly identified priority regions, based on the principle of aid intervention in areas with worse economic conditions (e.g. USAID was one of the major donors in early transition years in Central Europe but with an improved economic situation and a pre-accession status of these countries, USAID moved its priorities further to the East). As the EU Phare assistance programme has been the major source of financing in the majority of the countries, and because its assistance has been largely aimed at preparing the CEE countries for the entry and harmonisation of their systems with the EU, Phare did not have a preferential funding policy for more deprived countries. The share of the interviewed scientists in the aforementioned brain-drain survey (Bobeva 1997) involved in a joint research project with Western institutions was also the highest in Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic (table 3).

This shows that the farther along the country is in the process of EU integration, the higher the volume of joint research projects. This is also influenced to a great extent by eligibility for the EU programmes (not only Phare but also Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Youth for Europe, etc.), and especially by the momentum brought about by the enactment of full membership. There has been a certain level of spontaneous coordination at the international level. Where Phare funds were not a major source of support for VET reform, the World Bank or another donor

Figure 4: % of respondents participating in a joint research project with western institutions



Source: Brain drain survey, Bobeva (1997), p.21.

(ILO, UN, Soros foundation, etc.) took the lead (e.g. the case of Albania). In some countries also the World Bank loan funds were supplemented with Phare funds to run a more comprehensive national reform of VET (e.g. Poland). Research cooperation is dependent on access to international programmes, but also on information availability and efficiency, the preparedness of the institutional and legal system to incorporate and market international programmes, and to some extend on the traditional openness of the research community to such cooperation.

The role of international donor organisations in research in general and in VET research in particular has been highly appreciated by all countries (Country overviews of VET research (see list of background reports 1999 on first page); Bobeva 1997; National Observatory country reports 1998). The issue of coordination and transparency is less positively referred to, with frequent criticism of the duplication of funding, the lack of information, and especially in the case of bilateral projects, the lack of coordination with national priorities.

All countries, with the only exception of Albania, reported the Phare VET reform programme as the major reform source and often a driving force of change and innovation. Reforms of vocational education and training systems, which took place between 1990-1998 and were supported by Phare, served as a catalyst in curriculum development primarily in the area of initial VET, in the training of school staff, the upgrading of learning equipment, the involvement of social partners in policy and needs formulation, the evaluation of programme results and the drafting of policy papers on further reform steps. The Phare supported reform in VET made an attempt to initiate systemic reform through the development of a new curriculum reform model in a limited number of pilot schools. 'The model was imported from EU countries and, though ideologically attractive, paid little attention to the specific transition conditions of each individual country' (Parkes et al., 1999, p. 30).

The extent to which the research component was present in the reform process varied from one country to another. All programmes started up from some sort of prior analysis, in which the Western consultants normally participated directly or which they mainly carried out and involved the participation of national experts. The analyses were aimed at an assessment of the national VET systems, the institutional and socioeconomic conditions in the countries, as well as at a comparison of existing systems and arrangements in the EU

member states as far as their appropriateness and feasibility for implementation in partner countries was concerned. 'One of the main drawbacks of the first phase of vocational education and training reforms in some of the Central and Eastern European countries is the fact that reform programmes were generally launched with little labour market information' (ETF 1999a, p.15). Indeed, although all reform programmes started from an elaboration of the conception and analysis of the labour market and general socioeconomic and demographic developments, information on trends in employment and prospective information on the labour market was very limited. Indeed earlier Phare VET programmes possessed a thorough concept of the reform, derived from the long-standing needs of education and from a pro-Western model of development. But the analysis of the transitional nature of socioeconomic developments, employment prospects and the changing nature of employment were not sufficiently considered. Sometimes this was taken into account during the following phase of the programme, when a series of feasibility studies and system assessments (e.g. UPET programme in Poland in 1992) and subsequent needs analysis (MOVE in Poland in 1993) were conducted (Dlugokecka et al., 1996).

> 'The fact that the Strategic Study was prepared by foreign experts in close collaboration with Czech (and Slovak) professionals contributed to the high quality of the Study and at the same time the broad professional public was made aware of the modern approaches to the issues at hand applied in developed countries as well as of the knowledge and experience in these countries'
>
> (Grootings and Kalous et al. 1997, p.179)

Both Czech and Slovak reforms emerged out of the Strategic study of vocational education and training, developed jointly by foreign (Birks Sinclair and Associates Ltd., 1993) and national experts, which 'presented the first comprehensive view of the issues of VET after the political turnover of 1989' (Grootings and Kalous et al. 1997, p.178). The analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the then existing VET system was performed against the background of social, economic and political conditions. The study remains one of the most respected pieces of analytical work in the countries up until now, and one of the strong aspects of its methodology – collaborative research between foreign and national experts – has been noted many times as its convincing advantage. The study naturally lacked a thorough analysis of current and upcoming employment trends, as these data has been largely missing in both countries.

Later Phare VET reform programmes paid more direct attention to the analysis of employment trends, maintaining labour market analysis as a component of the programme (e.g. Romania, and recently FYROM). For instance, the Romanian *Study on labour market and related implications on the manpower provision by the VET system* (CNA Veneto Euro-In Consulting 1998) attempted to substitute the lacking prospective data on labour market trends with specific field surveys, measuring a) the occupational supply of vocational school graduates, and b) labour demand by occupations in stock and flows.

The aforementioned study and others like it attempted to outline the main systemic drawbacks and suggest reform steps leading to a more flexible VET systems and curricula through implementation in a decentralised manner via selected pilot schools. At the end of the programme period, each country conducted an evaluation in which the main results and findings were assessed with respect to European developments in the field of VET. This programme component involved a great deal of research and was very important from the point of view of subsequent political development, outlining the future steps for national implementation.

The pilot character of the reform, though attempting to address systemic problems, has had certain limitations. Without trying to depreciate the added value of the reform programme, it has certainly been difficult to mainstream the specific achievements after the programme's completion. The countries that succeeded to actively involve decision making and a broad spectrum of social partners at an early stage in the programme, and that managed to reach a consensus on the future of reform, have been doing better in im-

plementing the results nation-wide. Indeed, the innovation of curriculum being run in some 20-40 pilot schools in a flexible decentralised manner certainly brings about an added value, but if the approach is not disseminated at a national level, then the value of the project runs out. Paradoxically the problems of mainstreaming the achievements of Phare (and other) reform projects could be at least partially connected with the direct reproduction and testing of the foreign experience in a sample of schools, where the reform could be seen as something not developed nationally but copied from abroad. The reform models paid insufficient attention to the specific transition conditions of each individual country (Parkes 1999). The eventual success of the implementation of achievements at the national level not only involves the recognition of findings and the consensus regarding the issue, but also involves the question of existing institutional frameworks (and consequently often a need in institution building), reform of other integral parts of education system, mentality of all actors involved, and allocation (or the very existence) of financial resources.

'VET development projects funded by international donors are normally anticipated by a preliminary research phase to clarify the objectives of the projects and to appropriately define the activities, partners, time schedule, budgeting etc. In the majority of cases there are foreign specialists that lead this process, cooperating with Albanian specialists or local experts that normally have a second hand role (as a source of information). In some cases, this phase is neglected or underestimated and has resulted in not realistic project documents and weak results on the application of it. One of the main weaknesses experienced during the conception and application of bilateral and international VET projects in Albania is *not taking sufficiently into account all the aspects of the Albanian context*'

Mustafai A.1999,
VET research in Albania

In spite of the few drawbacks of the Phare supported VET reform programmes in CEE, the latter are seen as success stories in all countries, and the role of Phare as the main or sometimes even the only VET reform initiative is widely acknowledged. A peculiar case is Albania, where Phare VET reform in comparison with other international assistance projects, has played a very limited role (presumably due to the fact that Albania does not belong to the pre-accession group of partner countries). The Phare VET reform programme was postponed for several years and was finally rushed through in 1998, making it impossible to fully accomplish the objectives that had been started in this country rather late (Mustafai 1999). The research component of the project was vague, particularly represented by an attempt to introduce a new approach for market analysis. However, in a later Phare project, which aimed at piloting a modular curriculum system in Albania (ALBAVET), research played a more substantial role (Mustafai 1999). The adaptation of the Scottish model for the development of vocational qualifications, registration, accreditation and certification, and in conformity with the Albanian context, has demanded research (still ongoing), in which the national institutions are fully involved (Mustafai 1999). Although the Albanian background study is far more critical towards the way foreign assistance reform programmes have been organized and coordinated than are reports from other countries, generally it is admitted that VET research in Albania is almost entirely financed by foreign donors. The limited national funding is used to cover the salaries of state research institutions, and foreign assistance is used for research activities, allowing for normal operations (Mustafai 1999).

Another major, international, expert contribution has been the involvement of some of the CEE countries in the OECD analyses. During the last six years, several countries were engaged in Reviews of national policies on education, labour market analysis, analyses of aspects of transition from school to working life and of the financing of life long learning. All these studies have been done on the basis of background reports produced by national teams with a subsequent analytical reflection (reviews, country notes, comparative reports) of the OECD experts. It is important to note that OECD does not finance projects, and the primary value of its involvement is precisely the expertise, collaboration

of national and OECD teams, the exchange of knowledge and ideas, recommendations, discussions with national decision making bodies, and the professional follow up on the implementation of proposals. The OECD analyses are among the most comprehensive studies that were produced in the region at the beginning of transition, viewing the VET system as a part of the entire system of education and life long learning in the context of changing labour market conditions. Many of the recommendations produced in 1995-1996 remain acute and significant until even now. This certainly is true of the majority of recommendations produced within the context of the reviews of national policies of education (OECD 1996a, Bialecki ed. 1996), especially in the case of the Czech Republic. Many recommendations have been closely linked to the need for institution building in the field of VET (Czech Republic), which requires substantial financial resources or a radical reorganisation of existing institutional structures. Therefore, the implementation of these recommendations is hindered by the lack of consensus at a national level as well as the lack of financing required for the implementation of such demanding reforms. In 1998-99, Slovenia (OECD 1998), Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania benefited from participation in the OECD education policy reviews (in the latter cases the drafts are not officially available yet). OECD also produced many comparative studies, either examining only a few countries of the region within a bigger, international group (OECD 1999, Green A. et al. 1998), or examining the CEE region with the involvement of all countries (OECD1996b). The comparison with other CEE countries and advanced democracies has been a very useful benchmarking attribute of OECD studies.

The World Bank has also contributed to the comprehensive analysis of VET and the labour market in CEE: it started with a comparative analysis of the systems in the region (The World Bank 1995); its loan programmes have substantially contributed to an up-grading of VET systems in some countries (e.g. Hungary); it has been a major reform driving force and implementation tool in the countries, where Phare funds were limited (e.g. Albania).

Another principal contributor to transparency and a greater comparability of CEE vocational education and training systems and matters is the European Training Foundation. It has been operating actively since 1995 in close co-operation with national experts. The creation of a National Observatories network in 1996 brought about a standard comparative perspective in studying major VET issues, a comprehensive understanding of the VET system in the wider context of the labour market, and continuity by following main trends and indicators in VET and the labour market on an annual basis. ETF projects attempted to narrow the gaps in VET analysis in CEE. During recent years its projects concentrated on studying the role of social partners in VET within the CEE countries, systems of continuing vocational education, standards, employment policies, teachers and trainers training, tertiary professional education, VET in the context of regional development in the partner countries, etc. ETF has contributed to the coordination of donor activities in some countries by organising donor workshops (e.g. Albania 1997). It has supported preparatory activities for the initiation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and directly participated in the implementation of the Phare VET reform programmes in CEE countries.

Despite the indisputable great value of the ETF activities in CEE, there have been certain drawbacks, often noted by national contributors. The ETF became operational rather late and the changes in partner countries that occurred between the decision to establish the ETF (1990) and its actual operational start up (1995) were already enormous. In this situation the ETF had to define its role in the development process when transition was already well under way and many structures and concepts were already in place. At the same time, the initial transition period in most CEE countries was largely undertaken on the basis of bottom up initiatives, spontaneous developments and often intuitive thinking in the situation of the lacking conceptual vision of the education and training reform at the central level. This shortcoming was tackled by the ETF through the introduction of analyses and recommendations within the many dimensions of VET. The main reason

behind the occasional criticism of these efforts seems to be the ETF's endeavour to run many projects with relatively limited funds and very short time frames. This approach resulted in a certain fragmentation of projects and tasks. The projects aimed to tackle the most urgent areas for reform and were expected to have immediate results, i.e. recommendations for future reform steps. The latter approach has been rather typical for the internal mechanisms of support of the CEE research at the national level as well. This sometimes led to a lack of support for thorough theoretical research *per se* in CEE, which would be necessary in the future, but lies beyond the scope of the Foundation's activities. Early announcement of the planned studies and projects and subsequent agreement at a national level (sort of OECD model) may facilitate not only a consensus and, consequently, the success of project implementation, but also co-funding from the national sources.

As the ETF is not directed at supporting research projects and infrastructures, the studies produced under its auspices have been of a mainly developmental and applied nature. Therefore, as it has been mentioned above, there has not been support for basic research in the field of VET in CEE. In 1998, the ETF initiated assessment of research institutes in CEE (Csako 1998) with the view to establish a network of such institutes in CEE and the CIS. Support for research agencies was limited to a marginal contribution for the initial sustainability of the CEE Club for VET Research Institutes (exists since 1995) and (co-)financing of meetings of researchers. However, the very establishment of National Observatories in the countries where research institutions had been missing contributed to the revival of VET research there. The ETF also supported the present overview of VET research in CEE, and in general intends to assist in strengthening the research function of National Observatories, an initiative received very positively by NOs themselves. A wider involvement of the research community and support for research projects, including fundamental research, would be desirable.

CEDEFOP maintains long-standing cooperation, albeit still limited, with research institutes and independent researchers in CEE. Between the two EU decentralised agencies that deal with VET in synergy but with a different mandate and scope of activities, it is CEDEFOP which is the more *research* oriented and has well established links with the leading EU *research* structures. The CEE countries would certainly welcome more extensive cooperation with CEDEFOP and its partners in the research field, while further cooperation with the ETF in applied analyses and development projects would be necessary also beyond the point of EU accession.

A big step forward in knowledge and methodology sharing between member states and partner countries has been the gradual opening of the possibility to join EU programmes for CEE countries (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth for Europe, Research Framework programmes). Of special importance for VET research has been the Leonardo da Vinci programme, with its Surveys and Analyses (S&A) strand, opened to partner countries during 1998-1999[17]. Unfortunately so far there has been only one call for proposals in this period, which allowed for applications under the S&A strand. The data on recent calls is very scarce and does not allow for a comparison of the share of S&A projects out of the entire number of approved projects in member states and in CEEC under the same call. The most recent project compendium refers to the 1997 call, in which CEE countries still held primarily the roles of associate ('silent') partners and could not promote the projects. Thorough information on the 1998 Call is not yet available.

As a result, we could only compare the results of the 1997 Call for member states and the 1998 Call for partner countries[18]. The share of S&A projects within the total number of

17) Although Pilot Projects – another type of the Leonardo da Vinci projects – also often contain a research component, their primary objectives are innovation and development, and analysis often present there is only a tool (assessment, comparison, etc.) for application.

18) Information on the 1998 Call - S&A successful projects – was collected with the help of the Czech national Resource Centre for Guidance through National Coordination Units.

projects is traditionally low in all European countries, which is possibly due to the relative complexity of the application requirements in the S&A strand. In 1997, this share was 7% in all participating countries, which corresponded to approximately two to four S&A projects per country with population of 10 to 20 million people (Compendium 1997). In CEE we could identify only two S&A in the whole region: one in Romania and one in the Czech Republic. In the latter case, this corresponds to an approximately 1% share of S&A projects out of the total number of approved projects in the country under the 1998 Call. It is worth noting that both institutions that generated and submitted the successful S&A project bids possess considerable previous experience in international cooperation and presumably a capacity for project generation and management skills. Needless to say, the excessive complexity of procedures in project administration and financial management often hampers participation of institutions in such programmes. Project management capacity and foreign language skills are insufficiently developed in research (and other) institutions in CEE, and deserve special attention at all levels so that it will be possible to benefit in the future from the EU programmes.

Participation in such programmes is invaluable as it supports the 'brain exchange' (one should not omit mentioning the special importance of the TEMPUS programme in this respect), the sharing of scientific knowledge and research tools, and a from the ground up initiative in project generation. If the national decision-making bodies succeed in defining the priorities for international programmes in accordance with national priorities, such participation also turns into a direct contribution to the reform process at a national level, and makes available funds that are otherwise limited. The definition of national priorities is especially important in the case of EU programmes, as governments allocate financial means for the programme each year.

Among the reporting CEE countries, it seems that Romania has paid significant attention to the development of a strategy for identifying national priorities for the Leonardo da Vinci II programme. This country initiated the *Study on national training priorities*, which is being elaborated by the Romanian National Observatory with an extensive inter-institutional team (Balica et al. 1999). By means of a survey, case studies and an analysis of available data and national legislation, the team intends to examine the needs of the labour market in terms of qualifications and competences, the mismatch between demand and supply, and training needs for specific disadvantaged groups on the labour market. Such a systematic approach to the identification of national training priorities could be used well beyond the preparation process for Leonardo II. It seems that the country, being in the situation where World Bank funds have ceased, has also made a substantial effort to introduce the coordination and transparency of various funding sources in VET by creating the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education (Balica et al. 1999). Romania is a good example of the utilisation of the main conclusions from the evaluations of Leonardo I (Birzea et al. 1999) and Phare VET programmes for the formulation of future strategy and priorities.

'So far, in Romania there is no strategy meant to utilise the recommendations and conclusions of international research programs. We notice an insufficient correlation between the studies and analyses resulting from the implementation of international grants and programs, on the one hand, and the research activity carried out in specialised research centres and institutions, on the other hand. In some cases, substantiating new projects does not benefit from the conclusions of the external efficiency of some finalised projects or the conclusions of fundamental research in the field.

With reference to *the activities for continuing the programs*, evaluations have highlighted the fact that some projects often have a reduced capacity of adjustment to situations undergoing change, in the sense that they tend to be carried out according to the logic of the initial context that generated them. The mode of administrating the projects is often centralised and continuation of the projects is extended in the immediate proximity of co-ordinating institutions, without involving other interested partners and institutions'.

Balica M. et al. (1999),
VET research in Romania

Assessing the general impact of international assistance in the field of VET, with a specific reference to research, it must be said that the overall outcomes are invaluable. However, certain steps could be taken to improve the efficiency of international assistance and matching it to better meet with the national needs. It is necessary to concentrate on the support of development follow up projects, aimed at the implementation of research findings and recommendations. However, it is also important to strengthen the research component of development projects. The early involvement of the local/national experts and institutions at all steps of programme implementation, including the planning stage, strategy elaboration, analysis and research components, is crucial, as it is the key to reaching consensus at a national level, with the direct involvement of all actors, and consequently also the key to effective implementation. At a national level, there must be mechanisms for coordination in order to increase the transparency of research projects already undertaken with international assistance, to avoid duplicity, and to ensure that the national priorities are taken up.

Since 1990, the CEE countries have undergone several phases of transformation, and in each of them the role of international assistance was different. The initial phase was largely defined by enthusiasm after the collapse of the totalitarian regime, and was characterised by spontaneous developments, decentralisation and ground up initiatives. Deep confidence in the legitimacy and the universal value of the Western democratic approaches and traditions in education on the one hand, and a high degree of interest and good will among international donor organisations and experts on the other, drove foreign experts into CEE *en masse*. The majority of comprehensive analytical works during this period were undertaken by or with the help of international experts. In the second half of the 1990s, and especially during recent years, the countries began to formulate national strategies and priorities in a more systematic way. The reform process had been more regulated with from the top down approaches more clearly articulated. The international assistance and research engendered in its framework during this period mostly appeared to be a joint product of international experts and national teams.

At present, the countries are experiencing the reinstitution of their own traditions and values in education with a more cautious attitude towards foreign advice. The contemporary challenge is the elaboration of clearly defined and comprehensive national priorities and strategies. The latter development appears 'as yet another logical step in the overall evolution of research of this topic – i.e. a step away from individual pieces of research of partial issues undertaken by national professionals, possibly in collaboration with foreign experts, or its comprehensive examination undertaken exclusively by foreign experts' (Grootings and Kalous et al. 1997, p. 183).

5. Systems, concepts, requirements, arrangements: what does VET research in CEE enquire into?

In this section we shall look at the range of topics encompassed by the CEE researchers in the field of VET in recent years in two broad areas: research into VET and contextual research. The overview given herein is far from being exhaustive. Instead of giving a detailed inventory of the research projects in CEE we try rather to see what sort and range of questions are asked by the researchers there, to what extent they tackle the CEE reform dimension and how they cope with the global changes. This approach would assist understanding whether the CEE research has actually supported the national reform process, and whether it manages to follow the scientific argument in other countries. Nevertheless, the line we have embarked upon is illuminative rather than informative or evaluative.

5.1 Research into systems in the lifelong learning perspective

It was not the end of the communist regime that suddenly made people realising the need

for the reform of education and training. In the 1980s in many countries of CEE there was a lively debate about the need to reform the system. It was also realised that such reform was especially needed in VET, the social esteem of which was very low. Too narrow specialisation, poor training facilities, inadequate teaching quality, were all seen as features that hampered the provision of skills adequate to the economic objectives and development of new technologies. At the beginning of the reform process the countries faced the challenge of the new, market oriented, economic objectives and the need to reform the VET provision to trigger off the overall reform process. There was no deliberate planning on the government side though, and the VET experts simply looked at VET systems in the advanced countries in order to obtain a benchmarking perspective.

Comparative analysis of VET systems, therefore, has become the most frequent topic in CEE as well as among international organisations analysing the CEE systems throughout the 1990s, ranging from a comparison of system organisation, administration and legal provision to financial arrangements, the system of social partnership, curriculum policy, and segments of education and training (e.g. CVT, tertiary education). It is important to note in this context that the CEE research has been rather concentrated on comparison of the systems of the advanced European countries aspiring toward future reform steps, while the international research analysed mostly the progress made by the CEE countries, and thus compared them to each other. The latter appeared as being a form of the reform progress assessment. The former type of comparison has somewhat neglected the debate about advantages and deficiencies of systems, taking place in the EU member states on the research arena; pros and cons of each of the systems were considered at first glance without concentrating on the in-depth analysis of the suitability of the system to the country and without following a multifaceted scientific argument taking place in the West.

The National Observatories of the Baltic countries with the support of the ETF and in the light of *the Common education space agreement* between the three Baltic Countries, carried out comparative study on the VET systems, legislation and regulated professions between the countries. The report has been the first attempt of the Baltic National Observatories to compare VET related issues.

National Observatories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 2000.
Comparative analysis of VET systems and regulated professions in Baltic states.

The initial VET is provided in two basic types of schools: the secondary technical/professional schools, providing qualifications of technicians and white-collar workers (four to five years of studies), and vocational schools leading to the skills level of blue-collar workers (one to three years of studying) (see annex 2). One of the common features of the process of restructuring of VET systems in CEE was elimination of the strict division between the two types of VET, introducing the combined programmes, diversifying the range of choice among educational programmes, and providing vocational types of programmes leading to complete upper secondary education (*matura*). The general positive trend has been an increase in enrolments in the programmes that provide higher qualifications.

These positive systemic developments, however, occurred against the background of changing economic conditions of the VET system, where former ties between schools and enterprises were impaired and a former semi-apprenticeship system was damaged or completely abandoned. The former system of (semi-)apprenticeship itself, though it provided necessary work experience and linked trainees to their potential workplace, had a dubious character. The central point was not the learner, and therefore the form of apprenticeship was not intended to ease youth transition into working life but to provide the state enterprise structure with a workforce (Grootings 1998).

With the collapse of the state enterprise structure, the CEE VET systems found themselves almost exclusively school-based (Baltic countries, Albania, and Bulgaria) or enjoyed only very limited enterprise participation in the

model (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland). This has increased the danger of skills provision at schools being irrelevant to the labour market needs. Only two countries – Hungary and Slovenia – managed to re-introduce elements of the old (pre-Soviet) tradition of the dual system.

Yet in the CEE research, unlike that in the West, the discussion about alternatives of integration of work and learning into the VET system has not been adequately addressed. Indeed, the different analyses of responsiveness of CEE systems to the new economic objectives and requirements of the labour market demonstrate the need for higher proportions of vocational theory subjects in the content of education on the one hand, but on the other hand the necessity to provide adequate practical training and work-based learning. The latter can and is provided in a variety of forms (enterprise training, enterprise-based workshops, school based workshops, creation of intermediary labour markets, etc.) but there is no assessment of such practices, especially in the private sector (Romania).

The international research and rhetoric in the field of the changing role of the school – from being a mediator of knowledge to becoming a mediator of knowing how to apply the knowledge – and the changing role of the workplace – from an end in itself for knowledge application per se to the learning organisation – has not influenced the research debates in the CEE countries. A certain improvement was stimulated by preparation and then first phase of implementation of the project *Integration of work and learning* in the two countries.

Integration of work and learning is a three-year development project, initiated by ETF and implemented through the national teams in Hungary and Slovenia. The project will be completed in 2000. The project seeks to support and supplement innovative VET actions in the field of the integration of work and learning; to improve the conditions for further integration of work and learning for both individuals and educational and work organisations; and to establish the co-operation and exchange of experiences between organisations that are most advanced in the implementation of integration of work and learning in and between the countries concerned. There are four organisations involved in the project in Slovenia (two school centres, two companies) and four organisations in Hungary (three school centres, one company) (Ivancic et al. 1999).

The theoretical background of the project was based on the assumption that schools must develop a new identity by which school 'is no longer seen as the only institution and location for work-relevant learning', and where the humanistic paradigm of education as 'learning through theoretical understanding' is obsolete (Grootings 1998, 2.3, Buck 1997). The 'increased blurring of education and work' (Grootings 1998, 2.7) introduces a different theoretical perspective to various aspects of VET development, such as systemic arrangements and enhancement of social partners' involvement, contents of education, skills and competences, and teaching and learning methods. This is recognised in the advanced western democracies and in CEE, although it is not at the top of the priority list when compared to the still more acute problems in the immediate CEE reform process. Taking into account that the CEE countries are gradually leaving the phase of curing the diseases inherited from the previous regime and entering into a new phase of transformation in which these countries must harmonize conceptually with the developments in Western Europe, adequate theoretical perspectives for the research need to be introduced. Thus what range of questions to be involved in research in CEE appears crucial: for the time being, equilibrium must be found between the acute issues and the issues of a global concern. This would correspond to the challenges of the double transformation mentioned earlier.

Knitting the two worlds – education and employment – must eventually bring about knotting the two systems and its structures in order to provide a flexible and adaptable lifetime studying workforce. The CEE wider research suggests actually two key notions: 'flexibility' and 'partnership'. Taking into account that 'the paradigm of learning society implies weakening the barriers between the persons learning life and working life' (Tempus CME-

97-3007 1999, p.16), researchers in CEE advocate support for flexible learning strategies at all levels. Diversification of education systems by introduction of alternative pathways and integrated programmes at a secondary level, and non-academic type of tertiary vocational education, was one, systemic step forward in adaptability to the new circumstances. From the conceptual point of view, however, it is not sufficient, as in the new environment we must think from a perspective of the lifelong learning concept, where the initial education is only a starting point of learning for one's whole life. The functions of continuing vocational training (CVT) and professional development must be advanced in secondary VET schools, universities and higher vocational education establishments to make them flexible units of learning for various target groups (Tempus CME-97-3007 1999, Kofronova et al. 1999). The attempts to integrate the various segments of VET (youth, adult and retraining) under one roof is evidenced in the EU member states (Parkes (ed.) 1999), while in the CEE such innovative examples are not yet systematic.

From the perspective of the lifelong learning concept it is especially important from which angle researchers approach VET and how they include different education and training segments in their analyses. The experience of the study of the emerged sector of post-secondary and tertiary professional education in CEE, for example, demonstrated the complexity and variety of the systems appearing in CEE in recent years (Hennessey, M.A. et al. 1998). In a number of cases the complexity came into view, given by the ad hoc development of the system, when the necessity of such reform was recognized by the educators and asked for by the society. The general upskilling trend and the changing nature of the world of work in the direction of knowledge-based performance was displayed in the shift of enrolment trends towards higher and more general qualifications at a secondary level, providing for the possibility to enter higher education. The increased importance of the higher level of qualifications 'as a determinant of labour market status and earnings potential has encouraged students to prolong their education and to continue on to university' (Laporte and Ringold 1997, p.33). The restructuring of higher education has therefore become important, especially in the countries with insufficient participation at this level (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Romania). Moreover, for the countries where higher education enjoyed high participation rates (Bulgaria and the Baltic states) but enrolments in VET were comparably lower (ETF 1999c), the restructuring of higher education was a means by which to diversify the provision of vocational qualification at a higher level.

No ready-made unique model of a non-university professional education system was at hand (Hennessey, M.A. et al. 1998). The countries had to build the system upon the existing VET and higher education provisions. Other countries introduced tertiary/ post-secondary professional education in its remarkable complexity at least partly in a deliberate manner, in which the complexity of the system is meant to correspond to the complexity of the world of employment and social choice. As a result post-secondary/tertiary professional education in the CEE countries differs in the length of the programmes (from two up to four-five years), in the level of qualification provided, entry requirements, institutional provision, etc. The system often overlaps with university-type higher education on the one hand, and with secondary vocational education on the other hand. The demarcation between post-secondary and tertiary as two levels of professional education is also not very explicit in the CEE countries (with the exception of the Baltic countries) (Hennessey, M.A. et al. 1998). The complexity of the system is in line with the context of lifelong learning, where all sub-categories of education and training system become interrelated, overlap and interact.

Higher levels of participation at the tertiary level, driven strongly by demands reflecting the diverse interests of students, employers and society at large, have created challenges which must be met. In 1995, the OECD's Education Committee launched a multi-country 'thematic review' of the first years of tertiary education. *Redefining tertiary education*, a comparative report of its findings and conclusions was published by the OECD

in the first half of 1998 (http://www.oecd.org). The CEE countries were not covered by the thematic review but they benefited from the study *Tertiary professional and vocational education in central and eastern Europe*, co-produced by the ETF and the Council of Europe in 1997 and published in 1998 (Hennessey, M.A. et al. 1998). The latter analysis covered sixteen countries of CEE and the CIS.

The above study (Hennessey, M.A. et al. 1998) 'provided evidence that many phenomena of this range of education programmes and qualifications and of related institutions tend to be overlooked if one focuses solely on higher education or solely on vocational education and training' (p.45). Therefore, the system must be comprehended in its full variety. Inclusive research must be encouraged; fragmentation in analyses and in practices (the major drawback of the reform process in CEE) must be avoided. It is, unfortunately so far a prevailing mode[19], and initial VET is studied separately from CVT and the rest of the system, as well as often without a particular reference to the labour market and socio-economic context. Moreover, each segment is often put under the responsibility of a different institution, which further exacerbates the intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach.

There are, however, positive attempts to comprehend the system in its entirety within CEE. For instance, the last two years featured the generation of a number of research outputs such, as the synthesis report *Initial VET in the framework of lifelong learning* (Kofroňová 1998), report *The role of employment policy and employment services in the state education policy* (VÚPSV 1999), Estonian *Education scenarios 2015*, study *The model of integrated career guidance in Poland* (Trzeciak, Drogosz-Zablocka (eds.) 1999), *Restructuring alternatives for Albania's vocational/technical education and training subsector* (Lamoureux et al. 1999), *National strategy for human resources development* (Birzea et al. 1999), *Human resources in the Czech Republic* (Hendrichová (ed.) 1999), *Czech Education and Europe* (Čerych et al. 1999), OECD education policy reviews, and others. A number of projects of comparable comprehension are under preparation.

5.1.1 Research on financing of VET

Recent years have also featured analyses of the financing of initial education and training (though still very limited), its mechanisms and trends in the CEE countries, where one of the recent OECD projects analysed alternative methods in financing lifelong learning. The study analysed various aspects of the role of financing in promoting access, participation and quality assurance of lifelong learning. Only two CEE countries could benefit from participation in the study, even though with certain restrictions given by the lack of data. The latter is a characteristic common to the CCE countries in this field: data on financing by employers, private sources, and data on CVT participation in general are very scarce. The OECD study also revealed that the mere understanding of the concept of lifelong learning differs between the OECD countries to a great extent. The CEE countries lack a thorough elaboration and common understanding of the concept and further research in this field is desirable.

The OECD report on *Alternative approaches to financing lifelong learning* (Green et al. 1998) aimed at analysis of emerging strategies for mobilising investment for implementation of lifelong learning for all, and for improving its returns and reducing its costs (p.2). The study is based on background reports submitted by ten OECD countries, including Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The CEE countries equally lack thorough comparative research on systems of financing lifelong learning in these countries, where the above-mentioned lack of data is certainly a drawback. Nevertheless, such research is badly needed, it may actually by itself instigate *inter alia* the data collection. The CEE countries, which enjoyed a steady increase in public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP between 1990 and 1994, have suffered from a decrease or stagnation in spend-

19) Our analysis in this context is not an exception, indeed, and although there has been an attempt to have an integrated structure, still the segmental approach in research is directly reflected in this paper.

ing on education since 1995 (with the exception of Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania), ranging in 1997 between about 3% (Bulgaria) and 7% (Estonia) of GDP spent on education (Laporte and Ringold 1997, ETF 1999c).

The difficulties in public budget allocation in the transition period were multiplied by inefficiency of resource allocation, where the bulk of funding was spent on personnel (though the teachers salaries being protected still are far too low to maintain or to gain prestige for the profession) and capital expenditures remaining extremely low. The latter has been a crucial issue over years, as the education facilities become outdated and become an obstacle to implementing modern education programmes, including ICT education. The research on *Efficiency in Bulgaria's schools* suggests to increase efficiency in using classrooms without jeopardising learning objectives, by e.g. consolidating several grades in a multiple grade system in rural areas where classes are small (Bogetic and Chattophadyay 1995).

There is, however, the question as to how this instrument would affect the quality of education provision. Further research on different means of making the system more efficient is necessary. The CEE countries particularly need to introduce a system of incentives for individuals and employers to participate in education and training, including tax incentives, a system of benefits and indirect 'qualitative', systemic incentives to encourage participation in education and training. The system thus far of financing in the CEE countries is somewhat inflexible, with the per capita or per-unit financing prevailing as a nucleus system with certain variations (e.g. elements of output-based funding in combination with per capita funding in the Czech Republic), low involvement of enterprises in financing due to severe economic conditions, and a low, though steadily increasing, private component (ETF 1999c).

The low financial involvement of enterprises in training increases the danger of the irrelevance of the practical skills and competences, provided by education and training. Therefore, finding the instruments for encouraging employers to participate financially in VET or to directly provide training for their current and future employees becomes crucial. Hungary is an example of a CEE country which has provided certain financial incentives, namely tax allowances for non-profit making organisations engaged in educational services (Green et al. 1998) and through a levy fund paid by employers or alternatively direct contribution to VET schools or on-the-site workshops (20% of total VET secondary schools expenditures are paid through the levy fund (ETF 1999a)).

Such a system, however, presupposes a high level of participation of social partners in VET, which is still rather weak in the CEE countries. In any case a thorough analysis of the Hungarian system, its evaluation and comparison with other similar systems of incentives in CEE (Poland, Lithuania, in the latter a contribution from employees is also levied, (ETF 1998a)) and in the EU member states (the Netherlands, Finland, Spain, etc.) as well as a feasibility analysis of its applicability in different CEE countries is highly desirable. The CEE countries should concentrate on the analysis of whether it is preferable to tackle the issue of financing by merely increasing resources allocated to training or by setting up training funds (ETF 1999a).

5.1.2 Continuing vocational training and human resource development

Continuing vocational training has been tackled by research very sporadically. The concept itself is not very elaborate and all research exercises in the area of CVT experience difficulties with the exact definition of which types of training to include. Numerous definitions of CVT created perhaps more confusion than clarity, and eventually arrived at a very vague definition of 'learning that improves employability of adults who have left the compulsory education system' (ETF 1999d). Some definitions involve employment or keeping/improving the employment position as a virtual objective of CVT, by this means setting up CVT in opposition to training as a leisure pursuit (Palan 1997). It is, however, questionable as to where the line can be drawn between the

two, and what kind of 'leisure' training may eventually bring about better employability and employment.

Nevertheless, the crystallisation of certain types of training of adults under CVT has naturally occurred, involving (from the viewpoint of participants):

- CVT as an instrument of active labour market policy for unemployed, young graduates and those at risk of unemployment,
- CVT as a part of human resource development policies of companies for those with employment, and
- CVT as an individual initiative.

From the perspective of lifelong learning CVT has attained a new importance: it is no more a mere second chance, retraining or further training, but a regular lifelong educational path for everybody (ETF 1999d, p.4). At the same time 'CVT has received a little intention so far, apart from labour market retraining measures[20]' (ETF 1999d, p.9).

The ETF report on *Continuing vocational training* was prepared in 1999 and used the information from the country reports, written by National Observatories in CEE in 1998. The reports appeared to be an invaluable mapping source, where all major surveys and studies existing at the time were recorded and the results were evaluated. This has been a first step in appallingly demanded research in the field of CVT, which should be tackled, however, in a wider perspective of lifelong learning.

The evidence of *participation in CVT* is inadequate, but the one available evinces higher participation among people with higher qualifications in all CEE countries. This is evidence of people's individual commitment and initiative, and perhaps also of greater capability to get access to CVT (where not only money matters but also, and even more so, access to barely available information). The system of CVT (if one can speak about a system in this context at all) suffers from a lack of transparency and lack of information on the offer and quality of training. The system of monitoring and evaluating CVT (as well as initial VET) is insufficiently developed. Conceptually this must be tackled by research in both segments (initial and continuing). While the initial VET is relatively well monitored in all countries, CVT suffers from a lack of data and particular indicators that can provide evidence of the sub-sector development. Furthermore, interlinking the initial and continuing VET involves the issue 'of educational and occupational standards and their related certification and qualification' (ETF 1999d, p. 13).

The debate so far has taken place in the field of initial VET although some CEE countries have decided to introduce a unified system of national competence-based qualifications and the corresponding system of standards and certification for both initial and continuing VET (e.g. Estonia, to some extent Hungary). This appears to be an optimal solution from the perspective of lifelong learning. It must, however, go beyond the point and involve assessment of prior learning and recognition of informal learning – issues that are actively debated in the EU research arena but so far almost totally neglected in the CEE research (Slovenia prepares to introduce such a system).

The research on *quality assurance* and linked to the certification and accreditation in CVT is equally scarce in the CEE countries. There are very few examples of research, one of them being the feasibility study initiated by the National Training Fund in the Czech Republic in the area of quality assessment and quality assurance of management training (Žaludová et al. 1997). It set up principles and drew up procedures for quality assessment at the level of training organisation (both self-assessment and a third-part certification), but also in a company training department. The study provided pilot field testing and suggested the steps for implementing a standardised model of quality assurance according to the ISO 9000 series as a first step to total quality management. The study also sug-

20) Research in the field of retraining will be dealt with later in the chapter.

gested measures and recommendations for the implementation of a system to assure and improve the quality of management training at a national level (Žaludová et al. 1997, p.100). Such research in the area of CVT provision beyond management training is needed, especially if the national system of qualifications with the credit system, unique for VET and CVT, is not in place. There are other positive examples of research into quality assurance in education (e.g. Hungarian project *Comenius 2000*) which could be disseminated.

The CEE research materials provide very poor evidence of CVT or *human resource development* (HRD) in enterprises. Several international company surveys will perhaps shed light on the problem in the near future, namely *the Second CVT survey* by Eurostat, which included several CEE countries this year, and *the Cranfield project on European human resource management*, which was conducted the last time in 1998 and would announce the comparable longitudinal results in the near future. The surveys will give the information on training provision, participation, financing, HRD policy at a company level, recruitment problems, flexible forms of employment, etc. The results would present an invaluable primary source for further research in the field of CVT and HRD. The preliminary results thus far show that the CEE countries have somewhat lower participation in CVT than the advanced EU member states, the systematic HRD policy elaboration is not a rule for the majority of companies yet, companies spend on education and training less than their EU counterparts. The bigger companies enjoy higher participation and expenditure on CVT. The research on methods of support for CVT and HRD among SMEs is another area where analyses and suggestions of innovative solutions could be especially welcomed.

The report *Key indicators for human resource management in CEE 1999,* summarises the key issues of human resources departments in companies from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The survey covers a very small sample and cannot serve as a comparative study; it is a benchmarking analysis (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 1999)

The benchmarking survey Key indicators for HRD appeared to be one of very few existing sources in this field. The companies which participate in the survey are interested in obtaining a benchmarking perspective which helps them to grasp where the company stands. The survey revealed that in all CEE countries middle management had the most training days, the highest frequency numbers being found in professional (technical) training. Leadership training, ICT and languages training are also in demand. The survey also demonstrated that it was not HRD, HRM or education and training that kept the HR departments busy but personnel and payroll administration – the activities that take up the most time of the HR departments in the CEE companies (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 1999).

The Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS), supported by OECD, UNESCO and Eurostat, was conducted in 1996-1999. The survey was a second wave of IALS, conducted in 1994. The two surveys included *inter alia* several CEE countries, namely Poland (IALS), and Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia (SIALS). The survey, based on a representative sample, analysed functional literacy (prose, document and quantitative literacy) among the adult population at five levels. The comparative results for SIALS will be published in mid 2000.

The Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS) analysed the outcomes of education among the adult population. The preliminary results of the SIALS unfortunately do not yet make it possible to compare the results cross-country, and to see where participating CEE countries stand. It is possible, however, on the basis of the preliminary results of the Czech Republic as compared to the first wave (IALS), to conclude that the Czech respondents demonstrated the incapability of working actively with information given in a particular context, but demonstrated excellent functional numeric skills and formal document literacy. Poland showed very poor overall results in the survey, but also performed the worst in the active usage of information (Matějů 2000). These results derive from the mode of education provided in CEE schools, which provides encyclopae-

dic knowledge rather than an ability to work with information actively, to use the knowledge and be innovative ('to know' vs. 'to know how').

The survey also gave evidence that people with higher educational attainment perform with better results, but different levels of education demonstrate different efficiency, as compared to the performance of respondents with the same level of education. Those Czech people with full secondary education and with vocational training qualification performed, when compared with the same level in other countries, much better than the higher education graduates as compared to their counterparts in other countries (Matějů 2000). The analysis of intergenerational mobility revealed at the same time that higher education is characterised by the lack of openness and eliteness (Matějů 2000). Taking into account the insufficient capacity of higher education in the Czech Republic and the poor performance of its graduates when compared internationally, the results are rather striking. The restructuring of higher education and its better integration into the system of lifelong learning needs to be enhanced. The role of CVT in this process is indisputable as well. At this point we come back to the conclusion that the whole system must experience better integration of its different, and so far rather fragmented. segments.

5.1.3 Teaching and learning: a one-off task or a lifelong perspective?

The perspective of an individual learner in the educational process and outcome has been somewhat neglected in the CEE research. At the same time individual development is a crucial democratic value. The education must provide an individual with the best possible chances for life success. What kind of education can provide this?

A re-thinking of the two paradigms – education and employment – and their role in the life of the individual brings us to a new appraisal of initial education and a re-assessment of the roles of different actors in the education process. The school must provide a basis of knowledge broad enough to create incentives for further learning. Two aspects are important in this respect: what is learned and how it is learned.

It is important to perceive the content of education from the point of view of the eventual outcome for the individual, be it employment, further learning, entrepreneurship or self-development. Therefore the system should presuppose a flexible form of learning and a flexible award system of qualifications. Under new conditions the CEE countries are trying to find different approaches and concentrate on combining the two basic ones: an orientation toward curriculum input (a more traditional one) and the output control, based on output occupational standards and the national system of occupational classification and vocational qualifications.

In curriculum innovation the countries try to develop flexible competence-based systems. There is little research, however, on competence-based training and especially on the methods and tools for implementing such approach. The research is needed to suggest how to modify the traditional way of teaching, which is divided between theoretical and practical teaching, and turn it into an integrated competence-based approach. *The cross country analysis of curricular reform* has demonstrated that in spite of the considerable progress achieved, so far 'there is a sharp division between theory and practice, between classroom and workshop, and between vocational teacher and trainer functions in most Central and Eastern European countries. This separation between the intelligence of the brain and the intelligence of the hands is very problematic for the combined learning outcomes of the vocational students and must eventually change' (Parkes ed., 1999, p.24).

A cross country analysis of curricular reform in VET in CEE (Parkes (ed.) 1999) was a report commissioned by the ETF and was drawn on the basis of ten CEE country case studies. The report evaluated the reform experience of the countries and outlined the key issues for the future actions.

The experience of pilot schools under the Phare VET reform programme resulted in the proc-

ess of the implementation of competence-based curricula, where competences are understood at different levels – professional performance related and designed for unstructured work situations. Some countries have set up the national system of qualifications linked to occupational classifications (e.g. Hungary, initiated in Estonia, Slovenia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic). The system is however at the moment very time consuming, as occupational profiles have become outdated, and this is an ongoing process. It therefore requires the ongoing involvement and commitment of social partners. Additional research on methods for the efficient construction of occupational profiles as a living process would be useful. Some countries make an emphasis on general subjects in vocational preparation (e.g. Latvia). The latter corresponds to the objectives of lifelong learning but has certain drawbacks in its linkages to the requirements of the labour market (Parkes ed., 1999). The Czech Republic has introduced a two stage curriculum, allowing for the input control at a state level and leaving room for the innovation and for adjustment to local labour market needs at a school level.

In the framework of the introduction of flexible forms of learning and as a result of the pilot Phare reform, a debate on modular training has become very popular in the CEE countries. Modules are conceptualised in their linkage to occupational tasks. Most countries try to gradually introduce a flexible and adaptable system of modular training, which embrace both initial and continuing VET, allowing for transparency, recognition of qualifications and mobility. The most flexible systems are based on credits allowing for mobility and flexibility inside the system (e.g. Estonia under implementation, Slovenia in planning, in Hungary implemented at a post-secondary level). Such a system corresponds best to the needs of learners, as it presupposes open pathways and is a step forward toward recognition of informal learning. The latter is in the direct interest of an individual as well as of the society. The issue of assessment of prior learning and informal learning, widely discussed in the West, has not yet appeared on the agenda in CEE, nor has how it may be linked to CVT.

Two points are especially important as far as the VET research is concerned. First, in spite of obvious advantages of the modular system, thorough research is needed to analyse the possible impacts of a modular system in the context of the CEE countries. The experience of the pilot schools is invaluable but the countries should be aware of the current debate in the EU member states on the shortcomings of the modular system, as well as analyse its impact as applied to the CEE context. Second, due to the decentralisation of the school system and the greater independence of schools research on different types and methods of evaluations and assessments is important as a part of the quality assurance system. The research on standardisation of output assessment, though it has been developing in recent years, requires further research and concentration on alternative methods (examination, portfolios, etc.) more appropriate in the context of lifelong learning.

No matter how perfect the VET system is, and how good the content of education and school facilities, the crucial task of the reform for the CEE countries, and so far largely unsolved, remains that of the quality of teaching. The new flexible forms of learning assume innovative, informal forms of teaching and the existence of necessary teaching and learning materials. But again, no matter how wonderful the teaching materials and tools are, the teacher remains a cornerstone of mediation in the learning process. The task cannot be narrowed down to the reform of the preparation of teachers and trainers. It involves the much deeper problem of redefining the roles of individual partners in the educational process, where the mentality of all actors must be changed. The teacher is no more an intermediary of knowledge but a student partner. The methods shall become more informal, pro-active, and integrative. Research on innovative methods of teaching (e.g. project, team work, etc.) must complement the research on the preparation of teachers and trainers recently widely implemented at a national level by many countries and at the international level.

The question of the reform of training for teachers and trainers, which still suffers from many drawbacks of the old system, shall be tackled

in the wider perspective of the integration of work and learning. The preparation of teachers and trainers, its transparency, standardisation, upgrading, and other aspects should be considered along with such aspects as the integration of the teaching function with employment, the changing role of agents in the teaching and learning processes, the new flexible methods of learning, school openness to the external environment, its integration with the employment environment, and in the comprehensive context of the lifelong learning system.

The ETF report *Innovative practice in teacher and trainer training in VET* (Oldroyd D., 1999) was prepared on the basis of the survey conducted among the members of the ETF Advisory Forum Subgroup D. The report collected information about innovative practices of teacher preparation and expert opinion on problems and priorities in the CEE countries in this area.

A cross country review *Reshaping the focus of vocational teacher and trainer training* (Nielsen et al. 1999) was commissioned by the ETF and prepared on the basis of country reports submitted by National Observatories. The report scrutinises the existing situation and arrives at proposals and recommendations.

The project major *Trends and actors of education policies and reforms in Central Europe* was implemented with the support of Soros Foundation and include Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The project has contributed also to a better understanding of recent developments of teacher training in CEE (Nagy 1998).

Reshaping the focus and structure of VET teaching personnel training in Latvia and Lithuania is a project (1999-2000), supported by ETF and the governments of Denmark and Finland. The project has a common frame and objectives for both Latvia and Lithuania. It seeks to open the VET schools to the world of work, introduce organisational development within schools, promote training of teachers, modernisation of teaching and learning methods.

5.1.4 Social partnership

It must be remembered that earlier in this chapter we stated that the challenge of blurring the worlds of education and work and the concept of lifelong learning involve two key notions – flexibility and partnerships, being indeed present in all the rhetoric on each segment of VET. We have tackled the point on flexibility and we shall come back to this later on; we shall now look at how the system of social partnership has been researched. Analyses of the role of social partnership in VET appeared in CEE very recently as a part of an on-going pilot project on the role of social partners in VET, launched by the ETF in 1997. The study examined the state of the art in this area and came up with recommendations for the future, which were verified during workshops and public discussions. As the overall exercise involved social partners' representatives from the early stage, the project itself has contributed to improvement of the situation. The ETF continues to work with partner countries in this field, and the project will eventually attain a development character.

Enhancing the role of social partner organisations in the area of VET in the candidate countries of CEE (ETF 1998a) was prepared in the framework of an identically named project, launched by ETF in 1997. The report was prepared on the basis of country reports submitted by National Observatories. The reports analysed social partners involvement in financing of VET, elaboration of vocational standards and systems of qualifications, quality assurance, and VET planning. The analysis was produced in close collaboration with social partners' representatives and their close involvement in the follow-up discussion at a national level and at the international conference organised by the ETF.

Although the project is not purely of the research type, the analysis has contributed greatly to mapping out the current situation. It showed that in spite of the general immaturity of the system of social partnership in CEE, the countries have reached quite different levels of development in this field, and have also undertaken rather different patterns of development. The common obstacles to the higher involvement of social partners in VET are the above mentioned lack of incentives for employers, lack of commitment from their side, and the lack of resources.

Some countries still lack the legal framework or suffer from insufficient institutional development. Nevertheless, it is possible to state that the countries that have managed to set up a system of financing with the participation of employers through a fund mechanism enjoy greater involvement of social partners in VET in general (e.g. Hungary).

Similarly those that started developing the system of national vocational qualifications (e.g. Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia) and worked with social partners on development of vocational and occupational standards (e.g. Slovenia, Estonia and Lithuania – in selected sectors) were more successful in developing systemic ties with social partners. Their involvement in the development of vocational standards is relatively low in all CEE countries, as is their involvement in quality assurance or identification of future labour market needs.

The Phare VET reforms have pushed forward significant progress in the area of a systematic consultation process with social partners, covering, though, only a limited number of pilot schools. Some countries have been more successful in involving social partners at a regional level within the framework of the overall regional administration reform (e.g. Poland), and many countries have succeeded in securing social partners' involvement at a community or school level (ETF 1998a). The latter is a peculiar point, which showed a great potential of flexibility at a very local level. The weak social partnership system in CEE is a part of the overall weakness of civil society and the instruments for its provision. The issue of finding mechanisms for the rehabilitation of the institutions of civil society, NGOs, public and professional associations, trade unions, the whole third sector, after the compromising of 'public' organisations under the previous regime, could perhaps be tackled in research from a wider sociological perspective.

5.2 Contextual research

Contextual research is a provisional expression for research which, although it does not deal with VET exclusively, looks at the contextual aspects of VET that define e.g. qualification requirements of the labour market, skill requirements in companies, and various social aspects as far as education and employment are concerned. The 'contextual' research in CEE, although concentrating on the same range of topics as in the EU countries, sometimes actually analyses somewhat different models and processes, when it comes to employment, unemployment, social exclusion, poverty, transition from school to working life, etc. Needless to say most of the mentioned notions are also new or have a new meaning for countries in transition: under the state planned economy unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion purportedly did not exist. Therefore these are also new research subjects in the countries of transition.

5.2.1 Employment and unemployment: factors of transition

All reporting countries enjoy better analytical and statistical coverage of unemployment than in the area of employment. Unemployment appeared as a new notion in CEE countries in 1990s as compared to the imaginary 'full' employment during the communist regime. In this situation the state had to generate social policy, a system of benefits, and employment measures on a principally new basis. Information from official registers of the unemployed was quickly generated for subsequent analyses and evaluation of national policies to fight unemployment. Comparable data with the standard ILO definitions appeared, however, in the CEE region only with the commencement of the national Labour Force Surveys (LFS) from the first half of 1990s.

Labour Force Sample Survey (LFS) was commenced in CEE countries between 1991-1995 with the exception of Slovenia where LFS has been in place sine 1989. LFS applies standard ILO definitions of employment, unemployment, activity, and others, and therefore, appeared to be the major source of comparable data at the international level. Although LFS itself is not a study, the majority of reporting countries mentioned the importance of the survey for the research. Through LFS data, collected through a representative sample of households, the coun-

tries have acquired an alternative to the official registry picture of the unemployment situation, and additional data not only on the unemployed but also otherwise largely missing employment data. LFS therefore being a major stocktaking source contributed to the research development.

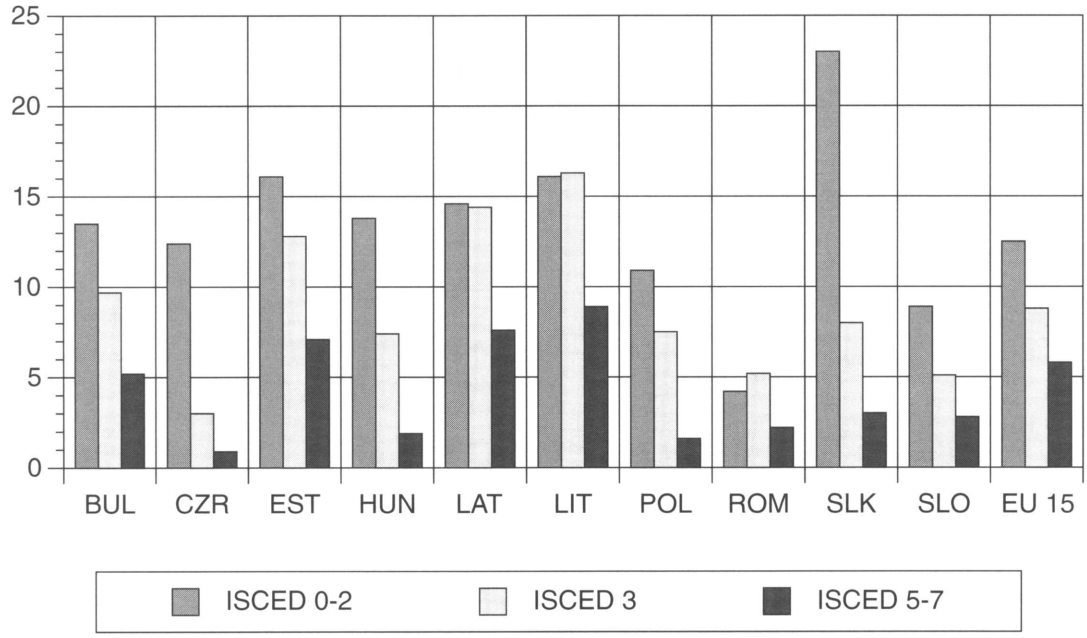
As far as unemployment data are concerned, there are marked differences among the countries in the relationship between registered and LFS (ILO definition) unemployment, reflecting the efficiency of employment services and the level of unemployment benefits in CEE. For instance in the Baltic States, the number of registered unemployed is very small (between one half and two-thirds) as compared to the LFS data (European Commission 1999). The trend is similar in Bulgaria (Beleva et al. 1999). This shows that there are very limited incentives for people to register due to the low level of unemployment benefits and the underdeveloped nature of public employment services (European Commission 1999). This was confirmed by *Background studies on labour market and employment* (e.g. Eamets et al. 1999; Beleva et al. 1999). The situation is the opposite in Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, where the number of registered was 40-60% higher than recorded by LFS, which reflects that those registered as unemployed did not comply with the ILO criteria (e.g. were not available for work or were not actively seeking a job). This may mean that they were involved in very short-term temporary work, or may indicate fairly high unemployment benefits and effective public employment services in these countries. This however may also imply that a relatively large proportion of the population is still involved in the grey economy (European Commission 1999).

Educational planning, structural adaptation of the system, curriculum development, career guidance, all need to be based on sound labour market analysis, derived from the monitoring of actual labour market developments, and identifying the current and forecasting the future qualification requirements (ETF 1999a). The studies in the field of monitoring the actual situation in the labour market could be found in all researched countries. As labour market instruments and policies were introduced by states in the early 1990s, naturally the states have mostly financed studies evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of active and passive measures. This sort of study is available in most CEE countries. However, the impact measurement in these studies has been rather weak and analyses mostly display insufficient attention paid to measurement of (re)-employment after participation in active labour market measures as a major indicator of policy success. The available studies mostly measure the efficiency of the programme by calculating the cost per unit, and accessibility of programmes by participation rates. There are some attempts in alternative measurement and its analysis (e.g. Svetlik (ed.) 1992; Pert 1998) which can serve as a good foundation for future research. Generally speaking, although the studies stress the usefulness of programmes for particular disadvantaged groups in the labour market, they also note relatively small proportions of participants and insufficient spending on the active measures. The latter features certainly vary from country to country to a great extent; nevertheless, they are a common characteristic in the region.

Background studies on labour market and employment were conducted in all countries in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in 1999. The studies were initiated by the European Commission, DGV, and the European Training Foundation for preparation of the background analysis for the labour market and employment policy assessment in ten pre-accession countries (see Beleva et al., Munich et al, Eamets et al, Horvath et al, Trapenciere et al, Gruzevskis et al, Sztanderska et al, Lubyová et al, Ciobanu et al, Pirher et al, 1999).

Unemployment, inactivity of the population as well as employment have their specific characteristics in CEE, stemming from the huge shift from the state-owned to private sector economy and between agriculture, industry and services (see more 2.1). Hidden employment and hidden unemployment, early retirement and women's withdrawal from the labour force, structural unemployment in 'mono-industrial' regions (especially mining and metallurgy) and rural areas, which in-

Figure 5: Unemployment rates by educational attainment among 25-59 year olds, 1997 (%)



Source: ETF (1999) Key indicators, p.9.

creases long term unemployment, are some of the employment characteristics typical for the different countries in the CEE region, each to a different extent. There is no strong correlation between gender and unemployment in the region (it varies from country to country but it seems that female withdrawal from the labour market has obscured unemployment among them at least partly). Unemployment is highest among the young, poorly educated, and older age groups. The level of educational attainment proved to be a crucial success factor in the labour market. *Background studies on labour market and employment* as well as other studies in the field of the labour market (Allison and Ringold 1996; Guegnard and Cvetkova et al 1998; Martuzans et al. 1998; Rutkowski 1998; ETF 1999c; OECD 1998; Vecernik and Mateju et al 1999) proved that the higher the qualification level, the higher the level of employment. They also demonstrated high proportions of people with low or no qualifications among the unemployed and especially the long-term unemployed. The latter trend has been confirmed by the annual collection of key indicators on VET and the labour market (ETF 1999c), where the vast majority of the CEE countries have demonstrated an appalling correlation between low skills level and unemployment.

'*Key indicators*' is the annual statistical publication on VET and the labour market in the CEE countries, compiled by the European Training Foundation through the network of National Observatories. The data are provided by national statistical services and the ministries of education. For the purposes of comparability the publication also includes EU data for selected indicators, provided by Eurostat.

Rather few analyses have focused on the relation between unemployment and employment as two specific paradigms and stimulating factors of transition. One of such studies (Jackman and Pauna 1997) attempted to build the analysis on the examination of the reallocation of employment between sectors (public and private sectors, and sectors of growth and decline). The analysis questioned the fact that unemployment in the particular circumstances of the transition was an inevitable factor in facilitating of the move-

ment of workers to growth sectors. The authors justified their views through two pieces of evidence: first that private firms appeared to recruit almost exclusively from those with jobs in the state sector or new entrants to the labour force rather than from the unemployed; second the example of the Czech Republic with the highest rate of new job creation in the growth sectors (trade and finance) had the lowest unemployment rate in Europe. Jackman and Pauna, therefore, questioned 'the rationale of policies directed at speeding up the shake-out of labour from the excess employment sectors' (p.386). The analysis proved that unemployment in the transition economies was 'neither necessary nor efficient from the perspective of labour market restructuring' (p. 387).

It is, however, a dubious conclusion, taking into account later developments: the so called Czech miracle is no longer the case; economic recession and the fast growing unemployment rate are largely explained by the delayed restructuring of the state sector there; in the countries that started the economic reform earlier and intensively restructured the state sector, the initially high unemployment has already started to decline. A further analysis of unemployment and the effects of employment policies as factors in the transition process would be useful as a comparison of the development in the last decade in all CEE countries.

5.2.2 Human capital and social exclusion: the prize and price of transition?

Background studies on labour market and employment demonstrated that the process of differentiation of income, which increases with the advancement of the process of transition to a market economy, is remarkably linked to the relation between wage growth and the level of educational attainment. The previous regime put certain social groups in the ill-fated circumstances of the egalitarian society, hampering their life success and income growth, a fact which namely concerned specialists with higher education and people with entrepreneurial inclinations. After the change of regime the social stratification started to modify, and this has been reflected in the change of values.

One of the greatest among such changes has become the association of education as a crucial characteristic of life success. Although the CEE countries still tend to undervalue education as a crucial factor in life success as compared to the advanced democracies in Western Europe, the rate of importance given to the education factor increases along with the advancement in the process of transition. The higher the level of educational attainment, the more value is conferred on education as a factor of life success. The transition period in CEE countries has been characterised by the gradual formation of the value of human capital, the rehabilitation of career rising, and a steady transformation of stability values into mobility values as factors of employment success.

The trends are partly evidenced in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), in particular in the Social inequality survey (1992, 1999) and the Work orientations survey (1997). The longitudinal study *Returns to human capital under the communist wage grid and during the transition to a market economy* (Munich et al. 1999) demonstrated through the example of the Czech Republic that while during the decades of communism an extremely low rate of return on education was maintained, it increased dramatically after the change of regime, and that the inter-industry wage structure varied substantially after the economy switched from central planning to market orientation. Human capital embraces not only the attained education but also initial skills, competences, talents, motivation and commitment to further develop and use the skills and competences. Human capital represents a very important capacity of the workforce, which can eventually activate economic capital (Matějů 2000).

The International Social Survey Programme is a continuing annual programme of cross-national collaboration on surveys covering topics important for social science research. It brings together pre-existing social science projects and coordinates research goals, thereby adding a cross-national, cross-cultural perspective to the indi-

vidual national studies. Thirty-four countries are members of the ISSP, including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia (http://www.issp.org)

The reverse side of the healthy differentiation processes, increasing returns on education and formation of the human capital value were, however, raising *inequalities*: the greater the life success of the educated, the fewer the chances received by those without qualifications. The overall income decline and rising differentiation in the CEE societies have become major pitfalls of transition and put the disadvantaged groups at the high risk of social exclusion. 'In this respect, it is necessary for human resources policies to combine social policies for the human capital protection... with policies for human capital development' (Romanian national HRD strategy, p.4). Some analyses show the growing inequality in access to education in the CEE countries (e.g. Matějů 2000) and predict its further deepening. The growing importance of education for life success on the one hand, high intergenerational reproduction of educational qualification on the other hand, and finally insufficient participation in higher education in a number of CEE countries will contribute to rising social inequalities.

Social exclusion is a young topic on the research agenda in CEE, as is the problem itself, and very little research can be found in this field. Under the communist regime the existence of social exclusion as well as poverty was not admitted; marginalisation was perceived as a social choice. Therefore these phenomena were not scientifically and empirically addressed. In the early transition period, with the rapid growth in poverty, the countries and international society focused on studying poverty, though with a certain reduction of the concept of poverty to measuring income and consumption based definitions of poverty, and insufficiently focusing on the educational and occupational aspects of poverty (also criticised by Szalai 1999). UNDP focused on studying poverty in transition economies in 1997, where limitations of the income-based perspective were realised and the Human Poverty Index was introduced, which includes indicators of different dimensions of deprivation, including lack of education (United Nations Development Programme UNDP 1997). The latter report revealed the enormous social cost of transition, which in most CEE countries, particularly in the early transition period, led to a decline in income, the highest ever growth in income inequality, crime growth, loss of social protection, decrease in life expectancy and a sharp decline of the birth rate.

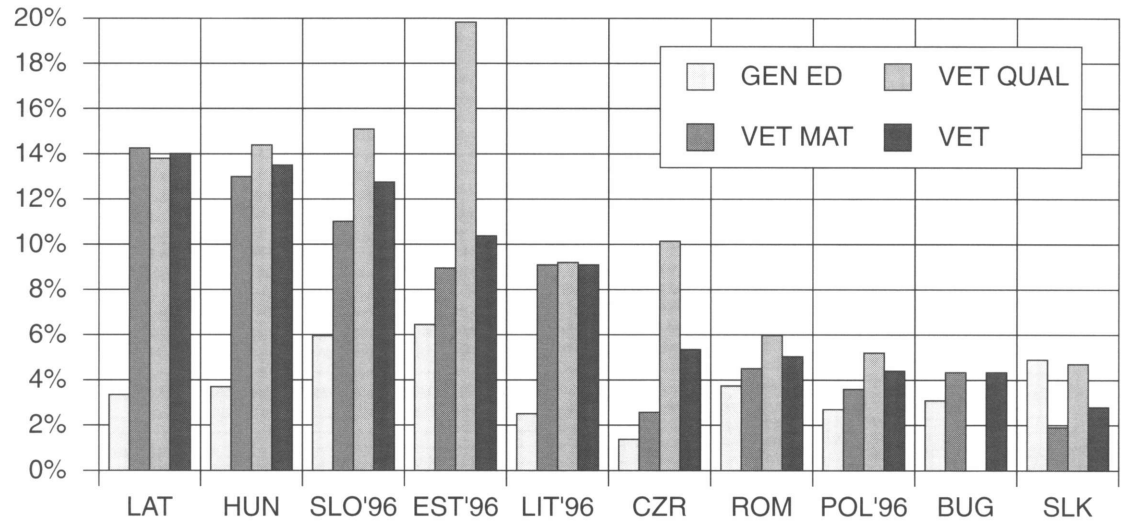
Atal (1999) noted that 'careful sociological investigation is needed to understand the phenomenon of poverty in these countries. Is it a new form of poverty that is emerging, or is it suppressed poverty that is resurfacing?' (p.6). His work (Atal 1999) was a subsequent attempt to summarise different approaches to poverty definition and measurement in the selected CEE and CIS countries. This has been a first step, which certainly demands further elaboration, and especially analysis of marginalisation and social exclusion from the perspective of education and training.

The latest UNDP report (1999) revealed that in the process of globalisation and the rising importance of the development of information and communication technology, as well as biotechnology, the race to lay claim to knowledge becomes inevitable. The lack of access to knowledge (PC skills, language skills) and to information tools (the Internet), widens the gap between 'knows and know-nots', not only between "conventional" 'haves and have-nots' (UNDP 1999). Therefore the topic of social exclusion, so far insufficiently considered, deserves more attention on the CEE VET research arena.

Every year since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme has commissioned *the Human Development Report* to explore major issues of global concern. The UNDP reports look beyond per capita income as a measure of human progress by also assessing it against such factors as average life expectancy, literacy and overall well-being. This year's Report focuses on the positive and negative aspects of globalisation. (http//:www.undp.org)

So far the scarce research in this field has mostly been tackled from a sociological or eco-

Figure 6: Drop outs rate, men and women



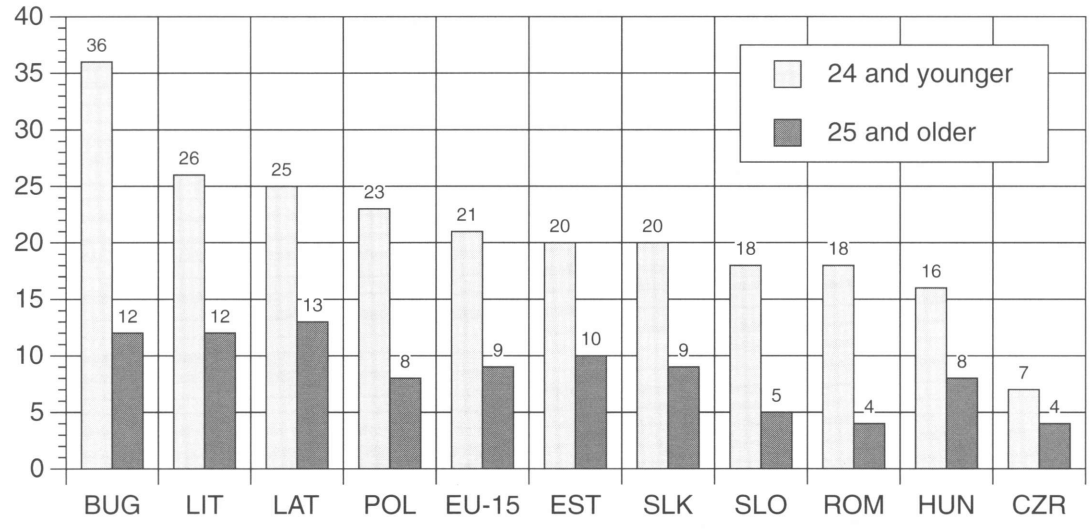
	LAT	HUN	SLO'96	EST'96	LIT'96	CZR	ROM	POL'96	BUG	SLK
GEN ED	0,0335	0,037	0,0596	0,0645	0,025	0,0138	0,0374	0,027	0,0309	0,049
VET MAT	0,1426	0,13	0,1101	0,0895	0,091	0,0256	0,045	0,036	0,0434	0,019
VET Qual	0,1381	0,144	0,151	0,1983	0,092	0,1014	0,0598	0,052	0	0,047
VET	0,1401	0,135	0,1275	0,1038	0,091	0,0535	0,0504	0,044	0,0434	0,028

Source: ETF (1999) Key indicators, p.23.

nomic perspectives (e.g. Svetlik (ed.) 1996; Vecernik 1991; Sirovatka 1997). Only recently the research started to focus on issues of the role of VET in the promotion of social cohesion, as a tool of 'systemic inclusion of the generation of youngsters in the vocational education and training, and in all forms of education and training of adults – those related to jobs and those not directly related' (Trbanc 1999). The question therefore should be tackled from the point of view of access to education, flexibility and permeability of the systems, financial incentives to promote participation in education, especially among disadvantaged groups, and finally the content of education to promote participation, achievement of qualifications and the relevance of educational output to the needs of the labour market. Trace studies and analysis on drop outs from education and training, as well as on the causes and effects of low participation rates in education may shed the light on how to reform the system to promote access to education and life long learning. These studies are so far missing, which has been noted by most of the countries, especially the ones where drop out rates are high – above 10% (Hungary, Slovenia, and the Baltic states).

The ETF initiated extensive studies on VET against social exclusion in the CEE countries. The project is in its starting phase, and the first results shall be available in mid 2000. The very preliminary results demonstrated that social exclusion has several tendencies common to CEE countries: it occurs in the case of an accumulation of a number of disadvantage characteristics (e.g. low skills, long-term unemployed, belongingness to/membership in a national minority); there is a spatial accumulation of risk factors (deprived regions); it has a reproductive intergenerational tendency. This makes research from the spatial and social accumulation and reproduction perspectives crucial for finding mechanisms to fight the social traps.

Figure 7: Unemployment rates of young and older people in CEE and in EU-15, 1997 (%)



Source: ETF (1999) Key indicators

Studies on *VET against social exclusion*, commissioned by ETF at the end of 1999, and currently under preparation by the National Observatories, shall tackle the problem from the starting point of identification of groups under the risk of social exclusion, collection of factual information about the situation of these groups in education and training and on the labour market, analysis of policies, actions and best practices to promote the social cohesion in the countries. The studies shall come up with the set of preventive and reactive recommendations for targeted policy measures and projects to support the disadvantaged groups and promote social cohesion.

5.2.3 Transition from school to working life: transition in transitory societies

The growth of youth unemployment in CEE facilitated relatively frequent trace analyses of school leavers' integration to the labour market and research in the field of transition from school to employment.

Roberts (1998) looked at the school-to-work transition in CEE from the perspective of an analysis of basic categories of the transition process, examining the relevance of the Western models. He argues that although the basic categories of transition such as employment, self-employment and unemployment are the same, their meaning and impact may be quite different. Indeed, he demonstrates that variations inside the employment status of young school leavers in CEE are much wider than the ones in the West. With the emergence of the private sector and especially 'westernised' types of employment (local offices of Western firms) employment conditions vary a great deal, often providing wages well above the national average. Employment in unstable jobs in the private or public sector, and especially in the redundancy sectors, or self-employment often mean low or vulnerable income and insecurity regarding the future. The young people in CEE appeared more likely to work on their own accounts, being self-employed, than their Western counterparts.

K.Roberts' analysis is based on the enquiries undertaken in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, based on the methodology which allows for broad comparisons within the group of countries and with experiences of young people on the labour market in the West, developed by the Anglo-German foundation in the early 1990s.

Similarly the unemployment status among the youth in CEE appeared to have a different connotation as compared to the West. Tra-

ditionally much closer intergenerational family ties in CEE affected deprivation as a direct consequence of joblessness, where the unemployed young people often relied rather on the assistance of their parents than on the employment services, managing to maintain the reasonable standards of living and leisure patterns, unlike their Western unemployed counterparts. A relatively high rate of withdrawal from the labour market, especially among young women, was found characteristic for the CEE youth (see also OECD 1998, p.28 for Bulgarian case). Unemployment often actually meant employment in the grey economy, casual labour practices or part-time studies. The young people in CEE also often demonstrated being more likely to be involved in the growth sectors, private SMEs with foreign capital, or successful entrepreneurship than the older population, diminishing by these means the age income inequalities. Thus although the categories of transition to the labour market are the same in the West and in the East, their connotation differs substantially. Roberts, therefore, defines 'westernised' employment, public sector, self-employment, partial employment, and unemployment as more appropriate categories to address in research on the school-to-work transition (Roberts 1998, p.236). He proposes, therefore, to research *career routes* rather than labour market statuses.

The thematic review of the transition from initial education to working life was conducted by OECD between 1997 and 1999. The review covered fourteen nations, including two CEE countries – the Czech Republic and Hungary. The review was built upon *Background Reports* (NTF 1997, OECD 1998a), prepared by all involved countries, and *Country Notes* (OECD 1997, OECD 1999a), prepared by expert reviewers. The final comparative report focused on the analysis within the lifelong learning framework of how transition has been changing during the 1990s, and what policies are the most effective (OECD 1999).

The OECD thematic review of the transition from initial education to working life (1999) tackles the topic primarily from the point of view of the flexibility of *educational pathways* and also of the effectiveness of systems and policies. It was remarkable that both the Czech and the Hungarian post-compulsory schooling pathways were found selective, and the system of partnership to promote effectiveness of education pathways leading to integration to the labour market, insufficient. Moreover, the general trend of the growing length of the transition process in both CEE countries was partly connected with inadequate capacities of tertiary level education, making therefore the overall system of lifelong learning even more selective. The study puts a particular emphasis on the lifelong learning perspective, where high drop-out rates from secondary education in Hungary should be tackled in elementary schooling, and higher levels of qualifications should be achieved by offering a broad basis of both general and vocational qualifications at an upper secondary level and by restructuring higher education in both countries (OECD 1997, 1999a). The role of CVT in improving the employability of young people on the labour market is especially important in this respect (ETF 1999d), as it provides a quick solution by supporting employability of the young before the systemic changes come into being.

The sociological survey *School leavers in the Czech Republic* conducted in the framework of the OECD project *Transition from school to working life* (Kuchař 1999) was carried out among population of 20-29 years old who are graduates of standard full time education of all types or are without education, who are employed, unemployed or inactive. The survey analysed educational paths and their length, professional paths, (mis)match of the first job after graduation and the obtained vocational qualification, evaluation of quality of the school education from the employment perspective, and intergenerational mobility.

Both research perspectives – analysis of the educational pathways and career routes – have been combined in a sociological survey, carried out in the framework of the OECD project *Transition from school to working life* in the Czech Republic (Kuchař 1999). The survey confirmed that the key reason for prolongation of the educational paths was unsuccessful attempts to enter into higher education. The survey also demonstrated linear

school pathways, an early start in professional pathways (combined studies and employment), most frequently out of self-employment, relative instability of professional pathways for people with vocational type qualifications, given by a high concentration of these qualifications in restructuring industries. The survey revealed that particular problems in the transition process were experienced by people with no qualifications, and that the higher the level of education, the stronger the tendency toward social reproduction in the educational and professional mobility (Kuchař 1999). The trace studies on school graduates were also undertaken in other countries (CNA Veneto Euro-In Consulting 1998, and Jigau et al. 1998 in Romania; Study of graduates of VET schools in Estonia, 1998; Pavelson 1999 in Estonia and others). An absolute majority of the trace studies confirm that the higher the level of educational attained, the less the likelihood of unemployment, and the smoother the transition process. They also mostly agree on the need to provide broad-based qualifications with substantial general knowledge and social skills. They confirm that the majority of both the current students and those already in the labour market seek to enhance their knowledge and obtain a higher qualification.

All countries report the lack of a regular system for tracing school leavers' success and failure on the labour market. The above-mentioned surveys are irregular (most of them are one-off surveys financed on an accidental basis), and they lack a consistent methodology. Several countries tried to elaborate a mechanism for the regular measurement of youth integration in the labour market by using the standard available statistics (e.g. Horačková and Ryška 1998, 1999 used unemployment registry, Vojtěch 1998 employed LFS data, Markausa 1997), but the analysis is circumscribed by the data sources and often happen to be somewhat mechanical, unable to follow the whole complexity of categories and factors of the school-to-work transition. Moreover, not all countries witness research in this field, but all of them report the school-to-work transition as one of the under-researched fields. Finally, our overview of the research on transition revealed that perhaps it is somewhat reduced to the school-to-work perspective, neglecting other transitional aspects, such as transition from unemployment to employment, from one type of employment to another one, inter-occupational transition, transition from the labour-intensive type of employment to the knowledge- and technology-intensive type of employment, transition between employment in large enterprises and SMEs and so on. Analysis of these notions from the perspective of the role of lifelong learning in lessening the transitional encumbrance may bring the analysts to useful recommendations.

5.2.4 Labour market requirements and skills mismatch

The research on school leavers in the labour market is closely connected to the research on labour market requirements. Indeed, while the trace studies on school leavers in the labour market try to understand the reasons for success and failure in integration into employment, measuring the failure by type, level and branch of education, there are a number of studies that attempt to undertake a preventive approach. They survey the employers' needs in terms of the qualifications and skills of the new labour force, and draw up conclusions on the implications for education and training. It should be admitted that this type of study is not very widespread in CEE yet, and the main reason behind the limited analysis in this area is the costs connected to such types of research. The system of social partnership is still very weak in these countries, and it is rather difficult to persuade branch associations and employers to take interest in and to take charge of generating this type of data and information.

The lack of employers' commitment to cooperate with educators in defining qualification standards is partly compensated by the surveys on employer's needs, mostly paid and organised by the state, the non-governmental sector or foreign donors. The surveys, which have been reported by CEE countries, either take the form of questionnaire surveys among employers or embrace a wider scope of the pro-active operation, involving social partners in the discussion and verification of

the survey results and statistics otherwise available. The latter approach is particularly important as in the long run it may help to activate the role of the social partners in the development and adjustment of VET provision in their branches.

The questionnaire survey *Graduates on the labour market: what do employers expect?,* conducted in the framework of the OECD project INES, was designed to measure employers demands in terms of skills and competences. It was carried out among 820 Czech companies that employed more than five employees, at least one of them being a school graduate recruited within last two years (Šťastnová et al. 1998).

The survey *Graduates on the labour market: what do employers expect?* (Šťastnová et al. 1998) revealed that Czech companies expect first of all to recruit young candidates with a comprehension of quality and entrepreneurship, a propensity to learn in order to deepen their knowledge or obtain a new qualification, and who are flexible and adaptable to new environments. The schools are assumed to be primarily in charge of providing broad general knowledge, developing verbal and writing skills, and learning aspirations. The companies declared their preparedness to train young people in vocational subjects, health and safety at work, and develop their entrepreneurial skills; they, however, expect schools to take charge of the provision of foreign language proficiency, managerial skills, quality comprehension and customer-oriented skills, self-confidence, motivation, and initiative. Therefore, employers primarily lack social or core skills among school graduates rather than professional competences, and moreover, the employers assume their readiness for providing necessary vocational training leading to excellence in qualifications.

The objective of the *sectoral study in the wood processing and furniture idustry in Estonia* (1999) was to assess the importance of the factors influencing its development, clarify the current situation and workforce requirements, including future training needs. The questionaire survey and indepth interviews covered 165 SMEs (PW Partners Ltd. 1999).

Most of studies on employers' requirements are organised either at a sectoral or at a regional level. Estonia organised a sectoral study in the wood and furniture industry (Jogi 1999) with an attempt to employ a more proactive approach, actively involving employers' representatives in debates on the results of the survey. The survey demonstrated that companies experience skills shortages among qualified labour, not in terms of the numbers among the prepared workforce but rather in terms of skills and competences. On the top of the lack of entrepreneurial skills, a sense of responsibility, commitment and other social skills, as well as thorough theoretical knowledge, the companies see a lack in practical skills, insufficiently provided at schools. The peculiarity of the perception of small enterprises was demonstrated in their appeal for a staff with multiple skills, capable of fulfilling the entire cycle of the production process.

Transition economies have been characterised by a situation in which the job profiles were changing more rapidly than the system of occupational standards. Many jobs are new on the list of occupations or their content has changed so much that the skills required do not correspond to vocational qualifications formally requested for job performance. Therefore the mere measurement of shortage and surplus occupations or enquiries into recruitment problems are insufficient. The added value of the research into particular skills and competences is therefore unquestionable. Another aspect of possible research is the reconstruction of actual job profiles as a tool to upgrade vocational standards. Job analysis (the nature of tasks performed, work environment, responsibilities and perceived skills required) was undertaken in the survey on needs in management training in the banking and financial sector (Deloitte & Touche, 1996). The latter survey also scrutinised customer attitudes in order to enrich the skills perspective.

VET in the context of regional development was a project initiated by the ETF in four pre-accession countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) and implemented by National Observatories in 1998. The studies analysed the

education and training provision, labour market and institutional development in selected regions of the four countries. The Czech Republic conducted a company survey to help to measure qualification supply and demand mismatch in the coming two years in the Ostrava region. Although the project did not involve other CEE countries, some of them took their own initiative and conducted research at a regional or local level, displaying a particular need in such studies.

A number of studies on labour market requirements were undertaken at a regional or county level, varying from a quantified measurement of the present shortage and surplus occupations (Rittau et al. 1998 in Poland) and the training needs analyses (Podravje region 1997-1999, including SMEs needs analysis in 1998, in Slovenia) to rather complex studies on VET in the context of regional development (Versa 1998 in Slovenia, Kidyba and Kozak 1998 in Poland), including the supply/demand analysis (PMU/OBS/IC003, 1998 in Bulgaria, Czesana and Strietska-Ilina et al. 1999 in the Czech Republic, and Cvetkova et al. 1999 in Latvia). Regional development is a process still in its starting phase in the CEE countries. Some of them have established regions and basic structures and responsibilities (Poland, Hungary), others have just undergone the legislative process or are still engaged in debates over the regional reform. In this context the regional perspective of socioeconomic development, labour market requirements, and education and training offers becomes very important. Matching supply and demand may best be addressed at the local level and support the establishment of regional and local ties among key institutions. In the context of preparation for EU accession and entering into pre-structural funding, including the European Social Fund, the regional research perspectives are rendered ever more important. Moreover, if such research is undertaken and discussed in collaboration with broad partnerships in the region, it may by itself promote regional development. Therefore, as in the case of other research seeking to anticipate the education and training needs at a sectoral or national level, the primary added value of regional studies is its 'collaborative' character. This type of research should be further promoted and supported in a systematic way in the CEE countries, where both methods and coverage have immense room for enhancement.

5.2.5 Prognostic research and strategies

Zecchini (1997) rightly noted that existing statistical services in CEE are not prepared to measure facts which are not directly observable in all their detail. He further noted that 'the tradition of precisely and meticulously quantifying facts related to the implementation of the central plan was suited to an era in which the economy was dominated by few large firms over which the government held strong control...' (p.4). Indeed, in the past most CEE countries had an elaborate mechanism and infrastructure for manpower planning as an integral part of the overall economic planning. With the end of the communist regime the old practices were abandoned and institutions dissolved. The word 'planning' acquired very negative connotation and attempts to conduct prognoses had little recognition in the societies.

The situation has recently changed and in a few countries future oriented studies have been conducted. The research that deals with the needs and requirements of future labour force training, which we provisionally call 'prognostic' research, may occur in very different forms. The research also may have a different time span for prediction or planning strategy. Short-term forecasting is much better developed and more widespread than mid- and especially long-term oriented prognostic research. At the same time the need for a longer term anticipation of qualifications and skills requirements, which can go beyond the educational cycle, has started to be recognised.

Prognostic research varies from the relatively simple collective brainstorming of experts and social partners with an attempt to verify existing statistics and to produce an outlook for future development, to quite complex attempts at quantified forecasting models, and to a rather complex mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodologies for elaborating scenarios and strategies for future policies. In CEE prognostic research uses methods

available and at some point applied in the EU member states, where most quantified forecasting models are based on retrospective data and extrapolation of the past trends on the future. In the West, the traditional forecasting models were abandoned by some countries (e.g. France) after the oil shock of the 1970s when the method proved its inability to produce a reliable forecast in exceptional conditions.

Unlike traditional forecasting, scenarios present alternative images (van Wieringen and Dekker 1999), and proved functional in a changing environment. In the case of CEE countries the latter point is especially important, as the reliable retrospective data comparable over a longer time period and the sectoral employment forecasts supplied by macro-economic models, necessary for manpower requirements models, are often not available (NO of VET and Labour Market 1999).

Scenarios certainly cannot fully substitute the presence of data, moreover, the approach itself requires sound statistical data for the initial context analysis. The scenarios method is not meant to 'de-legitimise the work of those who try to improve the statistical and labour market information base. It is just meant to lay stress on the question of whether there are additional, alternative, faster, and simpler ways of taking decisions about the development of education and training' (Baumgartl et al. 1999, pp. 186-187). Examining the scenarios method as such is not an objective in our study and we shall simply concentrate on examples of projects using the scenarios approach which either occurred in the countries in question or involved their participation (see more on examples of projects based on the method of scenarios elaboration in van Wieringen and Dekker 1999).

In CEE countries the scenarios approach started to be discussed and subsequently developed in 1997, at which time Estonian researchers were in the forefront. Estonian 'Education scenarios 2015' were developed with the objective of initiating discussion in society about the future of education and receiving public support and contribution for the development of strategy in education policies. The idea emerged and started to develop among the members of the Education Forum Committee along with those involved in the elaboration of the nationwide planning Estonia 2010 at the Estonian Institute of Future Studies (Jogi 1999). Thus, the elaboration of education policy scenarios took place hand in hand with the planning process at a macro level. The major assumption for scenarios elaboration was that the future of education cannot be observed separately from the future of the society. Two key factors, which determine the nature of the Estonian society, were chosen as a result of brainstorming meetings and a wider public discussion: cohesion and innovativeness of the society. In the light of these factors four models of the future Estonian society and corresponding education scenarios were drawn: a) Estonia of public schools (nation-centred Estonia), b) Estonia of permanent education reforms (corporate Estonia), c) Estonia of market education and elite schools (Estonia of the rich and the poor), d) learning Estonia (interactive) (Jogi 1999, Baumgartl et al. 1999). The idea of drawing up possible paths of development also implied that the core expert group, civil servants and decision makers would also draw a certain plan of achievement of the most positive scenario, and, even more importantly, would reach a certain level of consensus on how to achieve that.

Scenarios and strategies for VET in Europe is a project initiated by Cedefop, supported by ETF and coordinated by Max Goote Expert Centre at the University of Amsterdam. The project eventually involved five CEE countries (Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) along with five EU member states. The project 'aims to develop a tool to improve the understanding of VET systems in their economic-technological, employment-labour and training-knowledge environment' (van Wieringen and Dekker 1999, pp.3).

Another, most recent example of scenarios elaboration was the international project Scenarios and strategies for VET in Europe. The study is based on the Delphi method – the structured consultation of selected experts through questionnaires. The project intends to identify not only scenarios and strategies

for VET in the involved countries, but also to define the most suitable scenarios and strategies for VET in Europe. As only the first phase of the project has been completed, it is impossible to speak about specific results yet.

It is, however, noteworthy that even on the basis of preliminary results CEE countries often have a sound distinctiveness in defining trends, strategies, key actors and scenarios as compared to the EU member states. The distinctiveness is not necessarily indicated as a difference but rather as giving more or less importance to the same factors. For instance, in scoring the responsible actors for the strategy both the CEE countries and the EU member states assign the same importance to the nation state. However, the EU member states assign a bigger role to the EU agencies than the CEE countries, while the latter undervalue the role of the trade unions as a responsible actor. Furthermore, on average the respondents from the EU countries assign larger responsibility to the individual than respondents from CEE (van Wieringen and Dekker 1999, pp.102). This is given to a large extent by the shared past experiences of the CEE region, its egalitarianism on the one hand, and aversion towards certain types of institutions and partnerships that in some way connote the 'officialdom' of the past regime.

The CEE countries also remarkably differed from the EU member states in weighing the relevance of the strategies and scenarios provisionally developed in the project in a number of cases. In terms of importance for CEE in the context of economy and technology, the key issues seem to be those of providing incentives for the private sector and social partners to encourage their engagement in training, developing learning organisation and knowledge management, and forecasting specific needs. In the employment and labour market context a strategy based on the modern workforce (flexible, part-time, employable, entrepreneurial) was rated by all participating in the project CEE countries as highly relevant, whereas scenario dimensions 'changing in the workplace' (the organisation becomes multicultural; ICT, knowledge management and social skills become more important whereas hierarchies become less important) and 'mobility of labour' (trends towards mobility of labour in flexibilisation, new combinations of work and training, but also higher migration) were not largely shared by the CEE countries, and Slovenia was the only country that supported both scenario dimensions.

The certain contradiction in weighing scenarios and strategies in the context of the employment and labour market is given by the fact that scenarios are built by exploring certain developments, measuring responses on how the selected 23 trends are important and likely for the given country. In other words this means that although the strategy based on the modern flexible workforce may be highly relevant for CEE countries, scenarios based on the 'modernisation' of the workplace and the increase in the flexibility and mobility of labour may not yet be feasible.

In the context of training, skills and knowledge, the CEE countries lay stress on reforming the VET system as a whole (decentralisation, flexibility, expansion) rather than changing the role of VET providers and flexibility in training programmes. The CEE countries are at the top of the list for relevance of the strategy based on a transparent qualification structure and mobility, and on individuals investing in their own training (van Wieringen and Dekker 1999, pp.134). Although CEE countries generally support European scenarios and strategies, the abovementioned preferences show that the systemic reform process in CEE has not been completed yet, whereas other European countries concentrate on scenarios and strategies based on more targeted measures.

As we have already mentioned the above results are only preliminary and may be verified by further analysis. The involvement of the CEE countries in the project on scenarios and strategies in VET in Europe has been no doubt very beneficial, albeit the methodology itself may appear somewhat disputable. Although the scenarios method intends to overcome the limitations of traditional forecasting approaches, based on extrapolation of

retrospective trends to the future, to some extent the same shortcomings could be observed also in the scenarios method itself. The method is based upon the experts' analysis of the past developments, but also upon their comprehension of the present and future evolution. The human brain has natural limitations in its ability to innovate and imagine the future. This drawback could also be in evidence in other anticipative research based on the Delphi method, which relies on expert judgement – the second-hand testimony of the factual state of affairs.

Whether or not the results of the application of such methods are reliable is a long standing scientific debate, but one thing is certain: it is the added value that the method encompasses, perhaps not necessarily in the result itself only but more so in the process of obtaining the result. The scenarios project as well as several other examples of qualitative research undertaken with an attempt to anticipate future developments and qualification needs managed to put partners from different fields together and make them discuss the problems and possible measures for tackling them. These debates bring about the first step to a common understanding and eventual compromise around very urgent problems, and helps people to start working together on their solution.

The project *Regular forecasting training needs: comparative analysis, elaboration and application of methodology (LABOURatory)* is led by the Czech National Observatory in cooperation with CERGE (Centre for Economic Research and Graduate Education, Charles University). The project involves a broad trans-European partnership of leading institutions in the field of forecasting and anticipation of labour market needs: ROA (Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market, the Netherlands), ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute, Ireland), IAB (Institute of Employment and Occupational Research at the Federal Institute of Labour, Germany), and OREF (Regional Employment and Training Observatory, Burgundy) and Quaternaire in France. The partnership further involves Slovenia and Poland. The project, which is in its interim phase and will be completed in March 2001, seeks to elaborate a complex forecasting methodology, based on quantitative and qualitative methods.

Forecasting qualification needs is only starting to be developed in the CEE countries. There have been attempts in Hungary and Poland, and feasibility studies in Estonia (Corcoran 1997), Latvia (Guegnard and Perier-Cornet 1997). Recently the Czech Republic started to develop a methodology based on the manpower requirement approach in the framework of the project *Regular forecasting of training needs: comparative analysis, elaboration and application of methodology.* The project tries to utilise partners' experience with different methods: the manpower occupational forecast, which takes into account all relevant flows, determining the supply and demand for school-leavers on the labour market; analysis of changing trends in broadly defined occupations and sectors, and future skill requirements for the decision making level to help to elaborate medium-term labour market strategies and educational planning; and expertise in forecasting for the Eastern Länder in the similar conditions of economic transition.

The objective of the project is to elaborate the mid-term (5 years) forecasting methodology for use at a national level by decision makers, guidance services and individuals. However, due to the lack of data and the absence of bridges between classification systems in the fields of education and employment, the results will not be valid at a regional, and a sub-sector level (NO of VET and Labour Market 1999). There is a need to complement quantifying forecasting based on partially available data and a relatively short time span of retrospective data with reliable techniques to estimate the correct figure for a given aggregate. Zecchini (1997) was accurate in characterising the situation of data availability in CEE, saying that 'proper estimation is more useful than incomplete data' (p.4). Therefore, the quantified forecasting models will be enriched with anticipation mechanisms for analyses at a regional and a sectoral level, where experience of OREF and Quaternaire will be applied respectively. The result of the project shall be a forecasting model along with alternative corrective instruments adjusted to exogenous shocks of transition economies, and therefore functional in uncertain conditions.

Forecasting as well as different forms of qualitative anticipation of labour market requirements cannot serve as a direct guide to action but rather as indicators of trends and developments which are to be taken into account by the public as well as by the decision making authorities in planning and strategy development. The strategy elaboration process as such did not emerge by itself in the CEE countries and took place no earlier than the second half of the 1990s, being especially notable in recent years when a wave of conceptual analytical documents were elaborated in different CEE countries. This development was stimulated by a number of reasons.

First, after the completion of the Phare VET reform in its pilot phase, the countries needed a comprehensive evaluation of the results and subsequently an elaboration of a national strategy of further development of the system in the new phase of transformation, when the initial reforming euphoria was left behind, and a new, more pragmatic and targeted approach was needed.

Second, the advancement of the transition process brought the nations from the survival mentality to a definition of priorities and concentrated actions.

Third, the process of preparation for EU accession has fuelled the strategy and planning development.

Finally, the research component itself reached the level of maturity when at least partial intersectoral and inter-institutional cooperation became possible, and this collaboration generated the inter-disciplinary analysis and elaboration of comprehensive studies and concepts.

No matter which CEE country the strategy has been developed in, there are certain domains that are relevant for the whole region:

- the move towards a more decentralised VET system and a system of curriculum development and an elaboration of standards,
- enhancing the role of social partners in curriculum and standards innovation and the anticipation of labour market requirements,
- support for financial and tax incentives to increase access and participation in lifelong learning at all levels and in various forms,
- the provision of targeted support measures for disadvantaged groups to reinforce social inclusion, and to enhance system incentives to promote equality of opportunity in access and participation in lifelong learning,
- continued reform of the systems allowing for more flexibility, horizontal and vertical permeability, and diversification of education offered in order to meet the diversity of needs of economy and learners,
- a system of educational standards and qualifications and a system of quality assurance and accreditation,
- allowing for transparency and compatibility, providing a broad theoretical basis and social/core skills in educational preparation,
- enhancing the modern teaching methods, which develop creativity, initiative, responsibility and independence among pupils by improving teachers training.
- improving the teaching materials, tools and school equipment in response to the needs of a knowledge based and information society,
- support for anticipation analyses of the skill needs to provide employable workforce for the future.

All strategies have been based on the assumption that human resources are a crucial component in the development of the societies in all sectors, and on the recognition of education as an opportunity for the whole society to meet the economic objectives of the community as well as individual aspirations (Cerych et al. 1999; Hendrichova (ed.) 1999; Pusvaskis 1998; Lamoureux et al. 1999 and

others). We must note, however, that comprehensive strategic research in its primary sense is still very scarce. A lack of strategic future oriented thinking is compensated by a series of efforts and institutional collaboration, which brings about alternative perspectives and eventually generates policy documents. In the field of research per se, however, this is not enough, and there must be a serious effort undertaken by national authorities and the international community to enhance research capacities, expertise, and comprehensiveness in understanding the issues of concern for researchers worldwide.

6.Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions: shortcomings and 'gaps'

Our initial analysis started from an assumption that the research gaps (i.e. neglected or abandoned areas of research) and the research priorities are determined by the tremendous changes occurring in the countries of CEE. These changes in CEE are a part of the double transformation, where the transition from planned to market economy is multiplied by the challenges of global transformation. We therefore suggested that the gaps and priorities of CEE research would be largely prescribed by the reform process, would concentrate on the requirement aspect of VET and would have much in common among the CEE countries. We also suggested that VET research would have a higher level of production and maturity in the countries where VET itself enjoys a long-term tradition and relative prestige.

Our analysis has brought us to several conclusions. First, indeed the background country reports confirmed that a major demand in research is concentrated in the area of requirement (or contextual) type of research with the emphasis on the needs of the labour market. Nevertheless, at the same time the contextual research with the reference to the labour market requirements was the most frequent in the reports and could be traced in all CEE countries. Somewhat more developed this area seems to be in Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia and Latvia, but, to stress it again, it is also well existent in other CEE countries.

Second, our hypothesis about a high degree of accord between the countries in identification of major priorities was confirmed. This demonstrates that although all CEE countries are at a very different stage of the reform process, and have different VET traditions and cultural backgrounds, the principle features of the transition, which are rather common for all countries, determine the current research.

Third, and most important, the VET research in CEE has fairly successfully reacted to the major challenges of the socioeconomic development, quickly responding and adjusting to the immediate needs. A great deal of research efforts have been undertaken as a reaction to major challenges of the transition process: rapidly rising unemployment, growing social and skills inequalities, skills mismatch, and within this context inadequate diversification of VET programmes and the systems themselves, ineffective financing, teaching methods and qualifications of teachers, too narrow vocational specialisation and insufficient mechanisms for innovation of curriculum, standards and quality assurance. The VET research claimed to play its role in the reform process, adopting a pro-active approach and enthusiastically participating in development projects.

Our initial hypothesis of better research coverage and greater maturity of VET research in the countries where VET itself enjoys higher prestige was not confirmed. The analysis showed that there were other factors that influenced the research development in the CEE countries, where the existence of a research institute, development of the university-based research or participation in international granting schemes had a greater impact on VET research than the prestige of VET. We may, however, suggest that the countries, where recent years displayed a shift towards comprehensive conceptual elaboration of the overall system of human resources

development at the national level in the concept of lifelong learning, enjoyed integration of VET into state or public driven conceptual works. This manifested the most positive development of recent years as far as VET research in CEE is concerned.

Although VET research managed to successfully cover the most acute problems on the agenda of the countries in transitional, the study has revealed an insufficient coverage, inadequate quality, poor methodological approach and inefficient organisation in a number of areas of VET research in CEE:

- Under the turmoil of the reform process, the VET research has tried to find immediate solutions to complex socioeconomic problems. Out of the two components of the transition process, the VET research has rather reacted to the principle demands of transformation towards free market economy and democratic society. The global challenges, imposed by the growing importance of knowledge intensive industries, the services sector, SMEs, and related to these question of access to knowledge, information and ICT have not been tackled to the same extent.

- In the pursuit for quick and immediate solutions, and being under time and financial constraints, the VET researchers and practitioners in CEE often tended to look for ready made answers, which came into being in the form of the models adopted from the West and with the international financial assistance. A thorough systematic analytical work into verification of the feasibility, adjustability and impact of such adoptions was not in place. In spite of the invaluable input of international expertise to the process of advancement of the VET reform, the role of national research in the reform process was often neglected. As the result the VET reform process did not sufficiently contribute to VET research development, especially at the beginning of the transition period. The notions of a primary concern for research in the EU member states are not always adequately tackled by the CEE research. The CEE countries found themselves in the situation where the challenges they have to tackle are primarily the same as in the EU member states but on the top of it they must find quick answers to most urgent questions of the democratic reform process. Being a driving force for change, researchers and analysts happened to be a 'hostage' of the same reform process. The urgent has often prevailed over the conceptually important in a longer term perspective. The recent years have, however, featured a number of positive examples of a thorough conceptual approach in the elaboration of further steps, though still somewhat missing a scientific hand on it.

- The national reports have demonstrated the peculiar domination of the analytical works in the field of labour market requirements over conceptual and theoretical research into aspects of process and outcomes of VET in recent years. This has been strongly determined by the rapid economic change. In spite of the general reproach expressed by all (!) CEE countries about the lack and insufficient development of labour market needs analysis, we may state that the problem was rather a lack of a systematic approach, and effective and efficient methods in such analyses. Moreover, the VET research has been somewhat subordinated to the labour market analysis, while the theoretical research in the field of process and outcomes of VET has been neglected. Slightly more evidence of research into processes and outcomes of VET were observed in Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

  The subordination to the labour market requirement was not a negative development *per se* but it threw out the baby with the bathwater. What is it that we are trying to harmonise VET provision with the labour market requirements for? It is the life success of the individual, his employability, but also his ability to learn in the future and to be a successful and active citizen. The role of the individual has been somewhat overlooked in the research, where the success of the individual was reduced to his success in employment in

the future. The concept of lifelong learning gives a broader perspective and needs to be better addressed in the research into different fields of VET. Furthermore, the needs of individual learners must be also better addressed in the context of employment – in the framework of CVT and HRD in enterprises.

- The VET research in CEE has mainly had an applied or developmental character. Theoretical scientific research has been almost totally abandoned in a majority of the CEE countries; Lithuania was virtually the only exception where theoretical scientific research into VET is well situated in the academic surrounding of the country. Such development in CEE on the one hand appeared as a positive shift from highly theoretical academic research, isolated from reality, towards more practical and developmental research. On the other hand this can turn into a very dangerous development. The absence of theoretical or basic research is not something that could be felt immediately but it may restrain development in the long run. Putting research closer to practice certainly does not mean abandoning theoretical research. The mechanisms should be found how to implement the scientific findings into practice.

- To the contrary of our previous statement, several countries reported insufficient development of applied research (Slovakia, Estonia, Albania, Hungary, Romania). The reasons behind the statements are largely caused by the same reasons: a lack of mechanism to follow up research projects and implement recommendations. There is a gap in between "what to do?" and "how to do it?" (Mustafai 1999). Specific types of projects, aimed at the dissemination or implementation of results of the research, are not frequent and must be enhanced.

- The VET research in CEE proved to be highly fragmented, where each sub-sector of the VET system or a particular field were researched separately. This was also reflected in the institutional arrangements that separate curriculum research, research on standards from the labour market research, research on initial VET from research on CVT and HRD, etc. Each institution specialises in its domain, in which they would run both research and development projects depending on the context and funding, but would rarely go beyond their scope of operation.

  A comprehensive conceptual approach in research started to be developed in recent years and manifested a new qualitative change in the reform process. The national researchers adopted a more cautious approach in implementation of the foreign models and started to look at the research traditions in their own countries. From taking the value of Western models and methods for granted there has started a shift towards a more thoughtful approach, reliance on the national researchers and practitioners, and attempts to look at the education and training in a broader context of lifelong learning, human resources development and global changes. The positive shift must be further supported and promoted where multidisciplinary research and a corresponding inter-institutional collaboration must take a lead.

- In the transition turmoil the VET research has had very limited financial sources in CEE. This has contributed to fragmentation of research, brain drain from research, subordination to the immediate and most urgent problems, attempts to find ready-made solutions of complex problems, dependence on the external sources and therefore subject to specific restrictive regulations of the foreign aid. Some countries evidenced insufficient development of the empirical research due to the financial constraints. Where national sources are very limited, efficiency of the research organisation is vital. The research function needs more transparency, coordination and flexible mechanisms of grant support at the national level. Inter-institutional cooperation, coordination of efforts and synergy between different institutional structures, diversification of funding sources and a greater participation of private and civil society sectors in the VET research can contribute to the efficiency.

Under the circumstances of the economic hardship and limited spending on research and development in CEE, the role of international financial assistance is indispensable. It has, however, concentrated rather in the area of development projects than in assisting research to undergo the transition period. It is the duty of each particular CEE government as well as of the international society to help research to overcome the scientific discourse caused by the decades of the realm of the communist ideology. The role of the research as a central support point in the reform process, where research is both cause and effect of the transition, is essential for overcoming short-sightedness and old-fashioned mode of the CEE research.

- In spite of fairly successful reaction to most urgent topics, the introduction of many new research fields in the research agenda, and successful coverage of the issues of concern of the reform process by the VET research in CEE, there have been certain *'gaps' or topics which need further elaboration*. These topics are of two types: country specific and general for the region. Confirming our original hypothesis, the vast majority of priority fields are common for the CEE countries. All or most countries state the need in supporting and developing research in the following fields: labour market training and qualification needs analysis, competence-based qualifications, broad-based qualifications, innovative teaching methods, teachers training and personnel development at schools, vocational and occupational standards, evaluation and quality assurance, financing of VET, transition from school to working life, systematic trace studies of graduates (including educational paths and career routes), modular training and its impact, the role of VET in promoting social cohesion, CVT, and HRD in enterprises. It is necessary, however, to add that the major drawback of CEE research is not in its gaps as such, but rather in the mode by which the fields are covered. It lacks a comprehensive perspective where each particular issue or field is considered against the background of lifelong learning and the strategic perspective of the systemic development of national human capital.

The country specific research priorities concentrate on particular problematic areas of VET present in these countries. For instance, a rather high rate of dropouts (over 10%) from education in Slovenia, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, would suggest that the research into causes and effects of early school leaving as well as the identification of mechanisms to promote integration of the young into education or employment would be useful.

Another important aspect of country specific needs lies in the area of initial stocktaking information and data collection. At the beginning of the transition process the information tools were often inadequate for helping to design the policies, monitor policy effects and identify areas for policy adjustment (Zecchini 1997). After a history of governmental manipulation of statistics, a new approach also needed to be elaborated in the statistical services for the purposes of obtaining an accurate and objective record of relevant social and economic phenomena (Zecchini 1997). While in most CEE countries the initial phase of reforming national statistical services and the minimum requirement of reliable stocktaking data for the monitoring and adjustment of social and economic policies has been mainly fulfilled, in Albania it is clearly not the case. The statistical provision in the latter country hinders research and analysis and the subsequent policy innovation. Thus, statistics on education and the labour market should be urgently improved in Albania. Nevertheless, other countries also suffer from inappropriate data coverage, especially in the area of CVT, HRD in enterprises and financing of initial and continuing education and training by type of sources (including private sources and expenditures on education by enterprises).

Involvement of the CEE countries in the process of elaboration of the common terminology in the field of VET and support to a greater transparency in the VET vocabulary is important for promotion of com-

parable cross country analyses and stipulation of a benchmarking perspective to each particular state.

The CEE research in the field of VET must harmonise conceptually and methodologically with the foremost international research community by consolidating its great intellectual potential and by relying on its experience in playing a prominent role, which the CEE researchers and other intellectuals have played in supporting democratic developments in their countries.

6.2 Policy implications

The challenges of double transformation, the increased blurring of education and work, the challenge of the knowledge-based society and a lifelong learning perspective impose especial role for research in the field of VET. The research in CEE is in the process of change itself; at the same time it should become a core point of initiation, analysis and elaboration, and expert support in implementation of the major reform steps. This implies the importance to support the research provision and organisation in the CEE countries in the following dimensions:

- It is recommended to support research in the fields, where either country specific or cross country research gaps have been identified (see above). It is equally important to support research in the fields, which have enjoyed relatively high frequency, nevertheless, lack conceptual maturity, methodological excellency and comprehensive understanding. Stocktaking information gathering is equally a priority, especially in the countries where the absence of data hamper efforts of analysts and present an obstacle in strategic conceptualisation.

- In order to facilitate research generation and effectiveness the following institutional measures are recommended:

  - to support the establishment of cross-sectoral coordination and granting structures for research (e.g. research boards) in the CEE countries, where such bodies are not in place yet;

  - to support building project management capacities at research institutes and universities in CEE in order to promote their better participation in national and international research and development activities;

  - to define and publicise national research priorities and strategy on a regular basis;

  - in commissioning grant schemes at a national level a balance must be found between research projects commissioned on order from the top and open calls for proposals aimed at supporting the local research initiative and inter-institutional collaboration;

  - to enhance information provision and wide dissemination on the available research outputs in order to increase inter-institutional awareness and co-operation;

  - the governments shall seek after diversification of financial sources for VET research, promote incentives to increase participation of private bodies, companies, voluntary sector in research into VET.

- International organisations (especially OECD, European Commission, World Bank, ETF and Cedefop) in many cases have been a driving force of information provision and research generation. It is recommended:

  - to broaden the eligibility of international research programmes and analysis to other countries in transition in order to contribute to a better co-operation of research networks across Europe, facilitating exchange of experiences and methods;

  - in the international support programmes (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Vth Framework, projects commissioned by ETF) to ensure the suitability of the topics of selected projects to the national priorities and needs; this implies greater and tighter cooperation

between international organisations on the one hand and the national governments and research communities on the other;

- to support cross/trans-border research projects, international partnerships, international comparative analyses;

- to support the establishment and sustainability of research thematic networks across European countries, both EU and outside.

❑ In order to increase awareness of research results, improve adequacy of research to practice and diversify research outputs, the following *types* of research should be enhanced and must be taken into account in evaluation of proposals:

- university-based or academic research, linked to the world of work and policy making;

- research initiated by a private and voluntary sector with the involvement of counterparts from the public and academic research community;

- interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary research;

- applied research in a solid theoretical framework;

- comprehensive research which embraces the whole system analysis in a broad perspective of lifelong learning;

- preparatory research, aimed at identification of research needs and subsequent project generation;

- follow-up projects, aimed at implementation of previously done research analyses, tackling outcomes and recommendations of research, dissemination projects;

- prospective, future oriented research and elaboration of methods for such research.

Finally it could be stressed that 'cross-national studies and increasing transnational knowledge may add to a process of integrating Western and non-Western approaches' in science, the added value of such cooperation being the increased knowledge about other countries among both the researchers involved in such studies and also those who have access to the results (Oyen 1999, p.190). Our analysis has been only a first attempt to map the research in the field of VET in CEE and we very much hope that further elaboration with a focus on particular topics will bring about greater transparency in the VET research fields and methods in the future.

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Slovenia

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Annexes

Annex 1: Tables

Table 4: Educational Attainment by Age Groups, 1997 (%) (25 – 59 year olds)

	Age groups												Total		
	25 – 29			30 – 39			40 - 49			50 - 59			25 - 59		
	ISCED 0 - 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5 - 7	ISCED 0 - 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5 – 7	ISCED 0 - 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5 - 7	ISCED 0 - 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5 - 7	ISCED 0 - 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5 - 7
ALB	54	40	6	54	39	8	55	35	11	73	19	5	59	34	7
BUG	24	59	17	24	56	20	30	49	21	48	36	16	32	49	19
CZR	7	82	10	9	78	12	15	74	11	21	69	10	14	75	11
EST	8	56	36	7	46	47	12	43	45	25	36	39	13	44	43
HUN	21	68	11	22	64	14	30	56	14	54	35	11	33	55	13
LAT	11	76	13	6	78	16	13	69	19	32	53	15	15	69	16
LIT	13	45	43	8	43	50	14	38	48	37	24	37	18	37	45
POL	53	37	9	52	37	10	56	34	9	62	25	10	55	34	10
ROM	12	78	10	17	70	13	33	49	18	60	26	15	31	55	14
SLK	8	81	11	11	77	12	18	69	13	36	54	10	18	70	12
SLO	18	68	14	20	64	16	31	57	12	37	51	12	27	59	14
EU15	31	48	21	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	41	40	20

Source : Key Indicators 1999, European Training Foundation, 1999

Note: for Albania: 20 – 29 year olds, 20 – 59 year olds, year 1998, (Key Indicators 2000, draft report, European Training Foundation, 2000)

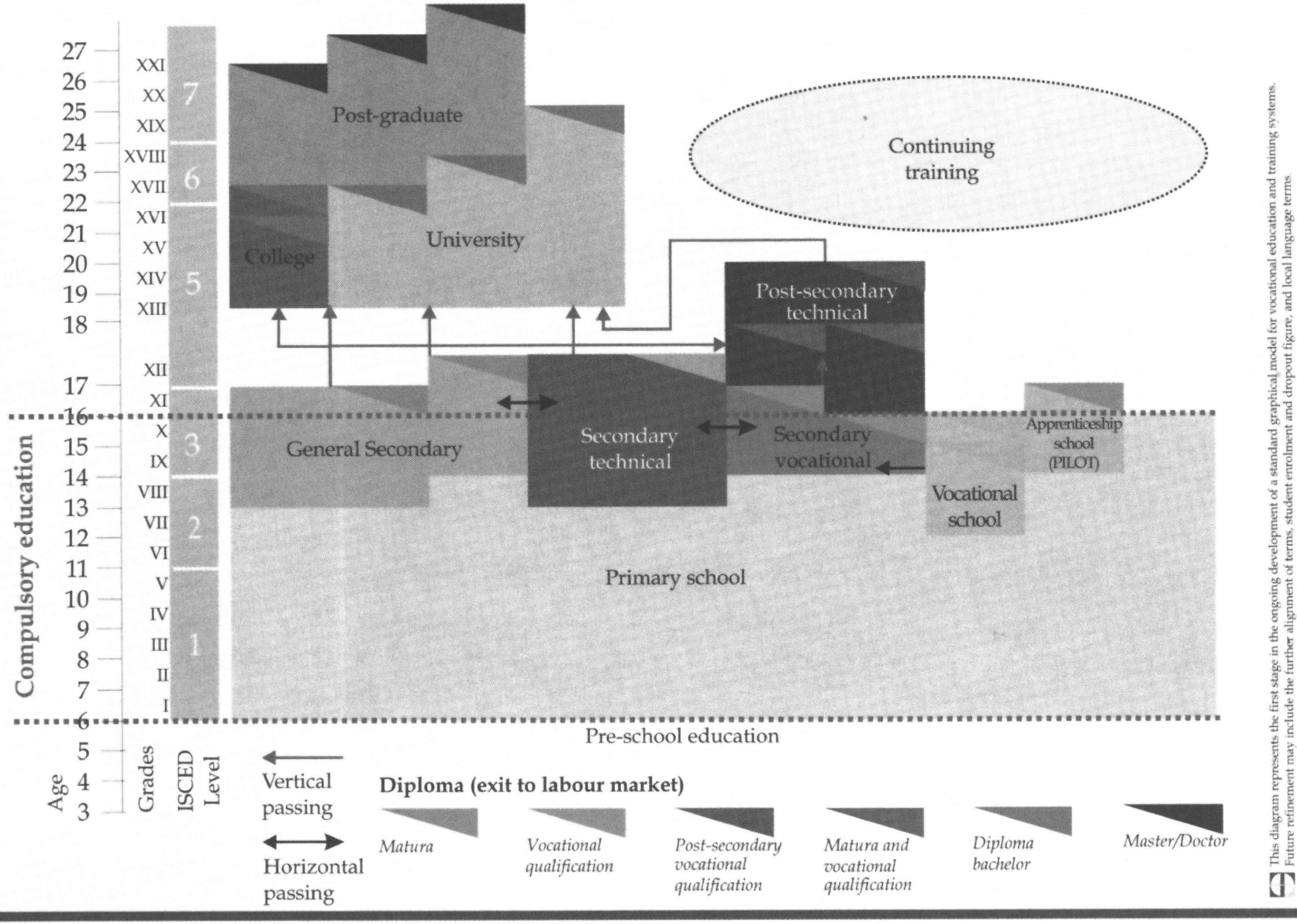
Table 5: Internet hosts per 10 000 people (1997)

CEE countries		Selected EU/OECD countries	
Albania	0,32	Germany	106,68
Bulgaria	6,65	France	49,56
Czech Republic	47,66	Finland	653,61
Estonia	45,35	Portugal	18,26
Hungary	33,29	EU average	
Latvia	21,03		
Lithuania	7,46	United States	442,11
Poland	11,22	Japan	75,80
Romania	2,66		
Slovakia	20,47		
Slovenia	85,66		

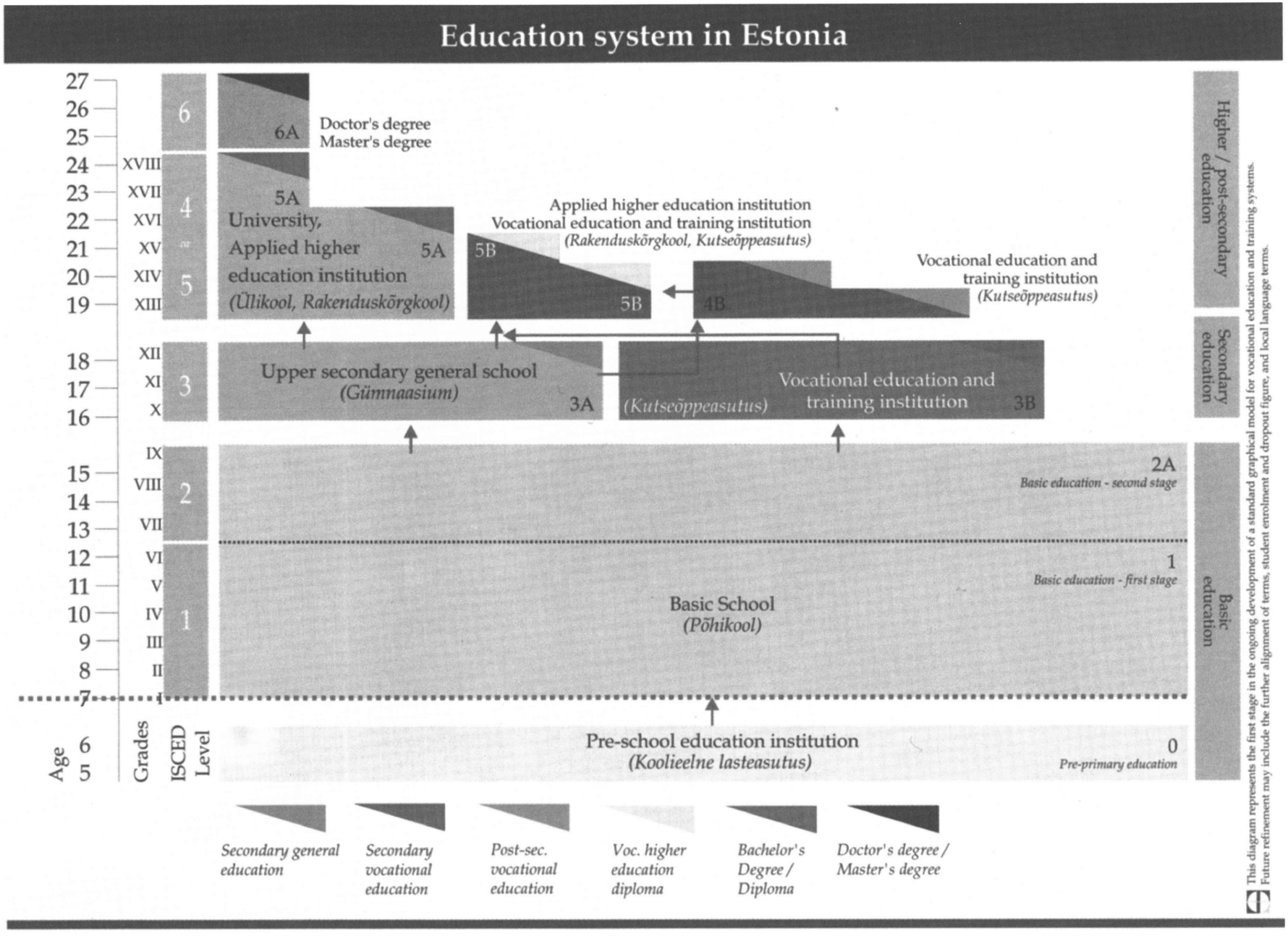
Source: World Development Indicators 1998, the World Bank 1998

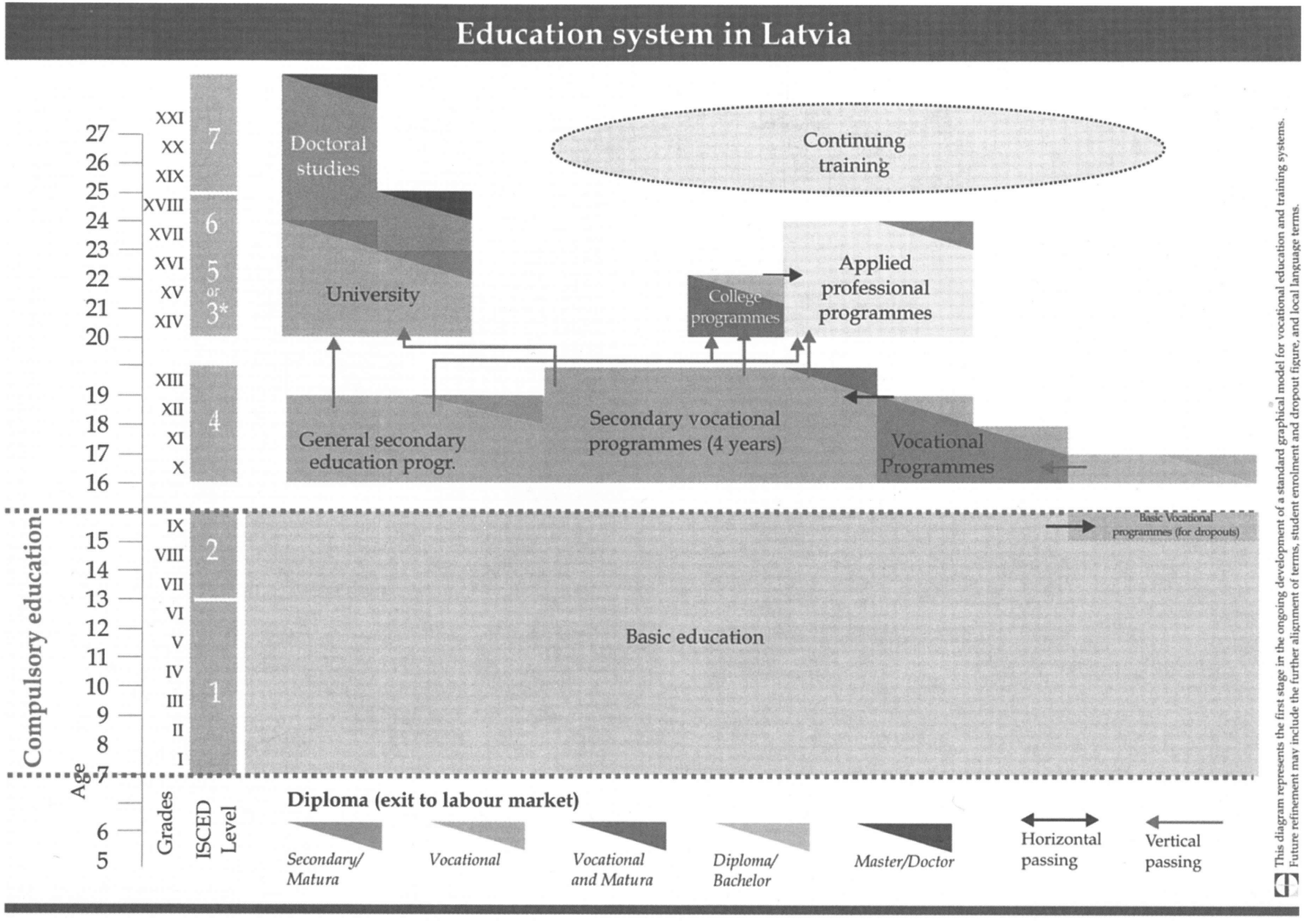
Annex 2: Diagrams of systems of education of eleven CEE countries

Education system in Bulgaria

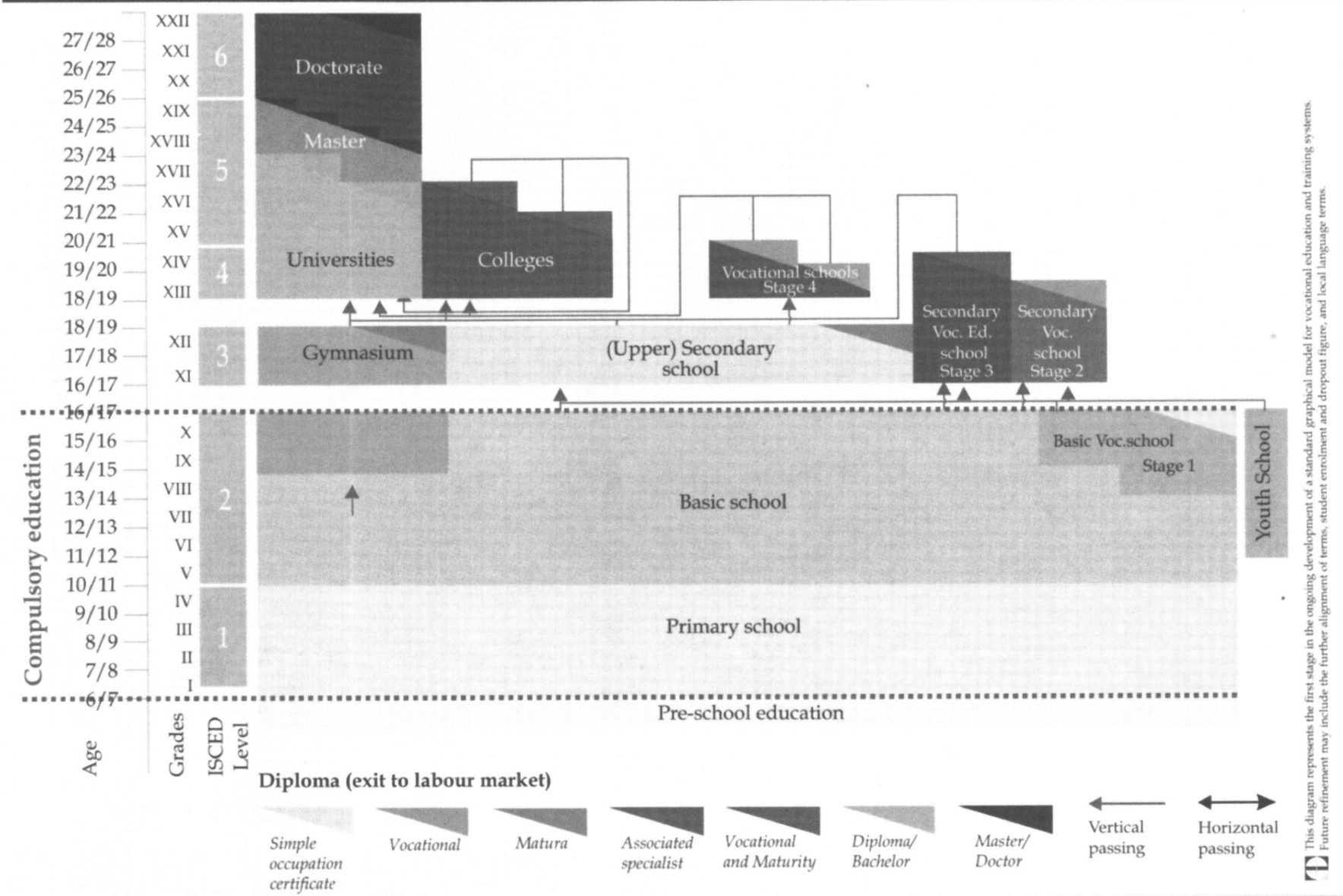


This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.

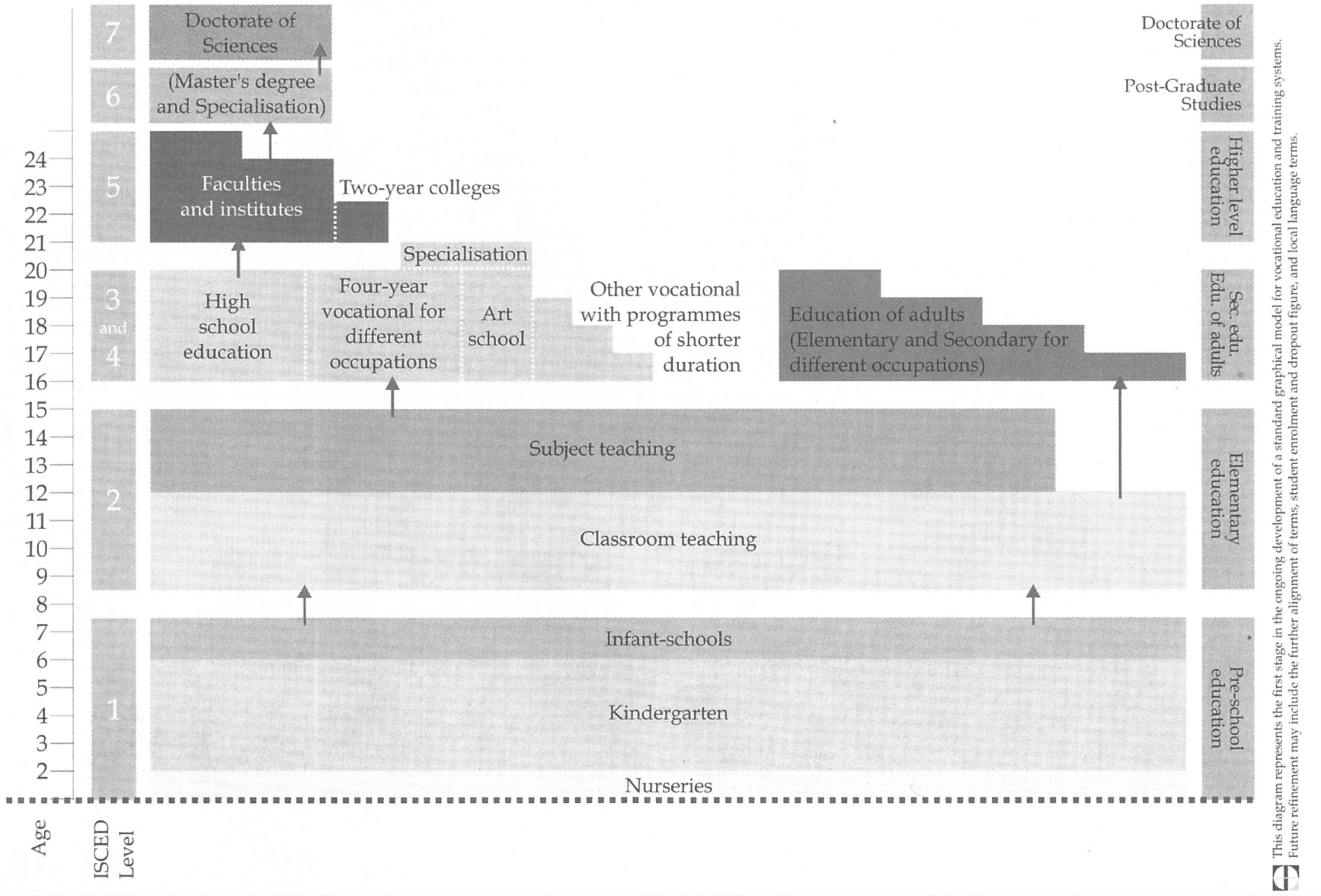

Education system in Estonia
Age
Grades
ISCED Level
Higher / post-secondary education
Secondary education
Basic education
6
6A
Doctor's degree
Master's degree
5A
University,
Applied higher education institution
(Ülikool, Rakenduskõrgkool)
5A
Applied higher education institution
Vocational education and training institution
(Rakenduskõrgkool, Kutseõppeasutus)
5B
Vocational education and training institution
(Kutseõppeasutus)
4B
Upper secondary general school
(Gümnaasium)
3A
(Kutseõppeasutus)
Vocational education and training institution
3B
2A
Basic education - second stage
1
Basic education - first stage
Basic School
(Põhikool)
Pre-school education institution
(Koolieelne lasteasutus)
0
Pre-primary education
Secondary general education
Secondary vocational education
Post-sec. vocational education
Voc. higher education diploma
Bachelor's Degree / Diploma
Doctor's degree / Master's degree
This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems.
Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.

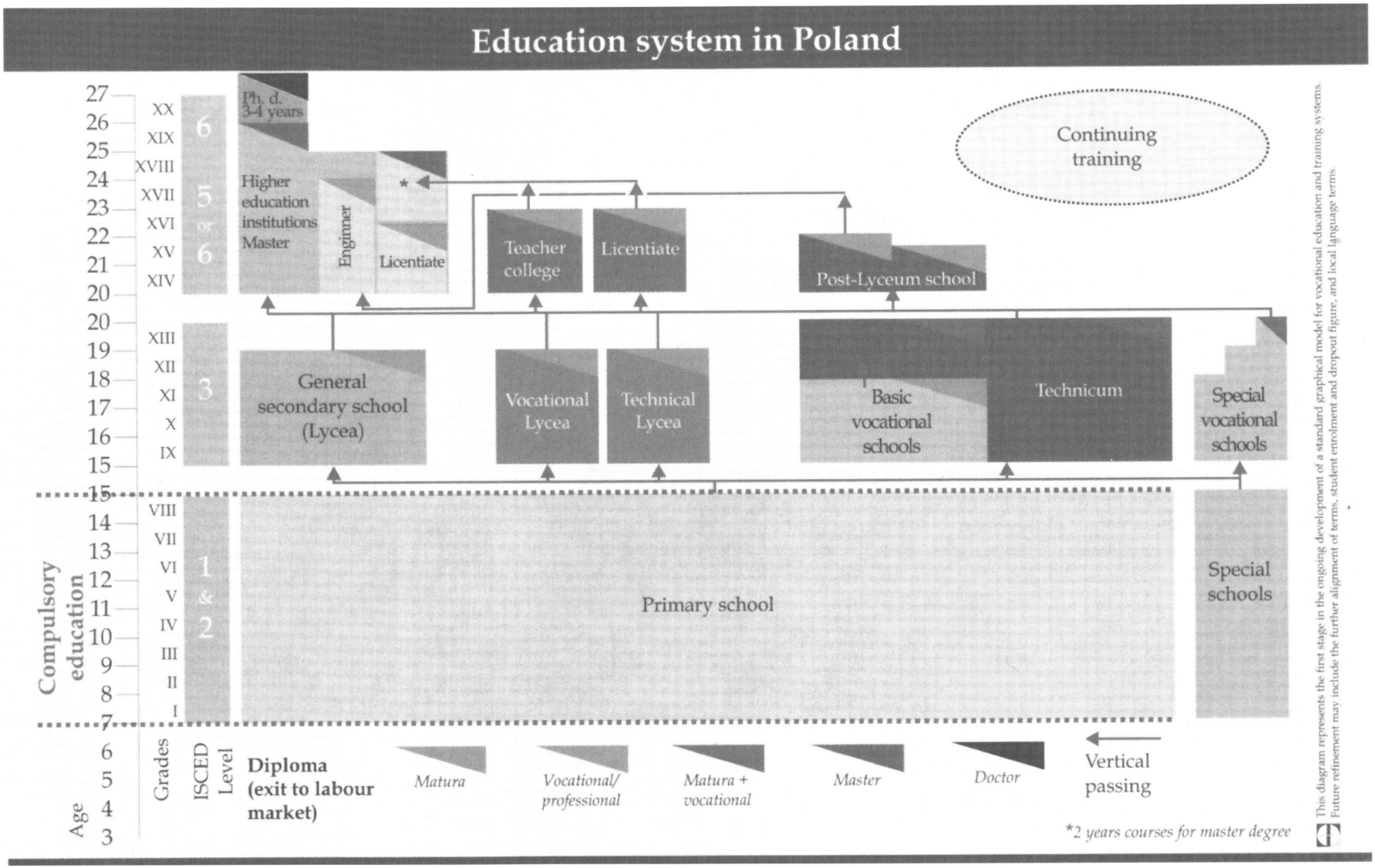

Education system in Latvia
Doctoral studies
University
Continuing training
College programmes
Applied professional programmes
General secondary education progr.
Secondary vocational programmes (4 years)
Vocational Programmes
Basic Vocational programmes (for dropouts)
Basic education
Compulsory education
Age
Grades
ISCED Level
Diploma (exit to labour market)
Secondary/ Matura
Vocational
Vocational and Matura
Diploma/ Bachelor
Master/Doctor
Horizontal passing
Vertical passing
This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems.
Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.

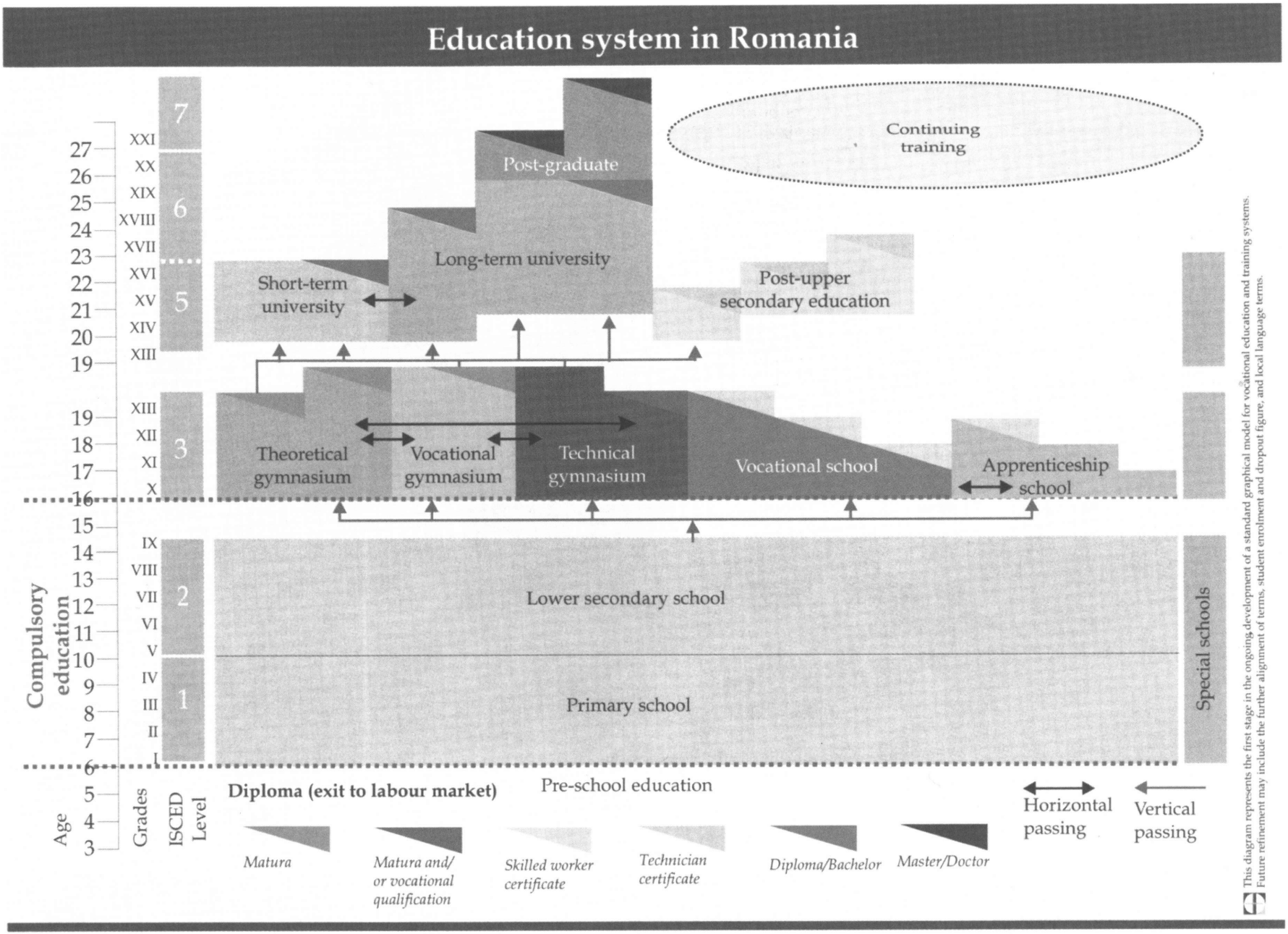
Education system in Lithuania

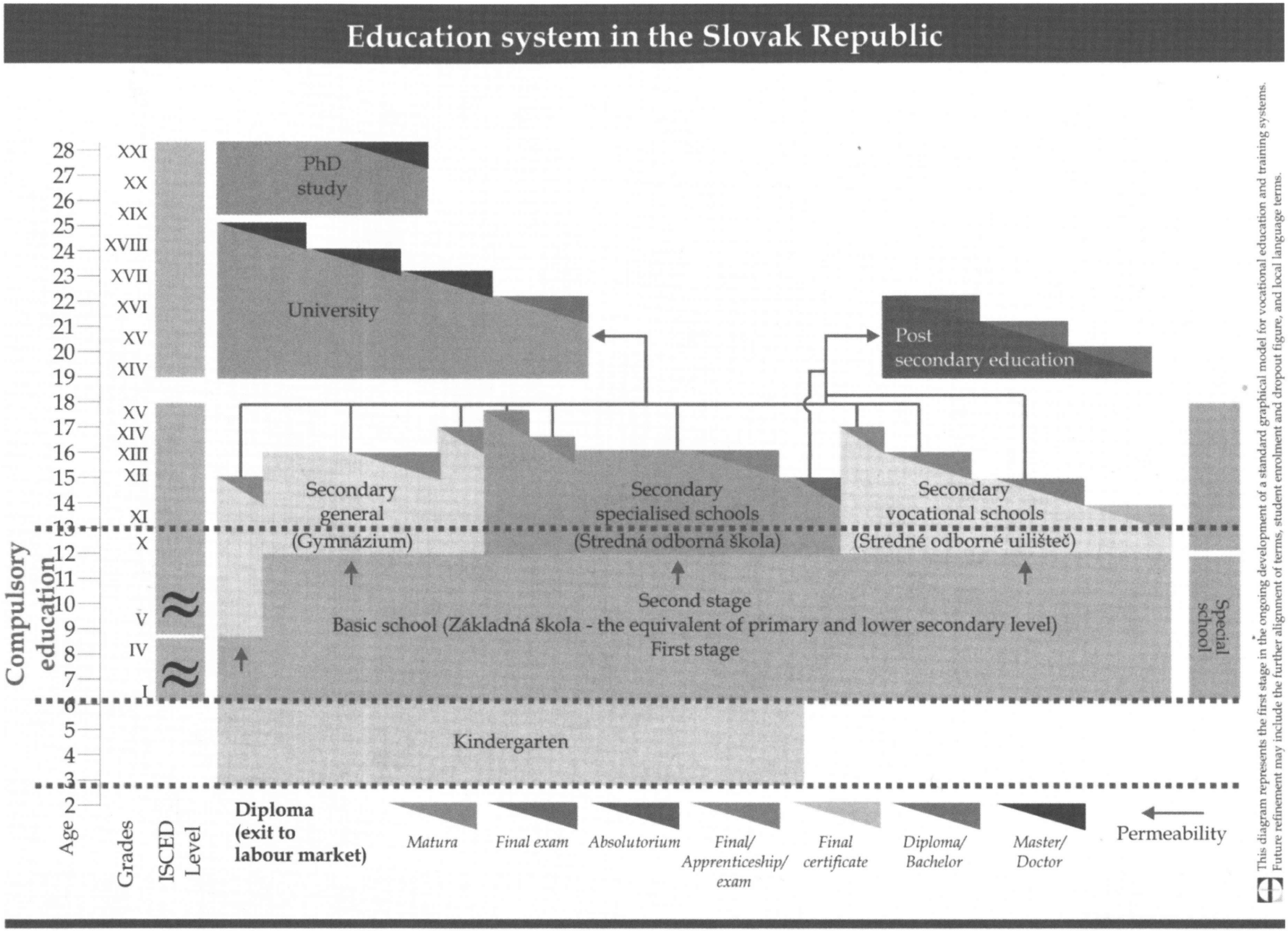


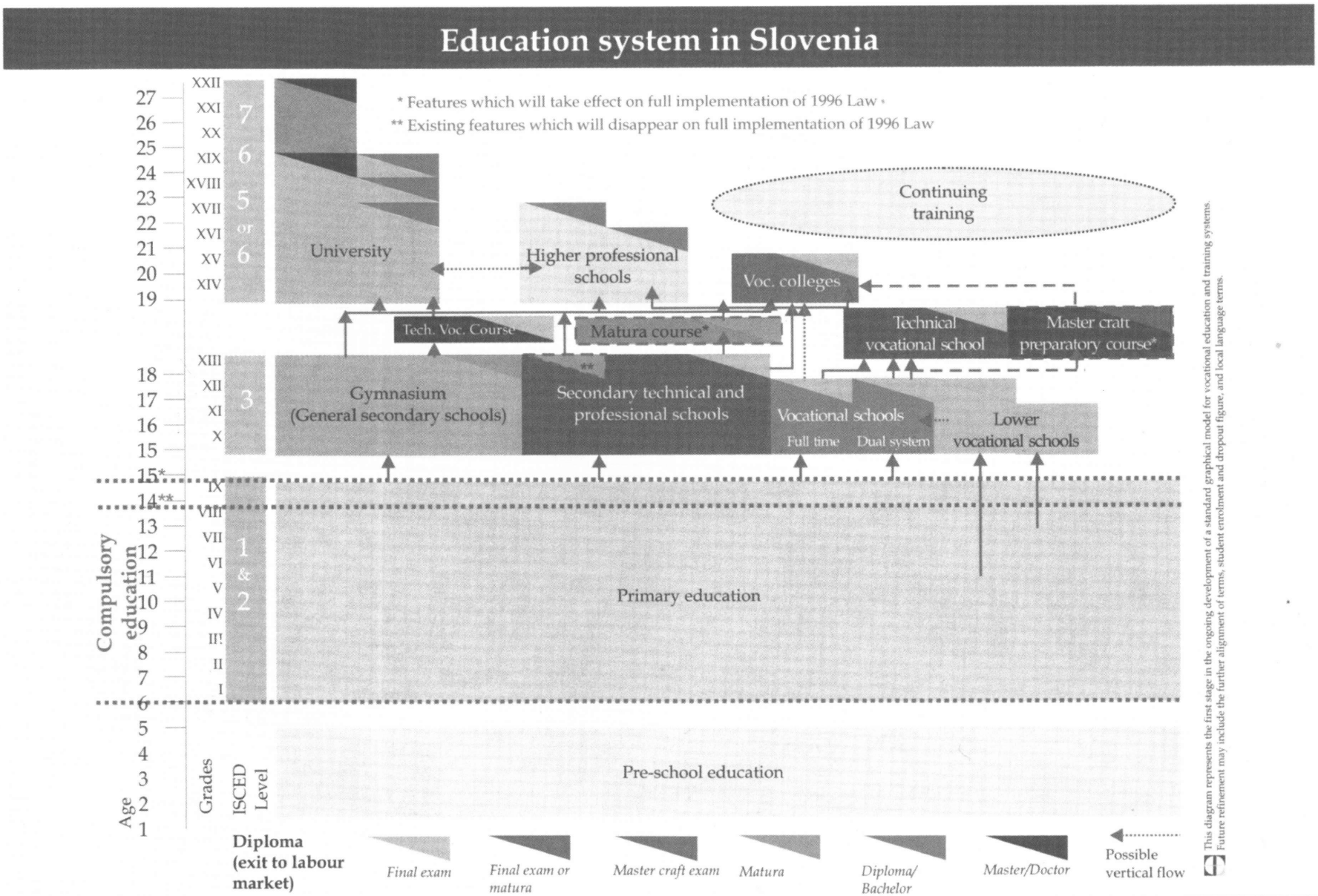
Education system in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia




Education system in Poland
Ph. d. 3-4 years
Higher education institutions Master
Enginner
*
Licentiate
Teacher college
Licentiate
Post-Lyceum school
Continuing training
General secondary school (Lycea)
Vocational Lycea
Technical Lycea
Basic vocational schools
Technicum
Special vocational schools
Special schools
Primary school
Compulsory education
Age
Grades
ISCED Level
Diploma (exit to labour market)
Matura
Vocational/ professional
Matura + vocational
Master
Doctor
Vertical passing
*2 years courses for master degree
This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.


Education system in Romania
Continuing training
Post-graduate
Long-term university
Short-term university
Post-upper secondary education
Theoretical gymnasium
Vocational gymnasium
Technical gymnasium
Vocational school
Apprenticeship school
Lower secondary school
Primary school
Special schools
Compulsory education
Pre-school education
Diploma (exit to labour market)
Horizontal passing
Vertical passing
Age
Grades
ISCED Level
Matura
Matura and/ or vocational qualification
Skilled worker certificate
Technician certificate
Diploma/Bachelor
Master/Doctor
This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.


Education system in the Slovak Republic
Age
Grades
ISCED Level
Compulsory education
PhD study
University
Post secondary education
Secondary general (Gymnázium)
Secondary specialised schools (Stredná odborná škola)
Secondary vocational schools (Stredné odborné uilišteč)
Second stage
Basic school (Základná škola - the equivalent of primary and lower secondary level)
First stage
Special school
Kindergarten
Diploma (exit to labour market)
Matura
Final exam
Absolutorium
Final/ Apprenticeship/ exam
Final certificate
Diploma/ Bachelor
Master/ Doctor
Permeability
This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.


Education system in Slovenia
* Features which will take effect on full implementation of 1996 Law
** Existing features which will disappear on full implementation of 1996 Law
Continuing training
University
Higher professional schools
Voc. colleges
Tech. Voc. Course
Matura course*
Technical vocational school
Master craft preparatory course*
Gymnasium (General secondary schools)
Secondary technical and professional schools
Vocational schools
Full time
Dual system
Lower vocational schools
Primary education
Pre-school education
Compulsory education
Age
Grades
ISCED Level
Diploma (exit to labour market)
Final exam
Final exam or matura
Master craft exam
Matura
Diploma/ Bachelor
Master/Doctor
Possible vertical flow
This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.

Annex 3

List of the international institution networks involved in VET research

Network of National Observatories

Albania

National Observatory
Institution of Labour and Social Affairs
Rr. Kavajes
ALB- Tiranë
Tel. (355) 42-37966
Fax (355) 42-37966
e-mail: ksulka@natobs.gov.al
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Mr Zef Shala

Bulgaria

National Observatory
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Graf Ignatiev 15, 4th floor
BG- Sofia
Tel. (359) 2-809203
Fax (359) 2-9888686
e-mail: 0511@mbox.infotel.bgf
http:/www.etf.eu.int/no.bg
Ms Iskra Petrova

Czech Republic

National Observatory
National Training Fund
Václavské náměstí 43
CZ- Praha
Tel. (420-2) 24228732
Fax (420-2) 24214475
e-mail: oli@observatory.nvf.cz
http://www.nvf.cz/observ/aobs.html
Ms Olga Stryjecka Ilyina

Estonia

National Observatory
Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Reform
Sakala 23
EE-Tallin
Tel. (372) 6281257
Fax (372) 6418200
e-mail: tiina@hm.ee
http://www.etf.eu.int/no.ee
Ms Tiina Annus

Hungary

National Observatory
National Institute of Vocational Education
Fehér út. 10
H- Budapest
Tel. (36 1) 2633240
Fax (36-1) 2633240
e-mail: observat@nive.hu
http://www.nive.hu/observat/angol/brit.html
Mr Tamás Köpeczi Bócz

Latvia

National Observatory
Academic Information Centre
Valnu iela 2
LV- Riga
Tel. (371) 7-225155
Fax (371) 7-221006
e-mail: andrejs@apa.lv
http://aic.lv/Observatorijas/obsgalva.html
Ms Baiba Ramina

Lithuania

National Observatory
Methodical Centre for Vocational Training
Gelezinio Vilko g. 12
LT- Vilnius
Tel. (370) 2-250185
Fax (370) 2-250183
e-mail: pmit@pmmc.elnet.lt
http://www.etf.eu.int/no.lt
Ms Natalija Zimina

Poland

National Observatory
BKKK – Cooperation Fund
79 Koszykowa
PL- Warszawa
Tel. (48-22) 6253937
Fax (48-22)6252805
e-mail: kingam@pirx.cofund.org.pl]
http://www.cofund.org.pl/bkkk/eng/no/no-e.html
Ms Danuta Mozdzenska-Mrozek

Romania

National Observatory
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37 Stirbei voda street, Sector 1
RO- Bucuresti
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Mr Cesar Birzea

Slovenia

National Observatory
Centre for Vocational Education and Training
Kavciceva 66
SLO- Ljubljana
Tel. (386-61) 448119

Fax (386)-61)448356
e-mail: observatorij@cpi.si
http://www.cpi.si/obs/index.html
Ms Suzana Gerzina

Slovakia

National Observatory
State Institute for Vocational Education and Training
Bellova 54/A
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Mr Juraj Vantuch

Eurydice

Bulgaria

International Relations Department
Ministry of Education and Science
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2A, Knjaz Dondukov Bld
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Institute for Information on Education - ÚIV/IIE
Eurydice Unit
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Praha 1, 111 21
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Estonia

Estonian Ministry of Education
Eurydice Unit
9/11 Tonismägi St.
5192 Tallinn

Hungary

Education Eurydice Unit
Szalay u. 10-14
1054 Budapest

Latvia

Ministry of Education and Science
Department of Education Strategy
Eurydice Unit
Valnu 2
1050 Riga

Lithuania

Ministry of Education and Science
Eurydice Unit
A. Volano 2/7
2691 Vilnius

Poland

Foundation for the Development of the Education System
Socrates Agency
Eurydice Unit
Al. Szucha 25
00-918 Warszawa

Romania

Socrates National Agency
Eurydice Unit
1 Schitu M^{ă}gureanu, 2nd Floor
70626 Bucharest

Slovak Republic

Slovak Academic Association for International Co-operation
Eurydice Unit
Staré grunty 52
842 44 Bratislava

Slovenia

Ministry of Education and Sport
Eurydice Unit
Zupanciceva 6
1000 Ljubljana

Naric

Bulgaria

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Ministry of Education and Science
Equivalence and Information Section
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BG- 1000 Sofia
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Fax (359-2) 988 49 74
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Czech Republic

Ms S. Skuhrova
Csvs - Naric
U Luzického seminare 13
CZ - 11 800 Praha 1
Tel. (420-2) 53 23 32
Fax (420-2) 551 945
e-mail: skuhrova@csvs.cz or www.csvs.cz/naric

Estonia

Gunnar Vaht
Academic Recognition Information Centre
Socrates National Agency
Khotu 6
EE - 0100 Tallin
Tel. (372) 6962 415
Fax (372) 6962 426
e-mail: gunnar@enedu.ee
http://www.euedu.ee/socrates/english/naric/index.html

Hungary

Mr Gyula Nagy
Hungarian Naric/Enic
Szalay u. 10/14
H - 1055 Budapest
Tel. (36-1) 269 31 71
Fax (36-1) 332 19 32
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e-mail: birute@skvc.lt
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Poland

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Fax (48-22) 628 85 61
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e-mail: socrates@syfea.ro

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Fax (386-61) 1785 390
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Slovakia

Ms M. Hrabinska
Centre for Equivalence of Diplomas
Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education
Staré Grunty 52
SK - 842 44 Bratislava
Tel. (421-7) 65 42 65 21
Fax (421-7) 65 42 65 21
e-mail: hrabinska@uips.sk

Leonardo da Vinci National Agencies

Bulgaria

Human Resource Development Centre
Ncu the Leonardo da Vinci
15, Graf Ignatiev street, 4th floor
BG-1000 Sofia
Tel. (359-2) 980 85 50 (980 13 16)
Fax (359-2) 980 78 90
e-mail: ncu@mbox.infotel.bg
Mr Tzako Pantaleev

Czech Republic

National Training Fund
National Agency for the Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Václavské námesti 43
CZ-110 00 Praha 1
Tel. (420-2) 242 151 78 or 242 316 87
Fax (420-2) 242 145 33
e-mail: leonardo@nvf.cz
Ms Miroslava Kopicová
Mr Marcin Stryjecki

Estonia

Estonian National Agency for Leonardo da Vinci
Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Reform
Liivalaia 2
EE-10118 Tallin
Tel. (372-6) 103 622
Fax (372-6) 103 624
e-mail: ramia@sekr.ee
Ms Ramia Allev

Hungary

Leonardo da Vinci National Agency
Ida U. 2.
H-1143 Budapest
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Fax (371-7) 22 44 58
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e-mail: leonardo@izm.gov.lv
Ms Dita Traida
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Uwe Lauterbach et al.

Abstract
The paper gives an overview on VET research in a number of non-EU countries. It seeks to identify and to structure research undertaken at national, regional and international levels. However, to present a comprehensive and all-embracing study is almost impossible because of the difficult demarcations of VET research with corresponding research activities, the multi- and interdisciplinary orientation in various countries and the heterogeneity of the institutions, associations and researchers involved. In a first step, based on secondary analyses, the most important institutions, networks and research outcomes in the countries, regions and international organisations covered by this paper are described in different depth. Primary analyses have been carried out for the People's Republic of China, Canada, South America and for the IEA. For the other countries and institutions, work focused on stocktaking of relevant VET research provisions (research results, databases, thematic and other networks, information on classification systems, etc.).

The overview shows that, in general, there is an increasing trend to focus VET research on the interrelationships between economic development, labour market needs and vocational training. Purely school-based vocational training is in decline (e.g. in South America) and one increasingly includes research on labour market needs. Besides this, another general research field is pragmatic or policy-oriented research concerning the evaluation or development of existing or planned system reforms. Main fields are curriculum research, didactics, methodologies and media in training.

Universally, the support of thematic networks and the provision of information (databases, research results, etc.) is of increasing importance. Cooperation and taking on board experiences and suggestions from other countries rank high in the promotion and development of national systems of vocational training. Equally, international organisations (in particular ILO, OECD, Unevoc) are important providers of information, documentation and cooperation.

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Abbreviations

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research, Australia
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ATS	Australien Traineeship System
BBT	Bundesamt für Berufsbildung und Technologie Federal Office for Vocational Education and Technology
CEA	Canadian Educational Association
CECAP	Centro de Capacitación Profesional Centre for Vocational Education
CESE	Comparative Education Society of Europe
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CENEI	Centro Nacional de Educación Técnologia National Centre for Technological Education
CENEP	Centro Nacional de Estudios de Población Formação National Human Development Research Centre
CENID	Centro Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo del Sistema Dual National Centre for the Research and Development of the Dual System
CETP	Consejo de Educación Técnico-Profesional Council for Techno-Vocational Education
CIEP	Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogique Sèvres
CIET	Centro Internacional para la Educación, el Trabajo y la Transferencia de la Técnología International Centre for Education, Labour and the Transfer of Technology
CINTERFOR	Centro Interamericano de Investigación y Documentación sobre Formación Profesional Interamerican Centre for Research and Documentation on Vocational Education
CINTERNET	Red de Información y Gestión sobre Formación Profesional para América Latina y el Caribe Information and Management Network for Vocational Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
CNI	Confederación Nacional de la Industria National Confederation for Industry

BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung Federal Institute for Vocational Education
DACUM	Design or Develop a Curriculum
CONET	Consejo Nacional de Educación Técnica National Technical Education Board
DEETYA	Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DINAE	Dirección Nacional de Empleo National Employment Directorate
DIPF	Deutsche Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung German Institute for International Educational Research
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ILO	International Labor Organization
INES	Indicators of Education Systems
INET	Instituto Nacional de Educación Técnica Institute for Technical Education
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
JUNAE	Junta Nacional de Empleo National Committee for Employment
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur Common Market of the South- Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay
METARGEM	The Research and Development Center of Vocational and Technical Education
NCRVE	National Centre for Research in Vocational Education, USA
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Australia
NTMCR	National Training Markets Research Centre, Australia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OSTA	Occupational Skill and Testing Authority
PTU	Professional-Technical School
SENAC	Serviçio Nacional de Aprendizagem Comerzial National Service for Training in Commerce
SENAI	Serviçio Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial National Service for Training in Industry

SENAR	Serviçio Nacional de Formação Profissional Rural Nationaler Service for Training in Agriculture
SIBP	Schweizerische Institut für Berufspädagogik Swiss Institute for Vocational Education
SKBF	Schweizerische Koordinationsstelle für Bildungsforschung

Swiss Coordinating Unit for Educational Research

SNFMO	Sistema Nacional de Formação de Mão-de-Obra National System for Manpower Training
SSHRC	Social Science and Humanities Research Council
TAFE	Technical and Futher Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC	UNESCO Technical and Vocational Education Projekt
UTU	Universidad del Trabajo del Uruguay

Uruguayian Labour University

VET	Vocational education and training
WCCES	World Council of Comparative Education Societies
ZIBB	Zentralinstitut für Berufsbildung des Erziehungsministeriums Central Institute for Vocational Education (Ministry for Education)

Executive summary

This report attempts to identify and structure the focuses for VET Research in a geographical/political area several times the size of the EU at national (e.g. USA, Japan, China, Russia, Switzerland, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Uruguay, Australia, Turkey, etc.), regional (e.g. MERCOSUR) and international level (scientific societies: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), international organisations: ILO, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank). It is an exercise reminiscent of trying to square a circle, on account of:

- the virtual impossibility of delimitation of corresponding research activities;
- the multi- and inter-disciplinary set-up;
- the fact that research is conducted by institutions permanently supported by the state or public bodies, by international organisations and societies and by independent researchers.

Thus in an initial drive to establish some lines of demarcation an attempt was made to identify important institutions, networks and research results. For the countries, regions and international organisations listed above, this was done at various levels. For the People's Republic of China and Canada, as well as for South America and the IEA, primary analyses were conducted. For the remaining countries and institutions, the inventory of useable resources for VET Research (research results, data bases, thematic and other networks, information on classification systems, etc.) was the main source.

Was it possible to identify any global priorities? Generally speaking, research appears to be concentrating more heavily on the interdependencies between economic development, the needs of the labour market and vocational education. Purely academic vocational education came in for criticism (cf. example of South America), and hopes are being placed in the results of research oriented towards the needs of the labour market. Besides this priority, which is based more on a change of paradigm, the focus of national or regional activities is obviously 'pragmatic', policy-oriented research related to the assessment or development of available or planned national system structures. Curriculum research as well as teaching, methodology and media were all priorities. Thematic networks are commonly promoted and a wide range of information (databases, research results, etc.) provided. Co-operation and the possibility of drawing on other people's experience are very valuable resources when it comes to promoting and developing ones own national vocational education system. Even the international organisations (particularly the ILO, OECD and UNEVOC) depend on information, documentation and co-operation.

Since the EC area is tied in with the globalisation of this worldwide development, and comparative VET research has always provided for global dialogue alongside national or regional systems development, there is also a need for the EU to act. The experiences of comparative systems outside the EU should be tapped in order to prompt the further development of the highly diverse national VET systems which exist within Member States. Moreover, classification systems (ILO, OECD) and achievement assessment concepts (OECD) indirectly exercise a standardising effect on national VET systems. The involvement of supra-national bodies such as the EU – despite the fact that the individual EU Member States also belong to the ILO and the OECD – is therefore of the essence. Given the importance of global dialogue and the worldwide exchange of experience on VET-research, the EU should more actively embrace activities in this field.

Possible flanking measures could include:

- Studying the national research activities of the 'other countries' and the results of meetings of international scientific societies as well as what is provided by the international organisations, using policy-oriented state of the art analyses of more broad-ranging reports;
- Promoting dialogue between vocational education researchers in EU countries and

the countries, regional bodies, international scientific societies and international organisations covered by this report, through exchange programmes;

- Promoting the setting-up and running of thematic networks and information systems;

- Promoting dialogue and transfer between politics, EU institutions and the scientific community through meetings on specific topics.

1. Introduction and returns, by Uwe Lauterbach

1.1 Areas of investigation and problems with delimitation

In the 1st Report on Vocational Training Research in Europe (Tessaring 1998), the section on the Theory and Methodology of International Comparisons explained how VET research is tied in with many different disciplines. Only a generally accepted definition of vocational training research/ VET research can clarify the scale and depth of this field of research.

It deals with the aspects of the education and vocational training system, which are either directly or indirectly related to professions, to gaining qualifications, and to (professional) activities. It also studies the conditions, pathways and consequences of acquiring these specialised and extra-functional qualifications within the context of the cultural, social, political, historical and economic framework conditions, e.g. personal and social attitudes and leanings, which would appear to be important for training and further training and for performing (professionally) organised work processes. Vocational training systems (formal, non-formal, informal) should thereby be regarded as part of the overall education system.

The size of the research field is also demonstrated in the 1st report and the two volumes of the Background report 1998 (Cedefop 1998). The role of this contribution cannot therefore be to carry out a broad-ranging assessment of all the results of VET research worldwide – with the exception of the EU and the Central, Eastern and Southern European Countries (cf. the contribution of O. Ilina, in this volume). The point is more to focus on and tackle the following questions:

1. Is there a particular focus known as VET research in the national research landscape, and if so, where does it lie?

2. Which scientific institutes and university departments carry out VET research?

3. Are there any (scientific, application-oriented, etc) associations/societies/networks, which are primarily involved in VET research (including statistics)?

4. What are the most important results of research, and what do they concentrate on: systems research (e.g. steering, quality research, evaluation of attempts at reform, financing), labour market research (e.g. qualifications research, unemployment and labour management measures), curriculum research (key qualifications)?

5. What are the most important publications (monographs, statistics)?

Simply dealing with these questions alone would entail a research programme spanning several person-years. This bold-looking statement can be easily confirmed using a couple of examples. In the USA there is no one single national society for vocational training research. Interesting research projects are carried out by sociologists, educationalists, economists, and psychologists, to name but a few. In order to get the overall picture, virtually the whole of the research landscape would have to be scanned. Thought would have to be given to which projects actually focus on vocational education, and which lie more within general education, particularly bearing in mind that vocational education can differ very widely according to the cultural context. One example of this would be how in English, French and Spanish speaking countries vocational education distinguishes between actual vocational and technical educa-

tion, and the problems of translating from one language to another.

The term *'Technisch-berufliche Bildung'* is rendered in English by drawing a distinction between *technical education* and *vocational education.* 'Technical education' refers to areas of training which have traditionally been more theory-based, such as laboratory technicians, technicians, accountants and managers, in other words not only to the technical education which would relate to engineering in a German speaker's mind. 'Vocational education' is separate from technical education, with the former relating to more manual, 'simple' activities. To a certain extent UNESCO also uses these definitions, for example.

Within the European Union a further distinction is drawn between vocational education (school-based) and vocational training (company-based), abbreviated as VET. There is no term to put across the idea conveyed by the German *berufliche Bildung* which covers the concept of vocational 'learning'. This term, which is based on a theory of vocational learning, covers both basic and further vocational learning in all areas. It also embodies the idea that general and vocational training should be of equal value. (Beck 1995, p.457-464)

This example alone exemplifies the multi-faceted nature of the dilemma. The reason for this lies in the fact that the subject of vocational education is not clearly defined. In many areas there is no point in distinguishing between VET research and educational research. When priorities are established, the delimitations must be thoroughly justified. This integral approach has been achieved in Switzerland. The Swiss Co-ordinating Centre for Educational Research includes vocational education as a heading in its index, and around 5% of projects are identified as VET research. Had other selection criteria been applied, however, the figure could well have been 20 or 30%. But the multi-faceted delimitation dilemma relates not only to the discussion as to whether VET research is a component of educational research, or whether research into vocational education also has much in common with other areas of research such as educational economics, and cultural research. The example of comparative cultural research shows quite clearly which other fields of research could usefully be looked into in relation to questions of comparative VET research (see also D'Iribarne 1999).

But it is not only these difficulties which have to be weighed up. The difficulty posed by the different levels to which vocational education has developed in the countries under investigation also comes into play. Whilst in the USA, Japan, Canada, Russia and Switzerland vocational education in the broadest sense of the term has long been the subject of research, the same cannot be said of Australia, Turkey, or the Latin American countries. Here vocational education is an important factor in the development of the national economy. The same is also true in the People's Republic of China, although, on account of the political framework conditions, it has proved virtually impossible to date to collect and analyse information on VET research.

In the case of international organisations there are at least two types:

a) Those which represent national state roles and bodies, and define political aims as an organisation, such as UNESCO (UNEVOC), the World Bank Group, the OECD, and the ILO.

b) The global scientific societies which also deal with questions of VET research, such as the Comparative Education Society in Europe, the World Councils of Comparative Education, or the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

The aim of these analyses of the national and international fields should be to pick out worldwide trends and the results of research on commonly recurring priority areas, and at the same time to analyse the shortcomings. There are several aspects to such an analysis of shortcomings:

1. When we made an offer in response to the call for tender we presumed ('we' being the working party on international vocational

education from the German Institute for International Educational Research) that our main method of investigation would consist of secondary analyses. Once work had begun, however, we quickly realised that although this assumption was correct in the case of individual institutions, analyses of countries and regions, as well as of international organisations would all have to be carried out using primary sources.

2. As mentioned in the introduction, VET research must first and foremost be defined within the context of the country in question. The essential role here is played by linguistic and cultural framework conditions. The link between national VET research, the respective concept of vocational education and the latter's degree of development has to be brought out in relation to each subject of study.

3. The definition has to be established in relation to the individual countries. The respective essential characteristics of the vocational education system play a leading role therein. In some countries – such as the USA – federal/national, regional and local activities run alongside the research interests of 'independent' researchers from a multitude of disciplines. The term 'structured chaos' is doubtless somewhat exaggerated, but it is a situation which is nonetheless confirmed by researchers with the appropriate experience. Which is why an answer has always to be given to the question as to whether there is any 'national VET research', or whether 'external' research interests transform it from fiction into fact?

4. Although providing the results of research leads to the effect just described in countries which have a democratic research tradition and a corresponding infrastructure for means of communication – such as the USA – the same does not hold for countries which on the one hand cannot provide the necessary technical facilities, and on the other cannot tap into either the experience or the mindset which can be described as the 'democratic Western research tradition'- e.g. China.

5. Snapshots of the state of research are useful, but mean very little in the absence of a 'development-related' dimension which can help to place current results within the correct context and perspective.

6. In the past, international scientific societies played an important role in the development of comparative educational research, thus providing an impetus for the development of VET research and comparative VET research. International comparisons of achievement and the international classification system date back to initiatives taken as of the late fifties by independent researchers within the scientific societies. For well-known reasons, e.g. multi- and inter-disciplinarity, the fact that it was based in different disciplines, the problem of delimiting research fields, comparative VET research has not thus far been able to establish itself as a scientific discipline. Even representatives of comparative education and independent scientific societies lagged behind when compared with international organisations. It is now the international organisations which – largely for economic reasons – hold pole position, particularly those which play a leading role both in politics but even more specifically in economic policy matters.

These comments alone, which crystallised out in the course of work on the main hypotheses in this research study, and which could easily be added to by a series of other aspects, indicate the difficulties involved in tackling the questions worked out with CEDEFOP. As a consequence of these working results the scope of the subjects to be studied and the general depth of the study were amended:

- Efforts at primary analysis were limited to a handful of countries alone, with pragmatic and fundamentally system-related aspects complementing each other in the selection process. Developing and threshold countries (South America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay) and industrialised countries (Australia, Canada, Russia) were studied in more detail. Other industrialised nations such as the USA and Switzerland on the other hand could only

be touched upon. Due to the limited time and working capacities available, African countries could not be included in this contribution.[1]

- In an initial round the international organisations were sounded out to see whether VET research was relevant to their work. The results were complemented by a description of the emphasis each organisation placed on VET research. It was not possible within the framework of this project to assess and weigh up the results.

- In the post-war period the independent scientific societies played a leading role as a driving force in the development of comparative educational research. A series of results would seem to indicate, however, that their position has since become much weaker. In order to check out this assessment, reference was made to the international organisations which dominate today, such as the OECD.

- The VET research theme draws no distinction between VET research and comparative VET research. We only indirectly made this distinction in our study. In the country analyses it is VET research which predominates. However, comparative VET research is of more importance for the independent international scientific societies and the international organisations.

1.2 Results of the investigation

The results of the investigation relate to questions (1) to (6) and to the analysis of shortcomings (1) to (6). The amendments explained above and the limitation of the questions which arose as general matters in the course of the study led to attention being focused on the four areas described below.

[1] Information on these and other countries not dealt with in this contribution are found in diverse publications and statistics of international organisations and associations (see below).

1.2.1 Links between national VET research, the respective vocational education concept and the level of development of vocational education

The focus of interest in VET research is vocational education. Vocational education became a point of general interest in the industrial society. The link between encouraging the working population to gain qualifications and economic development is self-evident. That apart, politics looked and continues to look out for vocational education because its further development or specific measures taken in the area of vocational education can help to break down or at least ease tensions on the labour market. By way of an example, CINTERFOR was founded because the South American states involved promised thereby to assist in 'generally raising the level of vocational training, in order to improve the living conditions of workers, and the qualitative and quantitative running of firms' (see Section 2.7 of this contribution).

VET research is thus very closely related to the present and to what happens in practice, and therefore tied in with the broader contexts of vocational education and everyday politics – particularly educational and economic policy. Reference should not be made here to the 'classical' example of Germany – this correlation is also clear in the countries and regions studied. That is why in Australia a *National Centre for Vocational Education Research*, the NCVER, was set up in 1980. The Montevideo based *Centro Interamericano de Investigación y Documentación sobre Formación Profesional*, or CINTERFOR, which is responsible for South America (founded 1960) the METARGEM in Ankara, Turkey, or the *National Centre for Research in Vocational Education* in Berkley/USA also came into being within this context. The most recent example is the *Central Institute for Vocational Education* in the Chinese Education Ministry, which was set up in 1990.

This correlation between the activities of vocational education policy, the development of vocational education and the founding of central national or regional research institutes also extends to research subjects.

Main research subjects in relation to national or regional research institutes in selected countries

Theme	Australia	PR China	Japan	Canada	Russia	Latin America	USA
Systems development		xx		xx	xx	xx	
Labour market research		x	x	x		x	
Curriculum research	xx	xx		x	x	xx	xx
Teaching, methodology, media	xx	xx		xx	x	x	xx
Management, organisational development		x	x		x	x	x
Statistics	xx						
Networks	xx	x		xx	x	xx	xx
Databases	x	x	x			x	x
Information	xx	x	x			xx	xx

These are shaped by the respective political framework conditions and system development. In Japan and the USA 'national vocational education policy' enjoys relatively little room for manoeuvre. It acts within the parameters stipulated by the system. In the case of Japan what this means is that even the research bodies in the Education and Labour Ministries must carry out their duties within the framework of the existing vocational education system. In the USA the NCRVE has to concentrate on assessing the federal programmes and on providing advice, in line with the system. Even in Australia the thrust of the system is dictated by politics. Within the framework of these handicaps the NCVER and other research institutes carry out specific tasks of research and documentation, which assist in shaping the system.

On the other hand, research activities in the People's Republic of China, as in Canada, Russia and Latin America, have taken on systems development as one of their subjects. This is also influenced by prevailing conditions, such as the switch from developing to industrialised country, reforms in vocational education, country in the process of transformation, a relatively unstable and minimally developed system of vocational education, etc.

Independent of how the system is composed, research commonly focused in all of the countries under consideration on curriculum research, teaching, methodology, and media. Apart from actual research work, documentation, networking and information are also important tasks.

1.2.2 International organisations and vocational education or the education concept versus the economic concept?

Previous analysis could give the impression that VET research is shaped nationally, and that it is therefore the political framework conditions, which also determine the reality of the vocational education 'system', which are responsible for the focus of research activities. In relation to the current situation this view is certainly correct. In relation to future developments, however, it might be questioned on a number of fronts.

The developments which remain to be verified for vocational education can briefly be sketched out using the example of comparative education. Here co-operation began between the scientific communities of large industrialised nations, and later on academic or scientific societies and international organi-

sations were founded. Important research priorities included, for example, the comparisons of achievement (IEA) and the development of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

These independent researchers have since lost their dominant influence. International organisations now predominate, and within this circle those organisations having a sound financial basis can take over many of the roles (see above) which 30 years ago still numbered amongst the original developments of the scientific community.

The OECD has since been working hard to develop the ISCED classifications further. Even the comparisons of achievement which were originally carried out by the IEA have now been take over by the OECD, and educational statistics in Member States and other interesting countries are collated by the OECD at a differentiated level. This information is then used in the OECD's popular publication *Education at a Glance.* The specialised public enjoys referring to this handy indicator system. The problems attaching to the classification of areas and levels of national education and vocational education systems in international comparisons are not unknown. We are referring here to the different assessments made of classification and participation rates for vocational education in industrialised nations. Different national set-ups and system philosophies for vocational education are mentioned as essential reasons for this. Indicator systems – as for example in today's OECD format – should therefore be used only with the necessary critical distance. A broad knowledge of the system is required for interpretation. Here it should be noted that major progress has been made in indicator-related work towards placing data within the context of the respective education and vocational training system. This can be seen, for example, by comparing the 1992 and 1998 editions on vocational education. The most highly criticised approaches (OECD 1992 and 1998) from the past have now been dropped. A differentiated system of indicators with a series of comments attached has taken over from the rather cut and dried classification. Differing interpretations of the various classifications also crop up, but on a basis which presupposes more in-depth knowledge of the respective national systems. In continuation of this argument, the only question which remains to be asked is, actual experts apart, who else is still in a position to correctly digest these commendable publications?

A shift of emphasis seems to be taking place within the international organisations which is also affecting VET research. Until the seventies it was UNESCO – supported by the scientific community – which set the pace, but the ILO, the World Bank group, and the OECD have since taken over the running. Apart from the OECD's activities (see above) the ILO is also running a series of highly promising research projects, e.g. *Evaluation of Training* and *Training Policy Analysis.* For its part, through the UNEVOC, UNESCO is also beefing up its activities in support of VET research.

This range of research activities would seem to allay the fears (von Recum 1997) which are constantly being expressed in research that, as a result of the economic globalisation of trade, production, services and information flows, those who support the theory that because of this globalisation the world should be seen as a company, and that things political will gradually be swallowed up by the functionality of things economic, will see their influence on VET research grow.

1.2.3 Are there any world-wide priorities in VET research?

Identifying world-wide priorities in VET research requires a knowledge of current activities. In this report we looked at various different levels in order to answer this question:

- nation states;
- supra-national and international organisations;
- international scientific societies.

For the reasons mentioned in section 1.1, we limited ourselves to certain countries and, wherever possible, to the central research

bodies. International organisations were also one of our points of focus. It is almost impossible to say anything in respect of international scientific societies because VET research as a cross-sectional science exists to date in only a handful of countries as a scientific and academic discipline, and the results of academic VET research have next to no influence on international discussions. For the nation states and international organisations, on the other hand, different priorities and results can be identified in terms of the tasks to be carried out.

As has already been stated, national VET research, particularly in the central institutes, is directly tied in with systems development and national vocational education policy. It was not possible within the framework of this first study to work on the priorities established for the individual countries – curriculum research as well as teaching, methodology and media – and pick out recurring themes such as module based training, or self-guided learning. In general terms, however, research seems to be targeting more heavily the interdependencies between economic development, the needs of the labour market, and vocational education. Purely school-based vocational education came in for criticism (cf. South American example). Alongside the priorities which are geared to a change of paradigm 'pragmatic' research related to the assessment or development of existing structures clearly represents the main focus of activities.

These research priorities are constantly related to the national level and international organisations, with the addition of information, documentation and networks. It is a focus which occurs particularly in the international organisations. Statistics, classification systems and databases then provide more specific references.

1.2.4 The outcome of VET research (transfer function)

The transfer of national research results into political everyday reality would appear to have been catered for already simply by the setting up of national research institutes and/or the networks created as a consequence. Whether or not vocational education policy actually uses the results of VET research, which tends to be publicly financed, is something which cannot be answered in the framework of this study. It would seem, however, that this dialogue does exist in Australia, the People's Republic of China, Canada, the MERCOSUR area, Russia and the USA.

The question has to be couched in wider terms when applied to international development and the international organisations. Brian Holmes (1974, p.115-132) summed up the situation in respect of the interest in and important practical research aims of *comparative education* (a-d), which are directly transferable to comparative VET research. These four priority areas represent the summary of many years' experience in the area of transfer between policy and research, in particular through practice-related research and policy recommendations.

a) Using the aims, experience, and experiments of other states;

It is impossible to say here whether or not national policy applies the meliorist principle and draws on 'positive' examples from other countries in order to shape national vocational education policy. In the case of the People's Republic of China, which is involved in the framework of co-operation on vocational training with several industrialised nations, the answer is yes. Similar examples of co-operation are also to be seen in the MERCOSUR area.

b) Overcoming the vestiges of ethnocentrism in education questions;

There was little evidence in our study of the attitude according to which ones own national education system is the 'best', and offering it as a 'prime export'. Ever-increasing knowledge about 'other' systems, worldwide co-operation, the international organisations' information systems and international networks are helping to break down ethnocentric stances. On the other hand, international comparisons of achievement (formerly IEA, now OECD) could play a role in reviving

focus (b), since there is a tendency towards (a) or (b) when the results of international comparisons of achievement (TIMSS, PISA) are used, depending on the results in question.

c) Similar problems in different countries;

Unemployment, including unemployment among young people, school-to-work transition, and the answers provided by vocational education consistently crop up as research subjects in the different countries. The link between technological development, globalisation and staff qualification is almost as common. It is not only through the international organisations and the classification systems which they have developed that equivalence in mutual recognition of diplomas is coming ever more to the fore, but also through common markets (e.g. MERCOSUR). The international organisations bring together some of these themes (databases, thematic networks etc.) and thereby also parcel them up ready for policy-makers and educational management. On the other hand, research activities also emerge from the work programmes of national institutes and international organisations. Politics obviously has the upper hand in determining the topics examined.

d) Contribution to the theoretical understanding of training and education and their planned development;

At national level it is pragmatic research rather than theoretical developments and contributions towards future development which tend to dominate. International organisations go someway towards counter-balancing this state of affairs, since classification and indicator systems as well as assessment exercises require a theoretical basis. The ILO and OECD provide plenty of background information (ILO e.g.: Training Policy Reforms, Training Policies and Systems, Evaluation of Training; OECD e.g.: ISCED). Indications concerning possible developments are also raised for discussion within the context of work on education indicators (Education at a Glance). Policy-makers are more interested in the latter.

This section dealt with various aspects involved in the transfer between politics and VET research (thematic focuses of research) and the transfer of results to policies, in full knowledge of the fact that this is an on-going, reciprocal process if channels of communication are open. It was only possible to provide a provisional answer in the framework of this study, by looking at whether networks, advisory bodies etc. which can provide organisational support for transfer, exist within the national research institutes and international organisations.

1.3 Outlook as an analysis of shortcomings and as a proposal for further research

This study presents the initial results of VET research in other European and non- European countries. The aim was to identify national and international institutions and societies and research themes. In making this choice we were taking on a task which was difficult in many respects:

a) Delimitation of research

VET research has to be defined differently and distinguished from other research areas such as educational economics or general research in education, depending on the cultural and systemic context. These problems of delimitation also arise when further distinctions such as research into teaching and learning, assessment research or curriculum research are made. There is also the question of the multi disciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of VET-focused research.

b) Researchers and institutions

Just as it is virtually impossible to define VET research, it is also difficult to identify researchers and institutions. A distinction also has to be drawn between research which is publicly supported and defined, and independent research.

c) The geographical and political area

The third level relates to the link with geography and policy. Besides fields of research

defined by national borders there are also regional bodies and worldwide organisations.

Given this three-way challenge in identifying VET research, the first step was to:

a) Identify the central research bodies at national level.

b) Identify the important regional and world institutions which also carry out VET research.

c) Carry out primary analyses for selected institutions as well as geographical and political areas (South America, Canada, China).

d) Draw on results for other important countries (USA, Russia, Australia, Switzerland, Turkey, Japan) produced by other research projects carried out by the DIPF and cooperating institutes.

e) Tap into and document the activities of international institutions (ILO, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank group) using Internet research and experts in the DIPF.

f) Have the development of the IEA described by 'independent' international scientific associations.

What then had to be done in the second and subsequent stages was:

a) To continue the primary analyses for more countries (USA, Russia, Japan, Switzerland, Turkey, Australia, Taiwan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico) with reference to the central research institutes;

b) To carry out a more detailed study of independent research in selected countries (USA, Australia, Switzerland, Japan);

c) To look at whether or not exchange programmes for researchers exist;

d) To take a closer look at the international scientific associations (e.g. World Council) and independent research establishments;

e) To document in detail the activities of the international organisations (ILO, OECD, etc.) – in depth in respect of certain selected themes (e.g. classification systems) – and to carry out primary analyses;

f) To study existing networks, documentation centres, databases etc. in terms of their input to VET research and to create links with CEDEFOP's 'training village' *(www.trainingvillage.gr)*.

g) To document the research results in terms of where the emphases lie, and to bring out their relation to vocational training policy (transfer).

2. Countries

The addresses of the institutions can be found in the Annex.

2.1 Australia, by Uwe Lauterbach and Ute Lanzendorf*

2.1.1 Introduction to the education and vocational training system

Australia is a federal state in which powers are shared between the central or Commonwealth government and the eight States and Territories. Under the 1901 constitution, the responsibility for education falls largely to the State and Territory governments but with significant funding and policy guidance from the Commonwealth.

The federal Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs ensures national consistency in policy terms and funds national programs in the education system. Since the 1960s, universities have been completely funded by the Commonwealth and are part of a unified national system for higher education. However, schools and vocational education and training (VET) are controlled by the States and Territories. The VET system in each state is based on the publicly funded Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges and, increasingly, a range of private training providers. About 80 % of vocational education and training is delivered through the public system. At the national level the funding and development of VET is co-

* We acknowledge the verification and substantial revision of the original text by A. Smith (NCVER).

ordinated by a joint federal-state body, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

Since the early 1990s the Australian VET system has undergone a significant process of reform driven by Australian governments' desire to create a more unified national system for vocational education. This process has involved the implementation of competency-based training for VET programs, the creation of a national system of vocational qualifications (the Australian Qualifications Framework), measures to open up the training market to private providers and the introduction of New Apprenticeships to provide structured entry-level training in industries that have traditionally not operated within the apprenticeship system. During this period, the VET system has expanded considerably with enrolments in VET climbing from 1 million in 1992 to over 1.6 million (12 % of the Australian population) in 1999.

2.1.2 Research in Vocational Education and Training

The reforms to the VET system have been accompanied by a significant expansion of research in vocational education and training in Australia. Prior to this period, the volume of research in the training and development field was low and projects fragmented. Few statistics were collected and there was no basis on which to judge the relative performance of the Australian public training system and Australian organisations in their provision of training. This situation has changed sharply with both Commonwealth and State governments increasing their expenditure on VET research dramatically.

Although the State Training Authorities commission research to underpin their policy development in vocational education, the main source of research funding is the Commonwealth government. Much of this expenditure is managed by the Australian National Training Authority. ANTA funds the collection of a wide variety of statistics on VET and funds a large number of research projects and research centres. Much of this work is managed by the principal Australian training research body, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) based in Adelaide.

The NCVER was established in 1981. Funded by governments but operating as an independent company, NCVER collects and publishes a wide variety of statistical information on the Australian VET system.** NCVER also conducts research projects in vocational education and funds a large national program of VET research carried out by other research organisations in the country. In order to guide the national research program, NCVER has produced a National VET Research Strategy in conjunction with the users of VET research (primarily federal and state training authorities) and the training research community. The first research strategy was published in 1997 and covers the period 1997-2000. The first strategy identified six broad areas for training research. These include:

1. economic and social implications of VET;
2. employment and the workforce;
3. pathways from school to work;
4. outcomes of the VET sector;
5. the quality of the provision of VET.

ANTA also funds four national Key Research Centres in VET directly. These centres are the Research Centre in Vocational Education and Training at the University of Technology in Sydney (focused on vocational learning), the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training jointly sponsored by Monash University and the Australian Council for Education Research (focused on the economics of VET), the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia at the University of Tasmania (focused on rural/regional VET issues) and the Centre for Post-compulsory education and training at Melbourne University and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (focused on the economic and cultural

** More information: www.ncver.edu.au. NCVER has also established an international database VOCED to find the latest technical and VET research information: www.ncver.edu.au/voced.htm.

benefits of VET). These centres represent an attempt to build up a critical mass of researchers in the key areas of VET policy making. Apart from the three national Key Research Centres, there are also a number of smaller training research centres and groups that have emerged in recent years in response to the increase in training research funding since 1990. These centres include the Group for Research in Employment and Training at Charles Sturt University, the Centre for Research in Equity, Education and Work at the University of South Australia and the Centre for Learning and Work Research at Griffith University.

2.1.3 Future issues affecting the VET sector.

The explosion in training research in Australia since 1990 is closely linked to the training reforms that have taken place during that period. State and federal governments in Australia are as keen to pursue the goal of lowering unacceptably high levels of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, as governments in all the developed nations. Training is viewed by both sides of politics as an acceptable supply side solution to these problems in the absence of a consensus on more direct means of stimulating the economy. Research provides a tool for evaluating the impact of policy and devising further reforms to the system.

2.2 People's Republic of China, by Josef Rützel and Stefan Ziehm

2.2.1 Introduction to the Chinese education and vocational education system

Since the early eighties the political leadership in the People's Republic of China has carried out comprehensive reforms. The transition from a centrally managed economy to a 'socialist market economy' has brought about change in virtually all the socially relevant areas. More attention is being paid to the (vocational) education system in particular. The 1986 Compulsory Schooling Act provided for nine years of compulsory schooling in the People's Republic of China. The Act aims to ensure nationwide, uniform, free school education and raise the general level of education. Educational development hinges on the compulsory 6+3+3 school system (primary, secondary I and II), although there are obvious regional differences between the eastern provinces and those in the north and west. There are major problems in implementing this compulsory schooling in the poorer provinces because of the lack of resources.

The vocational education system is also facing completely new challenges. Although there is no general compulsion to undergo vocational education, the government is clearly striving to upgrade it. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), general education was expounded as being the best vocational qualification, many vocational schools were shut down, and thus there was virtually no systematic provision of vocational education. A whole generation was therefore deprived of adequate formal vocational qualifications. The only qualifying provision of a practical nature was a form of apprenticeship. In the informal sector in particular the handing down of knowledge acquired through experience continues to play an important role even today. Small workshops and traders employ 'apprentices' who are instructed by experienced workers rather than undergoing any structured form of training.

Since the early eighties high priority has been given to extending and improving the quality of vocational education. The reforms and restructuring affect the vocational education system as a whole, including types of training preparing for a specific profession, those providing vocational qualifications, higher vocational education and further vocational education. The institutions within the vocational education system, the curricula, teaching and learning methods, responsibilities, funding, and the legal bases are all undergoing a shake-up. It should be noted that the efforts to reform the vocational education system have obviously led to improvements, although there are still marked differences in the provinces. Socially speaking, an academic education is still the 'one best way'. Only when

this is not possible because of restrictive selection procedures in the schools of further education and universities is a vocational training sought.

Basic vocational education takes place at secondary I level in the vocational secondary schools (lower grade). At secondary II level vocational education is provided by the technical secondary schools, schools for skilled workers and vocational secondary schools (upper grade).

- The technical secondary schools are full-time and accept secondary school leavers. Training lasts between three and four years. In terms of content it is theoretical rather than practical subjects which dominate, so that when they come out of this type of school students temporarily find it hard to find a suitable job on the labour market because their training was so far removed from practice.

- The schools for skilled workers train medium-skilled workers, although they vary widely at regional, sectoral and branch level because of differences in resources, non-standardised qualification of trainers, and the absence of standards. Training lasts three years and is split up into theoretical and practical modules. In most cases the skilled workers' schools are funded by businesses and enterprises.

- The vocational secondary schools (upper grade) were only reconstructed during the period of reform (from 1981). They tend to be full-time. Admission depends on passing an entrance exam and having completed upper school education as a minimum. In general training lasts 3 years, although there are also shorter courses lasting 1-2 years. Vocational practice is not a requirement.

Besides these possibilities for gaining a qualification, a basic qualification was introduced in the form of minimum training. Short courses are intended to provide a minimum level of basic vocational education for all workers, including those who are already in active working life.

2.2.2 VET research

In the People's Republic of China – as in other countries – VET research goes hand in hand with economic, industrial and social development. Chinese vocational education experts date the start of VET research as identical with the creation of the industrial schools in the late 19th /early 20th Century. The upturn in industry sparked a need for qualified workers who had acquired some sort of organised vocational qualification. This need for vocational education led to a need for VET research. In 1916 Yanpei Huang founded the first research institute for vocational education within Jiangsu Province's education committee. In May 1917, along with another 40 well-known scientists, he founded the Chinese Association for Vocational Education. Its aim was to develop the personality through vocational education, to prepare for employment, increase productivity through vocational education and to popularise vocational education. This association was the first ever non-state vocational education research organisation and is still influential today. Its activities led to general and technical training being separated at secondary school upper grade, and to the introduction of systematic forms of school-based vocational education. More importantly, however, the association established the theoretical basis, key ideas and principles for vocational education and carried out research into subject classification, teaching programmes, text books, practical teaching and teacher training. From 1949 to the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, VET research supported in particular the development of the technical secondary schools and the skilled workers schools.

The reform of vocational education which was carried out in the late 70s sparked a major increase in the demand for VET research. From Xianxin Tang's report – which provides the essence of the overview of the VET research situation – it can be seen that VET research is intended to work out the scientific bases for macro-steering and needs planning, concept development, reform strategies and measures. Post 1978, special research institutes for vocational education were set up to meet the need for research. Previously,

research into vocational education policy, the vocational education system, as well as the teaching and provision of vocational education, lay in the hands of the competent commissions, ministries and departments, vocational schools and teachers. Nowadays there are independent research institutes at state level, in the provinces, towns and autonomous areas as well as in the technical colleges, colleges and universities. Vocational education is becoming a discipline in its own right within the field of educational science. The 6th five-year plan only mentioned one vocational education project, but by the 7th the figure had already risen to 11. The figure continued to rise, reaching 42 by the 9th five-year plan. Half of these projects are based in the education ministry.

Some of the most important research institutions at state level are the Ministry of Education's *Central Institute for Vocational Training* (CIVT), the *Occupational Skill and Testing Authority* (OSTA), which comes under the Ministry for Labour, various vocational education societies and associations, as well as research bodies in branch ministries and commissions. The CIVT, which was set up in 1990, is a national research institute whose research centres on services with a view to the reform and further development of vocational education. The focus lies with applied research in vocational education policy, financing, job classification, teaching/learning research, media development and teacher training. The CIVT is also responsible for documentation, information and transfer of knowledge. Like the regional institutes (RIVTs) in Liaoning and Shanghai which will be mentioned later, the CIVT is also a project in development co-operation with the People's Republic of China. Nothing more will be said about this here. The most important research work of the OSTA, which is also application oriented, is the development of occupational, qualification and testing standards and qualification of the specialised personnel required.

Some of the national societies and associations for vocational training are:

- The *Chinese Association for Vocational Education,* founded in 1917, which has already been mentioned, and to which many professional and part-time researchers belong. Apart from promoting vocational education and VET research it also carries out research projects for the state.

- The *Society for Vocational Education* which was founded in 1990. This is a national, public organisation for scientific research, run by the Ministry of Education. Alongside its advisory role and the job of diffusing information, the main responsibility of the society is to carry out scientific research into vocational education, which is done by 10 specialist commissions with only 73 members. The nature of the commissions – e.g. commissions for technical secondary schools, for vocational education in cities, for nationality training, for scientific research – gives some indication of what research actually means, the thrust of research questions and indirectly also the working methods. Apart from the Commission for Scientific Research all the commissions are formed with clear-cut tasks related to individual elements or types of school in the vocational education system, regional or sectoral aspects or specific target groups. This in turn makes the research questions very specific, and they tend primarily also to aim at achieving political objectives.

- The *Chinese Association of Regional Institutes at Provincial Level.* All the provincial regional institutes belong to it. It was founded in 1997 and primarily coordinates, orchestrates and defines supra-regional and regional VET research involving the CIVT. The fields of research and issues examined cover the whole spectrum of vocational education, according to the role of the respective regional institutes.

- The *Association of Research Institutions for Vocational Education* which came into being in 1982 has brought together researchers and vocational trainers from the large and medium-sized cities. Its main task lies in the theory and practice of providing vocational education and its methods. Its work concentrates on solving specific problems of teaching the individual subjects,

e.g. electronics, machine engineering, computing, beauty and hairdressing.

At present most of the branch ministries and commissions still have their own vocational education research bodies. Following the reorganisation of the ministries and commissions and the principle of 'one task, one responsibility', it is likely that their structure will also change. Examples of these research bodies are the *National Association for Research into Agricultural Vocational Education,* the *Research Association for Technical Secondary School Training in Transport*, the *Research Department for Technical Secondary School Training in Metal-working*, or the *Research Centre for Vocational Education* in the Ministry for the Energy Industry. These bodies are supported and run by the branch ministries. They differ in terms of their type of organisation and tend to deal with highly specific question areas. Some of them are attached to technical secondary schools or specialised schools as research departments. They are largely responsible for supporting reforms and solving problems in practice.

At provincial level, vocational education research institutes have progressively been set up since 1985. There are at present 23 regional institutes at provincial level which employ around 400 researchers. The majority of these research bodies come directly under the education commissions of the provinces or cities. They are responsible for carrying out applied research, and providing advice and services to support regionally adapted reform. This includes research into vocational education development strategies, organisation of the vocational education system, financing, legislation, curricular development, teaching/learning processes, organisational development and teacher training.

Apart from the regional institutes for vocational education, institutes or departments for vocational education have also been set up within the provincial institutes for educational science. These institutes focus mainly on scientific research. Then there is also a third type of newly established vocational education (research) institute at provincial level within the colleges and universities. These deal essentially with teacher training, research into teaching/learning processes and studying the principles of vocational training.

At first sight this overview of the research bodies and their roles reveals a broadly institutionalised and established vocational education landscape which varies in terms of its content. It should be noted, however, that there are only a relatively limited number of people working in the institutions. Although noticeable progress has been made in development and expansion, even Chinese experts feel that staff resources are far from sufficient when compared with the quantitative and qualitative requirements of vocational education. On the other hand, however, great store is laid by VET researchers' qualifications, since many of them hold high level diplomas. It is similarly felt that the theoretical principles and research methods are not broad or deep enough yet either. A distinction is drawn between basic and applied research. However, as yet there are no systematically established theories of vocational education. Theoretical education tends to take a rather philosophical stance, and only gradually is a social science oriented type of VET research starting to emerge. There has been a considerable increase in the number of publications on basic research which cover a broad spectrum of subjects, and they tend to resemble standard reference works. Theoretical reflections and theory-shaping aspects are rare. Moreover, the links between research into principles and the shaping of theory and applied research is a somewhat hit-and-miss affair.

Applied research is the most highly valued. Virtually all the institutions mentioned carry out applied research only. Even within the academies and university institutes applied research takes place alongside basic research. In his report Tang mentions four priority areas in applied VET research:

- *Vocational education and social and economic development.* This includes research into the strategic importance of vocational education in the development of China, the regions, macro planning, systems development, standardisation and the funding

structure, as well as legislation governing vocational education and the financing of vocational education.

- *Curriculum development and teaching processes.* Research work is conducted concerning pupils' moral education, educational aims and models, course development, tailoring of subject areas, teaching content, teaching methods and the assessment or evaluation of the quality of learning and the learning process. Model tests are also included in this research work, e.g. on the introduction of the dual system, competency based education and the ILO's MES system. According to Chinese experts, the initial impetus for theoretical education stemmed from this research work.

- *Educational management and organisational development.* These studies look at management systems, organisational structure and development, the distribution of competences and evaluation. Such studies mainly present successful models and reports from experience. They provided important impetus for practical reforms although their theoretical basis is deemed inadequate.

- *Development of information and support systems.* A great deal of attention has been paid to the systematic development and expansion of information networks on vocational education through the Internet and networked communication structures, databases, e.g. on subject-related research work, legal bases, text books etc. Research in such areas tends to be the exception, however.

It is not only in the area of educational management, organisational development and the development of information and communication systems that there appears to be a lack of a theoretical basis for applied research. This is also true in other areas. On the one hand, the issues examined appear to be too restrictive and to relate the direct implementation of policy matters, whilst on the other hand the transfer from the theoretical to the applied level has still not been ensured. Furthermore, applied research provides very little impetus for theoretical training. There is not much differentiation in terms of the research design, tools of investigation and evaluation procedures in applied research. Evaluation research, which could provide the corner stone for both the reform process and theoretical education is not very highly developed either.

2.3 Japan, by Walter Georg

2.3.1 Japanese Institute of Labour

Since 1989 labour market research, occupational research and VET research have come under the *Japanese Institute of Labour* [Nihon Rôdô Kenkyû Kikô], a body within the Ministry for Labour. The new institute was created from the merger of its predecessor, Nihon Rôdô Kyôkai, founded in 1958, whose research programme initially concentrated primarily on employer-worker relations, and the *National Institute of Employment and Vocational Research* [Koyô Shokugyô Sôgô Kenkyûsho]. The latter was set up in 1969 under the aegis of the EPC and carried out labour market and occupational research. To a certain (limited) extent the new *Japanese Institute of Labour* was also charged with responsibility for VET research, whilst at the same time there was a corresponding cut-back in the Institute for Vocational Education's research programme. The Institute carries out extensive studies of its own, has a broad-ranging database covering the field of labour, labour market and occupational research, and supports the governments in the prefectures within the framework of regional labour market policy. In many respects the institute's activities can be compared with those of the German Institute for Employment Research within the Federal Employment Services *(Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung [IAB] der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit)* in Nuremberg.

The Japanese Institute of Labour's most important fields of research are as follows:

- Industrial relations and labour law (employer-worker relations, trade union law, legislation and jurisdiction in the field of work and employment);

- Economic aspects of work (wage increases, employment figures, working hours, female labour);
- Vocational and employment structure (unemployment, mobility and change of company, technological change and changes on the labour market);
- Labour market and forms of employment (worker supply and demand, types of employment conditions/contracts);
- Working life (occupational biographies, the work and everyday life of employees);
- Staff management (company employment policy, wage system, human relations within the company);
- Vocational education (developing work skills, in-company training and further training);
- Occupational guidance and work conduct (individual criteria for selecting an occupation, assessment and evaluation methods for aptitude and inclination);
- Careers advice and information (developing occupational conduct, activity analysis, effects of placement, careers information and advice).

2.3.2 Polytechnic University

The top institute amongst the vocational training bodies which come under the Ministry for Labour is the Shokugyô kunren daigakkô *(Institute of Vocational Education)* which was founded in 1961 on the basis of the 1958 Vocational Education Act. It has since been renamed Shokugyô nôryoku kaihatsu daigakkô/Polytechnic University and comes under the aegis of the Ministry for Labour. Until 1989 it worked in the most important fields of research in vocational education, but now concentrates its activities on staff training for vocational education and on research into teaching and learning e.g. research and development work (developing curricula, audiovisual teaching materials, text books), and on distance learning courses.

2.3.3 National Institute for Educational Research (Kokuritsu kyôiku kenkyûjo-NIER)

The NIER was set up in 1949 as a body of the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Japanese abbreviation: *Monbushô*).

The main aims of the institute are to carry out basic and applied research in the educational field as well as to provide a range of information and advisory services. In terms of content and organisation the institute comprises ten main departments (e.g. life-long learning, scientific education, educational management etc.). Vocational education is dealt with by part of the Department for Educational Content (the Section for Vocational Education).

2.4 Canada, by Philipp Grollmann[2]

2.4.1 Current priorities of VET research in Canada

This overview provides a brief run-down of the current priorities and institutions for VET research in Canada. It presents not only the 'academic' research activities, but also certain projects and institutions involved in applied research, which are of importance to Canadian vocational education. In the interests of brevity, only a brief outline can be presented here, but the addresses and references to literature which are listed in the annex should help the interested reader to build up a clearer picture.

2.4.2 DACUM and co-operation in international vocational education

First of all, this is a sort of classic in Canadian VET research and in certain respects representative of it; it seems to be particularly characterised by applied research.

[2] The basic information for this overview was collected during a research trip to Canada in 1998. The objectives of this report were funded by the Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology (Reference: G 9013.007)

Because Canada is a country of immigration to begin with, and also because it is involved in numerous development projects, international VET research and co-operation is a not-unimportant pillar of Canadian VET research. An important player in this respect is the *Canadian International Development Agency* – CIDA – which regularly issues contracts to Canadian VET researchers.

2.4.3 Vocational education in Canada and VET research in the universities and research institutes

As in other industrialised nations, a large part of the development and present state of VET research can best be seen and understood in relation to the problems and institutional structures in the field of the subject of vocational education itself.

Certain general social trends and theme-method related considerations which also figure on the agenda of other countries are also apparent.

Vocational education in Canada is provided primarily by the *Community Colleges*. These are post-secondary institutions which appeal to a wide range of individuals through the range of courses and subjects which they offer. Evening top-up qualification courses, co-operative education and vocational education in full-time school as well as technical university style training courses are similarly organised by these institutions. In the secondary sector (pre-) vocational education and training is provided by the senior high schools.

Thus any research which aims to analyse the effects and development lines of these institutions is to some extent always a form of VET research.

This type of research is largely carried out in the Canadian universities, particularly by the faculties involved with teacher training. Apart from the usual teaching and research activities, bigger projects are on occasion also carried out in the universities, as for example the networks for VET research which are referred to later on. An example of a more extensive research project would be the two year 'Secondary Schools Project' which was set up by the *Canadian Educational Association* (CEA) and supported by the HRDC (Gaskell 1995).

Depending on their size, some of the Community Colleges also have their own research and evaluation departments. They carry out evaluation research in particular, with the aim of helping the colleges to better tailor their programmes to students' needs, or to recognise factors influencing success or failure. Since drop-out rates are at their highest in the first year of the Community Colleges this type of research tends to trade under the name 'first year experience'.

Software developed specially for this purpose by the evaluation department of Humber College, Toronto, can be quoted here as an example. COMPAS (College Outcomes Management and Performance Analysis System) can be used by college staff to assess what they themselves are offering, whilst also providing an information base for internal and external decision-takers (cf. Dietsche 1998).

2.4.4 School-to-work-transition research and research by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

Because of the relatively high school drop-out rates by international standards, and the range of alternatives as regards both content and institutions in the vocational education field, the role of school-to-work-transition research is as important as in other countries faced with this type of vocational education policy issue. Such research usually tends to have a sociological or socio-psychological slant. Once again, a considerable amount of it is done in the relevant university faculties.

In many cases this research is governed by contracts which are issued by the competent Federal Ministry for Labour, Education and Training. *Human Resources Development Canada* evolved from the former Ministry of Employment *(Immigration and Employment Canada)*, and acts as a major financier of research in relevant fields, either indirectly or through subordinate authorities. As far as educational matters are concerned, the Ministry enjoys only very limited decision-taking

powers, since educational questions are largely regulated at state level in Canada.

Smaller contracts, e.g. in the field of curriculum development, are therefore also issued by the education ministries and the ministries for vocational education and further training in the relevant provinces (cf. e.g. Wilson).

The renaming of the former Ministry of Employment as the HRDC and the identification of new fields of activity should be seen in relation to the general drive towards change and reform of vocational education and further training in Canada, which either directly or indirectly has brought a considerable amount of research activity in its wake. Since the late eighties there has been a broad-ranging and quite well funded initiative to set up *Sector Councils*, i.e. branch organisations which were brought into being through the initial injection of some very generous funding. There is also room for numerous research and development activities within the framework of these activities.

Thus *skill standards* which underlie the development of vocational qualifications and curricula are often established by the relevant Sector Councils or by private consulting firms contacted by them. The basis for creating these skill standards is provided by sectoral studies which look at the general requirements for educational and staff development in a given sector (cf. e.g. Textiles Human Resources Council 1996). These are then followed by *occupational analyses*, in which occupational activity within a given occupational field is 'broken down'. This procedure is also applied when occupational profiles are drawn up for apprenticeships (cf. HRDC 1995 and e.g. HRDC 1998).

HRDC also has its own research department, the *applied research branch*, as well as an evaluation department. The former draws up at four-yearly intervals, for example – sometimes in co-operation with Statistics Canada – transition and location studies on secondary school leavers, and Community College and university graduates (The Class of 1986, The Class of 1990 etc.; EIC 1991, HRDC 1996), whereas the latter monitors and follows up model projects and vocational education policy initiatives in terms of their effectiveness.

In parallel to the reform activities just mentioned, HRDC also amended the entire Canadian occupational classification, which traditionally bore a close resemblance to the American Dictionary of Occupational Titles in terms of its fragmentation and specialisation, but now arranges broader fields of activity horizontally and vertically within a type of occupational field structure (cf. HRDC 1996).

In terms of their scientific quality, projects carried out by HRDC or consulting agencies are not necessarily inferior to university ones. There are on-going communication structures between HRDC and the universities, e.g. through experts being asked to draw up reports (cf. e.g. Krahn 1996).

2.4.5 Political and industrial-sociological labour market research into vocational education and further training

The discussions and measures pertaining to the *Sector Councils* and *Local Training Boards* go hand in hand with lively scientific publishing activity: over the last two years two compilations have come out on the subject (cf. Gunderson, Sharpe 1998; Haddow, Sharpe 1997). This research should be seen within the field of political science and industrial sociology. A similar perspective is taken by the *Canadian Policy Research Networks* on vocational education questions in their last report, which deals in more concrete terms with essential questions related to qualifications in the face of the challenges raised by the future world of work. This is a type of foundation which is supported by donations from sponsors, sets up expert commissions on other areas of public life, and drafts and publishes reports (cf. Betcherman, McMullen, Davidman 1998).

2.4.6 Research networks in the field of vocational education and further training

Over recent years the greater esteem in which vocational education and further training is

held has had a knock-on effect in the field of basic research: thus, following a major call for tender, the *Social Science and Humanities Research Council* (SSHRC) is supporting four major Strategic Research Networks in Education and Training, which fall within the VET research area. These networks also co-operate amongst themselves and organise calls for tender for researchers with suitable projects who can apply for small-scale financing. Co-operation with vocational education practice also represents an important aspect in the work of these networks.

The five networks have the following titles, which also indicate what they deal with:

- NALL: Lifelong Linking of Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning: Current Practices, Social Barriers and New Approaches
- Training Matters: Education and Training for New Forms of Work: Canadian Experience and International Perspectives
- EvNet: Network for the Evaluation of Education and Training Technologies
- The Western Research Network on Education and Training: The Link Between Educational Provision, Processes and Outcomes
- Relations formation emploi: analyse des modes de collaboration entre les partenaires de la formation, des effets sur leur organisation et des résultats pour les apprenants *(Training-employment relations: analysis of methods of cooperation between the players in the training world, the impact on their organisation and results for students)*

A further, relatively new network in the VET research field is the UNEVOC Canada Network, which was founded in close co-operation with UNESCO's UNEVOC project and is supported by it.

The setting up of all of these six networks should also be seen in relation to the constant demands for a National Centre for Research on Vocational Education and Training, NCRVE, along the lines of the American model.

2.5 Russian Federation, by Friedrich Kuebarth

2.5.1 VET research

In Russia there is, first of all, a tradition of what is known as *occupational education*, which sees itself as a scientific discipline and which as a branch of education fulfilled the well-known functions of socialist educational doctrine in the field of vocational education. The theoretical principles were largely laid by the former Academy of Educational Sciences in the USSR (nowadays the Russian Education Academy). Its scope was and in fact still is predominantly the training and further training of teaching staff for the vocational training sector.

Secondly, a form of VET research was also developed which initially concentrated on the development of teaching methods within the scope of the framework plans for the vocational schools, whilst also becoming increasingly involved with matters of policy advice. It is these functions which have come particularly to the fore since the switch in system in the early 90s, in the course of which institutional classifications changed on several occasions.

The important thing to note in this context is that VET research was and continues to be predominantly sector-based, i.e. it is tied in with the various levels of vocational education in Russia which evolved historically, each with its own respective administrative 'superstructure'. Thus even today there are still different research structures for the levels of 'basic vocational education' (formerly: occupational-technical training, PTUs), and 'middle-grade vocational education' (middle grade technical secondary schools, schools of technology, and more recently also colleges). ('Higher vocational education' i.e. the higher educational or tertiary level has its own research and development structures which will not be considered here).

Research and development structures, particularly in the area of curriculum development, are to some extent also to be found within specialised departments which oversee vocational training institutions (e.g. agriculture). Corre-

sponding practice-oriented centres were more seriously built up, particularly by the regions, which sometimes also call on available institutions for the further training of teachers to develop teaching materials and for (vocational) educational development planning.

Recently the state labour administration has also become more deeply involved in vocational and VET research.

Institutes of higher education have only a minor role to play in VET research. This also applies to the teacher training universities/colleges which train teachers for general schools and subjects. The majority of staff for vocational schools or occupation-related subjects are trained at two specialised universities (Jekaterinburg and recently Nishnij Nowgorod) as well as at several technical universities/colleges, and it is only in this area that there is any occupational education/VET research worth mentioning.

Projects and subjects related to the development of vocational education and vocational education policy are also worked on in other research contexts, such as economic (including the economics of education) and sociological research (e.g. youth sociology), mainly within the respective institutes of the Russian Academy of Science.

2.5.2 Research structures

Mainstream Russian VET research is conducted within three structures which are separate in organisational terms. Whilst competing with each other they are also interlinked by the networking of both staff and subject matter.

a) The traditional 'leading institution' in Russian educational research is the *Russian Academy of Education* (RAO). It has the following affiliates to its department for 'basic vocational education' (literally):

- The Institute for Technical Occupational Education in St. Petersburg;
- The Institute for Technical Secondary Education in Kasan;
- The Institute for Adult Education in St. Petersburg;
- The Centre for Problems related to Lifelong Learning in Moscow.

The department also promotes regional priorities within the framework of the RAO's regionalised structure. The activities of the Siberian section deserve particular mention. The Academy is formally requesting that it should be responsible for the nationwide co-ordination of VET research, but its influence would essentially only extend to the institutions mentioned. (It is additionally responsible for co-ordinating research assistantships). The work of the research institutes – whose research plans are determined on an annual basis – centres rather loosely on general programme topics such as 'the development prospects of vocational education'.

b) The Ministry for General and Vocational Education supports:

- The Institute for the Development of Vocational Training (IRPO) in Moscow, and
- The Scientific Method Centre for Secondary Technical Education, Moscow.

Whilst the latter concentrates mainly on developing curricula for the technical secondary school level, over recent years and despite the disastrous framework conditions and also political resistance, the IRPO has managed to extend and consolidate its position as the central body for VET research. Its work involves:

- Basic research related to educational policy and concepts, particularly in terms of policy advice;
- Curricular development work: drawing up the register of training professions, developing 'standards' and methodological training bases, text book development, quality assurance methods, new technologies;
- The further training of teaching staff;
- Scientific research assistantships;

- International co-operation (esp. with the BIBB);
- Publications.

c) The vocational teacher-training universities (see above) which also come under the Ministry for Education train 'engineering' teaching staff (with the emphasis on engineering and the corresponding technical production occupations) as well as experts for specialist practical training in the vocational schools. Their research priorities are determined by these roles, and therefore tend to stress technical teaching methods. The Occupational Training University of the Urals is also strong in occupational psychology and occupational sociology, whilst new university in Nisnij Nowgorod has no clear-cut profile as yet.

2.5.3 Research associations

When the system started to change numerous associations and networks came into being which have in common the fact that they are in reasonably close proximity to the 'official' structures of the Ministry. From the point of view of VET training the first bodies to be noted are:

- The *Academy for Vocational Education* (not to be confused in either organisational or functional terms with the RAO – see above!) which is close to the IRPO in staff terms and is striving to bring together the broad field of research and practice (particularly school heads and regional managers) and to gradually build bridges with the social partners. At the same time, the Academy sees itself as a services company in the publications and conferences field (it produces amongst other things one of the two available specialist revues).
- The *'Vocational Education' Association* which was born of the RAO and also provides specialist services. Amongst other things it has produced a new standard textbook 'Occupational Education' (1997) as well as an 'Encyclopaedia of Vocational Education' (1998).
- Another organisation known by the acronym *'Rosproftech'* (Russian technical vocational education) is made up principally of workers in the field and is closely linked to the Ministry.

2.6 Switzerland, by Ulrich Arnswald and Daniela Heipel

Vocational education – insofar as it is regulated by the BBG (Vocational Education Act) – falls within the scope of activities of the *Bundesamt für Berufsbildung und Techno*[2]
The basic information for this overview was collected during a research trip to Canada in 1998. The objectives of this report were funded by the Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology (Reference: G 9013.007)
logie (BBT) (Federal Office for for Vocational Education and Technology), which is also in charge of vocational education in agriculture. It comes under the Swiss Department for the National Economy.

The *Schweizerische Institut für Berufspädagogik* (Swiss Institute for Occupational Education) (SIBP) – which is also a department of the BBT- deals first and foremost with the training and further training of teachers at vocational education schools.

In the whole of Switzerland there are some 125 mostly small-scale institutions working in the field of educational research and school development. The Swiss *Co-ordinating Unit for Educational Research* (SKBF) (Entfelderstr. 61 in 5000 Aarau, Tel.: + 41 (0)62/8352390) promotes co-operation between educational research, practice, administration and policy.

Within educational research, the SKBF coordinates between the various disciplines and institutions, as well as between the university institutions and teaching sections of the Education Department.

It is linked to the *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Bildungsforschung* (SGBF) (Swiss Society for Educational Research). This body pursues its aims through the organisation of annual congresses, standing working parties, and through publication of the review *'Bildungs-*

forschung und Bildungspraxis' (Educational Research and Practice), as well as the scientific series 'Exploration'. At the present moment the co-ordinating unit is running three networks, which promote contact between researchers working in the same field, i.e. in the areas of assessment, secondary level I, and research into adult education. The SKFB is also linked to the *Schweizerische Gesellschaft für angewandte Berufsbildungforschung* (Swiss Society for Applied Vocational Education Research), which was founded in 1987.

The SKFB provides information about research and development projects within the Swiss education system, about development trends in education and about the institutions for educational research and school development. A register which comes out every 4 to 5 years lists the institutions for educational research and school development, indicating the main focuses of their work. An index of persons and subjects means that targeted searches for information and contact persons can be carried out on specific questions.

Publications on vocational education:

1. Blätter. Review of vocational education. Journal produced by the umbrella organisation BCH Berufsbildung Schweiz. Published 5408 Ennetbaden. Ten editions yearly, in three languages.

2. Panorama. Review of the Swiss Society for Applied VET research. Published 8005 Zurich, six times per year.

2.7 Latin America, focus South America, by Daniela Heipel and Ute Lanzendorf

2.7.1 Introduction to the vocational education systems in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay

Economic, political and social integration in South America came a step closer with the creation of the *Mercado Común del Sur* or MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South) in 1991. The MERCOSUR brings together a population of more than 190 million, living in an area bigger than the whole of the European continent. The biggest country in South America and also its strongest in economic terms, Brazil covers an area of 8.5 million square kilometres and has 155 million inhabitants. Argentina is the second biggest member of MERCOSUR with 33 million inhabitants, and over recent years has had the fastest economic growth. Paraguay and Uruguay are the smaller partners in every sense. With a gross national product of 8.1 million US$, Paraguay is the weakest member state in economic terms (von Baratta 1997, p. 567). Uruguay, the country with the smallest population – 3.1million – is an important financial centre in the MERCOSUR, and in 1995 had a GNP of 16.4 million US$.

A description of the vocational training system in the three countries selected here (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay) – which differ in terms of their economy, size and population – as a background to the details on VET research in the respective countries can provide no more than a brief introduction at this point.

In ***Brazil***, co-ordination of the various public and private providers of vocational education which since 1976 have been brought together under the *Sistema Nacional de Formação de Mão-de-Obra*, SNFMO (National Manpower Training System), is the responsibility of the Conselho Federal de Mão-de-Obra (Federal Manpower Council). Most vocational education is organised on a private basis through several sector-related and decentrally organised vocational training institutions which are financed through a form of income tax – the *Serviçio Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial* (SENAI) (National Service for Industrial Training), the *Serviçio Nacional de Aprendizagem* Comerzial (SENAC) (National Service for Commercial Training), and the *Serviçio Nacional de Formação Professional Rural* (SENAR) (National Service for Agricultural Qualification). Teaching takes place in training centres which integrate company training with occupational adjustment. The SENAI, the oldest of the three pillars of the Brazilian training system, was founded in 1943 along the lines of the training system which existed in the railway company. It was set up as an independent institution, financed and managed by the companies in that sector

(industry in the case of the SENAI). In 1946 the SENAC was founded, and 30 years later the SENAR started its work. The training activities of the various institutions are strongly coloured by the respective sector of the economy. Thus the SENAI is responsible for industrial training, the SENAC for commercial training, and the SENAR for agricultural training. Despite sharing a similar organisational structure, the three vocational training institutions have different activities. The SENAI offers multi-annual initial training courses for skilled workers and engineers, within which both occupation-related knowledge and more general educational content is provided. The SENAC provides initial training in the field of commerce and services, predominantly in the classroom, with provision for practical teaching on computers, for example. The diploma is acquired within a maximum of one and a half years. SENAR works exclusively in the field of part qualifications and further training.

Technology training in the general school system includes pre-occupational training in the compulsory sector as well as the three-year courses at secondary II level, technical training at university level and post-graduate technological training. At full-time upper grade secondary vocational schools financed by the federal authorities or states, an initial vocational diploma for occupational groups such as clerical workers, engineers, health workers and teachers is catered for within the compulsory sector. A vocational qualification at this level also satisfies university entrance requirements. Technology training centres offer courses at all levels of the education system, which aim at training middle management levels in particular.

Apart from the occupational training branches at secondary II level, which date back to the military regime, the other full-time vocational schools are the engineering schools, which come directly under the national education ministry. The four-year engineering schools essentially provide training in the technical and agricultural fields, whilst the three to four year secondary level vocational schools teach commercial, care and educational activities as well as technical and agricultural ones. Unlike the engineering schools the vocational education sections of the secondary schools do not usually have sufficient means to provide practical training.

The high drop-out rates and the fall in the numbers of secure jobs, which has boosted free-lance activity, particularly in the informal sector, have – and this applies to all three of the countries in question – led to the ministries for labour becoming increasingly involved in the shaping of vocational education. Essentially, what is provided are programmes for those dropping out of school and the unemployed leading to qualifications for jobs. More will be said about this development below.

The Brazilian government is struggling with the problems affecting all the South American countries. The north-east of the country is the single largest pocket of poverty in the whole of Latin America. Children under 14 make up 18% of the working population and most young people have no chance of finding a regulated training place or job. Thus access to the Brazilian training system is reserved for a privileged section of the population. Young people are expected to start paying their way at an early age, and therefore quit formal education. What is more, even completion of vocational education is no automatic guarantee of finding a well-paid job. There is also a negative attitude towards practical training, with an academic training being preferred wherever possible. Over the next few years the Brazilian government aims to create a national system for technological training by bringing together the existing training establishments under the co-ordination and supervision of the Ministry of Education, to make good the shortage of training places, to improve co-operation between companies, training centres and the government, and to bring the vocational education system into line with recent technological developments. (see Lanzendorf et al. 1996)

Of the South American education systems, it is the ***Argentinian*** one which goes back the furthest. Unlike in other Latin American countries, no sectoral vocational education institutions based on private economic initia-

tive have developed alongside the public education system. Initial vocational education was and still is an integral part of the state system. Vocational and technical education in Argentina is therefore marked by the predominant steering role played by the state. Neither employers nor the trade unions have any formal responsibility or take any initiative. Thus people also talk of the 'secondarisation' of vocational education in Argentina.

Formal vocational education in Argentina takes place in vocational secondary schools, which until 1995 came under the *National Council for Technical Education* (Consejo Nacional de Educación Técnica, CONET). In the same year, following the decentralisation of responsibility in the secondary school sector, the CONET was replaced by the *Institute for Technological Training* (Instituto Nacional de Educación Tecnológica, INET). CONET was a public, decentralised provider with functional autonomy which was founded in November 1959. The vocational education institution came under the Education Ministry, just as is now the case with the INET, and was responsible for the vocational education sector financed by the ministry. Until 1992, the Education Ministry was responsible for around two thirds of vocational secondary schools, some provinces had their own schools, and some were run on a private basis. The establishments for technical training which pre-1959 were ministry-run or those providing apprenticeships from Peron's era were placed under the responsibility of the CONET. The CONET was in charge of the funds from the apprentices levy which prior to 1959 was managed by the Education Ministry's Committee for Teaching and Vocational Guidance. During the reform of the public education system in 1995 the CONET, the *National Centre for EDP-Training* (Centro Nacional de Enseñanza de la Informática, CENEI), and the *Centre for Research and Development into the Dual System* (Centro Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo del Sistema Dual, CENID) were merged to form the *Institute for Technological Training* (Instituto Nacional de Educación Tecnológica, INET). This shifted greater responsibility to the provinces. It is now they who are responsible for the technical schools and training centres, whilst the INET is only responsible for overall planning and assistance and advice on future education strategies.

A distinction is drawn between *technical education* (educación técnica) in secondary schools and the practice-oriented and market-related *vocational training* (formación profesional) directed at the unemployed and those who drop out of school. Technical training at a corresponding secondary school centres on training staff for executive activities and supervisory roles at the skilled level. Vocational secondary schools act more as a special type of school leading to university entrance qualifications than as an institution providing the type of qualification needed to enter an occupation. Participants are prepared both for subsequent employment and for higher studies (dual qualification). The poor infrastructure, high drop-out rates and lack of any practical reference are the problems faced by training in the state secondary schools.

A further provider of vocational training is the *Ministry for Labour and Social Security* (Ministerio del trabajo y seguridad social) within which the *Department for Vocational Education* (Subsecretaría de formación profesional) was set up in accordance with the December 1991 National Employment Act (Ley Nacional de Empleo). Its role is to develop special training for disadvantaged groups on the labour market, bearing in mind both individual interests in terms of further personal and professional development, and the needs of the company. Generally speaking, in recent years measures directly related to work, aimed at improving skills and which form part of the vocational training system, have increasingly been taken over by the labour administration within the framework of job promotion.

Although the vast majority of Argentina's active population completes compulsory schooling, only a minority goes on to vocational education. Because of increased international competition, this level of qualification no longer satisfies firms' requirements. People have realised that, in particular given the context of the MERCOSUR integration process, only an extensively trained, technically

qualified and flexible workforce can guarantee competitivity in the long term. Measures in the pipeline or in certain cases already implemented, such as the decentralisation of competences in the secondary education sector, should improve the situation. There is also a new approach which aims at involving the social partners in vocational education in order to improve the alternation between school and firm (Lanzendorf, 1997).

Socially speaking, education and training in ***Uruguay*** are highly regarded. Generally speaking, occupations which require study are held in greater esteem than manual professions, even though the latter are often better paid. There is a clear preference for the school-leaving exam, with less than 10% of those leaving lower grade secondary school opting for a technical training at the UTU. With an average of seven completed years of education, Uruguay has a comparatively high level of education in Latin American terms. The small size of the country and the concentration of its population in the capital, Montevideo, means that vast sectors of the population have access to the education system. The illiteracy rate in Uruguay (0.4%) is low not only in comparison with other Latin American countries, but also in international terms, and it is still falling thanks to virtual blanket coverage, particularly in the primary sector.

In Uruguay the *Council for Technical Vocational Education* (Consejo de Educación Técnico-Profesional, C.E.T.P.) under the aegis of the Ministry for Education is the body which provides vocational education at secondary technical level in schools and training institutions. The C.E.P.T. (also known as the *Uruguayan University of Labour* (Universidad del Trabajo del Uruguay or UTU)) aims to be open to as broad a population as possible and generally to provide vocational education. The UTU is the biggest provider of formal vocational education, covering the whole range of different training levels, which range from the basic level of secondary I, through technical vocational training to technical school leaving certificates.

There has been a noticeable shift in the defining of vocational education from the Education Ministry to the Ministry for Labour, through the creation of the *National Directorate for Employment* (Dirección Nacional de Empleo, DINAE) and the *National Employment Board* (Junta Nacional de Empleo, JUNAE), whose role it is to advise the Ministry for Labour on labour market policy, and to provide guidance programmes for the labour market as well as training programmes. The DINAE's work has led to a process of decentralisation and diversification in the vocational education field, which has resulted in the central role which the UTU played in vocational education and further training for many years being watered down. What is more, the drafting of vocational education programmes has also been split from their implementation. This means that although the DINAE is responsible for financing the programmes, it does not actually implement them. It has also meant that more and newer organisations – under state control – have become involved in vocational education. The UTU had to surrender many of its powers in the course of this process. For decades the UTU – a body which has been in existence since the late 19th century and which in spite of its deceptive 'university' title almost exclusively offers secondary level courses – was the sole provider of vocational education courses. Formal vocational education at the UTU was assessed in 1995 under a study by the Inter-American Development Bank, within the context of the development of new technologies and changes to the economic structure. The study came to the conclusion that the courses on offer were in desperate need of an overhaul, since the institution had got out of hand, the quality of courses was very poor, they were badly organised, and the training was too long. Moreover, the lack of teacher training amongst the staff and the fact that the schools were badly equipped also came in for criticism. Since the UTU was no longer in a position to cover the demand for vocational education as a result of these shortcomings, supply on the private market exploded in response to the vacuum. This led to utter confusion in terms of the provision available and a lack of checks on qualifications. Through a decentralisation process in the field of training and through increasing competition from private and semi-state institutions over re-

cent years, the UTU has seen its importance plummet in comparison with what it used to be.

The compulsory secondary I level lasts three years, during which pupils may choose between two different types of schools. Either they attend secondary school *(secundaria)* which provides a general education, or they opt for the technically oriented UTU, which aims more at young people who subsequently want to enter working life. The ensuing three year cycle concludes either after three years with the university entrance qualification or again with the technically oriented UTU. Here training lasts from two to seven years and is split up into four main areas – agriculture, industry, art/craft, and services. University entrance requirements can also be met along this path under certain circumstances. Those who have not completed nine years of compulsory schooling can still train at the UTU, in vocational training centres *(Centro de Capacitación Profesional,* C.E.C.A.P.) or through the Ministry for Youth's programmes to unskilled worker level. Upon completion of the nine years of compulsory schooling the majority of newcomers to the employment scene do not have adequate technical or vocational training and the successful use of completed training often depends on training or further training measures in the company.

Apart from formal training provision there is also a whole series of state, non-formal training possibilities, which mainly target socially marginalized young people who have dropped out of the formal training and vocational education system. The courses do not provide for the transition to the tertiary level and are not national in scope. (Heipel et al.)

2.7.2 Themes and trends in VET research in South America

VET research in South America is not an academic discipline in its own right, and as a result interdisciplinary research approaches have sprung up in the fields of sociology, economics, psychology, and to a lesser extent in education science, complemented by individual studies of applied VET research. This inter-disciplinarity means that the institutions involved in VET research are located in very different fields, and there is also little institutionalisation. Thus departments in the Ministries for Education and Labour, universities, non-governmental organisations, and both public and private research establishments all deal with VET research amongst their other research topics. A study of the most recent trends and tendencies in the South American vocational education systems which have already been touched upon, and which affect VET research topics and institutions, should shed some light on the tendencies and content affecting research and the institutions involved in it. This will be followed by a detailed description of the institutes and organisations which are active in national and Latin America-wide VET research. The institutions deal in particular with application-oriented issues intended for political decision-makers, and priorities are determined accordingly, with academic work often being the by-product of independent, non-university research institutes from which the general trends in vocational education can be deduced.

Whereas in the past training was predominantly not geared to practical work or labour market needs and formed part of general education policy – this applied in particular in Argentina and Uruguay – training policy has recently tended to been seen increasingly as an active labour market policy. The reason behind this new line was both the general effects of globalisation on the markets, which along with other developments has resulted in increased competition for firms and the appearance of new employment profiles, as well as high unemployment figures and drop out rates from the formal education system, which led to the Ministries for Labour bringing in short courses providing qualifications for jobs. So apart from the departments in the Education Ministries, Labour Ministries are also becoming more heavily involved in shaping and assessing vocational education.[3] Cop-

[3] The institutional reflection of this in Brazil is the National Secretariat for Training and Vocational Development *(Secretaría Nacional de Formación y Desarrollo Profesional,* SEFOR) and in Uruguay the National Directorate for Labour *(Dirección Nacional de Empleo,* DINAE).

ing with technological progress and the qualifications which it implies, qualifying micro-enterprises and workers in the informal sector, co-ordinating technical education and practice-oriented qualifications, co-ordinating formal and non-formal supply taking local and regional requirements into account, the social implications of vocational education, the influence of new technologies on vocational qualification requirements, the needs of disadvantaged groups and the integration of marginalized sections of the population, particularly young people in vocational education programmes, are increasingly being taken as the subject of research.

Since the founding of MERCOSUR in particular, comparative vocational research has grown in stature in South America. Through describing the core functions of the vocational education systems in individual countries, with their overall aims, an effort is being made to draw on developments even in industrialised countries, in order to pick up tips as to how to solve problems back at home. The overriding aim in setting up MERCOSUR was the free circulation of goods, services and manpower. The aims which stemmed from that for the organisation of vocational education were to achieve equivalence in the recognition of diplomas, to create information systems on vocational education systems in the member states and to increase co-operation on vocational education matters.

The institutions which are described hereafter have drawn more heavily on new communication and information technologies. This should allow for better networking within Latin America but also worldwide, and should facilitate access to information for those involved in vocational education.

2.7.3 The Inter-American Centre for Research and Documentation on Vocational Education (Centro Interamericano de Investigación y Documentación sobre Formación Profesional, CINTERFOR)

The Inter-American Centre for Research and Documentation on Vocational Education *(Centro Interamericano de Investigación y Documentación sobre Formación Profesional,* CINTERFOR) which was founded in 1963 and is based in Montevideo, Uruguay, is an offshoot of the International Labour Organisation which brings together the organisations and institutions responsible for vocational education in the ILO member states in Latin America and also Spain. The objectives at the time the centre was set up were guided by the demands of member states, i.e. to see a general rise in the level of vocational education, in order to improve living conditions for workers, and to improve the quantitative and qualitative performance of firms. Even before the CINTERFOR was founded some ILO member states (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela) were already trying to create national vocational education services with the support of the ILO, basing themselves on close co-operation with companies, workers and vocational training experts. The efforts undertaken by the countries which concentrated on preparing and publishing the vocational education programmes, preparing educators and building up establishments, demanded comprehensive research work, and the co-ordination and exchange of experience available in the individual countries took on added importance. It was against this backdrop that CINTERFOR was initially brought into being as a permanent centre of co-operation for the national institutions. The role of the centre was to collate documentation from the field of vocational education, to build up contacts, to diffuse information to national centres, to conduct research and to prepare teaching material for educators.

Since its creation the aims and role of CINTERFOR have been extended. The promotion and strengthening of technical co-operation in the context of the development and modernisation of vocational education, assistance in drafting and bringing in vocational education programmes through promoting strategic alliances between the state, the workforce and employers, the development and spread of a regional network for vocational education within the member states, the promotion of research activities, and the conducting of research into the institutionali-

sation and setting up of systems and programmes for vocational education with the aim of promoting efficiency, competitivity and social justice have all been added.

The lion's share of CINTERFOR's work is documented in numerous publications. Examples include the quarterly *Boletín CINTERFOR* which publishes theoretical contributions related to Latin America by vocational education experts, and the *Herramientas para la transformación* series in which the results of primary studies, surveys and academic essays are published. The publication *Trazos de Formación* deals essentially with current themes in the vocational education field, whilst *Papeles de la Oficina técnica* documents international, national and regional experiences in the fields of vocational education and employment.

The breakdown of funding for the centre reflects the backing of the various groups and initiatives which CINTERFOR has brought together. On top of the annual payments by the ILO and the Uruguayan government there are also voluntary payments by the member states and institutions, and international organisations also contribute to the funding of certain projects. The centre mainly employs experts in vocational education on limited contracts, most of them coming from Latin American countries.

CINTERFOR also runs and organises the *Latin American Information and Administration Network for Vocational Education* (Proyecto Red de Información y Gestión sobre Formación Profesional para América Latin y el Caribe, CINTERNET). CINTERNET is a network born of a co-operation agreement between the ILO and the Federal Republic of Germany on the exchange of information in the field of vocational education. CINTERNET is intended for the use of those involved in vocational education, and provides rapid access to information on innovation, information and methodology. Such access to information should make it easier for those responsible for vocational education at national level to respond appropriately to new challenges on the labour market. The network documents the current situation and offers rapid access to questions of vocational education in Latin America.

2.7.4 The International Centre for Education, Labour and the Transfer of Technology (Centro Internacional para la Educación, el Trabajo y la Transferencia de la Tecnología, CIET)

The CIET, which came into being in Brazil in 1993 as the result of a joint initiative involving the *National Confederation for Industry* (Confederación Nacional de la Industria, CNI), the National Service for Industrial Training (Serviçio Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial, SENAI) and UNESCO, acts at national and international level as a centre for observing and documenting the effects on and changes to vocational education brought about by the development of new technologies. The theoretical approach when the centre was founded was the understanding of the fact that the effects of new developments in information and communications technology and more generally the development of new technologies with the resulting changes on the labour market and the appearance of new qualification standards can have both a negative and a positive effect on national industries. Vocational training systems play a key role in positive adaptation:

'As technological development activities become more specialised, complex and dependent on specific information and knowledge more and more adequately trained skilled human resources are required for such special tasks'.

The centre researches, forecasts and formulates proposed solutions in the fields of information, technology, employment, and education in order to provide positive backing for the process of adaptation, and serves as an advice centre, in particular for the CNI/SENAI, which administer 900 vocational schools and 45 centres of technology.

By way of products and services the CIET is involved in developing an information system about international experiences in vocational education, life-long learning and the reintegration of adults and young people, re-

search into the link between education and work and the influence of new technologies on employers and workers, the development of an advisory centre for companies wanting to run vocational education and further training activities, and tracking political discussion of vocational education in Brazil.

The centre is mainly financed by the SENAI and brings in additional funds from courses, seminars and publications. Around 30 people are employed in the centre on a permanent basis, with backgrounds in education, labour, technology, sociology, systems analysis, engineering, mathematics and IT. International experts are also constantly being employed by the centre.

2.7.5 The National Research Centre for Human Development (Centro Nacional de Estudios de Población, CENEP)/ Education and Labour Network (Red Educación y Trabajo)

The CENEP in Buenos Aires plays an important role in national and international VET research. It is from there that the international education and labour network is managed, as well as a database on literature related to vocational education. The FIEL Economic Research for Latin America Foundation *(Fundación de Investigaciones Económicas Latinoamericanas,* FIEL) also conducts individual projects on questions related to education and vocational education. The centre mainly employs researchers from the social sciences and conducts research in the areas of human development, information technology, technical assistance and the distribution of information. The centre follows an inter-disciplinary approach, develops and supervises projects in co-operation with institutions and organisations, governments and private establishments. Amongst other subjects, the CENEP researches population growth, mobility, labour markets, education and work, pension systems and social security and health systems and domestic and family development.

2.8 Turkey

METARGEM: The Research and Development Centre of Vocational and Technical Education, Ankara [4]

The Research and Development Centre of Vocational and Technical Education (METARGEM) has been established with the aim of providing or having provided the services of planning, research, development and production required by the Ministry of National Education in order to raise the quality of schools and institutions of vocational and technical education to the level of standards in developed countries. METARGEM also meets the demand for research and programme development of other state and private institutions and organizations.

METARGEM has 8 departments (Programme Development, Research and Planning, Project Development, Technical Publications, Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Technology, Personnel Administrative and Financial Affairs, Revolving Fund Management)

Some of the main duties of METARGEM are: Conducting research, conducting studies to determine long and medium term goals, preparing an 'Annual Evaluation and Development Report', cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions, preparing educational books, and publishing periodicals and news bulletins.

METARGEM has so far provided a number of publications such as 'Evaluation of the Applications in Multi-Programmed Lycees' and 'Vocational and Technical Education in the Turkish Education System'.

As to programme development activities 'The process of programme development in Vocational and Technical Education' and 'Total Quality Management' should be mentioned.

METARGEM cooperates with international institutions such as the OECD INES Project-Network B and the UNESCO/UNEVOC

[4] The METARGEM summary is based on official documents made available by Walter Georg. Ulrich Arnswald was responsible for assessing and summarising.

Project. METARGEM is also continuously exchanging information and Material with the 'European Centre for Developing Vocational Education' and the 'European Training Foundation' established in Turin.

2.9 United States of America, by Uwe Lauterbach

2.9.1 Introduction to the education and vocational education system in the USA

There are various reasons why it is so difficult to identify where the emphasis lies in VET research in the USA and to make general comments on VET research. As in most countries, vocational education is a research subject for the whole range of social sciences. There is no specific institutionalised scientific discipline for labour, vocational and economic education. Besides these theoretical scientific reasons, the research subject itself further muddies the waters in that it distinguishes between vocational education, technical education, vocational training etc, terms which in German are lumped together under the heading *'berufliche Bildung'*.

These cultural and semantic reasons apart, the way in which the federal system in the USA is organised politically makes it even more complicated to describe the state of play in VET research, since responsibility for the education system lies with the individual federal states. Futhermore, there are some 15,500 school districts at local level with local boards of education all having various competences of their own.

Basically, the American constitution does not provide for any federal legislative powers on matters of education. The only competence the central authorities have is on directives covering the educational establishments for the federal administration and the military. Otherwise it may also intervene in matters of race integration or discrimination against certain population groups. The federal government can exert influence through the constitution's *welfare clause*. Through target-related grants in aid, the rules pertaining to which are strictly laid down, the central administration has a means of shaping the education system in the individual states. They mean that on this sub-continent with its fifty federal states and 260 million inhabitants, binding minimum standards are respected, which makes comparison possible within the federal system. In vocational education however these mainly take the form of programmes for the 'disadvantaged'.

Besides this political influence, the work of the federal authorities concentrates heavily on *documentation* of the state of play in the education system. Many educational policy makers at state and local level would be happy to see the work of the federal government in Washington limited to this role alone.

Apart from the Department of Education at federal level there are a further twenty ministries with competence in this field. Two ministries, the *Department of Education* and the *Department of Labour* are in overall charge. Programmes such as career education, initial vocational education (occupational education, vocational education, co-operative education, adult education) and various promotional measures for disadvantaged groups in the population (the illiterate) are handled by the Department of Education.

Company-oriented measures, (on-the-job training, apprenticeship programme), the promotional programmes, anti-unemployment measures through companies, trade unions and other institutions and programmes such as the Job Training Partnership Act come under the Department of Labour and the Employment and Training Administration.

Actual vocational and technical education as such is provided in Community Colleges, Technical Institutes, etc., which come under the aegis of the states or school districts, though it must be said that vocational and technical education is not the preferred path in the education sector by any stretch of the imagination, that is to say that it is not very highly regarded when compared with 'general' education.

Even this brief outline of the possible research fields for VET research and the political struc-

tures reveals the difficult framework conditions governing the development of VET research on the one hand, but on the other hand also explains why a state of the art report on VET research would require a degree of effort which was not feasible within the limits of this project. We will therefore limit ourselves here to an overview of the VET research conducted within the framework of national vocational education policy as implemented by the administration in Washington D.C. Two major journals which focus on comparative education were also assessed in order to get a look behind the scenes of 'free' and 'independent' academic research.

2.9.2 VET research and national vocational education policy

National Centre for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE), University of California, Berkeley,
http://ncrve.berkeley.edu/Default.html

The National Centre for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) is the largest national establishment in the USA dealing with research, development and diffusion of subjects related to vocational education. The Centre is financed by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education. Since 1988 the Centre's headquarters have been at the University of California, Berkeley, and it has played a key role in working out new concepts in the field of qualifications for the workforce. The centre's main aim is 'to strengthen school-based and work-based learning to prepare all individuals for lasting and rewarding employment, further education, and lifelong learning.' (National Centre for Research in Vocational Education)

The centre focuses on finding new and innovative ways of linking education and work. Training should specifically prepare young people for the world of work. Amongst other things, the centre provides information about pilot projects, curriculum development, qualification standards, further training of teachers and the integration of curricula. The work of the National Centre for Research in Vocational Education is used by teachers and administrations in high schools and community colleges, policy-makers, researchers and employers.

The centre's Work:

- Expert groups which tackle a range of subjects (student guidance through to structuring of schools);
- Support and information to show teachers how to prepare students for lifelong learning;
- Advisors who work together with schools in drafting education and training programmes which are related to the labour market;
- Student and teacher guidance;
- On-line discussion groups;
- Websites with the latest information about the centre and forthcoming events;
- Circulars giving information about the work of the centre.

The centre is comprised of a consortium of eight professors from the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota, MPR Associates Inc., the University of Colombia, the University of Wisconsin and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The presence of the NCRVE or one of its members in virtually every region of the USA facilitates contact with the various education and training establishments and the labour market.

In terms of training, the main issue at stake for the centre is to offer every student the option of a recognised course which is related to the needs of the labour market, and to promote the development of integrated curricula with the emphasis on problem-oriented learning. Students can thus be encouraged to find a job, train further and become imbued with the concept of lifelong learning (output oriented vocational education).

1998 Work Programme:

To examine the extent to which students' performance has improved as a result of efforts undertaken in the *High Schools* and *Community Colleges* to simultaneously prepare students for an activity and also for further training. Research particularly into the degree to

which structuring, organisation and implementation can be brought about in order to reach the planned aims. The NCRVE's work is guided in this by the general aims of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (with very general over-arching themes: teaching and learning; curricula, career guidance, technology, student support; partnerships and agreement on change; trainees, companies, State, elected representatives, local authorities; organisation and financing, etc.).

Projects: curriculum integration, academic skills, performance at the workplace; development of work-related technological skills.

2.9.3 VET Research outside national vocational education policy

In order to gain an overview, the last five years of relevant journals – *Comparative Education* and *Comparative Education Review* – were assessed. The subject of VET research was not explicitly dealt with. The main subjects of research are international matters and theoretical aspects of international comparative VET research.

Comparative Education

Patricia Broadfoot (ed.): Comparative Education. Massachusetts,
http://www.carefax.co.uk/ced-ad.htm

International matters, curriculum research, skills research

The quarterly journal *Comparative Education* which has been in existence for 34 years publishes up-to-date information and analyses of problem issues and trends in educational studies worldwide. Particular attention is paid to the importance of comparative studies concerning the drawing up and implementation of education policy, not only with explicit reference to education, but also combined with related disciplines and social, national and international developments. The journal also deals with issues related to governmental policy, management, sociology, technology and communication insofar as they affect education and training. The journal's administrative board which is made up of nine experts in comparative education meets 3 times per year to discuss contributions with the advice of experts, particularly on international issues.

Comparative Education Review

Erwin H. Epstein (ed.): Comparative Education Review. Chicago,
http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/CER

The journal *Comparative Education Review* is the official mouthpiece of the American Comparative and International Education Society, an organisation of researchers and university teachers of comparative education, which was set up in 1956 with the aim of improving knowledge and teaching methods in the field of comparative education. The journal comes out quarterly and apart from book reviews it also deals with international matters and publishes theoretical contributions, for example concerning the effects of globalisation and decentralisation on the education sector. There were no specific contributions on VET research.

3. International scientific societies and independent research establishments

3.1 Establishment and organisational framework, by Uwe Lauterbach

It was the political framework conditions which provided the decisive impetus for the establishment of the discipline known as *comparative education*. Without such organisational roots the sustainable presence of any science or branch of research would be impossible. Thus at this point we will consider in brief whether and how it has been possible to establish comparative education on a permanent basis within the scientific community as well as in the area of transfer between education policy and education administration at national, regional and global level.

The first moves towards comparative education were prompted by 'curiosity' about seemingly incomprehensible foreign education sys-

tems. As a consequence, visits to the countries deemed interesting became increasingly popular. Hilker (1962, pp. 22 ff.) coined the phrase 'the age of educational journeys', which developed from the cultural voyages of the 17th and 18th centuries.

From the second half of the 19th century national and international institutes and organisations which systematically carried out educational documentation crystallised out of this travel activity. National institutes to be mentioned here are: *The Office of Education* (Washington/USA 1868) from which emerged the Ministry of Education, the *Musée Pédagogique / Institut Pédagogique National* (Paris/France 1879), the *Pestalozzianum* (Zurich, Switzerland 1874), the *Office of Special Enquiries and Reports* (London, Great Britain 1895) and the *Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht* (Berlin/Germany 1914); international educational organisations and institutions include: the *Bureau International d'Education* (Geneva 1925), the *Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle* (Paris 1925), *UNESCO* (Paris 1946), the bodies of the former Western European Union/European Community/European Union such as *EURYDICE* (Brussels 1981) and of the *Council of Europe* such as *EUDISED* (Strasbourg 1970). Even the *World Bank* in Washington D.C. has its own Education and Employment Division which backs up the World Bank's political work with scientifically based studies etc. (Hilker 1962; Schneider 1961; Vorbeck 1997; Loxley 1994). Since 1971 the *OECD* has been running the *Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI)* in Paris, which has a prominent profile on account of its lively publication work, e.g. Education at a Glance, OECD Indicators.

Apart from the national and international documentation centres and research establishments in the individual countries, chairs and institutes for international and comparative education also developed within the universities. Once again the developments here took off in the USA in 1923 with the *Teachers College of Columbia University* (New York) and researchers such as: Monroe, Kandel, Alexander, Bereday, the *Comparative Education Centre of the University of Chicago* (1959), *Stanford International Development Education Committee (SIDEC)* (1965), in *England* with the *Institute of Education of the University of London* (1932), Kings College, the Universities of Reading, Oxford and Leeds, and in *Germany* with the Pädagogische Akademie Bonn (1926), Universität Köln with Friedrich Schneider (chair but not for comparative educational studies).

These institutions, which are integrated into university research and teaching, were and still are of fundamental importance to the shaping of theory and the further development of the discipline in general. The central role of the university institutes in the development of comparative education and its theories is abundantly clear just from the development of comparative education as dealt with in this chapter.

German developments were marked during the age of National Socialism by virtually total isolation from the outside world. After the Second World War, comparative education took off again with renewed impetus. Under the auspices of the French occupying powers a congress was held in Mainz in 1949. The American occupying powers initiated the *International Conference on Comparative Education* which took place in Chiemsee in April 1949. The *Hochschule für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung* which was founded in 1952 in Frankfurt am Main – it gave rise to the German Institute for International Educational Research in 1964 – also helped to bring German expert circles back into the mainstream of international development. The chair for comparative education at Hamburg University (1950) and the UNESCO Institute in Hamburg (1953) were the first post-war creations in the comparative education field (Hilker 1962, p. 70 ff.; Schneider 1961, p. 65 ff.). Comparative education developed further during the sixties and seventies through the work of the university institutes in Marburg (Froese), Heidelberg (Roehrs) and Bochum (Anweiler). As a result of the growth and development of universities in the wake of German reunification, additional professorships for comparative education were set up at the universities of Leipzig and Dresden as well as at Humboldt University in Berlin.

As a direct result of the conferences on comparative education, scientific societies were founded, such as the *Comparative Education Society* in 1956, which is today's *Comparative and International Education Society (CIES)*, the *Comparative Education Society of Europe (CESE)* in 1961, and the *World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES)* in 1970. The CIES and CESE grew out of the scientific work of the university institutes for educational studies or comparative education (Loxley 1994, p.933-942; Hilker 1962; Schneider 1961). The *WCCES* brings together the national societies (Comparative Education Society) of which there are now more than 25, whilst the membership of the CIES is made up of individual researchers.

After the Second World War a series of independent research institutes outside the universities were set up. They are mainly financed through national public funding or by international organisations. They are either very empirically organised and provide services for the education administration (e.g. the *Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogique Sèvres (CIEP) and* the *Deutsche Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung (DIPF))*, or they are strongly rooted in theory and method (e.g. *the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)).*

The picture is completed by regional or globally organised societies and organisations which were not founded in responce to executive or legislative requirements (non-governmental organisations) but rather as a result of the special interest of researchers, e.g. the *International Reading Association (IRA)* and the *International Association for Educational Assessment (IEA).*

3.2 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), by Uwe Lauterbach and Brigitte Steinert

Because of their free-floating position the independent international comparative research institutes are better suited to conducting research studies using this methodological concept than are institutes which are tied to national or international administrations or the university institutes which tend to concentrate more on developing theory (Loxley 1994, p. 934). The subject knowledge which links historical knowledge with present-day expertise about education systems with empirical analytical authority can generally be found or can be pooled in supra-institutional networks. Lack of staff – a common occurrence – presents more of a problem in tackling the increasing workload resulting from ever more complicated systems and contexts.

The latest TIMSS study can be quoted as an example (Baumert et al. 1997, particularly pp. 38 f). This international comparison of mathematical-scientific teaching was so demanding that it only came to a successful conclusion thanks to the fact that the project was carried out by an 'independent' international association of researchers, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in conjunction with national research institutes (e.g. in Germany: the Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung), national universities (e.g. the University of Kiel and Humboldt University Berlin), national ministries (e.g. the Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology in Germany), and international organisations, e.g. OECD.

The *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)* was founded in 1959 and is a non-governmental international association based in The Hague in the Netherlands, to which research institutes, universities and governmental authorities from over 45 countries belong. Its role consists of conducting international comparative school achievement studies and thereby developing indicators for learning processes and in particular for the outcome of learning. Through regular observation of the output of education systems a basis of knowledge can be built up for users in education policy, educational administration and educational research, in order to bring about improvements.

The core subjects taught in schools are the main subjects for comparative studies (the years of the main studies are shown in brackets): maths (1964, 1980-1982, 1994-1995), sci-

ences (1970-1971, 1983-1984, 1994-1995), six-subject survey (science, reading comprehension, literature, French and English as foreign languages, political education), reading literacy study (1970, 1990-1991), international study of achievement in written composition (1984-1985), classroom environment study/CES (1981-1983), computers in education study (1987-1990), pre-primary project (1988-1989, 1992-1996).

4. International organisations

4.1 World Bank Group, by Heike Maier and Heinz Bartel

Framework conditions

At the present moment the regional emphasis for loans is on the Eastern Asiatic and Pacific area as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. In the human development field the *World Bank Group*[5] provided 1,017 million US$ for 18 education projects in 15 countries in the 1997 tax year (1995: 2,096 million US$; 1996: 1,7057 million US$) (World Bank Annual Report 1997, p. 18). Loans for education rose significantly in the 1998 tax year. 36 loans were granted to 28 countries. Only one project in Hungary[6] and one in the Lebanon[7] dealt explicitly with vocational education in 1998. The total credit volume for this sector amounted to 3,129 million US$ (World Bank Annual Report 1998, p. 69). That provided 11% of the loans for the education sector.

[5] The group comprises the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Agency (MIGA) and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

[6] A programme against youth unemployment. Young peoples' chances on the labour market are improved by improved training possibilities. Total cost 60.1 million US$.

[7] Under the World Bank's reconstruction work 68.86 million US$ is being invested in the vocational education system in the Lebanon, to bring it up to market requirements.

Vocational education

The role of vocational education in the World Bank has changed since the early 90s. Whilst in the 70s and 80s it was projects in this field that were promoted in particular, nowadays the view is that:

'Vocational and technical skills are best imparted at the workplace, following general education. The private sector should be directly involved in the provision, financing and governance of vocational schooling.' (quoted from Watson 1996, p. 47)

Watson interprets this statement in relation to the real drop in loans to the vocational education sector in the following terms:

'Because VOCED has generally proved to be expensive it is far easier for the Bank to suggest that private employers should take on this role themselves: it excuses the Bank from becoming too heavily involved in that costly area again.' (Watson 1996, p. 53)

The World Bank Group acts first and foremost as a bank, i.e. research, if research there be, is always conducted from an economic point of view. The problem with this is that:

'The research base is largely restricted to that produced by the World Bank staff or commissioned by the Bank. The result is a self fulfilling prophecy: Research data supports the policy that the Bank wishes to pursue because that research has already helped to shape that policy'. (Watson 1996, p. 49; see also: Samoff 1993, p: 181-222)

The importance of the World Bank in terms of VET research tends therefore to be related to its role as a publisher, or in the transfer of knowledge. The (major) World Bank projects are now widely documented on the Internet. Via *Topics* (Education and Training), *Regions* and *Countries* or a server's global search engine, researchers can call up primary information.[8] Pdf documents about the vocational

[8] The server can be searched e.g. with key words (vocational Chile) for relevant documents.

education systems in individual countries can also be called up.[9]

4.2 Unesco, by Heike Maier and Heinz Bartel

Framework conditions

In the 1996/97 financial year there were 518.4 million US$ available to UNESCO. With this budget, which is actually no bigger than that of a sizeable university, UNESCO supports projects in 180 countries. Besides this budget, which is financed by the member states, Unesco also receives income from voluntary contributions. For the 1996/97 tax year these amounted to 290 million US$. (http://www.unesco.org (24 March 1999)) More than 35% of Unesco's funds go into the education sector.

The current priorities in UNESCO's work (http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/prog_idx.htm (1 April 1999)) are lifelong learning[10] and learning in the 21st century[11].

UNESCO's work in the education sector is supported by the following research institutes:

- International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris; (http://www.unesco.org/iiep/ (6 April 1999).)
- Unesco Institute for Education (UIE), Hamburg; (http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/index.html (6 April 1999).)
- International Bureau of Education (IBE), Geneva; (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/ (6 April 1999).)
- European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES), Bucharest. (http://www.cepes.ro/ (6 April 1999).)

Vocational education

Unesco is the only specialised agency of the UN to have a mandate in the education sector. It does not have a monopoly, however. In 1954 the following distribution of labour was agreed upon between the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNESCO:

'The ILO is primarily concerned with technical and vocational education and training in relation to occupational activities and welfare of employees. UNESCO is primarily concerned with technical and vocational education as part of the education of human beings (...). Technical or vocational education which takes place within a general education system is primarily a matter for UNESCO, subject to consultation with the ILO concerning the prospective demand for particular skills

[9] 'The Social Protection Team is pleased to make available a groundbreaking set of country study summaries and issues briefs on vocational education and training based on a joint World Bank- ILO study, Skills and Change: Constraints and Innovation in the Reform of Vocational Education and Training.' The views expressed here are those of the authors, and should not be attributed to their respective organisations.' in: http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/HDNet/Hddocs.nsf/7b5f392774476c0d85256681005 4d98e/d5afc250286633c6852566b100014bbb?OpenDocument (18 March 1999).

[10] Subject areas are: Education for All Forum, Alternative Education for Marginalised Youth, Learning without Frontiers, Early Childhood and Family Education, Special Needs Education, Preventive and Health Education, Information in the field of drug abuse prevention, UNESCO programmes and Activities for Women, Promoting Girls' and Women's education in Africa, in: http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/prog_idx.htm (1 April 1999).

[11] Subject areas are: World Conference on Higher Education, UNITWIN UNESCO Chairs Programme, Academic Mobility and Recognition, Civics Education and Human Rights Education, Linguapax, Associated Schools Project Network, General Secondary School Curricula and Teacher Training Materials, Science and Technology Education and Project 2000+, SEMEP- South Eastern Mediterranean Sea Project, UNEVOC- International Project on Technical and Vocational Education, World Teachers' Day 1998, UNESCO and the Elimination of Illiteracy, International Literacy Day, MINEDAF VII, Working Group on Education Sector Analysis (WGESA), Environmental Education, in: http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/prog_idx.htm (1 April 1999)

and the requirements to be fulfilled in respect of such skills.'[12]

UNESCO's work in the field of vocational education is essentially of a statutory nature. The *Recommendation on vocational education* which was adopted in 1962 was revised in 1974. In 1987 the first global congress on vocational education was held, at which the draft of a *Convention on Vocational Education* was tabled. This was approved in 1989 and ratified in 1991 by the Federal Republic of Germany, amongst others.

In organisational terms, vocational education within UNESCO has been upgraded. In 1992 the *UNESCO Technical and Vocational Education Project* (UNEVOC) was set up. In parallel to this development it would appear that the *Division for the Renovation of Secondary and Vocational Education (ED / SVE)* has become more sharply focused on general questions of vocational education. New subject areas have been introduced, and are organised on an interdisciplinary basis. Currently an attempt is being made to involve NGOs more closely with projects.[13] The *Section for Science and Technology Education* (http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/ste/framework/activities.html (6 April 1999) (1996-1997) already did this in its 1996/1997 programme[14].

The task profile of the UNEVOC project is as follows:

1. International exchange of ideas, experience and studies on policy issues;

2. Strengthening of national research and development capabilities;

3. Facilitating access to data bases and documentation; strengthening of the UNEVOC Network (http://www.unevoc.de/workplan/wp9899-e.htm (6 April 1999).

The board for the UNEVOC project has recommended that the work should continue even once the pilot stage has come to an end (http://www.unevoc.de/events/ev9703hq.htm (27 April 1999). Colin N. Power, Deputy Director-General for Education, made a statement at the second international congress on vocational education in Seoul in 1999, by which UNEVOC also feels bound.

'Partnerships and networking will also be critical to meet the challenges of globalisation and technological development. Working with the International Labour Organisation and the World Bank, we must adopt an integrated approach to TVE, a vital component of any development programme. At the national level we must encourage ministries of education and labour to combine their theoretical knowledge and practical training and to work closer together for their mutual benefit'. (http://www.unesco.org/education/educnews/99_03_11/letter.htm

Specific research opportunities in the field of vocational education

Monetary Backing

In UNESCO's 1998/99 budget some 86.7 million US$ are earmarked for the scientific programme from the ordinary budget, with an additional 62 million US$ in the extra-budgetary provision. The MOST programme – Management of Social Transformations – lies at the heart of social scientific research. Individual fields of research are as follows:

1. Change in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies;
2. towns as places with accelerated processes of social change and migration issues; and
3. local and regional management of economic, technological and ecological change.

Projects which fulfil the following criteria may be presented in the framework of these areas of research:

[12] Memorandum from the ILO and UNESCO of 14.10.1954 quoted from: H Krönner: Der Weg zur Berufsbildungs-Konvention der UNESCO, in: UNESCO today III (1992), p. 238.

[13] Greater account should be taken of themes such as the environment, health, nutrition and social relations in general.

[14] Amongst other things a 6 year project on Scientific, Technical and Vocational Education for Girls in Africa is being run at the present moment.

'Research projects are expected to be comparative, inter-disciplinary, international and relevant to policy. They must be conceived and implemented by groups or networks of researchers in several countries. They must be internationally structured, well coordinated, and cover a broad scope. This implies a solid project framework, as well as a clearly identified cooperation procedure between the groups of researchers. The project proposal must state clearly why a comparison between the countries selected is likely to produce important knowledge for scientific questions and for the political decision-taking process.' (quoted from: http://www.unesco.de/Info/Shs.htm#zurück (26 April 1999))

There is also another interesting option for smaller scale projects. Every two years the national UNESCO offices offer Partners hip Programmes. 25,000 US$ is granted per project. The choice of subject is free.

Instruments

With the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) UNESCO has tried to create an instrument which serves 'as an instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting statistics of education both within individual countries and internationally'. (International Standart Classification of Education. ISCED 1997)

The ISCED classification was revised in 1997. Initial vocational training in the secondary sector is classified as ISCED level 3, whilst vocational training in the tertiary sector comes under ISCED level 5. The aim of this is to 'make existing international statistics on education more transparent' (Statistisches Bundesamt Wiesbaden 1997, p. 8)

Communications

For scientists working in the vocational education sector UNEVOC is /is becoming a central communications interface. The following interactive activities are currently up and running:

- A mailing list – the UNEVOC E Forum (http://www.unevoc.de/forum.htm (6 April 1999) – which can be used for the general, interactive exchange of information;
- UNEVOC-Info (a free E-journal)[15];
- UNEVOC Network covers UNEVOC centres in the UNESCO member states[16];
- Publications[17].

Materials

Materials which are of relevance to vocational education can be consulted using the following databases:

- *Innodata* (http://www.software-engineering.ch/Infobases/IBE/InnoData/ (6 April 1999)

  The emphasis of the data files is on reports on innovative concepts/projects in the primary and secondary sectors;

- *UNESBIB* (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/unesbib.html (6 April 1999)

  Bibliography of UNESCO printed documents and publications (reference database);

- *UNESDOC* (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/ (6 April 1999)

[15] UNEVOC INFO No. 4/1998, Contents: Regional Conferences to prepare for the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, Seoul, Republic of Korea; UNESCO-OEEK Symposium on Vocational Education and Training (Greece); International Conference on New Developments and Models of Reform with focus on South East Asia (China); Information Technology and Technical and Vocational Education; National Seminar on Technical and Vocational Education (Republic of the Congo), http://www.unevoc.de/uc-info/toc-e.htm (6 April 1999).

[16] The address list can be called up under: http://www.unevoc.de/direct/directory.htm (6 April 1999).

[17] Many publications are already available as pdf-downloads, http://www.unevoc.de/publicat/public00.htm (6 April 1999).

UNESDOC contains documents from UNESCO bodies (General Conference, Executive Board, Director etc. (full text database);

- *World Data on Education* (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/Inf_Doc/Nat_reps/natdb96.htm (6 April 1999)

  Country profiles can be looked up in this database (full text database).

4.3 International Labour Organisation (ILO), by Heike Maier and Heinz Bartel

Framework conditions

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (www.ilo.org (17 May 1999) Delimitation from UNESCO, see above) which was founded in 1919 is the only UN Organisation whose bodies are composed on a tri-partite basis of representatives of governments, employers and workers. The ILO lays down statutory requirements in conventions and recommendations in the field of labour law, contractual and organisational freedom, abolition of forced labour, etc. *Training* is one of the organisation's main priorities. This can be seen for example in ILO Convention 142 (1975) on *Vocational Guidance and Training in the Development of Human Resources* and in Convention no. 159 (1983) on *Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)* (www.ilo.org/public/english&60mpfor/over.htm (17 May 1999)). But it also provides concrete support in the fields of vocational education, rehabilitation, labour market policy, labour administration, working conditions, labour law, etc. The organisation's budget for these tasks amounted to 79,500,000 US$ in 1996/97 (1998/99 estimated 569,080,000 US$) (http://www.ilo.org/public/english/200progr/pb/98/draftbud.htm (17 May 1999)).

Field programmes, technical programmes and action programmes are conducted. The *field programmes* are represented by continental/regional institutes. The South American region is one of the most active here with the CINTEFOR research and documentation centre and MERCOSUR[18]. The action programmes are basis-oriented and run across the field and technical programmes.

The *technical programmes* are thematically structured operational units (http://www.ilo.org/public/english/depts/depts.htm (17 May 1999), http://www.ilo.org/public/english/130inst/index.htm (17 May 1999)). The units include the International Institute for Labour Studies (http://www.ilo.org/public/english/10ilc/ilc83/dg-repc.htm#Heading10 (19 May 1999)) and the International Training Centre. The former deals with international labour market research, the Turin-based Training Centre provides amongst other things (further) training for officials from educational administrations, trade unions, etc.

Vocational education

The ILO's main task is that of:

'[...] developing the policy-making capacity of governments, employers' and workers' organisations and strengthening dialogue and co-operation in the field of training. These activities took the form of the dissemination of information to constituents, policy dialogue and the provision of advisory services.' [19]

A survey was conducted in co-operation with the World Bank, looking at the 'best practice in training policies' in 15 countries in the process of transformation.[20] Plenty of advice and technical support was also offered or provided relation to the implementation/further devel-

[18] SEAPAT is the Asiatic counterpart of CINTERFOR, although it has not yet achieved the level of professionalism and quality of the latter. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/mdtmanil/index.htm (18 May 1999).

[19] Constraints and innovations in vocational training reform (a joint World Bank/ILO publication) (in preparation).

[20] Country studies were drawn up for Indonesia, Tunisia, and China. http://www.ilo.org./public/english/10ilc/ilc83/dg-repc.htm#fn35 (19 May 1999)

opment/assessment of national training systems.[21]

The *Employment and Training Department* (EMP-FORM)[22] with its *Training Policies and Systems Branch* (POLFORM) has overall responsibility for vocational education. (http://www.ilo.org/public/english/60empfor/polform/over.htm (18 May 1999)) A total of 28,000,000 US$ was available from the ordinary budget in 1998/99 (1996/97: 28,000,000 US$). The following projects were amongst those implemented (in partial co-operation with the regional bureaus):

- *Training Policies and Systems*
  'The objective of the technical programme... is the improved capacity of ILO member countries to design and put into work-related training policies and systems, contribution to human resource development as a critical element in achieving economic growth and social equity'.[23]
- *Training Policy Reforms: The Evidence*
  This project was conducted in collaboration with the World Bank. Resistance to and innovation related to reforms in the vocational education field were documented in 17 countries.[24]
- *Management of Vocational Education and Training*

  This research project produced a handbook edited by Vladimir Gasskov.

  'It (the handbook) provides state-of-the-art knowledge relating to managing and organising vocational education and training (VET) systems and draws upon lessons from experience, current trends, and best practice in the administration of public training service around the world.' (http://www.ilo.org/public/english/60empfor/polform/prog10.htm (18 May 1999))
- *Evaluation of Training*

  W. Norton Grubb (University of California at Berkeley) and Paul Ryan (University of Cambridge) attempt to provide an overview of theory and practice in the field of assessment in this research project. [25]
- *Strategic Partnership in Training*

  A research project on the role of the state and of companies.

  'The study indicated that effective partnerships require not only a favourable policy environment and incentives but also greater capacity of the social actors involved, particularly employers and workers and their organisations. This means, inter alia, strengthening worker/employer perspectives- policies, strategies and mechanisms- in order to enable worker and employer organisations to participate more effectively in the governance of training systems and to deliver information and services for their affiliates.' (http://www.ilo.org./public/english/60empfor/polform/prog7.htm (19 May 1999))

[21] Additional programmes: Employers Activities, Enterprise and Cooperative Development, Equality for Women, Multinational Enterprises, Statistics etc., see http://www.ilo.org/public/english/depts/depts.htm (17 May 1999).

[22] The former departments for Training Policies and Programme Development and the Vocation Training System Management were dismantled as a result of restructuring.

[23] Gill, Indermit/Flutman, Fred (Publ.): Constraints and Innovation in the Reform of Vocational Education and Training, no page, no year. The countries looked at were: Chile, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazachstan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Tanzania, West Bank/Gaza, and Zambia. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/60empfor/polform/prog6.htm (18 May 1999).

[24] 10 countries were studied: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Pakistan, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/60empfor/polform/prog6.htm (18 May 1999).

[25] http://www.ilo.org./public/english/60empfor/polform/prog5.htm (19 May 1999). 26 countries were looked at: Australia, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Ivory Coast, Japan, Malaysia, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, United States.

As a result of this research project POLFROM is currently developing an 'Action Programme on Social Dialogue on Training' which should give rise to new, innovative forms of co-operation between the social partners.

- Training Policy Analysis: A methodology (*http://www.ilo.org./public/english/60empfor/polform/prog12.htm* (19 May 1999))

  'While training systems and training issues differ considerably from country to country, it was felt that, as in the case of a doctor examining a patient to cure an ilness, the method of arriving at sensible policy options need not vary across borders. It was consequently decided to try and develop, on the basis of practical experience, a methodology of training policy analysis in a format suitable for use in workshops and seminars targeted at training system officials in general, and at training policy analysts in particular. (...) A training package, containing six modules, has therefore been developed in the form of an elaborate, computer-aided slide show, using MS-Power Point.'

- *Skills Training and Employment in Conflict-Affected Countries*[26]

Research opportunities in the field of vocational education

- Instruments/statistics (http://www.ilo.org./public/english/120stat/class/index.htm)

  Analogous to the ISCED classification, the ILO provides the following classifications: (http://www.ilo.org./public/english/190bibl/dblist.htm)

  - International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO)
  - International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE)
  - International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC)
  - Classifications of occupational injuries (formerly industrial accidents)

- Materials

  Materials which can be of relevance to vocational education can be called up via the following online databases: (OECD Annual Report 1999)

  - ILODOC
    Database containing more than 50,000 files. ILO material is indexed in three languages. Monthly update (reference database).

  - ILOTERM
    Glossary for English, French, Spanish and German specialist terms from the vocational sphere

  - NATLEX (ILIS)
    Database which documents national labour law

  - LABORDOC
    The database, which contains all the material from the ILO's documentation centre (including non-ILO documents), is currently not available online. A CD-ROM is being prepared for 1999.

4.4 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), by Brigitte Steinert and Heike Maier

Framework conditions

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which is based in Paris was founded in 1961. Its 29 member states are amongst the richest countries on earth. Its role is to promote economic development, employment and living standards and to contribute to the development of the

[26] The subjects of basic labour statistics include the economically active population, unemployment and underemployment, average earnings and hours of work, time rates of wages and normal hours of work, labour cost, consumer price indices, household expenditure and household income, occupational injuries and occupational diseases, and industrial disputes (strikes, lockouts and other action due to labour disputes) http://www.ilo.org./public/english/120stat/index.htm (20 May 1999).

world economy and world trade. The organisation sees its main task as being the planning, coordination and intensification of economic co-operation and development, encouraging economic development with full employment and monetary stability. The OECD's current annual budget amounts to 200 million US$, contributed by member states in proportion to their ability to pay. Around 80% of this budget goes in staffing costs. (78) Besides this core budget, countries may also participate in specific projects or programmes on a voluntary basis. Overall there are more than 200 committees, working parties and expert groups which ascertain statistical data, collect, assess and make it available to the public in co-operation with the Secretariat in Paris.

General and vocational education

UNESCO, EUROSTAT and the OECD co-operate under the aegis of the OECD to achieve the international comparability ofWithin the OECD questions on general and vocational education are mainly handled in the Department for Statistics and Indicators in the OECD's Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Questions. Promotion and support for the development of research activities and the introduction and testing of innovations in the education sector is carried out by the *Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)* which was set up in 1968.

Current OECD activities related to educational development and research are concentrated in particular on the areas of educational statistics, developing a framework concept for the international comparison of education systems, and the international comparative measurement of student performance. Since 1992 the OECD has been producing a series of educational indicators – 'Education at a Glance – OECD Indicators'- on a yearly basis, as well as investigations into individual questions on the indicator table as 'Education Policy Analysis'. Within the INES network (indicators of education systems) the individual member states work on and support the drawing up of indicators for central areas of the education sector, priorities may change and include: the demographic and social context, educational expenditure and staffing, costs and returns, participation in education, decision-takers and structures, student performance and diplomas, employment figures. From an analytical point of view for the industrialised nations which belong to the OECD, this collection of statistics and indicators is much more highly differentiated than are UNESCO's Statistical Yearbooks.

the databases and classification systems in the INES framework. The 'International Standard Classification of Education' (ISCED) which was produced in 1976 by UNESCO's educational statistics department and which has served to collect, collate and publish national and international educational statistics, has since been updated by the OECD and published under the title 'Classifying Educational Programmes, Manual for ISCED-97. Implementation in OECD Countries'. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is also based within the INES indicator programme. PISA aims at providing participating states with comparative data on the efficiency of their education systems. For this purpose, starting in the year 2000, the skills of 15 year old students which are essential to a successful life style will be assessed at 3-yearly intervals. The emphasis will change each time round, but the areas to be covered are reading comprehension, maths, science, and cross-subject skills.

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Annex: Addresses of national research institutions, international scientific societies and international organisations[27]

National research institutions

Australia

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)
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Homepage: http://www.acer.edu.au

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
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Fax: (61)883319211
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Argentina

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Argentina
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Fax: 541 – 9618195
e-mail: cenep@cenep.satlink.net
http://www.undp.org/regionl/latam/argentina/cenep

Brazil

Centro Internacional para Educação, Trabalho e Transferência de Tecnologia
Rua Mariz e Barros 678, 1° andar – Tijuca
20270-002 Rio de Janeiro – RJ
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Fax: (+55) 41/224.5170
Internet: http://www.nupes.cefetpr.br

[27] Although compiled carefully, the information given here does not claim to be complete or without any mistakes. Since the manuscript was finalised by autumn 1999, addresses, persons and tasks may have changed in the meantime.

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Central Institute for Vocational Education Peking
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100032 Beijing, P.R. China

Shanghai Institute of Human Resource Development
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National Institute for Educational Research of Japan (NIER)
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Canadian Education Association (CEA)
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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
350 Albert Street
Box 1610
Ottawa, ON Canada
Tel: (613) 992-0691
Fax: (613) 992-1787
z-info@sshrc.ca
http://www.sshrc.ca

Strategic research networks in education and training des SSHRC:
Overview:
http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/srnet/srnet.htm

NALL: New Approaches to lifelong learning: lifelong linking of formal, nonformal and informal learning: current practices, social barriers and new approaches
Network leader: Dr. David W. Livingstone
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5S 1V6
Telephone: (416) 923-6641
FAX: 416-926-4725
http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/sese/csew/nall/index.htm

Training matters: education and training for new forms of work: canadian experiences and international perspectives
Dr. Carla Lipsig-Mummé
Centre For Research On Work and Society
276 York Lanes
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
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PHONE: (416) 736-5612
http://www.yorku.ca/research/crws/network/

english/english.htm

EvNet: Network for the evaluation of education and Training technologies
Network leader: Dr. Carl Cuneo
KTH 214 Dept. of Sociology
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University 1280 Main St. W. Hamilton
Ont. L8S 4M4
Ph. (905)-525-9140, x23602, x24021 Fax: (905) 628-3545;
E-mail: cuneo@mcmaster.ca ; Carl.Cuneo@LRSH.mcmaster.ca
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WRNET: The western research network on education and training: the link between educational provision, processes and outcomes
Network Leader: Dr. Jane Gaskell
Western Research Network on Education and Training
Faculty of Education, UBC
2125 Main Mall
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V6T 1Z4 Phone (604) 822-5708
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Relations formation emploi: analyse des modes de collaboration entre les partenaires de la formation, des effets sur leur organisation et des résultats pour les apprenants
Network Leader: Marcelle Hardy
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UNEVOC Canada
Chris Chinien, Ph.D.
Director, UNEVOC-Canada,
Faculty of Education,
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http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/unevoc/about/

Human Resources Development Canada
140 Promenade du Portage
Hull, Quebec
K1A-0J9
Fax 953-8584
http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/
in particular the Applied research branch ARB
VOYER, Jean-Pierre
Director General 994-1620
Jean-Pierre.Voyer@spg.org
http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/contacts/contacts.shtml

Humber College
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Dr. Peter Dietsche
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Etobicoke, ON., M9W 5L7

Russian Federation

Institute for the Development of Vocational Education, Moscow
Institut razvitija professional'nogo obrazovanija
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125319 Moskva
Director: Prof. Dr. Igor P. Smirnov

Russian Academy of Education, Vocational Education Department
Rossijskaja Akademija Obrazovanija, Otdelenie professiona'nogo obrazovanija
ul. Pogodinskaja, 8
119905 Moskva
Leader: Prof. Dr. Alexander M. Novikov

State Vocational Education University of the Urals, Ekaterinburg
Uralskij Gosudarstvennij Professional'no-Pedagogiceskij Universitet
ul. Masinostroiteli, 11
620012 Ekaterinburg
Rector: Prof. Dr. Gennadij M. Romantsev

Institute for Technical Vocational Education of the Russian Academyof Education, St. Petersburg
Institut professional'no-techniceskogo obrazovanija Rossijskoj Akademii Obrazovanija
ul.Chernjakovskogo, 2
191119 St. Petersburg
Director: Prof. Dr. Antonina P. Beljajeva

Switzerland

See Swiss Text (Chapter 2.6).

Turkey

The Research and Development Centre of Vocational and Technical
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Turkey
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Latin America

CINTERFOR
Avda. Uruguay 1238, Montevideo, Uruguay
Tel.: 005982 90 20 557
Fax: 005982 92 13 05
e-mail: Cinterfor@attmail.com
http://www.cinterfor.org.uy

Biblioteca Nacional de Maestros y Centro Nacional de Información Educativa
Pizzurno 935 P.Baja, 1020 Buenos Aires
Fax: 0054-1 811-0275

Independent supra-regional and international scientific societies and research institutes

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)
IEA Secretariat
Herengracht 487
1017 BT Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel.: +31 20 625 3625
Fax: 31 20 420 7136
E-Mail: Department@iea.nl
URL: http://uttou2.to.utwente.nl

International organisations and their research and documentation institutes

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

OECD Headquarters (Int. Secretariat)
2, rue André- Pascal
F 75775 Paris Cedex
Tel. and Fax: (0033)1-45248200
URL: http://www.oecd.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO Headquarters
7, place de Fontenoy
F-75352 Paris
Tel.: (0033) 1-45681000
Fax: (0033) 1-45671690

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

ILO Headquarters
4 route de Morrillons
CH-1211 Geneva
Tel.: (0041) 22-7996111
Fax: (0041) 22-7988685
E-mail doscom@hq1.ilo.ch.

World Bank Group

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ANNEX:

VET related research on behalf of the European Commission

Research on vocational education and training in the current research framework of the European Commission

Lieve Van den Brande

Table of contents

Introduction

Vocational education and training has not only been an issue for training, social and employment policies, but is also of paramount importance within the research framework.

Many questions and issues are still unsolved and indicate the necessity for coordinated comparative research for national and European policy making. What are the pathways and bridges between learning and work in Europe and how can they be developed? How do learning strategies and policies integrate with new trends in employment and work?

These research questions – among many others – are addressed in the key action on: 'Improving the socio-economic knowledge base' under the *horizontal programme: 'Improving the human research potential'*[1] *of the fifth framework programme (FP5) for research, technology and development (RTD).*

The horizontal programme 'improving the human research potential and the socio-economic base', or human potential as it has become known, has evolved from the research priorities addressed by two former programmes 'training and mobility of researchers' (TMR) and 'targeted socio-economic research' (TSER)[2].

The human potential programme for 1998 to 2002 consists of five distinct actions[3]*. Through these activities the programme is at the forefront of enhancing European mobility and cooperation in recognition of the essential role played by education and training:*

a) *supporting training and mobility of researchers* implemented through two lines: research training networks and Marie Curie fellowships;

b) *enhancing access to research infrastructures*, implemented through trans-national access to major research infrastructures, infrastructure cooperation networks and research infrastructure and research infrastructure RTD projects;

c) *promoting scientific and technological excellence*, implemented through high-level scientific conferences, distinctions for high-level research work and raising public awareness activities;

d) *support for the development of scientific and technology policies in Europe*, implemented through strategic analysis of specific political issues and the establishment of a common basis of science, technology and innovation indicators;

e) the key action on *'improving the socio-economic knowledge base'*, helping to provide a solid research foundation towards a 'Europe of knowledge'.

The research outcomes on 'vocational education and training', all refer to research projects under the key action and its former programme 'targeted socio-economic research'.

1. Description of the key action: 'improving the socio-economic knowledge base'

1.1 Introduction

The key action 'improving the socio-economic knowledge base'[4] is one of the action lines of the horizontal programme: 'improving human potential and the socio-economic knowledge base' of the fifth framework programme (FP5) for research, technology and development

[1] Council Decision 99/173/EC of 25 January 1999 – OJ L 64, 12.3.1999, p. 105. In addition, Council Decision 99/65/EC concerning the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities and for the dissemination of research results for the implementation of the fifth framework – OJ L 26, 1.2.1999, p. 1.

[2] Council Decision 94/915/EC of 15 December 1994 – OJ L 361/77, 31.12.1994.

[3] For further information on the activities of the human potential programme see Website http://www.cordis.lu/improving.

[4] For further information on the key action, see website http://www.cordis.lu/improving.

(1998-2002). Its indicative budget is EUR 165 million.

The overall aim of the key action is to improve through research understanding of the major structural changes taking place in European society, to identify ways of managing these changes and to involve European citizens more actively in shaping their own future.

The key action utilises, builds upon and extends work carried out in the TSER (targeted socio-economic research) programme of the fourth framework programme (FP4). It is implemented through RTD projects, thematic networks, research infrastructures and various types of accompanying measures.

As well as improving the social science knowledge base, this key action aims to mobilise the social science research community in Europe and to develop a process of dialogue between this community, policy-makers at all levels and other key actors. Effective targeting and dissemination of results is a key feature. All the activities are expected to lead to policy relevant insights. As such the key action will help to sensitise policy-makers to the importance of socio-economic research.

1.2 Rationale and objectives of the key action

The European Union draws its strength both from the social and cultural diversities of its members as well as from the similarities of their experiences and common values. The Community also has a solid tradition of research in social and economic science and the humanities, which need to be mobilised to identify economic and social trends and requirements, both current and future, in order to contribute to the Community's competitiveness and quality of life of its citizens.

In a period of increasing challenges, such as unacceptable levels of unemployment, an ageing population, the globalisation of economies, an increase in inequalities, and a declining relative contribution to the world economy, European society will have to undergo changes towards achieving sustainable socio-economic development, the improvement of the quality of life of all its citizens and to maintain and enhance Europe's competitive position in the world. Social sciences must therefore be in a position to respond to these challenges, overcome national boundaries, through reinforcing cooperation and enhancing their analytical capacity and thereby supporting policy-making. Furthermore, the process of European integration has given rise to a new object of study – European society – which is different from the sum of its components, although clearly dependent on them.

The objective of this key action will be to improve our understanding of the structural changes taking place in European society in order to identify ways of managing change and to involve European citizens more actively in shaping their own futures. This will entail the analysis of the main trends giving rise to these changes, the analysis of the relationships between technology, employment and society, the impact of new technologies on working conditions, the re-appraisal of participation mechanisms for collective action at all levels of governance and the elaboration of new development strategies fostering growth, employment and economic and social cohesion.

This key action covers a number of subjects linked to the general objectives of the framework programme and aims at defining the base for employment – generating social, economic and cultural development and for building a European knowledge society. These subjects should not be seen in isolation, but as interrelated parts of a coherent and comprehensive framework.

Support will aim at developing a conceptual understanding of the processes described above, built upon empirical, comparative and prospective research, including constructing and integrating data and indicator systems and establishing a common research infrastructure. These activities will therefore contribute to provide the policy decision-making process with a sound knowledge of the challenges facing Europe, of their main consequences and of possible policy options to tackle them.

1.3 Thematic framework for this key action

Societal trends and structural changes

Against a background of profound structural, demographic and social changes, research within this theme will aim at elucidating the complex interactions between societal trends, life chances, changes in family structures, economic changes, labour market institutions, cultural patterns and value systems, taking European regional diversities into account. The analysis will include the phenomena of xenophobia, racism and migration. Attention will be focused on the impact on economic development, social integration, social protection and factors of social inequalities and discrimination.

The study of these interactions will provide a better understanding of the changing patterns of work and organisation of time, of the use of new types of atypical and part-time or temporary jobs, of the capacity of education and training to prepare individuals over their lifetime to a changing environment and to enhance knowledge of the gender issue in European society. Research work will provide a sound knowledge base and contribute to the formulation and development of the relevant European policies.

Technology, society and employment

Research under this theme aims to understand better the relationship of interdependency and embeddedness between technology and society and to contribute to an integrated approach to planning and development. While the need for integrating social, institutional and environmental concerns in the technological development process is now accepted, the possible options vary according to different kinds of technologies, the state of their development and diffusion in society. Research will be undertaken on methods of interaction between the various actors concerned – suppliers, users, advisory bodies, decision makers and public authorities. An improved understanding of the deployment and the impact of technologies in various socio-economic, territorial, institutional, political and cultural contexts in the Union is expected to arise from this work. Research will also examine the role of the public sector in the innovation process and how authorities interact with other partners.

Attention will be paid to the relationships between technology and employment, in particular the new information and communications technologies and the new ways of organising production and labour, including newly emerging professions, the geographical location of employment, changes in working conditions and in workforce skills. The role of innovation in education and training, the concept of lifelong learning, as well as how education and training can stimulate innovation, promote employment, social integration and equal opportunities, will also be examined.

Governance and citizenship

In the context of European integration, there is a need to reassess the role of the different levels of governance in Europe (local, regional, national and supranational). The aim will be to analyse the mutual articulation of responsibility and accountability at all levels and their real capacity as agents of change, whilst allowing for the development of mechanisms of dialogue, deliberation and decision-making to ensure effective cooperation between all the actors concerned.

Research will set out to explain to what extent the various types of economic and social regulation in Europe are the consequences of a specific socio-institutional and cultural construction, in order to define better European integration strategies. It will address both regulation by public authorities as well as civil initiatives and structures such as political parties, public interest groups and social partners. The examination of the role of public authorities will also cover the reassessment of their missions, and of the concept of public service and the notion of public interest. In this framework, analysis of the evolution of welfare systems will be a key element. In these analyses of governance, the notion of political, economic and social power will also be taken into account.

The analyses will be accompanied by the study of the concept of citizenship across Europe, and of types and systems of participation of citizens and regulation to which they give rise. Research will also analyse the influence of the various components of culture (traditions, language, history, heritage, religions, migrations) and of educational models on the development of values. Analysis at the level of the individual could complement, where appropriate, research in this area. The role of media in a global economy, in which international audio-visual cultural products are increasingly present, will also be examined. The analyses will examine the interrelationships between governance and citizenship.

New development models fostering growth and employment

This prospective work will seek to explore new sustainable development models to foster growth, job creation, equal opportunities, the reduction of inequalities and the improvement of quality of life. It will investigate the dynamics of creation and distribution of wealth and the role of the public sector in this context in a globalised economy where 'intangible' and service factors predominate. This will involve the development of indicators and methodologies for assessing the social and economic added value of various production models, identifying competitiveness factors including human capital, and characterising the different policies best adapted to the European economic area, taking into account Europe's regional divergences, and to the evolution of Europe in world economic relations.

Research will concentrate on analyses of issues such as organisational innovations, new types of work and employment including the working potential of the older population, responses to the increasing demand for services, the development of non-profit mutual support activities, and innovations in socio-economic partners cooperation. Socio-economic and demographic differences across Europe and the impact of the development models on economic and social cohesion will be included.

2. Research on vocational education and training

2.1 From TSER to the key action – research clusters

The key action utilises, builds upon and extends the work carried out in the TSER (targeted socio-economic research) programme[5] of the fourth framework programme (FP4) (1994-98). TSER invited proposals for research from the European research community on three main areas of economic and social research:

a) science and technology policy,

b) education and training (ET) and labour market integration,

c) social integration and social exclusion.

The increasingly severe economic and social problems facing European societies required a more coordinated and better funded and targeted research and policy response than before. The main objective of the TSER (1994-98) programme therefore was to build up both the knowledge base and research infrastructure for high quality, policy relevant, comparative European socio-economic research at both national and Community levels.

In Area II, research in education and training, the objective was to help link advances in science and technology and rapid economic/ technological change to the effectiveness of the link/ relationship between ET systems – in building up human capital, labour market entry and in-firm insertion/ training processes for attracting and using high quality labour.

Within this broad area of research the programme had three main objectives – to strengthen the European research base and improve communication and networking amongst European researchers, to develop and strengthen the knowledge base and to

[5] Council Decision 94/915/EC of 15 December 1994 – OJ L 361/77, 31.12.1994.

improve its quality and comparability, and to help apply it to the challenges facing European economies and societies.

There were three main objectives of TSER Area II (research in education and training):

a) the nature and extent of skill change and of labour demand in the economy and the effectiveness and nature of the responsiveness of ET systems to these changes;

b) the development of ET effectiveness/ evaluation models and methodologies – both in terms of conventional schooling/ training and in lifelong learning/ instructional arrangements;

c) transitions from school to work, and the nature and extent to which ET systems and their relationships with employment systems positively or negatively affect inclusionary or exclusionary processes.

The implementation of the TSER programme under FP4 and the key action 'improving the socio-economic knowledge base' under FP5 is achieved through calls for proposals. The former TSER programme was implemented through three calls for proposals; the key action socio-economic research has already launched one call and two or three others will follow. To date more than 200 projects have been funded[6].

In order to create synergies and improve added value, these projects have been assembled in a certain number of groups, covering a wide range of relevant themes for research and policy.

Various clusters are actually running and working on issues such as systems of innovation, work, knowledge and the economy; technology and society, employment, work, welfare and exclusion, etc.

Two of these clusters touch on the issue of vocational education and training:

a) 'schooling, training and transitions and its impact on the low skilled and youth unemployment';

b) 'human resource development and competence development in Europe'.

2.2 The cluster on 'schooling, training and transitions' and its impact on the low skilled and youth unemployment

From a societal perspective, a growing interest in knowledge and learning is emerging. Issues such as mobility and employability, often stimulated by governments, drive citizens to invest in personal growth in knowledge and competence in order to create better job positions for now and the future. Therefore tools that help citizens to attain these goals have become important not only at the industry level, but also at the societal level.

The education/ employment relationship and the transition from school to work has been the subject of substantial research under the TSER programme. More than 25 research projects of FP4 and first call projects of FP5 are exploring and analysing in depth research topics in relation to 'the dynamics of education to work transitions in Europe and its impact on the low skilled and youth unemployment.' Clustering work will allow researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and the general public to learn from the work going on within the RTD projects.

These topics have been initiated following concerns raised by policy-makers. First, most European countries have had persistent high youth unemployment rates for almost two decades, with the time between leaving full-time education and securing a regular job also increasing significantly. With a substantial proportion of young people entering the labour market (LM) either never finding secure employment or being intermittently unemployed – particularly those with the lowest qualifications– both policy-makers and researchers have focused a lot of attention on the initial school-to-work transition process. Initially, substantial State investments occurred in LM interventions such as State employment and training programmes, but

[6] TSER project synopses 1994-98 (three calls for proposals), 358 pages (1999). Key action project synopses 1998-2002 (first call of proposals), (February 2000).

gradually these shifted to more active and more effective labour market intervention, as the long-term secular rather than temporary nature of the labour market problem became increasingly apparent. As a result, in many European Union (EU) countries participation in such State programmes became a regular feature of many young people's transition between leaving full-time initial education and either getting a regular job or effectively withdrawing from active participation in the labour market. Besides the immediate social consequences of this, these issues remain highly relevant to policy since, when economic growth resumes, countries will need to ensure the workforce is in employment as there are generally low replacement rates. Even today, labour shortages have emerged in some countries, so that national and EU policies need to be geared to address the medium to long-term effects of declining demographic trends with improving economic growth.

Second, besides the current employment crisis, a rapid upgrading of education and training (ET) is required in most EU countries given the poor competitive position of EU countries for low- skilled production and high global competitiveness for high-skilled production and services, particularly from the USA and Japan.

Given these policy priorities, transition from school to work and more particularly how to overcome youth unemployment and low skills through education and training, has become a very important policy issue in most EU countries. One of the main policy research questions remains whether there is one or a number of different and equally effective solutions to these problems in different EU countries.

The underlying sources of these difficulties in different country labour markets within the EU are difficult to disentangle. They are not equally serious in all countries. They also tend to have different patterns in different countries, and there is no agreement on the exact source of the relative lack of job vacancies for young people. Successful policy interventions also tend to differ across countries. Not all EU countries reacted the same way to the crisis, nor do or can they have the same kind of effective policy solutions: the seriousness and nature of the problem varies across countries; countries have different youth/ age profiles, somewhat different economies, and clearly different institutional systems.

In these circumstances, comparative cross-country research is of particular interest to learn to what extent and why some policies may be generalised, while others appear to be effective only in particular country/ institutional contexts. This requires that research should aim at a clear understanding of the impact(s) of institutional contexts on education and training (ET) and labour market (LM) outcomes.

The main aims of this cluster of TSER projects on transitions from education to working life are as follows:

a) the cluster reviewed the main research findings, conclusions and general direction of the targeted socio-economic research (TSER) programme under the fourth framework programme of Directorate General on Research, dealing with research on education/ employment/ social exclusion relationships and, in particular, transitions from education to work in Europe and places it in the context of the wider research literature and policy priorities in the area;

b) the cluster highlighted the main areas where policy needs are well served by research, and other areas where research is poorly developed;

c) the cluster of RTD projects suggests the main areas of research and policy analyses that need to be addressed in the future.

For this cluster close cooperation and coordination was established with Directorate General on Education and Culture to enhance the link between research and ET policies, especially on issues such as employability and the contribution of vocational education and training to innovation and on actions targeted at young persons who left the education system too early without qualifications.

2.3 Cluster of RTD projects on 'human resource development and competence development in Europe'

Human resource development and competence development in organisations has been a subject of substantial research under the TSER programme in more than 17 research projects of FP4 and first call projects of FP5.

It is a fundamental principle of European economic and social policy-making that prosperity and employment growth in the EU is dependent upon creating and sustaining a highly skilled and adaptable workforce. The European approach on the whole has tended to regard high skills, training, good internal communication and a consensual organisational regime as a part of the competitive advantage of firms. In this context, the concept of the learning organisation captured the imagination of managers and policy-makers alike, in that it proposes a positive framework for managing change for the social partners.

In this context, however, this fundamental principle is challenged by the continuation of contradictory strategies. These emphasise deregulatory, hire and fire, low skill and low-wage strategies. Partly, this is a failure to adapt to the new conditions of global competition, and partly it is because in some cases these strategies offer competitive advantages – in the short term. Consequently, arguments on the importance of human capital and how it might best be developed inside organisations are at a crossroads. Management uncertainty, skill losses and gains, intense periods of change, continued and sustained innovation make the need for policies and strategies of skill and knowledge acquisition all the more crucial for Europe's future.

More than 17 research projects currently supported by the TSER programme (FP4) and by the key action (FP5) are creating important new empirical and theoretical knowledge in this field.

To gain the maximum advantage from these projects, it was first necessary to identify a set of current policy concerns, which would benefit from interaction with the RTD projects. The EU and national governments have introduced a spectrum of policies aimed at the twin goals of promoting competitiveness in international markets and maintaining social cohesion (in particular, protecting the losers in global competition). A sense of urgency now drives policy debates, because Europe's economic performance is declining relative to that of the US and many Asian countries. In comparison with these countries, European productivity growth is slow, and its competitiveness in international markets is weak.

The RTD projects encompassed by this cluster are directly relevant to these concerns. Human resource development and competence development have a prominent position in new policies. They stand level with R&D policy, technology policy and infrastructure policy. In part, this is due to a return to human capital theory, the doctrine that the knowledge and skills of a firm's employees are among its most important capital assets. Consequently, HRD and VET practitioners are now assigned the task of generating human capital, and supplying it to the labour market.

The new role of HRD and competence development is described in numerous policy documents and is closely linked to the European employment strategy, currently the major policy arena for debate on human resource and competence needs. The cluster of RTD projects seeks to inform this policy debate by identifying relevant findings from the fourth and fifth framework programme projects and presenting these at appropriate points in the process of policy development.

However, bridging the policy development and the research programme at European level is no simple matter. The national action plans submitted to the Commission each year record many different ways in which Member States are addressing the issues of HRD and competence development. In these plans, local conditions rather than pan-European trends are the major determining factor.

As in the task of making research relevant to practice, there is a problem of reconciling the

general trends of research with the specificities of actual practice. Nevertheless, on the basis of the collective experience of the RTD projects that have come together to form the cluster, it is believed that many commonalities European-wide exist and that the bridge between research and practice can have major impact.

Synopsis of selected VET related projects undertaken in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci I programme

Abstract

Out of a list of a number of Leonardo Da Vinci projects (Surveys and analyses strand) we selected those that seemed relevant for several issues dealt with in the second Report on Vocational Training Research in Europe: 'Training and learning for competences'. [1] *This list was provided by the European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture. In spring 1999, we asked the coordination teams to send us their project results (papers, reports etc.) and received those described below. The others were not yet completed at that time or coordinators did not respond.*

[1] The compilation was carried out by Silvia del Panta (Cedefop).

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Promoting the attractiveness of vocational education (PAVE)

LdV Id. 4272

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Countries: United Kingdom, Finland, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands.

Period: 1997 to 1998.

Final report: Curriculum Development Unit: 'Reconciling Liberal and Vocational Education', Dublin 1999.

Summary

The project was undertaken by six educational institutions from five countries. The aim of the project was to examine vocational education in these countries with a view to finding ways of improving its status and attractiveness.

The three main hypotheses were:

a) vocational education in general has a lower prestige than liberal education, because it is perceived to lack the quality traditionally associated with the latter;

b) liberal education at its best has a vocational dimension and vocational education at its best has a liberal dimension; hence it makes sense to integrate both;

c) there are already examples of such integration, but they need to be examined critically and articulated more clearly.

The methodology had three dimensions:

a) the philosophical dimension examined the meaning of liberal education in a modern context. It tried to restate the liberal ideal in a vocational mode and to integrate the liberal and vocational tradition by reconciling academic excellence and economic usefulness, combining sake with practical competence, past heritage with present society needs;

b) the historical/hermeneutic dimension facilitated the analysis, comparison and synthesis of documentary importance. In this manner, key texts in the development of vocational education were identified, analysed and compared in each of the five countries involved;

c) The ethnographic dimension examined good practice examples in the integration of the liberal and vocational traditions, through selected case studies in each of the five countries.

General observations, comparisons and conclusions arising from the research

The two terms 'vocational' and 'liberal', in the context of their development over the centuries, are often employed to denote two different approaches to education, but a precise definition is not easy. There are two distinct educational philosophies: the first, which values knowledge for its own sake, the second, which puts a premium on the way this knowledge is used in practice. They have two educational methodologies, a formal, abstract approach or a concrete, experimental one. The two terms are sometimes seen as opposing and even mutually exclusive, but they can be complementary and mutually supportive.

The starting point of PAVE is the fact that vocational education traditionally had a low status in comparison with academic or general education. In the past, vocational education was often associated with manual or low prestige occupations and was oriented towards non-academic and sometimes socially disadvantaged young people. In choosing this starting point it was hoped that the project would identify factors which can enhance the attractiveness of vocational education.

The curriculum is the attempt to give meaning and to structure the world, to learn something about what is worth knowing and why it is important to make the effort. It is not only about knowledge, pedagogy and assessment, but also about values and relationships. 'A good school needs to provide the young with a wider vision of values as well as knowledge and skills.' (Lawton,1998)

Vocational education was suitable for future manual workers, while general education was needed for future bureaucrats, managers and professionals. Nowadays, with the changing nature of work, these distinctions are breaking down. Young people should be educated as persons, not merely as workers.

Education for citizenship is not just a national priority, it is also crucial to the vision of what it means to be European. Young people have to be actively prepared for citizenship, both national and European. Transforming school into genuine communities, where people learn through living and doing as well as through thinking and talking, is the concrete expression of reconciling the liberal and vocational traditions by bridging the gap between the liberal and the vocational traditions.

The lower status of vocational education has its roots in the way society itself is organised. Vocational education should not only prepare technicians and skilled workers but young people must be given the chance to improve their status by being able to proceed to more meaningful forms of further and higher education. In this way they will find not only the opportunity to improve their vocational ability but also ways of enhancing their own human development.

The fundamental principle is that liberal and vocational education should be regarded as two complementary aspects of the same task and this task is to shape the individual. We need both the liberal and the vocational if we are to develop an educational philosophy and practice that will adequately serve the needs and aspirations of the human personality. The coming together of the liberal and the vocational has to be accomplished in the context of the various institutions, which have grown up in each tradition and which often strive to maintain their separate identities

National case studies

England

The PAVE case study in England focused on GNVQs (General National Vocational Qualification)[2], new national qualifications in 'general' vocational education that were first proposed in 1991 and introduced nationally from 1993. They were conceived as a major national initiative to upgrade vocational education in Britain. The study focused on two schools: an in-depth case study was conducted in Cranford Community School in Hounslow and a shorter support case study in Leigh City Technology College in Dartford, Kent. The findings are based on individual and group interviews (plus an informal discussion) with students, teachers, parents, management staff and career advisers. These schools, using GNVQ as their vehicle, have indeed narrowed the status gap between vocational and academic education, and they have reduced it by a truly significant amount. There are five overlapping and interacting factors in the schools' success:

a) the more or less immediate relish of 'GNVQ way' with its emphasis on active, responsible and meaningful learning;

b) the experience of good outcomes, especially personal growth in the short-term and access to higher education in the mid-term;

[2] Vocational courses and qualifications introduced in 1992 as a substitute for, or an addition to, certain other vocational qualifications. They are studied by approximately 25 per cent of 16-18 years olds nationally. GNVQ can be taken at three levels: Advanced, Intermediate and Foundation.

c) care, ingenuity and patience in dealing with the fears and misconceptions of teachers, students and families;

d) setting high entry requirements;

e) a culture of support and recognition for GNVQ achievement.

The last three factors are, in a broad sense, 'managerial', and that suggests another valid and illuminating way of regarding the finding. We could say that success was produced by the interaction of three necessary conditions:

a) good management. The attitude of the heads and the senior teachers in these schools are determined, focused and deeply convinced: they really believe and they really concentrate. And, also, there is a progressive involvement of ever higher proportions of staff in GNVQ teaching, which is establishing a professional culture of critical respect for GNVQ in the schools;

b) good curriculum. This is the most important condition of all. The schools felt some initial confidence in the educational value of GNVQ courses when they adopted them, but the confirmation of that value from the experience of teaching and learning them has been crucial to sustaining the upgrading project. Essential further confirmation of value came from the growing acceptance of GNVQ by universities;

c) the formal equivalence of vocational and academic. The formal stipulation of equivalence between GNVQ Advanced and A Level may be seen as the government's contribution. Official equivalence was used to powerful effect in these schools; of course, without good curriculum and good management this would not have meant much.

Finland

The Finnish case study focused on two schools, the Salinkallio Upper Secondary School, outside Lahti city centre, and the Lahti Vocational Institute, a multidisciplinary vocational school offering training in four traditional occupations or industries: vehicles and metal technology; construction technology; electrical engineering; and hotel, restaurant and catering services.

The experimental unit launched, in the autumn of 1996, its 'minimised' form of double qualification programmes (DQ)[3] where vocational students study only those academic courses which are indispensable for taking the minimum form of the matriculation Examination concurrently with their vocational studies. Representatives of the schools were informed about the PAVE project, the aims of the study, the partners involved, the focus on the case study and so on, and both schools immediately expressed their willingness to participate. The case study is based on theme, interviews and informal discussions with principals, teachers and study counsellors and with 6 students from the vocational school.

The operational environment of Finnish vocational education is characterised by strict cultural and systematic differentiation between academic and vocational tracks and an uneven territorial competition between these. Under such conditions, cooperation, as a means of developing new forms of vocational education, is revealed as quite revolutionary and problematic. The Lahti experiment deserves admiration as a very pragmatic response to realities, which exist with all their accompanying irrationalities and cannot be changed locally. As for the attractiveness of vocational education – in the Lahti vocational Institute, in Lahti and in Finland in general – conclusions remain somewhat open.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Lahti model, in its very pragmatism, is far from

[3] DQ: a minimised form of the double qualification studies was launched in the autumn of 1996. Here the vocational students study only those academic courses which are indispensable for taking the minimum form (four exams) of the Matriculation Examination concurrently with their vocational studies. The DQ studies take 2-3 years; some are more intensive than in the regular vocational programmes. The DQ students study their academic courses instead of the common general studies, optional general studies and free-choice studies included in the regular vocational programmes.

representing an ideal solution to the problem of improving the quality of vocational education. For instance, for various practical reasons, academic lessons must be made the responsibility of the upper secondary school teachers.

Greece

The Greek educational system was changed significantly in September 1997; change is continuing and it is unclear what proposed changes will be applied in the future.[4] The case study deals with schools in the Cassandra area of Chalkidiki. This is an area of slow economic growth, with much emphasis on tourism. The case study is rooted in the evolution of the upper secondary schools of the area. Two lyceums were examined in the study: a technical-vocational lyceum and a general academic lyceum. The objectives involved an investigation of ways in which the change from a technical-vocational lyceum to a unified lyceum would affect the existing balance between the two schools in the area. A satisfactory relationship had already been created between them. The unified lyceum is shaped by characteristics of general or liberal education and has no elements of vocational training. There is a strict refusal of students, parents, professionals and other social agencies to accept the reform, indicating that it does not contribute to the upgrading of vocational education. A liberal dimension can contribute positively to vocational education but the critical issues are the form it will take and the teaching methodologies, which will be used.

Liberalisation in vocational training must be shaped according to the terms of vocational training; the same principal must apply in the general lyceum where vocationalisation should be introduced in a form which does not transform a general lyceum into a vocational one. The concept of a Unified Lyceum does not mean a one-way route; both influences can coexist. School should reflect the real-life concerns and interests of their students, while teaching and learning should be personal and concrete and take into account everyday situations and modern conditions. Finally the world of the school should be more closely connected with the world of work, and work should be interpreted broadly as comprising activities that are unpaid as well as paid. In the end, it was not possible to draw final conclusions from the study, but the findings go some way towards indicating the expected results of the research project.

Ireland

The Irish case study is based on the 1995-1997 cohort of students in two schools in different parts of Ireland. School X has a staff of 25 teachers, does not have a guidance counsellor or a home-school liaison officer. School W has a staff of 45 teachers and it has a guidance counsellor and a home-school officer on the staff. This case study proposed to examine the parity of esteem of the Leaving Certificate Applied[5]; this is a modular course unlike other Leaving Certificate programmes which comprised two-year long courses. The first part of the study focuses on the meaningfulness of the programme as a learning experience for the students themselves. The second part considers the manner in which the school authorities and the state authorities manage the programme so as to raise its status both within and outside the school.

The Leaving Certificate Applied provides young people with a learning experience that they consider being worthwhile and meaning-

[4] TEE: this is the New Act (secondary technical-vocational education) that changed significantly the Greek Educational System in September 1997. Under this Act, vocational education has been given the same general aims as primary and secondary education. Vocational schools were also abolished and these were replaced by technical-vocational/ institutions.

[5] Leaving Certificate Applied is a modular course whereas the other Leaving Certificate programmes comprised two-year long courses. It is semesterised in that the two-year programme is divided into four segments with ongoing assessments at the end of January and May each year. It is cross-curricular in that students are required to carry out a total of nine cross-curricular tasks on topics that aim to enable young people to relate what they are learning in the modules to their own life experiences.

ful. They become more empowered through developing personal effectiveness, and a sense of community. The position of Leaving Certificate Applied students highlights the disparity of esteem, reflected in both academic and vocational traditions, for people who become marginalised from the formal education system.

Students appear to have joined the Leaving Certificate Applied because they were advised to do so by their teachers or because they wanted to avoid the pressurised learning environment associated with traditional examinations.

While they have benefited educationally from a changed learning environment, they now find themselves facing three major barriers in getting back into mainstream schooling:

a) barriers of structure, in that they are confined to a limited range of further education courses no matter how well they perform in state assessments;

b) barriers of prejudice based on a materialistic value system that places possible future personal power and influence above the dignity of the human person;

c) barriers of didactic learning/ teaching methodologies that are not conducive to experience-based active learning.

There are indications from the case study that the majority found the barriers so great that they opted out of the formal system and settled for low-skilled jobs or unemployment depending on local labour market conditions.

The Netherlands

In contrast with other European countries there are no intentions or initiatives to integrate the vocational and general education systems in the Netherlands. The purpose of this case study was to find out if MBO (secondary vocational education)[6] succeeds in qualifying their students for the labour market as well as for further study and citizenship. In consideration of the main issue of the PAVE study, linking general and vocational, the Dutch study focused on general aspects of the MBO curriculum. Vocational education should not only prove itself with regard to job preparation, but also with regard to personal development, social education and development of broadly-skilled, independent citizens. Dutch secondary vocational education gives most of their graduates a very good starting position in the labour market. This results from the good mix of theoretical and practical education, practical activity during a substantial part of the course, and collaboration between MBO and employers. Between 20-40% of MBO graduates continue their study in higher level vocational courses.

In the case study two types of students can be distinguished. The first group can be characterised as 'late-developers'; they did not succeed in primary school or junior secondary for a variety of reasons and they 'use' vocational education as a second opportunity to realise their ambitions. In the second group of students are those who have known for many years what kind of job they wanted in the future and who have had small jobs for family and friends. Many students enter MBO as a consequence of selection; this implies that not all of them in MBO have made very explicit career and job choices.

The main question of this study was: how does MBO succeed in preparing their students for social participation and citizenship? MBO success is in delivery of skilled workers and the most important aspect of social participation is succeeding in the labour market. The student's future life is not just a working life and it is not inconceivable that general cultural capital, instead of broad job skills, will become increasingly important in the labour market. Vocational education still has to prove that passing on social and cultural capital is also possible by working in a vocational context and by learning by doing. On the other

[6] MBO is secondary vocational education in the Netherlands. Education in MBO takes two to three years and it is organised in four sectors: technology, economics, services and health care, agriculture and the natural environment. In school the subjects and other learning activities are very much related to occupational practice.

hand we might wonder if general education succeeds in educating critical and independent citizens. In this respect both system have to develop new styles of learning and teaching.

A European network of national reference structures for vocational qualification: a feasibility study (NATNET)

LdV Id. 3742

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Countries: European Union and European Economic Area.

Period: from 1996 to 1997.

Final report: Jean Gordon and David Parkes: "A European Network of National Reference Structures for Vocational Qualifications" – A Feasibility Study (NATNET) The Project Case Study: Austria and Norway. EIESP/ Leonardo/F3742, March 1998.

"Using Qualifications Trans-Nationally – a Manual for those designing policy and practice". Compiled by Leonard Bill for the LEONARDO NATNET Project, European Institute of Education and Social Policy, Paris, January 1998.

Summary

The EIESP (European Institution of Education and Social Policy) managed a Leonardo-funded project, NATNET, from 1996 to 1998, which was designed to contribute to the transparency of vocational qualifications by establishing a framework for concrete cooperation between expert bodies engaged in awarding, accrediting and developing vocational qualifications at a national level. NATNET was linked to a pilot project, NETREF, established to set up reference structures in the partner countries and pilot the conclusions of the feasibility study. Cedefop contributed its expertise to the work of both projects.

The main objectives of NATNET are the following:

a) to establish the working framework for a network of reference structures among the European Union and the associated countries with the intention of removing obstacles to the transparency of vocational qualifications;

b) in the context of such a network, to assume the function of developing and providing information on vocational qualifications on a transnational basis by establishing a simple methodology to enable data exchange, a human interface and the use of available information;

c) to develop the network in such a way that other countries may be easily integrated, extending the 'feasibility element' of the investigation from the original six countries to the European Union and associated countries.

The Austrian and Norwegian case studies

These two countries' case studies were selected to include one new EU member-state and one of the EEA countries.

The project aimed at investigating the feasibility of the creation of reference structures among the range of public and private constituencies (relevant ministries, local authorities, social partners, intermediary bodies, etc.).

Therefore, the intention was to co-operate to produce in-depth analysis of the issues at stake. It allowed NATNET to test the outcomes and conclusions of the first feasibility study in specific national contexts.

The approach was one of information gathering, analysis and feedback into the NATNET model of information development and exchange.

Information gathering in the two countries took place through:

a) working with a expert in each country;

b) carrying out a survey through interviews with key actors;

c) official and research documentation on the system;

d) discussions and debate at the national conferences.

The analysis and feedback was carried out through:

a) developing the analysis with the two national expert;

b) feedback through bodies and organisations interviewed;

c) the national conferences, which were designed to be a forum for discussing and testing the hypotheses to date.

Two national conferences were organised in each country during 1997. The aim was to test the outcomes of the interviewing in the country, to discuss the on-going hypotheses of NATNET concerning models for reference structures in a specific context, to bring together organisations, bodies and agencies which normally do not work together and to bridge the constraints of the system by providing a neutral territory.

The principal points identified from the Austrian case study are the following:

a) mobility and Austrians: mobility is low in Austria, because unemployment is low and, as a result, people do not need to be mobile;

b) mobility and immigration: Austria is seen as an historic entry point for people coming into Western Europe from central and eastern European countries. Therefore mobility in Austria is associated with immigration;

c) transparency of qualifications: qualifications from some countries, Germany and Switzerland, allow a higher mobility between these countries;

d) at national level there is the need for an organisation to improve the availability of, and access to, information on transparency issues;

e) a national information system should have two main functions: to identify and map the current channels of information; and to develop an overview of international priorities with a view to persuading existing channels to take these into consideration;

f) there is a need for a review of the counselling services in terms of their goals and provision of reliable information;

g) in Austria, regulated occupations are important in the labour market, therefore understanding the detailed characteristics of qualifications offered in other states is essential;

h) developing mobility of employers, i.e. large firms located in states other than the home country increases the need for understanding qualifications.

The conference has not created formal outcomes; it has simulated a number of indi-

vidual organisational responses. The Austrian context is organisationally and politically complex, therefore, cooperation is not easy. It is clear that higher cooperation between the social partners is required.

The main points identified by the Norwegian case study are the following:

a) there is a long tradition of mobility among the four Nordic countries;

b) there is a tendency to avoid recognition of foreign qualifications. Initiatives taken to promote comparability and/or transparency encounter difficulties as soon as they start to work on detailed comparisons or specific areas;

c) it is important to find a solution to the recognition of qualifications of immigrants from countries other than the EU/EEA and, in particular, of refugees;

d) a co-ordinating reference structure among the existing institutions would be helpful. It should provide and acquire information, coordination, advice and updating, i.e. guiding people through the systems;

e) there is a need to simplify entry points and make the system more efficient. At the moment candidates pass from one body to another with too many organisations giving too disperse information;

f) the distinction should be maintained between the government setting rules and the market influence over supply and demand.

The outcomes of the Norwegian conference are:

a) the conference gave individuals and organisations an opportunity to know each other better with reference to their respective roles and responsibilities;

b) there is high-level interest from the National Centre for Vocational Guidance in the project and for the idea of a reference structure.

Conclusion

There is clearly a need to improve information channels and provision. A first task, suitable for a reference centre, would be noticing and mapping channels of information in order to be better placed to guide enquires through the system.

There is also an increasing need for higher mobility, and a condition for that is transparency. The results of NATNET investigations suggest that mutual recognition is nevertheless missing from the agenda. It is necessary to develop the mechanism to improve information flows.

For the partners involved, NATNET has allowed them to raise and debate issues of provision and exchange of information internally and externally among a range of national and sector organisations, which normally work parallel to each other, but with little direct contact. The case studies were part of the surveys and feasibility studies. The main outcome has been to open up the debate in both countries so that the idea of establishing structures and mechanisms to improve transparency has been set higher in national agendas.

Quality appraisal and cost-benefit analysis in vocational training initiatives and structures.

LDV n: I/95/1/223/III.2a/FPC- Id.3908

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- CIREM (Barcelona), Spain.
- Pantheon Sorbonne (Paris), Tempo (Paris), France.

Countries: Italy, Germany, UK, Spain, France.

Period: 1995.

Final Report: "Quality appraisal and cost-benefit analysis in continuing vocational training projects. A model for the evaluation of continuing training". Rome, March 1998.

Summary

The aim of this project was to elaborate and provide a model for assessing continuing vocational training applicable to all European environments. In order to be applicable and operational, and therefore to qualify as a truly European instrument, the model had to meet the following requirements:

a) simple to use, also simple to learn for trainers and training agency staff throughout the EU;
b) to provide consistent meaning given to key concepts and simple, universal, and well defined tools and procedures;
c) to be flexible and applicable to a vast range of situations, sectors and organisational environments, as well as different geographical and cultural areas;
d) once applied, the model should be easily transferable and replicable in other situations;
e) for the above reasons, the model had to be minimal, i.e. consisting of a core that could be easily expanded and broken down according to special or local needs;
f) it had to be designed to 'capture' the quality of training schemes, as related to the different agents and actors involved, as well as the many levels, times, functions, etc. associated with the quality of their lifecycle;
g) finally, the model had to focus both on the process and outcome of training initiatives.

In this model, the assessment process tends to coincide with the training process itself, thus becoming an essential component of all the activities and skills involved in preparing, developing and implementing a training initiative. Moreover, the person in charge of the assessment is no longer necessarily an expert living and working in another field. Instead, the model is finalised at making assessment of skills a widespread practice of the training provider; the person in charge of appraisal is ultimately the same one who co-ordinates the training scheme and should be able to rely on the assistance of all staff involved in its implementation.

The basic principle of the model is that the training initiative is a process and assessment constitutes an intrinsic component of the training initiative. The person in charge of scheme should be able to evaluate it. A framework of parameters and standards should therefore be set up, *a priori*, for comparative assessment of training supply quality and its improvement.

The model is structured as a varied set of 'lean', 'flexible' checklists, aimed at assessing total quality in training initiatives, with special reference to continuous training. In this light, the model should be used during each time phase in the scheme's evaluation: the ex-ante phase; monitoring activities; final assessment; and the ex-post phase.

The user is the provider of vocational services. However, the model may also be used by the other actors involved in the training scheme, e.g. the contracting firm, public authorities or bilateral organisations, potential 'end users' of the activities implemented, direct beneficiaries, or even the scheme's financial backers.

The object of assessment is the training scheme itself. However, the model also allows an analysis of production processes at the training agency in charge of the scheme, in order to connect the training initiative to specific details related to the provider of vocational services. The model's structure is illustrated as follows:

Phase in Scheme	Actors involved
1. Strategy	Provider-client/end-user
2. Planning & Design	Provider-client/end-user
3. Implementation/ Monitoring	Provider-client/ trained end-user
4. Outcome/Impact	Provider-client/ trained end-user

For the each of the above-mentioned phases, there is a checklist of key issues concerning the scheme's quality. Those involved in assessment should reply to the questions contained in the list, adopting suitable standards, procedures and specific evaluation tools which depend on their initiative. There are two reasons for this choice.

First, only by allowing the user to chose standards, procedures and tools, could the Model aspire to be really universal, i.e. capable of adapting to all training providers and any social or cultural environment. Second, the creation, use and development of standards, procedures and tools whereby users assess the different aspects of quality, constitutes a major advance towards a solid, widespread culture of appraisal, which is the ultimate goal of the model.

For each group of issues in each checklist, quality appraisal may be summarised with a score (between 1 and 5), that reflects a simple qualitative scale (e.g. excellent, good, fair, poor, bad). The score should be interpreted as an index identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each cycle in a scheme's life, and also as a means of monitoring quality improvements in comparable schemes over a period of time.

The score for each phase in a scheme's cycle may also contribute to concise evaluation of the qualities of each phase, but also of the project as a whole. In this case, it is advisable to "normalise" aggregate scores by assigning only values between 1 and 5, in order to avoid overestimating phases embracing a larger number of checklists.

The model is completed by a brief 'User's Guide' and a 'List of Essential Information', without which the tool cannot be employed to its full potential.

Extended regional further training in Europe (ERFTIE)

LdV. Id. 445.

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- Castel Coldrano Education Centre, Italy
- *Institut National pour le Développement de la Formation Professionelle Continue (INFPC)*, Luxembourg

Areas: Voitsberg (Austria), Uckermark (Germany), Val Venosta (Italy) and Ösling (Luxembourg).

Period: July 1998 to March 1999.

Report of findings: *Erweiterte Regionale Weiterbildung in Europa*

Summary

The aim of the ERFTIE project is to question unemployed women in rural areas about their interests, wishes and attitudes and about the skills and qualifications they have acquired; the results of this survey should help to assess these women's prospects of re-entering the mainstream labour market, either as employees or through self-employment.

A total of 280 women in the selected areas were questioned, and 60 of them underwent a skills analysis. The findings in terms of their individual educational and occupational histories as well as of their respective personal interests and ambitions provided a largely customised training recommendation for each of the respondents. Experts from the employment authorities in the relevant areas and local training organisations are currently

comparing these recommendations with the actual training opportunities that exist at the present time and with the realities of the regional labour markets with a view to drawing up concrete training plans for the women, which would open the door for them to return to work.

As the study goes on, the intention is to use this survey, the skills analysis and a range of further-training modules to create a standardised system that can also be used in other comparable parts of Europe.

The methodology used to reintegrate women in rural areas into working life should have the following characteristics:

1. The women advising the respondents should come from the same social milieu as the latter;

2. The target group should be asked about their interests, attitudes, wishes and skills;

3. A special range of training courses should be developed and implemented;

4. This range of courses should be made available in other comparable parts of Europe.

First of all, the advisers (mentors) were trained and familiarised with the planned course of the project. As part of this training process, they were given a course in communication and counselling.

During the period from July to December 1998, these mentors tried to survey as many unemployed women as possible within their local areas and to recruit them for further participation in the project. Those who were interested were invited to an information session; the local sessions were held in December 1998 and January 1999. Their purpose was to inform the women in greater detail about the object and planned course of the study and in particular about the planned skills analysis. The mentors reported considerable irrational anxiety among the women when they first learned of the skills analysis. At the information session, however, the women were made aware that a housewife and mother possesses a considerable range of occupational skills which can be harnessed by a customised programme of further training.

In February 1999, skills analyses were conducted in each of the four areas. The analysis involved various tests and exercises. On completion, an initial feedback interview took place with each of the women. From the evaluation of the results, there emerged an individual skills profile for each participant, comprising various personal, social and methodological skills. Thereafter, the main focus was on the strengths of each woman and in particular on the question whether these strengths were sufficiently well developed. Weaknesses only came into play in cases where there was some indication of a need for compensatory training courses.

The next step was to formulate training recommendations for each individual woman and to pass these on to the partner organisations. During the current phase (1999), the partner organisations are examining the training recommendations with experts from the employment authorities and from bodies responsible for the provision of further training and comparing the recommendations with local market conditions with a view to drawing up concrete training plans in a second feedback interview with the women.

At the present time (1999), the implementation of the individual training plans has begun, so it is too early to make any pronouncements as to whether the aim of the project has been achieved. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the skills analysis has shown that it gave more than 90% of the women a clearer perception of their own future and raised their self-esteem.

Training processes in small and medium-sized companies

LdV Id. E/1224.

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- EIM Small Business Research and Consultancy (Netherlands);
- IfG (Institute for Small Business Research Vienna) (Austria);
- KMO-Studiencentrum (Small Business Research Institute) (Belgium);
- NEI (National Economic Institute) (Iceland);
- Turku School of Economics and Business Administration (Finland);
- University L. Bocconi (Furio Cicogna Study Centre) (Italy);
- University of Piraeus Research Centre (Greece).

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, The Netherlands.

Period: during 1997.

Final report: "Training Processes in SMEs: practices, problems and requirements". European Report, December 1997

Summary

The general aim of this research is to analyse the reasons of the limited access for the European SMEs to continuing vocational training (CVT) activities, and to identify effective policy lines for the improvement in the training strategies and for the development of programmes directed towards the European SMEs.

The study comprises five sub goals, as follows:

a) investigation of the training practices of small and medium-sized enterprises;

b) identification of the problems and the difficulties that small and medium sized enterprises encounter in their training processes;

c) elaboration of a qualitative analysis of the characteristics of the training offer and of the programmes of support put in practice;

d) comparative analysis of the situation in different countries;

e) recommendations regarding the strategies of support and encouragement, which are most appropriate to the process of training in small and medium-sized enterprises.

The study was designed using a regional approach for two main reasons: first, because there is still a relevant lack of information about the existing CVT practices on a regional basis and, second, because the regional approach allows a more precise treatment of the questions relating to the training supply and to the functioning of the programmes of support than a study conducted at national level.

The research is based on the survey of 75 manufacturing small and medium-sized enterprises per each selected region, and a qualitative analysis of the training supplies available to the same enterprises.

This study is divided into 4 part:

a) description of the surveyed regions;
b) training processes in SMEs;
c) analysis of the existing regional continuous vocational training systems in Europe;
d) assessment of CVT systems and barriers to training.

For a description of the regions surveyed see the final report

Training processes in SMEs

The available data show:

a) there is a positive relationship between size and training, very small enterprises carry out less training than small and medium enterprises;

b) the larger the enterprise, the more formal the adopted training approach;

c) training either at the request of the enterprise or the personnel is less intensively pursued in the larger SMEs;

d) the larger the turnover, more CVT activities are the carried out and more formal the adopted training approach;

e) the highest proportion of enterprises active in training is in the regions of Iceland and Norway; the regions of the Southern peripheral countries of Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal are less active in training activities; the remaining regions show a similar proportion of activity SMEs;

f) the regions where the SMEs have a larger percentage of training do not necessarily correspond to those regions whose enterprises are more active in training;

g) a large share of SMEs devote a relatively small percentage of their salary volume to the financing of their training activities;

h) different strategies are adopted by the different regional SMEs: the Italian regional SMEs prefer to devote a substantial amount of training to the benefit of a small share of employees. The opposite is adopted by the Icelandic or the Spanish regional SMEs, who prefer to train as many people as possible even if resources are scarce;

i) most of the surveyed SMEs (66,2%) point out that the training plans have to been elaborated by the enterprise without any aid from external sources and they have individual, annually defined training plans;

j) there are important differences amongst the different regions, due to the existence of ad-hoc policy schemes for supporting training plans.

The different regional approaches to training also provide important dissimilarity in the characterisation of the courses:

a) 50% of the SMEs with a training plan show a preference for custom made courses;

b) only 29,5% of the surveyed SMEs where training is carried out at the initiative of the personnel prefer custom made courses;

c) the use of self-study seems to rare amongst the surveyed SMEs, in the sense that whereas 24,1% of them state that they have used this type of course, 72% of enterprises say the contrary;

d) as far as size is concerned, the larger the enterprise is, the more important the personnel of the company itself and of training centres/associations are as providers.

Concerning the characteristics of the personnel trained, the survey data suggest the following:

a) the personnel that mostly benefit from training belong to the departments of production and management administration;

b) the larger SMEs and those with training plans show a higher diversification in the departments or professional levels of their trained personnel;

c) on average, the surveyed SMEs estimate that employees are willing to be trained;

d) the interest of employees towards training is higher in medium-sized enterprises and in those SMEs where training is carried out according to a training plan;

e) there are many contrasts in terms of departments and professional levels of trained personnel, probably due to the different economic specialisations and training situations amongst the surveyed regions.

The survey data show that only a minor percentage of the surveyed SMEs (31.3%) have received public financial aid. Most of these are larger SMEs and SMEs with a training plan. There is a strong correlation between receipt of public aids and the importance attributed to them: the regions where the aids are regarded as a determinant for developing training activities correspond exactly with those regions where the percentage of SMEs benefiting from aids is lower (the Finnish, Icelandic and Italian regions).

The surveyed SMEs are quite satisfied with the training activities carried out. The satisfaction indicated in the Greek and Spanish regions is particularly interestingattributed, since these two regions have the lowest percentage of SMEs active in training activities.

Analysis of the existing regional continuous vocational training systems in Europe

Several European countries, such as Austria, Finland, Iceland, Norway, The Netherlands and Spain do not have a national/regional legislative framework that regulates and defines CVT. They adopt a 'liberal' approach, where CVT activities are the sole responsibility of the private agreements reached between employers and employees themselves.

Other countries, such as Belgium, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal adopt a more 'interventionist' approach, in the sense that the public authorities play a primary, pro-active role. But there are also some differences between these countries: in Greece and Portugal we find a highly centralised CVT policy structure, where the regions do not have the capability to carry out an own regional CVT policy; in other countries, such as Belgium and Italy, there is a de-centralised model, where the main actors for planning activity and the administrative management of training activities are the regions. France is located in an 'intermediary' position; regional authorities can implement specific supports on CVT activities, though the main orientations and regulations of CVT policy are still primarily designed at central level.

The different existing situations are reflected in the different priorities of the national/regional CVT policies. This notwithstanding, it is possible to identify in most of the regions surveyed an increasing awareness of the importance of CVT for the competitiveness of national/regional enterprises, which explains its current priority status amongst policy makers.

Assessment of CVT systems and barriers to training

This section describes the most important information channels for SMEs relating to training, assesses the available information on training supply and public programmes as well as the suitability of training supply and training programmes to meet SME needs.

The most important information channels on existing training supply are business/sector associations and training centres/organisations. Other relevant suppliers of information are newspaper and suppliers of equipment.

SME assessment of the availability of information on training supply and public programmes suggests that SMEs regard positively information on training supply while information on public programmes is insufficiently regarded in all the regions surveyed.

The distinction by enterprise size and between SMEs that do/do not carry out training activities shows remarkable differences. The larger SMEs and those SMEs that effectively carry out training activities seem to value more positively the suitability of existing training supply and public programmes.

According to the general SMEs own point of view, there are three main reasons limiting the development of training activities:

a) high costs of training courses;

b) problems of internal organisation with reference to attendance at courses;

c) the bad quality/unsuitability of available training courses.

Two other also factors play a role,

a) the lack of interest of the personnel;

b) difficulties in identifying the enterprise's training needs.

There are also different perceptions on the above limiting factors from the SMEs: the small ones are more sensitive to high costs and the bad quality/unsuitability of the available courses; the large SMEs are more sensitive to the problems related to internal organisation.

It is important to underline the fact that SMEs do not perceive the lack of support from the government as an important barrier to training.

Perceptions of the barriers seem to be dependent on the regions surveyed. The experts differentiate between two main groups of barriers:

a) 'internal-to-the-firm', referring to the characteristics of SMEs, internal organisation and size;

b) 'external-to-the-firm', referring to the high cost of training for most SMEs, the lack of transparency that characterises most of the existing training markets.

One of the most feasible solutions to these barriers to training is the creation of inter-enterprise collaborative structures that could at least partly address the problems of insufficient size. It is particularly interesting to know which kind of courses are suggested by SMEs themselves to encourage their training activities. Non-training enterprises offer strong support for custom-made courses and have a better opinion of self-study courses as a suitable method for training; training enterprises resort more often to external open courses.

Conclusions

Having in mind European SMEs CVT practices and existing regional CVT systems, it is possible to suggest several lines of action for the different agents involved in CVT, SME employers, SME employees, CVT suppliers and policy makers.

Suggestions for SME employers and employees are as follows:

a) SME employers have to be conscious that any investment in the competence and skills of the workforce has to be seen in a long-term perspective;

b) training has to be understood as an element of enterprise general strategy;

c) employers have to be involved in the planning process of the enterprise's training policy;

d) SME employers have to acknowledge those employees who request and accept training, in order to motivate employees to take on training;

e) cooperation with other enterprises facing the same difficulties could be an appropriate tool for overcoming obstacles;

f) employees have to be conscious about the need to continuously develop their own skills/human capital during their life, not only as a tool for maintaining their job, but also as an instrument for improving their career prospects;

g) employees have to learn the principle that, in order to safeguard themselves, they have to increasingly contribute to training, even from their own means (for example through self-learning, using holidays).

Suggestions for CVT suppliers:

a) training contents and methodologies have to be continuously updated and improved, moreover, they have to be well aware of enterprises' training requirements.

b) the quality of training programmes has also to be continuously improved, not only from a quantitative but also from a qualitative point of view;

c) CVT suppliers have to make an effort to better inform and advise SMEs on the available options, basically through an intensification of their marketing efforts and an adaptation their language to SMEs.

Suggestions for CVT policy makers:

a) policy makers have to encourage awareness of SME employers/employees regarding the importance of CVT for the competitiveness of their enterprise;

b) future policy has to be designed from the enterprises' perspective, bearing in mind their needs, practices and requirements;

c) CVT activities cannot be isolated from the general education system, links between the two worlds have to be reinforced;

d) information and marketing on the available options have to be improved and ad-

ministrative procedures have to be shortened and simplified;

e) financing of SMEs investments in skill and training development has to be continuously encouraged and strengthened by public agents;

f) employees have to realise that they are the main actors responsible for their own career management;

g) tax relief is one of the most suitable means of support as it is based on the individual enterprise's initiative and avoids inefficiencies;

h) public bodies have to set up methods and routines for the evaluation of existing CVT supply, so that its quality can be continuously improved and adapted to existing needs and requirements.

Training processes in lean learning enterprises with particular emphasis on lifelong learning

LdV Id.1822

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Countries: UK, Germany and Austria.

Term: 1 December 1996 to 30 November 1998.

Final Report Hans G. Bauer, Ute Büchele (ed.): *Um schlank zu sein, muss man lernen.* Logos GAB, Trigon, Rubicon.

Summary

In this study three companies were examined: a distribution company in the UK, a large drug store in Germany and a private bank in Austria.

The study examined the operational leanness of the three companies and the development of their business organisation in terms of organisational culture and lifelong learning.

The case studies show that there are no criteria for defining a 'lean' or a 'learning' enterprise. 'Lean thinking' amounts to the concentration of business policies and decisions on the dimensions and processes of wealth creation in the sense of a 'restriction to essentials' involving specification of value, avoidance of waste and of needless effort and expense, focusing on customer requirements and continuous improvement.

A lean learning organisation is characterised by the following attributes:

1. On-the-job learning is supported by planning, implementation, evaluation, working parties, improvement and innovation teams, flat networked management and flexible documentation and, last but not least, by a culture of trust and support.

2. The learning process is designed to take account of the company's medium- and long-term aims and is facilitated by open and non-hierarchical channels of communication.

3. Supporting staff development is an important company aim and helps to secure the future of the organisation.

The study began by examining the following quantitative factors.

Company development phase: pioneering phase -> differentiation -> integration -> association describes the process by which a business and its style of management develop from a rather informal organisational system into a single focused entity.

Cultural diagnosis: 12 cardinal points within an enterprise. Each of the twelve cardinal points complements one of the others, and they may be represented as polarised pairs of qualities:

- striving for progress but nurturing tradition;
- adopting a visionary approach but striving for efficiency;
- prepared to take risks but seeking security;
- establishing rules and order but always ready to innovate;
- serving single-mindedly but always adaptable; and
- running a tight ship but anxious to promote the common good.

The stakeholder-centred approach: the stakeholders in a business are its customers, its suppliers, its owners or shareholders, its staff and society at large.

Corporate learning, as a means of optimising key processes and as an expression of a company's stakeholder-centred approach, is at the core of any staff-development strategy. The study examined the importance that the three businesses attach to training, how they identify learning needs, the available training opportunities, the learning processes and how the companies use and recognise the skills and knowledge acquired by their staff.

Aids to corporate learning: the study identified the principles, structural elements and measures that encourage and support corporate learning. A distinction was made between the core and support processes on the one hand and the managerial processes, together with cultural and social subsystems, on the other.

In a *'lean-rating questionnaire'*, six constituent elements of lean enterprises were assessed:

a) the human face of the organisation and the priority it accords to its staff;

b) the principles of lean production practised by the organisation;

c) the pull principle (company policy driven by customer demand);

d) the process-flow principle (avoidance of needless effort and expense);

e) the *muda* principle (avoidance of waste);

f) the principle of continuous improvement.

Curricular analysis of training programmes: the study categorised company training courses by subject, time input, target learning outcomes and methodology and drew inter-company comparisons.

A qualitative examination based on structured and open-ended interviews supplemented the quantitative indicators. This qualitative analysis related to the company's development phases, the respondent's concept of learning, the learning activities in which staff engaged, the place of learning processes within the fabric of the company and the instruction methods used on the training courses. A 'training questionnaire' was used to obtain various assessments of training needs and the value of in-house training. Experts from the project team used the collected data to evaluate the extent to which the principles of 'be lean and learn' were in balance within the analysed companies.

The individual findings for the three analysed companies cannot be presented in the context of this summary; for details of the study, please see the project team's report.

Conclusions

The three enterprises featured in the study are by no means object lessons in the perfect execution of a *think lean* policy. Be that as it may, the study has produced a number of suggestions as to the learning and training implications of a business strategy that is primarily driven by economic goals.

Lean thinking is *not an organisational model*, although organisational lessons naturally can and must be drawn from it; in fact, it is *primarily a matter of attitude*. For that reason, the study devoted particular attention to the cultural side of company development.

It is fair to say that the three analysed businesses are at different stages in their development, not only in general terms but also, and more especially, in terms of their individual functional elements.

It is plain to see that, in cases where 'lean thinking' is the prevailing philosophy or the ideal that shapes the corporate culture, businesses will tend to seek a value-adding unity of purpose through common ideas and visions. The point is that 'thinking lean' does not mean tightening the application of formal rules or optimising systems of centralised control; on the contrary, it is all about the identification of all members of an organisation with its fundamental ideas and values.

Special importance therefore attaches to the issues and requirements arising from this approach regarding the nurtured and spontaneous development of common modes of behaviour and communication styles and regarding a common understanding of the significance and aim of the work performed by the various departments within the organisation.

Virtual enterprises in initial vocational training (ISIS – OSIRIS)

LdV D/97/2/00057/EA/III.2.a./CONTP

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Countries: Ireland, Germany and Greece

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Publication: S. Kreher, Institute of Labour Studies, University of Kassel, *Virtuelle Unternehmen in der beruflichen Erstausbildung (ISIS- OSIRIS)*. Gesamthochschule Kassel, 2 August 1999.

Summary

'Virtual enterprises' are business structures which have been created as a response to new competitive demands. They are companies which conduct their business through the Internet or loose associations of independent companies which trade publicly under a common name but whose organisational links are administered exclusively by means of information and communication technology.

The characteristics of virtual enterprises are an extremely customer-centred approach, temporary forms of work organisation, decentralised organisation of the problem-solving team and the exclusive use of the Internet/ Intranet or Extranet instead of a fixed place of business.

Three types of virtual enterprise

1. Type A: a virtual enterprises is constituted on the basis of an existing pool of compa-

nies whose management teams know each other (trust).

2. Type B: where a company is short of particular skills, it brings in an external partner, but only for the lifetime of the virtual enterprise.
3. Type C: a virtual enterprise is constituted by companies which have not previously had any dealings with each other, so it is not founded on mutual trust; this is the least common form of virtual enterprise.

Inhibiting factors: the parties lack experience; specialists are tied to a particular company; trade unions are sceptical; it is a complex venture; obstacles arise in the course of cooperation.

Skill requirements for staff of virtual enterprises

- Specialised technical skills: knowledge of ICT (familiarity with applications and networks, knowledge of operating systems, the ability to create and maintain intranet and web pages and familiarity with communication software), linguistic ability and cultural awareness.

- Key skills are: awareness of problems, enterprising mentality and behaviour, a sense of responsibility and the ability to be a team player, to act on one's own initiative, to take independent decisions and to create an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Virtual enterprises create new forms of work and new workplaces; there are no steady jobs in the traditional sense any more; the demands on employees depend on the work in hand; within a continuous training process, inputs occur as and when required.

Team design is crucial to the success of virtual enterprises; educational, methodological, procedural and behavioural standards have to be defined and established.

Examples of virtual enterprises

- *The Virtual Company* is a loose association which currently comprises 14 independent small and medium-sized Swiss businesses from the realms of information and telecommunications; these companies form a fixed pool of skills and experience (Type A).

- *Virtuelle Fabrik Euregio Bodensee* is a combination of 27 companies (large, medium-sized and small) around the shores of Lake Constance.

- *Systemhaus Seitz*, with 250 member businesses, is a virtual enterprise in the German-speaking countries.

- *Personalvermittlung Newplan* is a service which finds work for freelancers; it currently employs 150 people.

- *PUMA Sportartikel (Deutschland)* focuses on the development, design and marketing of sportswear. The logistics and manufacturing of the products are entrusted to a global network of partner companies; a new virtual enterprise is set up every time a new product is introduced.

The organisation of vocational training in virtual enterprises

Virtual training is designed to complement the conventional forms of training. Training loses its stationary character and is networked. Appropriate learning software has to be developed, as must web-based training strategies which allow rapid curricular changes to be effected through the Internet or Intranets.

Media-based learning is the key to success

It is possible to organise a system of vocational training within virtual enterprises. With a fixed pool of employees and instructors, teachers and pupils, a virtual learning community can be created as a mirror image of a virtual enterprise, with each member able to formulate and satisfy his or training needs.

There are various providers of staff training who can meet the needs of virtual enterprises. Users learn the techniques and key skills they require for work in virtual enterprises. Virtual teams form themselves into learning

communities and can also use these technological resources to make their teamwork more effective.

Schools can offer their teaching material through the Internet as a supplement to formal lessons; in other words, a virtual enterprise of type A or B is developed when pupils and teachers work together in a team on the computerised material.

ISIS project

The ISIS project was developed in partnership with eight European institutions (see above). The aim of the project is to establish virtual enterprises in the domain of education and training.

The following are the main points regarding the implementation of this project.

- The creation of websites – a public Internet site with general information on the project and a closed Intranet for exchanges between project participants.

- Discussion boards are considered indispensable for communication on technical matters and on questions of content and organisation.

- Many interesting proposals were made at the start of the project, but the establishment of a market-research institute to survey the eating habits of young people in Europe was the only one to be implemented. The input from the surveyed pupils, however, was limited. Because of a lack of agreement among the project participants about a further virtual enterprise, the project management team decided to create its own virtual enterprise. The aim of this venture is the production of a CD-ROM on virtual enterprises in vocational training.

The accompanying OSIRIS project (see above)

The organisation and management of OSIRIS are based on a cooperative model involving self-determination, autonomy, initiative and shared responsibility.

In order to evaluate the ISIS project, OSIRIS established eight study packages, with various questions under each heading:

1. collection of general data from the respondents;

2. new company structures and initial vocational-training needs, decision-making processes in virtual enterprises and their procedural implications for the vocational-training system;

3. process management and vocational training (e.g. activities, resources, skills, interfaces between the various functional areas of the ISIS project, efficiency and the cost-benefit ratio);

4. communication structures and cooperation procedures in virtual enterprises and their implications for initial vocational training;

5. development of employees' identification with their work and improvement of vocational-training activity;

6. cooperation between cultures and prospects for European integration of vocational-training systems;

7. continuous organisational-development consultancy;

8. information technology in virtual enterprises and IT requirements within the system of vocational training.

MOSAIC: Managing diversity – innovative research towards mainstreaming equality

LdV Id.: 1783

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Countries:
Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom.

Period:
From 1996 to 1998.

Final Report:
"Project Mosaic: Innovative Research towards Mainstreaming Equality." 1999

Summary

The aim of the project MOSAIC is to help companies in Europe to become more economically competitive by enhancing their use of human resources. The approach is to learn from case study employers using or introducing a human resource management approach know as 'managing diversity'. This is a model which has been largely developed and implemented in the United States. It has some characteristics in common with the European equal opportunities approach know as 'mainstreaming equality', but there are important differences, too, which the project has analysed.

The principal objectives are the following:

a) to clarify the concepts of managing diversity and mainstreaming equality;

b) to conduct case studies of employers identified as managing diverse workforces;

c) to analyse the results and disseminate them widely.

These objectives have largely been met. A core research team from five Member States has:

a) prepared a series of papers on managing diversity and mainstreaming equality, some of which have been published;

b) distributed the papers to a wider group of 'validating partners' such as personnel organisations, employers, trade unions, equality agencies and business development agencies in a wider group of member states to disseminate to their constituencies;

c) prepared background papers on equal opportunities in the respective Member States as a context for analysing the case studies;

d) conducted theoretically sampled case studies of employers managing diverse workforces;

e) analysed the results individually and thematically;

e) clarified the similarities and differences between the two approaches;

f) disseminated the results widely through publications and conference presentations.

The case studies number thirteen, with most of the companies falling within the EC definition of 'large', being more than 250 employees; the exception is an Italian manufacturing company with 120 staff. They were selected to allow comparisons across sector and country and they included:

a) public sector health authorities;

b) post and telecommunication companies that were either new or ex-public sector;

c) white goods, computing and other manufacturing companies;

d) multi-national financial service sector companies.

The case studies in the Mosaic project were identified as examples of employers with active diversity policies. Some stressed this fea-

ture in their human resource management approach or their mission statement in their general or recruitment publicity. Some were actively involved in initiatives or projects with equality agencies. The researchers drew on analyses of company documentation and statistics, and interviews with key actors, plus, in some cases, staff to identify the key elements of the diversity approach.

The key elements of a managing diversity approach were identified as follows:

a) equality vision. Equality as part of the employers' mission culture and value systems, and it should be familiar with company policy;

b) consultation and ownership of equality. Many of the organisations had conducted surveys of their employees to identify barriers thought to impede their progress. Managers at all levels took the findings seriously. Workshops, seminars and training were common features. One of the outcomes was that diversity among women and among men was recognised. Policies that suited some were recognised as not necessarily benefiting all;

c) respect and dignity of employees. The case study employers placed a high premium on the personal dignity of employees. This meant that the culture was one that would not tolerate sexism, stereotyping or harassment of any kind. It was regarded as essential that work relationships were based on mutual respect, and that members of staff were aware that discrimination would be not tolerated;

d) reconciliation of work and family life. The employers tended to be pro-active in recognising that employees might have domestic and family responsibilities and sought to accommodate them. This included paying for or providing childcare and allowing flexibility in hours worked. Family were seen as a positive aspect of employees' lives rather than a hindrance.

e) challenging the long hours culture. Imaginative approaches had been developed in some of the organisations to the issue of time. Creating a culture oriented towards productivity rather than presenteeism was a feature of such approaches. Teleworking from home was one strategy used.

There are clear differences in motivation and approach between the case studies. Those in the early stages of developing diversity policies, and those who have to implement such policies principally because they have an American or multi-national corporate culture committed to diversity, tend to focus simply on gender and address overt discrimination such as racial harassment. They restrict their scope to recruitment, promotion and some aspects of work organisation and culture. By contrast, those at the other end of the continuum have a much wider remit in terms of characteristics: they focus more on developing the individual regardless of their ascribed characteristics. This is expressed through advertisements for recruitment and training programmes aimed at those with international competence. The knowledge of customers, especially ethnic groups, is seen as vital to addressing customer need. Managing diversity for such employers moves beyond human resource management to the development of a market agenda and, in some cases, a social policy agenda. One of the Swedish companies saw addressing racism in the workplace as a contribution to addressing racism in Swedish society more generally.

While all companies had a reputation for managing diversity, the extent to which they embraced the full range of equality dimensions varied considerably. A few had moved little beyond gender but had at least embraced gender pro-actively. Some had engaged with racial harassment as an issue but without valuing racial differences as an asset. Few had innovative approaches towards disability, sexual harassment or age. Indeed, the more sophisticated employers in terms of developed policies and practice shied away from equality groups and used a discourse of valuing the individual, ignoring rather than addressing group disadvantage. This is given as a rationale for not monitoring in some cases. This vision of diversity as individually focused is one of the fundamental

differences between managing diversity and mainstreaming equality.

Most of the case studies are from the private sector and include examples where diversity has been embedded into the organisation and culture. One clear finding is that those employers where diversity was embedded at the inception of the organisation appeared to be particularly successful in establishing a diversity culture.

Advantaged not disadvantage (AND): A project to establish new models of initial training for disadvantaged young people based on the assessment of current provision in 5 EU geographic areas

LdV Id.3886

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- the National Social Research Centre (EKKE), Greece.

Countries: Finland, Greece and the UK.

Period: during 1997.

Final report: SQW Ltd: "Advantage Not Disadvantage (AND)". Final report for Finland, Greece and the UK." March 1998.

Summary

The principal aim of this project is to establish new models of initial training for disadvantaged young people based on critical assessments of the current conditions in 6 EU geographical areas.

However, the final report concerns three countries: Finland, Greece and the UK.

Some highlights (Finland, Greece, United Kingdom)

Respondents were invited to value the quality of training design, delivery and development. Another objective was to consider the most important external influence on training development, and to suggest possible changes.

All countries share common results: confidence about the content of training was particularly high, but confidence about preparation for work and follow-up was very low. Many respondents did not comment, negatively or positively, because they did not have enough information:

a) definitions of 'disadvantaged' in the three countries differ. In Greece and Finland some organisations do not have formal definitions of disadvantage. In all three countries the commitment towards disadvantaged young people appears very individual and fragmented. Young people needing support are not a specific target group;

b) young people and employers do not play a decisive role in training design, and trainers would like to play a greater role than at present. There is no evidence of a design of training with reference to good practice elsewhere or external comparisons;

c) in all three countries there is little confidence in the quality of vocational guidance. Criticisms are made of pre- and post-training course assessment and guidance support. Most assessments are carried out by training providers in all three countries;

d) young people feel that assessment does not take account of their needs and strengths. Opinions on final assessment experience are different: positive in Finland, patchy in the UK, and poor in Greece. Follow-up systems were not found in any of the three countries.

e) formally valued and recognised training outcomes are funding driven. Policy mak-

ers agree that outcomes are limited and narrow, but respondents underlined a need to broaden outcomes to include social, educational and personal development aspects;

f) formal accountability is almost exclusively with the commissioner and training provider, not with the beneficiaries. It focuses on setting targets rather than focusing on the engagement of young people, good practice, and benefits to young people;

g) quantitative and qualitative monitoring is taken seriously by all agencies in the UK; this is not observed in Greece and Finland. Respondents would welcome greater formal accountability to the beneficiaries of training;

h) contractual cooperation is rare in the UK and in Greece, and absent in Finland. Training and social-care agencies do not work closely together. UK respondents are more involved in cooperation than in Greece and in Finland, where the systems appear more obstructive and respondents are more suspicious of such arrangements. Formal processes of cooperation do not exist in all three countries;

i) budgets are allocated according to projected needs and priorities and to the particular type of training programmes already in place. In the UK and in Finland joint-funding arrangements are increasing. In all three countries the major funders of initial training are national governments. Funding structures and authorities are considered to be remote, centralist and inaccessible to implementers or other stakeholders. In the UK and in Finland the negative impacts of compulsory training policy caused concern.

Conclusion and recommendation

Respondents in all countries mentioned government policies and priorities, EU directives and funding requirements as factors to be considered in relation to training design and development. There were also many other factors such as regional and organisational policies, lack of information on youth requirements, local needs and local agency management/board priorities.

In summary, the following possible solutions have been identified at national and international level:

a) *definition of disadvantage.* First, a review at national level is needed to arrive at a more specific definition which is relevant to interventions needed. Policy makers have to ensure that definitions are workable. Second, at EU level, the definition of disadvantaged groups should be positive and holistic. After this, an accreditation of individual assets, deficits and needs for assistance should be identified. A development team should be employed to examine what is required to achieve this;

b) *knowledge of disadvantage.* Policy makers should develop stronger national standards for measuring knowledge, skills and competences by a range of criteria. Annual awards should be established for regional centres of excellence and visits, exchanges, and secondments to transfer knowledge should be funded. Commissioners and training providers should be consulted by a group of young people and should establish national systems on the basis of registration networks, chartered organisations, twinning networks, etc. Another important point is the development of a training structure for agencies across the country. At EU level twinning relationships should be established between commissioning and training provider agencies. Interaction on the basis of clear development exchange bids should be developed;

c) *commitment to disadvantage.* Policy makers should commit themselves more at national level and ensure quality provision. Commissioners and providers should foster young people's involvement in training development, knowledge development, joint delivery etc. Funding should not change with political shifts or public opinion. At EU level there is scope to improve national provisions via more demanding European requirements. A European team should review and develop more meaning-

ful definitions of, and criteria for, funding for young marginalised people, involve key beneficiaries in design and development, support monitoring and evaluation and assess impacts and achievement. A development team should also examine how this could be implemented and monitored;

d) *design of training.* Solutions at national level could be origination of standards for planning and design, of feasibility and piloting of new methods, and the examination of practice elsewhere.

Requirements should be:

- ❑ effective control and constant monitoring of working methods;
- ❑ involvement of young people and stakeholders in the design, appraisal, awarding and monitoring of contracts;
- ❑ assistance for the commissioners to implement such development;
- ❑ at EU level, a funding of three yearly awards to one area in every country for joint agency bid should be considered. Aims are: to develop and achieve an improved design of programmes as suggested above; to disseminate the methodology and approach; and to monitor and evaluate the impact and changes;
- ❑ attracting and marketing: at national level policy makers should establish agencies to support tailored marketing approaches to young people as 'training consumers'. Peer-marketing possibilities should be explored to raise awareness in school of vocational training options. At EU level, programmes should be developed to identify pilot projects that explore the development of better marketing strategies of training 'to develop attractive and accessible training for young people';

e) *guidance and assessment.* Policy-makers should guarantee that career guidance and advice sessions are available for every young person, via trained careers personnel, independent of the training provider. Policy makers are responsible for introducing criteria of progression, rewarding such progression, setting up new standards of initial and ongoing assessment, and further appraisal of individual talent, strength and ability by independent assessors. At the EU level, it is important to guarantee that every young person gets the opportunity of initial, ongoing and final assessment;

f) *delivery of training.* A national a review of quality is necessary. The following initiatives should be undertaken:

- ❑ to establish national maps to explain how the entire process works,
- ❑ better methods to link supply to demand in the training domain,
- ❑ guidelines to select and monitor trainers,
- ❑ utilisation of external examiners, young people, employers in the selection process,
- ❑ examination of employability success factors of different kinds/ models of training,
- ❑ review of incentives and pilot progression reward systems to maximise continued participation,
- ❑ new regulation for structural funded training at EU level,
- ❑ any training-supported course must have evidence of relative local demand,
- ❑ every training course must give a marketing guide/map tool to young people and employers that explains what is offered and what could be expected from the training course.

g) *training outcomes.* A review of outcomes includes the measurement of how inputs affect outputs, of incentives for commissioners and trainers to broaden scope, and of progress made by individual starting and

personal development changes in outcomes. At EU level there is a need for structural funds to extend outcomes. Also important is the utilisation of the external examiner system to ensure quality evaluation.

h) *accountability, management and steerage.* Policy makers have to draw up criteria for the satisfaction of the beneficiaries, which the implementers must meet as part of targets. External examiners linked to local areas should advise on the development of accountability. National reviews should examine the impact of trainee feedback on affecting improvement and favouring changes. At the EU level it seems necessary to:

- ❑ examine the adequacy of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring accountability,
- ❑ develop support systems for projects to design appropriate monitoring systems,
- ❑ foster collaboration and partnerships,
- ❑ establish commission agencies for the promotion of inter-agency networks,
- ❑ reward projects that employ cross agency resources and management,
- ❑ review how/if structures facilitate/ obstruct collaboration,
- ❑ reward the actions,
- ❑ examine good practice in details and disseminate models.

A European directory of contractual multidisciplinary design for training partnership should be elaborated which includes core information about features and contact details (also on the Internet).

i) *funding.* National reviews of the impacts of funding, more incentives by identifying good practice and quality inputs are considered as solutions at national level.

j) *other measures are to:*

- ❑ develop structures of constant interaction and cooperation between financial decision-makers and implementers,
- ❑ provide incentives for multi-disciplinary/ joint resolution of current problems,
- ❑ develop systems for consultation throughout planning and reviews,
- ❑ change the nature of responsibility, attainment of attendance, tenure, qualifications, etc.,
- ❑ penalise delays.

Route counselling as a means of improving the access to and effectiveness of training and employment initiatives for deprived groups in the labour market

LDV n: B/95/1/223/III.2.a/FPC – Id. 3898

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Countries: Austria, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands.

Period: 1996 to 1997.

Final Report: "Route Counselling for Disadvantaged Groups on the Labour Market: Explorative Study in six Member States". HIVA, Leuven, 1999.

Summary

Route counselling is conceived as a dominant movement in the area of training, guidance and employment measures towards an indi-

vidualised, longitudinal approach. New forms of reintegration for the (long-term) unemployed have been developed in several countries. The common trend is that, far from being isolated, training and job placement activities are more and more embedded in an integral scheme, aimed at re-integrating various disadvantaged persons or groups in regular jobs through an intensive, systematic approach known as 'route counselling'.

The subject of such 'route counselling' can be an individual person or a target group. This approach involves different organisations or actors together deciding the route. It is increasingly seen as the key factor in reintegration strategies for disadvantaged persons or groups. In addition, the demand side of the labour market has come to discover 'route counselling' as a method of recruiting, training and selecting new personnel from target groups, such a ethnic minorities, and reintegrating women and the long-term unemployed.

The aim of this project is to analyse how far the new approach is being implemented, which instruments and services are involved, to consider the role of success and failure factors and to assess the extent to which different types of practice are transferable. The analysis in this report is based on the current debate and state of the art in six Member States: Austria, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands.

This report comprises five chapters:

a) chapter 1 gives an introduction to the definition of the key concept, and highlights the key dimensions and basic characteristics of route counselling;

b) chapter 2 provides an overview of the actual situation on route counselling in the six countries, and a broader overview of the institutional and labour market context;

c) chapter 3 deals with the specific situation of route counselling in each country, since the cases from the six countries do not demonstrate just a single type of route counselling project;

d) chapter 4 focuses on the critical factors and the consideration of strengths and weaknesses based on good example;

e) chapter 5 identifies the common functions and tasks necessary to implement route counselling. It provides a profile of the professional roles associated with implementing the core elements of route counselling in the practice.

Over 45: Causes of exclusion and the role of lifelong learning.

LDV Id. 5048

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Countries: Finland, Italy, Spain and Sweden.

Period: in 1997 and 1998.

Final report: "Over 45: causes of dismissal and the role of lifelong learning". January 1999.

Summary

The impact of population ageing on employment and on the labour market is one of the most pressing issues confronting European society. On the one hand there is an increase in the average age of the economically active population in the EU; on the other, the continuous lowering of labour force exit thresholds and the existence of age discrimination

in the labour market, means that people over 40 are regarded as nearing the end of their working lives.

The European Observatory on Ageing and Older People (EOAOP) was established in 1990 to monitor four key policy areas:

a) incomes and living standards,
b) health and social care,
c) social integration, and
d) age and employment.

The first major EOAOP report identified five relevant forms of discrimination concerning the over-45s, as follows:

a) early loss of employment,
b) discrimination in the recruitment process,
c) exclusion of the older unemployed,
d) exclusion from training,
e) discrimination at retirement age.

This study has provided a picture of the approach of four Member States (Spain, Italy, Sweden and Finland) towards continuous training / life-long learning. The consolidated experience and tradition in educational interventions of the Scandinavian countries may be very important for the rest of the EU, but also Spain shows what can be achieved, even from a relatively low base, when the political element is present.

Recommendations of the research are the following:

a) *at EU level,* the Commission should disseminate examples of good practice and encourage the Member States to develop continuous training/life-long learning;

b) *at national level,* each Member State should create a national strategy on life-long learning / continuous training, demonstrate a good practice in the public sphere and, introduce special initiatives such a 'knowledge lift';

c) *at the enterprise / organisational level,* the social partners should emphasise continuous training and its importance for the economy;

d) *At the older-worker level*, these have to update their skills and to take advantage of the education and training opportunities, which are available.

In the cases examined there are substantial differences among the countries, reflecting the different approaches between north and south. In the two Nordic countries there is already a history of public commitment to training and acceptance of the principle of life-long learning. These countries have developed a partnership model between governments, municipalities, trade unions and workers. The initiative in Sweden constitutes a good reference for the other European countries, because it shows that even the most excluded older workers can be drawn into continuing education by specially targeted measures.

In Italy, on the contrary, there is no national legislation on life-long learning, participation is low and only since the early 1990s was this recognised as an issue. Spain also records a low participation rate; however, it is more advanced than Italy in terms of vocational training and development of a national strategy for life-long learning. Spain has created a vocational-training system linking the Ministries of Education and Labour to the social partners. In 1997 Spain started a four-year implementation of continuous training agreements, which covered a wide range of training activities.

The 12 case studies (three in each country) chiefly reflect the national frameworks; however these are not national in a narrow sense due to the presence of several multinational enterprises. The report included an analysis of the 'over-45' labour market, an analysis of the causes of early exit and of income support mechanisms, and an analysis of adult educational systems, with particular consideration of vocational training mechanisms and lifelong learning practices.

The labour market among 'over 45' workers and lifelong training systems: country reports

Finland

Unemployment is a substantial problem in the more advanced age groups; the 45-64 year group registers higher unemployment than average.

There is a substantial proportion of early retirements: in 1995, the percentage of pensioners in the 45-54 age group was 11.6%, in the 45-49 age group 36.7% and in the 60-65 group 83.9%. The main reason for early retirement is invalidity.

Approximately 40% of people between 40 and 45 years old only have a compulsory school certificate. Social-security provides the unemployed with a benefit system that accompanies them up to early retirement age. Preventive measures are missing and the unemployed over 50 have no access to training, in contrast to younger age groups.

48% of the entire 18-to-64-year population takes part in adult education; this percentage is constantly rising. There are two types of adult education:

a) voluntary adult education covers just 25% of the population group and has a mixed form of funding;

b) personal education covers 70% of the population group and is aimed at re-qualification. It is financed by social security institutions and insurance companies.

The concept of lifelong learning was introduced in the Finnish program in 1995. The main objectives are:

a) continuous training,

b) the promotion of cooperation between work and educational institutions,

c) increasing knowledge in the labour market

d) the development of the European scope of training.

The most important institutions of lifelong learning are the open colleges. They were founded at the end of the 19th century and by 1990 they were 278 in number. Their principal objectives are:

a) to help people in their personal development,

b) to create cultural equity, improve skills and provide vocational training and complementary basic education.

The users are normally graduates, service workers rather than manufacturing workers, and people over 50.

Italy

In Italy there is a low employment rate; in 1996 it was 52.1% compared with the average of 60% to the EU. The unemployment rate for the more mature age groups is lower than in other EU countries. The highest percentage of people seeking a job is among women, though, after 55 years, the proportion is similar between the two sexes. Compared with other developed countries, there is a higher rate of long-term unemployed. The proportion of old people seeking employment decreases with age. People with higher qualifications remain employed longer than those with lower qualifications.

The Italian social-security system protects the working position of almost all dependent workers with a stable contract ('job for life'). This should undergo important modifications, and include a development of active work policies, including vocational training for young and old workers.

The demand for workers with a precise qualification has led to consideration of the role of training in the production process. In the context of reform of its welfare system, training policies are perceived as a potential innovative lever for labour market policies.

The so-called '150-hours' course was established in 1973, following an agreement with metal workers, stipulating the 150 total hours of paid training added to the same number of

hours of the workers' own free time. Thise can offered a lot of workers the opportunity to get the basic education that they missed.

The ministerial decree no 455 of July 1997 'Adult education. Education and training in primary and middle school' represented an important initiative. It aims to promote collaboration between school and local communities, the world of work and the social partners, and also to activate an integral system between professional education and training.

However, it is not easy to outline the characteristics of continuous training in Italy, because this mechanism is new and still under definition.

Spain

Spain records a very high unemployment rate both among young and old people. There are two types of contracts specifically aimed at the 'over 45s':

a) the permanent contract: this kind of contract, which was revised in 1997, foresees:

   - the elimination of the requirement that an individual be registered on the unemployment list for more than a year;

   - the right, for the contracting firm, to a discount on the company's fee payable to social security and

   - the elimination of the obligation for enterprises to maintain the same personnel for at least three years.

b) the substitution and replacement contract for early retirement: this is a measure to support youth employment. Its purpose is to foster the contracting of unemployed workers to substitute workers who opt for early retirement at the age of 64 (anticipating retirements by a year).

More than 80% of unemployed 'over-45' have taken advantage of this form of contracting that is generally capable of covering the lowest qualifications.

With the industrial crisis of the 1970s, the employment promotion fund (FPE) was created to implement re-insertion policies, fundamental for the re-employment of workers under 55.

The Spanish continuing training system is organised into three areas: initial vocational training (FPR); occupational vocational training (FPO); continuous vocational training (FCO).

In 1997 Spain started the four-year period for the application of the continuous training agreements. This is a combination of training actions carried out by the enterprises, workers or their respective organisations, aimed at improving skills and qualifications and also the re-qualification of workers.

In recent years, the theme of continuous vocational training has been at the centre of interest for the government and the social partners for two reasons: first the recognition of the strategic value of training to increase economic competition, and, second, for the role that FPC can carry out in e social promotion of workers.

The concept of lifelong learning has a vague definition in Spain, because it can encompass a wide range of activities

Sweden

In the post-war period until 1990 the unemployment rate was between 1 and 3%, afterwards it increased to approximately 8% and, in 1997, it reached 9.8%. Most of the unemployed women and men come from the manufacturing and the public sectors. Most affected is the 55 to 64 age group. Those over 45 have a lower degree of education: 83% of the long-term unemployed have a compulsory school certificate (39%) or a vocational school diploma (44%). Those most at risk are women with a low education level.

In Sweden, early retirement means a permanent invalidity pension given to people between the age of 16 and 65 whose working capacity has been permanently reduced by a quarter as a result of either illness or other

physical and mental disablement. In 1990, it was calculated that invalidity pensions awarded to the 60 to 64 age groups were six times greater than for the 45 to 54 age groups. This peak in early retirement reflected the program of professional rehabilitation conducted by the social-security offices as well as the specific crises recorded in the Swedish economy.

Lifelong learning is intended to combine education and learning processes that last throughout the working life. For Sweden we can talk of two generations of lifelong learning approaches: the first one is more humanistic, aimd at improving the quality of life, while the second, which was developed in the 1980s, is more linked to the economy.

The principal objective is to create 'schools for everyone', where knowledge and aptitudes can be developed. However, adult education does not only consist of public schooling, but there are also employment training programs targeting unemployed adults and people in a state of occupational risk.

A new initiative of the Government, the 'knowledge lift' aims at substantially reducing unemployment. The main targeted groups are the people between 25 and 55, who attended or completed three years of upper-middle school. The number of unemployed attending this program is much more pronounced than in any other program aimed at adult education: only 20% of the participants were not unemployed in the last 7 years; of these 28% are 'over 45'.

Conclusion

The following points emerged in this study:

a) lifelong learning is an historical, theoretical and practical model of adult education, focusing on the development of the capacity for, and pleasure of, learning and on the quality of life of individuals as well as of the community;

b) educational institutions based on lifelong learning are to be found in places outside the work environment;

c) continuing professional training includes professional up-dating and organising activities, as well as courses in the workplace; it is based on different logical and pedagogical assumptions from lifelong learning;

d) in Italy and Spain we cannot really speak of lifelong learning, but the area of continuing training for adults, in the workplace and also outside, is close to the concept of lifelong learning we find in the Scandinavian countries;

e) both the notions of lifelong learning and continuing training are wide-ranging terms that encompass numerous concepts and activities. In Italy and in Spain continuing training is limited to the workplace: government and the social partners have only recently begun to underline the potential aspects of permanent adult education in relation to production changes and employment crises;

f) the high rates of unemployment generated different reactions: in the Scandinavian countries there is a demand for an educational system for adults, focused on professional re-qualifications and following a more active role in labour market policies;

g) in Italy and in Spain there is an interest in the development of adult educational systems which are more focused than in the past on training 'during the whole length of working life' and, according to very recent developments and agreements, on professional re-qualification.

h) the effects of the interest expressed in lifelong learning cannot be evaluated yet because consolidated practices are still being redefined in Sweden and in Finland, and interest arising from previous experiences is being developed in both Italy and Spain.

Lifelong learning policies in European cities and new employment opportunities for disadvantaged people (POLLlis)

LdV Id. 5043.

Coordinator: Claudio Dondi and Cristina Brecciaroli, SCIENTER- Centro di Ricerche e Servizi Avanzati per la Formazione, Via Val d'Aposa 3, 40123 Bologna, Italy.

Partners:
- CCE – University of Edinburg; CGIL, City of Edinburgh, UK;
- IMFE-Instituto Municipal de Formacion y Empleo Ayuntamiento de Granada, Spain;
- Istituto Europeo di studi sociali- Associazione Europea, Italy;
- ÖIBF (Östereichisches Institut für die Berufsbildungsforschung), Austria;
- The Tavistock Institute of Human Relation, UK.

Cities involved in this project: Auxerre, Barcelona, Berlin, Bologna, Turin, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Espoo, Évora, Granada, and Steyr.

Period: in 1997-1998.

Survey report: Cristina Brecciaroli, Claudio Dondi, SCIENTER (eds.): "Lifelong learning policies in European cities and new employment opportunities for disadvantaged people". Bologna, March 1999.

Summary

The main aims of this study were:

a) investigation of major lifelong learning initiatives promoted by European cities;

b) developing tools and methodologies useful for those wishing to initiate new lifelong learning policies or to improve the ones which are already established.

The survey has been structured in two phases. The first is a comprehensive review of European learning cities in countries belonging to the EU and also outside the Community. The second is a comparative analysis of e cities selected as interesting cases and studied in greater depth.

Analysis

The following 20 points have emerged from the analysis of the practices observed and in-depth case studies:

a) lifelong learning is a priority in the regeneration and revitalisation programmes concerning cities and regions affected by substantial industrial crises;

b) most of the successful cases depend, among other things, on the formal legitimisation of city authorities to intervene in the field of education;

c) a formal declaration of willingness to be a 'learning city' or an 'educating city' often accompanies the effort of coordination and articulation of lifelong learning measures, although it is not rare to find similar policies undertaken in cities that have never made such a public declaration;

d) leading cities such as Barcelona, Turin, Bologna, Gothenburg and Edinburgh have generated affiliation and formal declarations by other cities of the same regions and countries, and have been an example for many others cities both in countries within and outside the European Union;

e) the term 'Learning City' is well established in the UK and in the Nordic Countries, but it is not easily accepted in the rest of Europe;

f) six main aims of lifelong learning initiatives at city level were already identified by the OECD study of 1992 "City strategies of lifelong learning". These, which are confirmed by the PoLLlis survey, are as follows:

- linking lifelong learning to community participation;

- creating learning for the whole life cycle;

- ❑ co-ordinating learning institutions;
- ❑ making learning more accessible;
- ❑ building a learning strategy for local development;
- ❑ building a cultural strategy.

g) lifelong initiatives at city level seem to be more frequently embedded in broader policy areas, especially concerning employment and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups;

h) in terms of concrete content of initiatives, the two dominant trends consist of measures to integrate and improve information provision on all learning opportunities in the city and the systematic use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve access to the same learning opportunities. These two elements are then combined in multiple ways with other measures contributing to address specific target audience and priority areas;

i) citizens' requirements are considered very important, though in most of the cases the actions observed are the result of initiative undertaken by the city administration without any 'citizens' input';

j) experiments in most of the cities analysed show that a complete coverage of potential target populations is not easy. In most of the cities some classes of users (e.g. long-term unemployed, cultural minorities, women) have absolute priority;

k) strong political sponsorship is a precious resource for start-up and consolidation of an initiative, but it should be as broad as possible to guarantee sustainability;

l) broad representatives of relevant actors in a 'Learning City Board' may certainly help to include a more complete range of possible actions. However, effective policies are often based on a coherent and cohesive group of partner institutions with a limited number of priorities;

m) a politician, a company, an association or an institution take the most of the initiatives as part of their substantial or public relation priorities. Final users could do much more to support expression of ideas and suggestions;

n) coordination is another misleading keyword of lifelong learning initiatives at city level: there is coordination of informational sources on learning opportunities, but coordination of supply agencies is far from being achieved;

o) in some of the cities surveyed there is a 'demand-based' approach, i.e. segmentation of target populations and articulation of learning opportunities specifically directed to each relevant target group;

p) competition among initiatives and promoters in the field of lifelong learning seems to play a different role in a learning city: when the process is starting, competition may be disruptive; in a second phase, when some progress has been made, competition among promoting agents and concurrent initiatives could be a factor of dynamisation;

q) the availability of economic resources is an essential factor in guaranteeing the feasibility and sustainability of lifelong learning initiatives at city level, but it is not certain that additional 'dedicated' LL resources are really a necessary condition of success;

r) there is no culture of evaluation in the most of the cases studied by the survey;

s) owing to the lack of evidence from the initiative results, cooperation among cities is stronger in the design than in the monitoring phase. External comparisons of the results are rare. This gap of comparison builds the fundamental case for the learning cities forum initiative proposed within the PoLLLis project;

t) a general improvement in the availability of information and some rationalisation in the provision of resources for lifelong learn-

ing are necessary steps in building a system dimension around the many individual actions that can be observed in European cities;

There is also a guideline offering a starting point of common understanding and experience for all those people involved, at city level, in the process of policy-making related to the theme of lifelong learning. This Guideline contains:

a) a simple conceptual framework in which to place the process of policy-making in the field of lifelong learning;

b) practical suggestions on how to define, design, implement and evaluate local lifelong learning public initiatives in an urban environment, sometimes with concrete examples of cities studied in the PoLLLis survey.

Learning City

Citizens participate in policy-making to shape their educational and learning agendas; the city is responsive to its citizens needs and provides appropriate learning environments and opportunities.

'A learning city addresses the learning needs of its locality through partnerships.... learning cities explicitly use learning as a way of promoting social cohesion, regeneration and economic development, which involves all parts of the community.'

The four main phases of a policy cycle are:

a) orientation: political priorities are accorded the main aims of public policy and are the result of the interaction between the main social and political parties;

b) definition: how to implement the main goals is the object of studies, comparisons and selections;

c) implementation: actions and programs are conducted and monitored, the beneficiaries have to provide feed-back;

d) evaluation: this one is not an isolated phase, but a continuous process which is present in the other three phases.

Policy orientation

This study identifies six elements of policy orientation that were confirmed by the PoLLLis survey and can be found, to different extents, in most city policies of lifelong learning:

a) coordination of education and training providers: cities can play an important role in coordination, partnership and inter-institutional integration of learning opportunities for citizens. They can break administrative and bureaucratic barriers and bring together the public and the private sectors with common objectives;

b) making learning more accessible: learning has to be more accessible to all citizens, but especially to the socially, culturally, economically and physically disadvantaged;

c) building a training strategy: learning is economically relevant, i.e. many lifelong policies at city level are dedicated to the generation of competences that would allow citizens to find relevant jobs and the economic system to compete in the global arena;

d) building a cultural strategy: a cultural policy has to stimulate participation in cultural activities and to promote an attractive cultural image of the city;

e) linking lifelong learning with community participation: citizen participation in decision-making processes may help to regenerate the sense of community that is lost in large urban centres, but this participation should be closely combined with a particular attention to the needs of all citizens;

f) creating learning for the whole life cycle: this idea is an essential part of the concept of lifelong learning, but it implies a special effort for the citizens that are out of the education and training processes.

Focusing on the above aims there are many initiatives dedicated to aged people, such as universities for the third age or 'intergenerational' learning. The last has the advantage of not pushing old people into a special 'reserve'.

It is difficult to codify and standardise the policy orientation and there are four *risks* in this phase, as follows:

plain policy borrowing, without sufficient analyses of what can really be transferred to other city contexts and what cannot be transferred and should be eventually replaced;

ignoring previous experience developed elsewhere and basing priority definition on a local set of references;

concentration on the same aims and target groups, without consideration of the whole scope of lifelong learning;

ignoring or bypassing the limits of city administration institutional competences may bring to unsolvable institutional conflicts with the central or regional administration.

Policy definition

Policy definition has to do with considering and finally choosing the best ways to achieve the agreed goals. Several steps were taken to promote awareness and dialogue between citizens and the city as a learning environment:

a) conducting in-depth analyses of needs, resources, and existing actors;

b) reviewing existing initiatives and past experiences at local level;

c) considering examples of concrete measures implemented elsewhere;

d) defining action lines to implement policy aims;

e) asking interested actors and citizens for ideas and suggestions;

f) designing an implementation plan;

g) developing criteria for selection of proposals;

h) choosing concrete actions;

i) designing a basic evaluation plan, clarifying criteria for success and monitoring approaches;

j) constituting a steering committee and an operational structure to conduct actions.

Policy implementation

How to put policy into practice with regard to learning cities; the leading roles in taking forward the learning city from concept to reality are played by people and institutions.

The central ideas are:

a) partnerships are the necessary basis of any lifelong learning policy and they have to reflect the 'vision' of the learning city, its main goals and agendas;

b) central coordination to guarantee system impact and rational use of resources; many initiatives should be encouraged and even competition with each other can be productive;

c) all possible options for finding lifelong learning must be considered, public and private, new project funding but also current funding for education, training, museums, libraries etc.;

d) the learning city policy has to profile and position its human, intellectual and social capacity in relation to global markets;

e) the learning city can be considered as a collective 'learning organisation': it has to identify, classify and assess the skills base of the community; to develop plans for effective training and learning arrangements to address 'skills' gaps; to widen the participation for excluded groups;

f) the involvement of ICT (information and communication technologies) is important to increase participation in learning for

socially excluded peoples, in developing competences and in providing accreditation for informally acquired skills and experience.

Policy evaluation

There are three main steps in carrying out an evaluation; as follows:

a) exploring and planning: the key points are clarity about issues, what is the purpose of the evaluation, who is the audience, what kinds of things need to be focused on and how evaluation will be integrated into the implementation of the Learning City initiative;

b) data collection and analyses or carrying out the evaluation; the main stages involved are choice of the evaluation criteria, the choice of the methods and techniques to use for data capture, managing and co-ordinating data collection, including analysing the results;

c) utilisation and dissemination: it is important to give the participants a sense of how the initiative is progressing and what are its outcomes by running feedback events. Dissemination means not only a circulation of a final report, but different communication approaches such as short summaries of the evaluation; journal articles for other researchers; topical articles in the trade press; workshops for specific audiences; feedback seminars for key decision-makers; a web site, including an electronic discussion group (for example the PoLLLis Learning Cities Forum).

The POLLLis Learning Cities Forum (LCF)

The LCF is not an association, but an informal, structured and focused gathering of cities that want to work together and to prepare the ground for other partnerships. It is a project generator, a city-based core structure that allows the validation of surveys and analyses.

It was established to design and run joint lifelong learning initiatives and to exchange experiences and opinions on a wide range of issues.

Role and structure

The LCF aims, by means of surveys and analyses, to facilitate the understanding of lifelong learning at city level, to plan and design joint lifelong learning initiatives, to support the formative evaluation of the individual and joint lifelong learning initiatives at city level and to carry out the intermediate and final dissemination of the outcomes to other interested cities.

Through the LCF, a collaborative learning environment has been created at European level which offers the opportunity for interested cities to gather and progress in their lifelong learning policies.

The LCF is composed of a research organisation, with a reputation and experience in the area of education and training, leading the study activities, and the city administrations, leading the learning cities forum that will orient and validate study activities.

Only a systematic research approach integrated with a validation exercise can produce effective progress in the area of policy intervention.

LCFs offers to cities

a) collaboration with consolidated research organisations;

b) 'value added': competence map of learning cities and benchmarking strategy;

c) exchange of information and experience in different fields of lifelong learning;

d) the outputs of the PoLLLis project: the outcomes of the many projects constitute the base on which the LCF is working, facilitating general methodology and studies on which to develop its activities;

e) communication tools available. The website of the project located at the IMFE (City of Granada) is regularly being updated and

introduces information about the general progress of the project and related issues. It will soon offer a chat facility for interested cities.

f) established general contacts with city representatives.

The PoLLlis project – lifelong learning policies in European cities and new employment opportunities for disadvantaged people- has the main aim of documenting and analysing new policies addressing social exclusion and exclusion from the labour market of the disadvantaged in society.

Targeted socio-economic research (TSER) Project synopses[1]

Targeted socio-economic research (TSER) invited, within the fourth framework programme, proposals for research from the European research community on three main areas of economic and social research:
i) science and technology policy,
ii) education & training (ET) and labour market integration,
iii)social integration and social exclusion.

The increasingly severe economic and social problems facing European societies required a more co-ordinated and better funded and targeted research and policy response than before. The main objective of the TSER (1994-1998) Programme therefore was to build up both the knowledge base and research infrastructure for high quality, policy relevant, comparative European socio-economic research at both national and Community level.

In Area II, research in education and training, the objective was to help link advances in science and technology and rapid economic/ technological change to the effectiveness of the linkage/ relationship between ET systems – in building up human capital, labour market entry and in-firm insertion/ training processes for attracting and using high quality labour.

Within this broad area of research the programme had three main objectives – to strengthen the European research base and improve communication and networking amongst European researchers, to develop and strengthen the knowledge base and to improve its quality and comparability, and to help apply it to the challenges facing European economies and societies.

From 1998 until 2002, the key action (under the fifth framework programme), builds upon and extends the work carried out in the TSER programme. It is implemented through research and technological development (RTD) projects, thematic networks, research infrastructure and various types of accompanying measures[2].

[1] The compilation was carried out by Silvia del Panta, Cedefop
[2] For more information on the key action programme, please refer to Van den Brande (2000) in this report.

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Introduction to the project synopses

The project synopses below have been selected on the basis of their relevance to the domain of VET. Several projects have also been referred to in several contributions of this background report. For completed projects, reference to core reports is made. Please note that most synopses are based on the original project abstracts. The contents of the final reports may differ from these descriptions. More information and links with each project can be found on the key action homepage.

For more information on the key action 'Improving human potential' visit the website of the Research Directorate-General, Directorate F – Human potential and mobility (http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/research/tser1/~ html or: http://www.cordis.lu/tser/home.html). There you will find:

- General information about the key action, its major goals and means of implementation;
- A full list of projects that have been funded till now by the TSER Programme (4th Framework Programme) and by the key action, including the composition of consortia, co-ordinator addresses, synopses and results (if available);
- Publications, proceedings and papers (in some cases also for download);
- Forthcoming events and interesting links to several socio-economic sites, research associations, networks etc.;
- Discussion forum on various research issues.

Website: http://www.cordis.lu/improving/ and in particular the key action homepage: http://www.cordis.lu/improving/src/hp_ser.htm
Postal address: European Commission; Research Directorate-General; Directorate F – Human potential and mobility; Rue de la Loi 200; B-1049 Bruxelles – Wetstraat 200; B-1049 Bruxelles; Office SDME 3/62; Tel.: +32-2-2991111 (switchboard); Fax: +32-2-2967024
For specific queries on Research for education and training contact: Lieve Van den Brande, European Commission; Research Directorate-General; Directorate F 4–Key Action: Improving the socio-economic knowledge base; Rue de la Loi 200; SDME 4/58; B-1049 Bruxelles; Tel.: +32 02 296 3425, e-mail: Godelieve.Van-den-brande@cec.eu.int

Themes: Governance, funding and teachers

1. Education governance and social integration and exclusion in Europe

Co-ordinator:
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http://syrpa.khi.is/ed/egsie

Abstract

In the current discourse on education governance there appear to be two overarching contradictory positions:

1. new ways to govern education are necessary in order to obtain a more fair, sensitive and efficient educational system which is necessary in order to get a more developed society who will be able to fight exclusion;
2. new ways to govern education will lead to increased segregation and decreased equity and equality in education as well as in society and will increase the amount of social exclusion.

Both positions can be regarded as based on available empirical evidences in different contexts. Thus, it is of vital importance to analyse the restructuring of education under different circumstances and to make comparisons between cases in different contexts.

The overall objective of this research project is to identify relationships of education governance to social integration and exclusion of youth in European contexts and to discuss and propose policies on governance that will help

to minimise social exclusion and to maximise inclusion. The project will clarify different positions within this field and inform current discourses on education governance in Europe. Of special interest are students transitions between different levels or kinds of education or from education to work or unemployment. The more specific definition of the level or age of students depends on the structure of the current educational system in its socio-cultural context.

In order to reach this overall objective the following subsidiary objectives need to be fulfilled:

- to review and analyse current research on education governance and social integration and exclusion among youth;
- to describe and analyse different national/ regional systems of education in the context of educational traditions and governance strategies in different European countries;
- to describe and analyse the discourse on education governance in international organisations and the potential impact of this on national discourses;
- to analyse experiences of and strategies to deal with new governance structures in education among politicians and administrators as well as teachers and head-teachers in different European countries;
- to analyse national and international statistics on social integration and exclusion related to education;
- to describe and analyse implications of education governance for the social integration and exclusion of youth;
- to compare different national cases in Europe with a focus on relations between education governance and social integration and exclusion;
- to inform and discuss results and conclusions of this study with education actors in different context.

2. Public funding and private returns to education (PURE)

Co-ordinator:
Rita Asplund, the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy, Finland
E-mail: rita.asplund@etla.fi

Abstract

The objective of this project is to study the impact of different systems of public financial support for school attendance on observed outcomes in the labour market, particularly in terms of the levels and dispersion of private returns to education and education-related inequality in earnings. This project moves into a territory not yet studied from the perspective of optimal investment in human capital, the role of student finance systems, school admission rules (free or selective entry) and school differentiation.

The project divides into four closely related issues as follows:

a) Analysis and comparison of wage and human capital structures and private returns to education between countries and within countries over time in order to uncover distinct trends as well as similarities and dissimilarities across countries.

b) Analysis of the impact of country-specific trends in educational returns of changes over time in underlying market forces (supply-side and demand-side factors), and of carefully differentiated measures of returns by type and level of education in order to highlight and compare national system of education.

c) Analysis of the structure and evolution of the national systems of education, admission rules and systems of financial support for school attendance to be used as an input in.

d) Analysis of the effects of differing systems of public support for cost of education to individuals and admission rules on the private returns to education and on earnings inequality related to differences in educational attainment.

The results of the project will be of value to policy-makers at both the national and the EU level. It will contribute to understanding the educational implications of the European integration process and to promote the relationship between education and training, the labour market and economic growth, which are set out as two problems areas where new knowledge is needed, and thus to reaching the short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives listed for Area II of the TSER programme. Results from the project will be disseminated via intermediate and final reports, user-oriented seminars and a Web site.

3. Teachers training, reflective theories and tele-guidance: prospective and possibilities in teachers training in Europe (thematic network)

Co-ordinator:
Wim Veen, Utrecht University, IVLOS Institute of Education, Faculteit Techniek, Bestuur en Management, The Netherlands
http://www.ivlos.uu.nl/reflect/index.htm

Abstract

This thematic network for teachers training aims to strengthen co-operation in research activities among the partners involved. The research will be carried out on reflective competencies training in initial teacher training for general secondary and vocational education, using teletutoring as an instrument in school based training.

For teacher training institutions will carry out comparative studies of the development of new practices using modes of tele-guidance. These studies will bring together experts in the field of reflection and those in the field of educational telematics in teacher training.

This research includes the following activities:

a) an inventory study of research activities in the field of IT related to the development of reflective competencies in training;

b) four preparatory studies on the use of telematics as a reflection aid. These studies will focus on:

c) development of instruments to measure the reflective skills;

d) installation of the technical requirements for the research;

e) development of hypothesis and research questions. They will focus on effects of telematic intervention of teachers trainers in the reflection process;

f) development of research agenda/ design for future research by partners involved.

Themes: Learning and competences

4. DELILAH: Designing and evaluating learning innovations and learning applications

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

This project is about educational and learning innovation. It aims at understanding of educational innovations and, on this basis, gathering empirical evidence on innovative education and learning arrangements and developing specific methodologies and guidelines for learning. This broad aim is operationalised through the following objectives:

1. to synthesise the existing research on major cross-cultural, socio-economic and pedagogic factors in education and learning, including new learning arrangements involving learning technologies, and major national policies on education and training, with a view to identify theoretical and empirical gaps in current understanding and establish the consonance or match between major educational and learning innovations and the different learning patrimonies or traditions as defined by the aforementioned factors;

2. to assess, in a transnational and cross-sectoral fashion, the contribution of different organisational settings of learning and accessibility of learning opportunities for less favoured groups;

3. to contribute to the development of appropriate policies in the area of education and learning by firstly identifying ways in which policies can facilitate the contribution of new educational and learning arrangement in accordance with the different learning patrimonies, and secondly promoting transfer and the exchange of results across the study areas.

4. to develop methodologies and guidelines for the evaluation of new educational and training arrangements and processes in four education and training sectors.

5. to provide methodologies and tools for more effective mixes of new training products, in particular those involving multimedia.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-2009 – Looking at innovations in Education and Training, Framework, results, and policy implications of the DELILAH project, J. Cullen, 1998, 83p (TSER011).

5. European network for educational research on 'assessment effectiveness and innovation'

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.to.utwente.nl/euaei/index.htm

Abstract

This is a thematic network of 19 participants who elaborate the structure for this research projects. The network aims to realise the following products:

- an electronic database (accessible via World Wide Web) containing information about characteristics of educational systems, descriptions of the participating research institutes, their research programmes and their research projects;

- integration and exchange of conceptual frameworks regarding educational indicators, and the use of expertise from the partners for producing national and European overviews of statistical information on education in mathematics, science and technology.

- exploration and identification of possibilities for cooperative pilot projects.

These products focus on the themes which are addressed in the TSER work programme (Area II), such as: development of output indicators, the 'general education' issue, cultural diversity, minorities, comparisons with Japan, and the USA, added value of schooling, multi-level educational effectiveness models, assessment of basic competencies, science and technology teaching, educational potential of new information technologies, scientific and technology literacy, implementation of science and technology options in education; and methods, tools and approaches relevant to the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of science and technology policies, and the performance of minorities in education.

The added value is the improvement in dissemination and accessibility of up-to-date information about ongoing and completed research in assessment, effectiveness and innovation.

The network focuses on primary and secondary education.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-2008_– European Network for Educational Research on Assessment, Effectiveness and Innovation, WJ Pelgrum, 1988, 55p (TSER009)

6. Forum of European research in vocational education and training (thematic network)

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.itb.uni-bremen.de/projekte/forum/f check.htm

Abstract

The primary aim of this thematic network 'Forum' is the establishment of the European dimension specifically related to contents and methodologies of vocational education and training (VET) systems. In contrast to the organisational orientation of informal on-the-job training dominating the Japanese system for skill acquisition and specific task-related training dominating the United States a European dimension needs to embrace the traditional values of European societies embodied in the diversity of traditions, institutions, legislation and cultures that influence vocational education and training in the European Union. Forum associates experienced researchers and academics, in institutions responsible for VET-research and the training of VET professionals, from fourteen countries. The Forum will bring together researchers from different traditions, disciplines and cultures with the aim of defining and exploring a European dimension for VET. The Forum will also play a role in the dissemination of existing research, help to link the different networks of researchers and practitioners, contribute to the establishment of a transnational research community and will integrate the coaching and development of young researchers. It will contribute to:

- the development of a transnational research approach in VET;
- the development of a European dimension in VET;
- discover the cultural diversities as sources of innovative idea;
- improve the dissemination of research results in Europe;
- contribute to the development of a European research community in VET;
- find a European path for VET policy between unification and regionalisation as well as diversion and conversion;
- improve the co-operation between VET research and VET-practice.

The network will examine the pressures to increase the quality of VET, skill levels of those in VET, quality assurance, flexibility, and transnationality, while taking into account different responses to employer involvement, individual funding and changing work organisations.

Five Forum workshops are envisaged:

1. Common practices and values in VET,
2. VET and the labour market,
3. Organisational changes required of vocational training institutions,
4. In-company training and school to work transition,
5. The Learning Organisation.

In all cases the focus will be on the European dimension for research into the capacity for change and adaptation of education systems. Furthermore all FORUM members are involved in national, regional and European projects which will help to disseminate their case studies of good practice.

7. Implementation of virtual environments in training and education (thematic network)

Co-operation:
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http://xiram.doe.d5.ub.es/IVETTE

Abstract

The central objective of this project is to investigate the issues involved in the implemen-

tation of 'virtual learning environments' (VLE) in post-secondary public educational institutions, as well as in training institutions. The project will focus particularly on looking for a holistic view when tackling the main issues mentioned. Within this context, the key objectives of the project are as follows:

- to map out the teaching and learning approaches in VLE, especially those arising from combining face-to-face and distance education methods in traditional institutions and companies;
- to critically assess the impact of European diversity into international VLE, in relation to common elements of curriculum, language issues, and institutional adaptation of the E&T systems to open and distance learning;
- to contribute to innovation in public educational institutions in relation to the restructuring of its functioning, the co-operation with similar European institutions and with the private sector when implementing VLE.

The network will explore problems and will open perspectives for further research. This will contribute to understand the problems of the new VLE, and to promote innovation in educational and training institutions in a context of European integration and collaboration between institutions.

The intended outcomes are the following:

- Three empirical studies on issues, problems and practices in the following areas: (i) teaching/learning approaches in virtual open learning environments; (ii) cross-cultural and academic dimensions in European diversity and (iii) Institutional/organisational factors in fostering innovation on public institutions and training companies through the implementation of VLE.
- A report integrating each empirical study with the aim of contributing to the innovation policy of both public and private institutions in developing new ways of open and distance learning based on VLE;
- A conference with policy makers, teachers, trainers and representatives of educational and training institutions.
- A report on policy implications addressed to the users groups and the wide academic community.

8. Lifelong learning: the implications for universities in the EU

Co-ordinator:
D. Tsaousis & N. Kokossalakis, Pantio University- KEKMOKOP, Greece
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Abstract

The general aim of this project is to investigate how the universities in the EU respond to the concept of lifelong learning (LLL) and to analyse the structural and functional implications which the application of the concept is bound to have for the universities in the 'information society'. The study also aims to investigate and discuss policies and goals of the universities relevant to LLL and raise more questions of reformulation of educational goals and strategies at a European level.

The project will identify, analyse and discuss the actual forms of involvement in LLL of the universities concerned. In addition the research will explore actual and potential policies and strategies of universities referring to LLL and will compare them with corresponding policies and strategies of international organisations namely the EU, OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

The intended outcome is to produce seven national reports, three special reports concerning the major areas of the research outlined above and a major general report synthesising the results of the whole project within a European context.

9. New assessment tools for cross-curricular competencies in the domain of problem solving

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

One of the biggest challenges to educational research and policy is providing relevant information regarding the education system's outcome at different levels. Student outcome indicators are of special interest as obviously this information is a primary criterion for different activities such as teaching assessment, quality improvement programs, evaluation studies, and steering (as expressed by the French word *'pilotage'*) the educational system. In the last few decades a major effort was exerted at the international level (e.g. IEA, OECD, EU) to develop student outcome indicators for comparative purposes. The most recent of these enterprises, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted by IEA between 1994 and 1996, exemplifies the progress that has been made.

In the next decade, a major source of information about education will be provided by a recently launched OECD-study in 26 countries (comprising all EU-countries, except Portugal), PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). PISA addresses student achievement indicators in the fields of Reading Literacy, Mathematics and Science, together with indicators with respect to Cross-Curricular Competencies (CCC). In comparison with the classic contents of school subjects, CCC gain specific attention in a rapidly changing information society. In the field of CCC special emphasis has been given to 'Problem Solving' (PS) as a very central competence. The need for CCC such as PS indicators is clearly also necessary for studies that extend beyond school age, such as the International Life Skills Study (ILSS) dealing with adult competencies.

All EU countries (and other European countries) participating in studies such as PISA or ILSS recognise that a common European effort in different parts of the studies is desirable. Consistent with this view, a Thematic Network on CC/PS is being created, directed to:

- connect policy needs with expertise and experience. This requires close co-operation between policy-makers and scientific experts;
- bring together experts from different disciplines who are working with different conceptual frameworks. By finding commonalties and enhancing synergy, new concepts and new assessment tools may be developed;
- stimulate and integrate more participation on both the political and scientific levels, with a special focus on South European countries. Ultimately this shall result in the outline of a larger project on CCC/PS.

10. Work experience as an education and training strategy: New approaches for the 21st century

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The proposal is to analyse and develop work experience as a European education and training strategy appropriate to the changing economic and social conditions of the 21st. century. Its context is the future and changing nature of work. Overarching questions concern the extent to which work experience can enable young people to understand and prepare for working life and the ways in which educational institutions and companies can work together creatively to deliver relevant learning outcomes.

The formal objectives of the project are the following:

- to undertake a European policy study and review of work experience;
- to develop a common framework and terminology for understanding work experience;
- to undertake case studies of innovative work experience partnerships;
- to compare outcomes and develop transferable models;
- to develop European quality criteria and a quality framework for work experience;
- to undertake an active dissemination programme.

Researchers from the six partner states will work collaboratively in a review of work experience as a vehicle for learning and on a study of current and future policy towards work experience in the 16-19 years age group. The other member states will be asked to join these exercises so as to build up a clear profile at European level.

The research work will focus on the 14-19 age group and will examine the aims, processes and outcomes of work experience in the light of changes in the labour market and trends in workplace requirements and organisation.

The aim is to analyse and test innovative approaches (including use of information and communication technology) to both domestic and European work experience. The methodology will involve researchers, enterprises and leading edge educational institutions working together.

There will be a particular concern with core and transferable skills and attitudes towards lifelong learning and therefore will be a focus on the development of quality criteria and evaluation procedures for work experience which can be applied at a European level.

The project will have practical, theoretical and policy outcomes and benefits. The products will include transferable models of good and innovative practice and will be disseminated throughout the EU and the central and eastern European countries. A series of workshops for key-decision makers will also be organised.

11. Work process knowledge in technological and organisational development

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

This thematic network is concerned with the impact on the knowledge required of the workforce due to the changes that occur when organisations acquire greater flexibility and introduce new technologies in response to the pressures of competition.

Its main objectives are:

- to identify new working practices associated with these changes;
- to integrate European traditions for conceptualising the ways of knowing needed in the workplace to adapt to these changes – 'work process knowledge';
- to generate and analyse policy options for facilitating the development of this knowledge, including new approaches to learning in the workplace, the design of new technology and organisational development within enterprises.

By elucidating the knowledge required in the working environment, and by integrating European traditions for theorising this knowledge, the project will contribute to the development of a European social science infrastructure.

By developing policy options for facilitating the adaptation of the workforce to new working practices, the project will strengthen European science and technology policy in rela-

tion to the problem of achieving sustainable growth.

Theme: Enterprises and human resources

12. LATIO: In-company training and learning in organisations

Co-ordinator: Lennart Svensson & Ylva Kjellberg, Lund University, Sweden
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http://www.pedagog.dk.se/latio/

Abstract

The aim of the project is to develop strategies for enhanced competence development in companies in the EU. The research objectives are the follows:

- to describe and compare learning environments in companies active on the EU arena, within a number of sector and branches;
- to describe and analyse current strategies for in-companies training, organisational learning, development of core skills and competencies within these companies;
- to find and lift forward positive examples of conditions that create successful learning in organisations;
- to distinguish what are critical factors for developing new and successful strategies for in-company training, competence development and learning in organisations.

The project is carried out in an ongoing dialogue with reference groups, both at national and international level. The reference groups at national levels consist of representatives of national organisation for in-company training providers, employers federations and relevant trade union representatives.

The project is divided into four major phases:

- theoretical analysis and studies of contextual national factors;
- empirical studies;
- theoretical and practical results;
- evaluation and implementation of results

The practical contribution of the project is to propose structures and strategies that enhance and facilitate the creation of learning environments, and best practice for in-company training and learning organisations.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE2-CT96-2013_– LATIO – In-company training and learning in organisation, Lennart Svenson – Ylva Kjellberg

13. The role of human resource development within organisations in creating opportunities for life-long learning – concepts and practices in seven European countries

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.eclo.org

Abstract

The objectives of the study are:

- to clarify the specific European outlook on the role which human resource development (HRD) in learning oriented organisations can fulfil in lifelong learning, and thus contribute to the discussion on a 'European model of lifelong learning';
- to provide a basis for further research on the changing role of HRD in work organisations;
- to provide practical guidelines for HRD practitioners throughout Europe on how to facilitate employee learning and thus assist their organisations in securing their competitiveness in a continuously changing environment.

The research looks at HRD departments in learning oriented organisations throughout Europe and how they view their own role in

stimulating and supporting employees to learn continuously as a part of everyday work (with the intent to contribute to organisational learning, and thus to enhance organisational competitiveness).

An attempt will be made to show different perspectives between HRD concepts and practices in European organisations and those which exists in the US and Japan.

The research will go into strategies adopted by European HRD departments in realising their envisioned new role. Consequently the research will analyse the facilitative factors as well as the difficulties (the inhibiting as well as conducive factors) they encounter during the implementation process.

In order to provide practical guidelines, the research aims to analyse how practitioners cope with these (inhibiting and conducive) factors.

To enhance the impact of the research, it is intended to publish (additional to the overall report and the case study report) a practitioner's guide. Furthermore, the results can be used in the ongoing discussion on the European 'infrastructure' for lifelong learning.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE2-CT97-2026 – The Role of HRD within Organisations in creating opportunities for Life-Long Learning: Concepts and practices in seven European Countries, S. Tjepkema

14. DELOS – developing learning organisation models in SME clusters

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The research intended to offer a methodological contribution and operative instrument in favour of E&T and employment policies. Although European SMEs account for 71% of European employment they are unable to formulate detailed training strategies which can guarantee qualification adjustments and increased competition. Hence the need to focus the research on small-firms network (clusters) which represent privileged observatories for the analysis of employment and learning dynamics.

Considering the 'clusters' as a learning organisation permits, methodologically, to analyse the information flow and the interactions which, in the cluster, give rise to circular processes of competence acquisition, shared know-how, experimenting and progressive correction of collective intervention. In relation to SME clusters it is the group of SMEs, which acts as the Learning Organisation. It is the aggregation of SMEs on the whole which reacts to challenges of change by adapting in terms of technological professional updating, new professional skills, new service needs, new market strategies. The path followed by the 'organisational learning' is complete in the SME cluster circuit, but instead of taking place within one large company, it takes place in a number of enterprises and also involves a number of different bodies (companies, associations, training institutes, etc.). The 'interorganisational' learning processes which develop in the SME clusters have not yet been systematically studied from the point of view of implications of collective learning, shared development of knowledge and intervention models. Indications and ideas for further research come from studies on the dynamics of interorganisational collaboration in technological innovation processes, or from surveys describing aspects of entrepreneurial learning processes during the occasion of co-operative initiatives on topics such as, internationalisation.

It is opportune to focus attention on the distinct characteristics and on specific organisational learning processes, which arise through co-operation between SMEs, so as to clarify their nature and to build support methodologies to increase conscious interventions on these issues.

The project objectives therefore are:

- ❑ verify the modalities through which the SMEs clusters intervene as learning organisation and investigate the organisational learning processes that arise through clustering;

- ❑ give 'working' indications capable of supporting training and occupational policies in favour of SMEs methodology.

After a preliminary scouting phase, through an ad hoc methodology, 12 different clusters have been analysed throughout six different countries. Finally, the modelling phase provides to rationalise the overall results.

Final Report:
DE.L.O.S. Project – Developing Learning Organisation Model in SME Clusters. November 1998

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-2007 – DELOS project – Developing Learning Organisation Model in SME Clusters, R. Sarcina, 1998, 128p (TSER008)

15. Small and medium enterprises in Europe and East Asia: Competition, collaboration and lessons for policy support.

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

This two year study evaluates the competitiveness of European SMEs vis-à-vis their counterparts in East Asia (Japan, Korea and Taiwan), using enterprise benchmarking to identify the nature of their technological differences in selected low, medium and high technology manufacturing activities. The project traces:

- ❑ observed differences within comparable activities to variations in human resource availability, development and management;

- ❑ the strength and relevance of network linkages with SMEs and with large enterprises;

- ❑ the nature and sophistication of consultancy and advisory services;

- ❑ links with the S&T system;

- ❑ the financial system supporting innovation;

- ❑ and cross-national, national, local and municipal government initiatives to support productivity, skill development and marketing.

The detailed firm-level analysis and benchmarking allow the identification of 'best practice' models of SME technology development; it also provides data that can be used in statistical analysis to identify rigorously the extent and causes of deviation from the technological frontier. This will clarify the nature of the emerging competitive challenge facing European enterprises from the Asian 'Tigers', and the prospects for fruitful collaboration between them. The analysis of support systems in Asia, which are known to be strong and pervasive, but whose detailed operations are not well understood, lead to policy recommendations for strengthening the science and technology support system for SMEs and improving the efficiency of networks and clusters in Europe. The project creates a data bank on micro-level technological activities studied; this data base can later be expanded to other activities to provide inputs into S&T policy analysis in the EU. Local collaborators in each of the three Asian countries have been selected from local research institutes. The dissemination of results will be undertaken within Europe and Asia.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT97-1065 – Small and Medium Enterprises in Europe and East Asia: Competition, Collaboration and Lessons for Policy Support, M. Fransman, 113p, 2000

16. Small business training and competitiveness: Building case studies in different European cultural contexts.

Co-ordinator: Alfons Sauquet, Fundación ESADE-Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección, Spain
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Abstract

The objective of this research is to identify learning processes that lead to increased competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and to describe how these learning processes are shaped in different European cultural contexts.

The analysis will be done by selecting and monitoring projects that companies undertake such as project development, technology innovation, environment adaptation, which aim at maintaining or developing sustainable competitiveness.

SMEs are the focal point of this research since learning processes should be relatively easy to identify and observe. In small companies learning experiences sometimes take place without the benefit of any formal training programme. Conversely those who have undergone training might have a relatively high chance of applying what they have learned.

The approach adopted will first build a conceptual framework of the different factors involved in the countries participating in this project. After this phase, the participants will conduct in depth empirical fieldwork within their communities using structured interviews and case studies. The results will be analysed for each country with the purpose to identifying learning processes, their relationship to cultural aspects and the contribution of such processes to building competitive advantage of SMEs especially through networking.

A comparative analysis of the learning processes in different countries building on case studies will be undertaken to identify best practice at both the national and European level.

The outcomes of the analysis is aimed not only at SMEs themselves in demonstrating how they can build competitive advantage through networking but also it is addressed to policy-makers active in this area.

17. SME policy and the regional dimension of innovation

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The SMEPOL (SME policy and the regional dimension of innovation) was a collaborative activity including seven research institutions in Europe. The project evaluates almost 40 existing policy instruments of promoting innovation activity in SMEs in 11 regions in eight European countries in order to identify 'good practice' policy. The aim is to construct a sound and organised knowledge base about existing practices, qualify their appropriateness and efficiency in order to identify 'good practice' principles, in a relative sense, and help to see how they can be adapted to other environments and situations.

In order to achieve this objective the project consists of four work packages:

1. the objective of the first work package is to establish a sound theoretical basis and a common analytical framework in the research group, in order to obtain comparability between the single evaluations of programmes and politics carried out in the project. The theoretical framework is based on the concepts of the interactive innovation model;

2. work package two contains evaluations of selected policy instruments in regions in eight countries to identify best practice policy in each case. The instruments to be evaluated reflects both linear and non-linear innovation models, endogenous and exogenous policy approaches, and sector

specific and non-sector specific policies on regional, national and EU policy levels. The evaluation studies have the same main questions and horizontal themes, use the same theoretical framework and similar methods;

3. work package three pools together material from the region and country specific evaluations. The different policy instruments and regions are classified according to a taxonomy developed in the project, and best practice policies will be analysed for different regions and instruments;

4. the objective of work package four is to produce a consolidated synthesis report and organise seminars and workshops aiming at policy makers at EU and national level. Workshops in each country or study region are also arranged during work package two.

SME innovation support policies in the EU regions, thus, could substantially be improved by three key principles:

1) Matching the context and SME needs' with the policy tools in each region.

2) Confronting the policy tools with the lessons and theory and practice.

3) Comparing results achieved with a range of policy instruments in different environments.

The SMEPOL project gives concrete inputs on all these principles. However, achieving progress in this direction would be best handled through the involvement of policy makers themselves, in benchmarking and evaluation exercises. One salient element of the conclusion is therefore the need for more 'policy intelligence' in this complex field, that is why at the end of the project a seminar will be organised involving policy makers and other end users.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE1-CT97-1061 – SME Policy and the Regional Dimension of Innovation. A. Isacksen, 2000

18. Self employment activities concerning women and minorities: Their success or failure in relation to social citizenship policies

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The project focuses on the evaluation of social citizenship policies in relation to self-employment activities implemented by member countries of the European Union. Those policies examined which aim to promote self-employment as prominent active social integration strategies, targeting to women and minority groups, as groups most likely to be threatened by exclusion and also as groups with a growing propensity towards self-employment.

The research is based upon the explicit hypothesis that active social integration policies aiming at the promotion of self-employment of unemployed women and migrant minority members can only be successful if their specific socialisation under unstable biographical and work conditions is recognised and compensation is provided for their discontinuous working careers. The empirical methodology of this project will challenge this hypothesis through the systematic collection of life-histories and work-histories from samples of women and migrants who participated in programmes geared to active social integration. These samples will be matched with samples of migrants and women who have become successfully self-employed without benefit of these programmes and policies.

The project want to establish an European-wide research infrastructure with the instruments of a common database and software training in qualitative data analysis. Policy makers and administrators will be equipped with well grounded answers for questions arising by the development of consultation and training programmes.

Theme: Employment and the labour market

19. Educational expansion and labour market (EDEX)

Co-ordinators:
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Abstract

The main objective of the EDEX research programme is to examine the effect of the substantial increase of high education workers on the functioning of the labour markets in five European countries: Germany, Spain, France, Italy and UK. The analysis takes also into consideration the comparison between Europe and the USA, where the education is regulated, more than in Europe by the study fees.

The research describes the trends of the different national systems in terms of training and employment; explores the reactions of the enterprises vis-a-vis the improvements in the level of education; and tries to prepare an analysis for the medium-term.

The project comprises five stages, of which the first three, i.e. analysis of the educational structures; analysis of the distribution of qualified people in the labour market; and, analysis of the employers' reactions; are preliminary to the fourth one, in order to establish the scenarios for the evolution of the job-training system; Finally the fifth one represents the summary of the main findings.

Every stage results into six reports of comparative international analysis. Each report will be discussed in the network international meeting, which will also be open to external partners such as academic experts, national and European policy makers, training experts and representatives of the enterprises.

20. Full employment in Europe (thematic network)

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The general objective of this thematic network's project is to re-introduce and substantiate the concept of full employment into the economic policy discussion in the European Union, on the Community as well as on the national and regional/local level. More specifically this includes the following three sub-objectives:

1. the development of an analytical understanding of the endogenous and external reasons, why full employment has been widely abandoned as economic policy goal;

2. the elaboration of the necessary modifications and differentiation's which must be made in a full employment strategy in contemporary Europe as compared to the three decades after World War II;

3. the concretisation of the instrumental and institutional side of an appropriate full employment strategy as a multi-layered policy on the European, the national and regional/local levels, paying particular attention to the mutual links between the different levels.

The thematic network will proceed in four working groups (WGs).

1. In the first WG the conceptual, historical and institutional dimensions of full employment and the development of these dimensions since World War II will be explored, taking into account the far-reaching changes of the structure of the workforce as well as of the international competitive environment.

2. The second WG deals with the macro-economic requirements for a sustainable strategy for full employment including, apart from well-established fields like monetary and fiscal policies, also questions of income distribution and of ecological requirements.

3. In the third WG the role of working time arrangements in a strategy for full employment will be discussed; this includes the analysis of different models of working time arrangements in various countries (e.g. the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany et al.).

4. The fourth WG thematises structural aspects of full employment policies. It will firstly deal with regional policy in the EU on a national and on the European level. Secondly the field of technology policy will be addressed.

The thematic network organises working group meetings to which interested experts will be invited and public annual conferences which will discuss and synthesise the findings of the working groups. Intermediate papers of the working groups and the results of the network will be published.

Report:
Full Employment, Solidarity and Sustainability in Europe. Old Challenges, New opportunities for Economic Policy. November 1998.

21. TRANSLAM – social integration by transitional labour markets: New pathways for labour market policy

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.wz-berlin.de/ab/projects.en.htm#Project

Abstract

This project aims to develop a theoretical analysis of the nature of transitional labour markets, including the types of transitions which occur under different institutional arrangements, and performance indicators on an aggregate level for social integration and exclusion.

In this framework the main aims are as follows:

- to examine the transitions provided by flexible working time arrangements, in particular part-time work;
- to evaluate active labour market policies in terms of their capacity to prevent social exclusion and to support social integration;
- to examine the performance of education and training systems with regard to the provision of basic skills and competence, as well as access-inequalities to education and training, over some length in a person's educational and occupational trajectory.

The project gives rise to the appearance of four publications:

a) 'Social integration by Transitional Labour Markets, Theory and Evidence'

b) 'Social Integration and Working Time: International comparisons of part-time work'

c) 'New Pathways for Active Labour Market Policy'

d) 'Training and Human Capital Investment: Prevention and cures for Social Exclusion'.

A conference was organised in November/December 1998 to present and discuss the chapters of these publications.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-3007 – TRANSLAM – Social Integration through Transitional Labour, G. Schmid, 1999, 37p (TSER034)

22. Innovations in information society sectors – implications for women's work, expertise and opportunities in European workplaces

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.tcd.ie/erc/Servemploi/index.htm

Abstract

The project examines the key innovations implemented in eight countries (Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Italy and Sweden) in the retailing and financial services sectors. It should do this through two interlinked research activities in each country: case studies of retailing and financial services firm, examining the work performed, the expertise deployed, and the personal development prospects enjoyed by female non-managerial employees; and a longitudinal study of selected women moving within firms, between firms, into or out of employment, or becoming self-employed.

The main objectives were:

- to examine the patterns and dynamics of innovation operating in two sectors of the Information Society: retailing and retail financial services;
- to investigate the significance of these innovations as part of the emerging European Knowledge Economy, specifically for the work done and knowledge content in the work of female employees in these sectors;
- to assess the opportunities for these employees to develop and utilise expertise in their work in the context of these patterns of innovation;
- to assess their consequent 'employability' and opportunities for personal development, within firms and beyond them to compare and contrast patterns of change and experiences across member states;
- To compare and contrast patterns of change and experiences across member states.

During the project there will be two European 'employment roundtable' as well as a concluding policy conference. These will involve representatives of social partners from the two sectors. The roundtables will be based on the findings of the project up to that point and the discussions will feed into the ongoing work of the project.

23. New forms of employment and working time in the service economy

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The overall objective of the project is to analyse the effects of new forms of employment and working time in the service sector and service activities on the opportunities for a redistribution of work likely to promote employment.

This project covers ten European Union countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Its quantitative parts include the analysis of data relating to the diffusion of new employment and working time forms in the individual service industries, i.e. deviations from the traditional permanent, full-time employment relationship with standardised working time. Data analysis will also include individual working time preferences, broken down by employee category, family structure, income, etc., as far as possible.

The qualitative parts include case studies which will help to identify basic industry and activity specific reasons for the emergence of certain new forms of employment and working time in selected service industries and

activities. Selected examples of innovative policy approaches and their practical implementation on the establishment level shall be covered.

The final analysis will tackle the question of what new opportunities for the collective regulation of individual working time preferences are emerging.

24. The strategic role of knowledge-intensive services for the transmission application of technical and management innovation

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

This thematic network has brought together organisations from nine member states of the EU to undertake a collaborative exchange of understanding about the contribution of knowledge-intensive service consultancies to the commercial competitiveness and growth of client organisations in different sectors, types and sizes of firm, and core and peripheral regions. A series of interim reports, arising from each work package, have examined the application of this understanding to economic policy, especially as applied to the promotion of technical and organisational innovation.

In targeting areas of policy, it has addressed:

1. The impact of the international integration of European service markets on the availability of consultancy expertise to clients in different parts of the Union.

2. The diversity of national experience, including the significance for consultancy activities of variable regulatory and corporate regimes, patterns of business organisation, including the corporate use of in-house expertise and the position of SMEs, and prevailing patterns of consultancy supply.

3. The degree and patterns of regional inequality in consultancy provision and use, their causes, and their significance for public agencies wishing to enhance regional technical and organisational innovation and competitiveness.

The outcome of the thematic network is a policy-orientated analysis of best practice in the employment of consultancy skills to support technical and organisational innovation, taking account of the needs of various sectors, large and small-medium enterprises, and the work of public agencies in different nations and regions. Proposals are made for further research into the changing corporate context of technological and managerial innovation involving growing consultancy inputs. The work programme of the network over 18 months consisted of five sequential work packages; each focused around a workshop. Four (work packages 1-3; 5) are based on international meetings among the participants, and one (work package 4) took place simultaneously in each participating country.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-1017 – The strategic role of knowledge-intensive services for the transmission and application of technical and management innovation (KISINN), Peter Wood, 1999, 110p (TSER023)

25. Regional innovation systems: Designing for the future.

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The central question of this study concerns the extent to which regional innovation systems could be identified in eleven European regions. The authors have studied regional innovation systems by exploring their differences and similarities, and relating their systemic structure to the contemporary needs of global industrial competitiveness and innovation foresight, and learning capacity. The study has also tried to identify the nature of

the key design elements of institutional innovation network architecture appropriate to supporting the main anticipated innovation needs of regionally clustered firms for the foreseeable future. In order to achieve this goal, the research work focuses on three levels:

1) at firm level – in what ways have conditions for competitiveness and innovation changed? What organisation innovations occur?

2) at institutional level – What changes in policy by private or public institutions occur?

3) at innovation and technology policy levels – What kind of support is provided by intermediary and public institutions, how, and is this changing?

The policy objectives were:

- to provide policy-makers information of good practice for enhancing regional growth projects;
- to help policy-makers assess different kinds of European regional innovation practices and to judge their tendencies towards convergence or divergence;
- to stimulate learning effects regarding transfer of endogenous innovation potential for sub-national and EU policy-markers;
- to raise awareness of the need for new or adjusted EU and other programmes.

Five workshops (month 1, 6, 10, 18, 23) have been implemented for the preparation of each workpackage and presentation of the final report.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-1010 – REGIS project – Regional Innovation Systems: Designing for the future. Philip Cooke, 1998, 125p. (TSER013)

Theme: Transitions and social exclusion

26. European panel analysis

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The panel project has two objectives:

1. to produce a comparative European longitudinal micro-database on employment, income and social protection, living standards and family or household circumstances, combined other European panel materials to extend the topical coverage and historical range and also to negotiate with the responsible national authorities, in partnership with Eurostat, for release of these data-sets to other researchers;

2. to use this database in the investigation of a number of issues concerning:

- the nature and dynamics of social exclusion and integration, and their causes and consequences;
- specifically examining and seeking to explain similarities and variations among European countries in terms of: the pattern of household income stability or instability over time; movement into and out of different forms of employment status; formation, growth, diminution and dissolution of households.

27. A comparative analysis of transitions from education to work in Europe (CATEWE)

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

European countries vary widely in their education and training systems and in the factors shaping transitions from initial education to the labour market. To date, no comprehensive research exists on the nature and consequences of this variation in education to work transitions across Europe. The objective of this research is to develop a more satisfactory framework for understanding transitions in the different European systems and to use this framework to analyse the factors affecting success and failure in education/ training outcomes and labour market integration in the different countries.

This project will be the first major comparative study focusing on recent developments in school to work:

- transition processes across a range of European countries. The project will use a particularly rich source of data on transitions, regular school leavers' surveys in Ireland, Scotland, France and the Netherlands, and will place these data in a broader European context by drawing on the Labour Force Survey. Together, comparative analyses of these two sources of data will significantly advance our empirical and theoretical understanding of the relationship between education/ training and labour market systems. It will provide a stronger empirical basis for studying the process of initial labour market entry, the factors influencing successful integration or exclusion, and the interaction of these factors with institutional and societal variables. The improved understanding of the diversity of education/ training systems and their relationships to labour markets is indispensable for more successful needs assessment, policy planning and implementation of policies on a cross-national basis. In this sense, the results of the project will help to

- underpin the development of more effective education and labour market policies which fit the varying contextual conditions across Europe. Only precise knowledge of the specific mechanisms through which various groups become advantaged or disadvantaged in the labour market can lead to the development of more effective policies which are appropriate to the varying conditions in different countries. At a more practical level, the project will directly contribute to the OECD's current Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life. In addition, the project will develop existing cross-national data sources on school leavers, encourage the greater harmonisation of national transition surveys and facilitate the expansion and standardisation of data collection in other European countries.

28. Schooling, training and transitions: an economic perspective.

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The research is about schooling, training and transitions at various points of an individual's life cycle.

The primary objective of this research is to bring together the work and experience of European economists who have contributed to the field of education and training. Its aim is to exploit the wealth and diversity of European institutions and data to develop further an expertise in comparative analysis and a deeper understanding of the mechanisms which have shaped schooling and training systems, and labour market transitions (from school to work, and from job to job), somewhat differently across countries.

The research incorporated these new developments by looking precisely at the production of established knowledge and skills, their allocation to individuals and jobs, and how well they fit together in each society depending on its specific institutions and other relevant characteristics. Special attention focused on the high school and undergraduate

level because most of the tensions generated by the regulation of schooling systems and labour markets seems to lie there nowadays.

A theoretical and empirical investigation of three related topics should be achieved:

1. a comparative analysis of schooling systems;

2. the transition from school to work;

3. training and labour market flexibility.

The economic equilibrium approach is based upon the idea that quantities, like the number of students or of trainees, for example, and prices, like wages, result from the comparison of a market demand. Depending on the question under consideration, the kind of market assumed in the analysis may vary from perfect competition to heavy institutional regulation (as is the most often case for education). This framework offers an aural way of understanding the interactions between the schooling system (supplier of education), the learning organisation (which demands specific skills and supplies training), and the individuals (demanding for education and supplying the skills) whose transitions reveal the costly adjustments that took place to match the supply of education and training with the demand for skills.

The aim of the research is to develop a good European expertise of education and training systems (first topic), gather comparable data and make some policy evaluations on transitions from school to work and from job to job (second and third topics) and give some new theoretical insights on institutions and labour markets.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE2-CT95-2012 – Schooling, training and transitions: an economic perspective, C. Sofer, 2000, 116p

29. Enhancing the participation of young adults in economic and social processes: Balancing instrumental, biographical and social competencies in post-school education and training

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.northampton.ac.uk/solar/tser/country

Abstract

The overall objective is to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the potentials and limitations of current approaches to post school education and training for unemployed youth and young adults.

In this line of thought, the main objectives of the research are the following:

a) to explore the different kinds of assumptions that give direction to the actions of educational policy makers, educators and participants involved in schemes aimed at (re)orienting or integrating young adults (in) to the labour market;

b) to identify ways in which particular educational practices, in the context of particular socio-political, economic and cultural contexts, impact (or not) upon how young people construe their choices and opportunities for social and economic inclusion and exclusion;

c) to extend current understanding of the experiences and perspectives of socially differentiated groups of unemployed youth/young adults with regard to education and training programmes that seek to widen choices and opportunities for participation in social and economic processes;

d) to illuminate how the assumptions that give direction to the actions and choices of policy makers, programme investors and designers, and educators/trainers may be understood and acted upon from the perspective of young people;

e) to consider how, in the different regions involved, balances between skills-integration, social integration and biographical integration do or do not come about and to explain how these may relate to structural, economical, historical and cultural particularities and policies of the regions;

f) to generate and further develop innovative educational concepts and practices which will address the social and biographical dimensions of economic participation and exclusion.

The project will juxtapose and explore the espoused aims and assumptions about 'education and training effectiveness' amongst those who are responsible for educational programmes, and investment therein, with the different ways in which their choices, practices and messages are being understood and negotiated in the life-world of the learners. The project is situated within a framework of assumptions about research quality, ethics and rigour that combines features of collaborative action inquiry and participatory research, with narrative, life history and case study research. It places an emphasis on research with, and not on people, and it builds on developments around the use of narratives and participatory action research in the context of situated case studies, as a reaction to overly deterministic reproduction theories of schooling.

30. Employment and exclusion (thematic network)

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The principal objective of this research is to compare results from various countries on the links between different types of employment and 'exclusion', to control for the effect of key variables, and to identify approaches that will assist policy-makers tackling social exclusion.

There is now considerable data available on different types of employment and their evolution, while exclusion has also been widely studied in Europe. However the articulation between these two remains problematic, and it is very important to understand better how and why different types of employment, particularly precarious employment, leads to exclusion. International comparisons on linked themes suggest that this articulation varies according to the country; it also varies depending on individuals' gender, age, national origin and level of educational attainment.

Access to social protection is at the heart of the process of exclusion. We are therefore particularly interested in this aspect. From this angle we wish to examine the extent to which different degrees of access to social security systems relate to the employment context; contexts which range from the long-term unemployed to those in the most stable and best paid jobs. The same issue is posed by issues of access to old age pensions.

The understanding of the articulation between different types of employment and exclusion will allow to reply to a series of questions that are rarely considered when thinking about exclusion, and which suggest the existence of many connections between research domains that are generally developed separately.

These questions concern how legal and collectively agreed definitions of work regulations, the significance of government policy and the effect of restructuring and of sectoral changes impinge on the mechanism of exclusion, and also whether qualifications play a part in structuring employee attitudes towards precarious atypical jobs.

31. Globalisation and social exclusion

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The principal objective of this project is to determine the role played by international

trade in influencing the employment and relative wages of unskilled workers in Europe. This task will be undertaken using a combination of data analysis, econometrics, case studies and simulation modelling and will take account of differences in industrial structures, social policies and technological change and labour markets and labour market policies in individual EU member states.

The project will investigate how firms and industries in Europe have responded and adjusted to increased international competition from low wage economies. The implications of this analysis for the design of appropriate strategies for responding to future supply surges of low-skill products onto European markets from low-wage economies will be fully explored.

A key element of the project will be the collection of the most suitable data on trade, industrial characteristics (output, prices, investment, employment, wages), technology, labour market structures and national tax and social policies. These data will be collected together and made available as a single database.

The results of the project will be widely disseminated, in the first instance via the discussion paper series of the participating institutions, and later through conferences for both the academic and the policy-making and business communities.

32. Growth, inequality and training

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Abstract

The aim of this project is to provide a better understanding of the interaction between growth, innovation, R&D and inequality. It will do this through developments in economic theory, and through a comparative international empirical investigation of the experience and performance of a number of carefully selected EU and non-EU countries.

The main objectives of this project are the following:

a) To extend the recent discussion of the changing distribution of skills and wages in the workforce by incorporating both demand-side and supply-side factors.

b) To look, on the supply-side, at both the evolving distributions of the supply of skills in different countries, but also the factors that determine the acquisition of skills, and hence the responsiveness of skill supply to technology shocks.

c) To provide a coherent intellectual framework in which to understand the links between growth and inequality.

d) To provide a systematic analysis of policies that can enhance long-run economic performance, where the measure of performance will encompass both growth and distributional considerations.

e) To undertake all the above analysis at macro, meso and micro level, through a combination of theoretical, econometric and case studies.

33. Information society, work, and the generation of new forms of social exclusion

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The central question in this project is: 'What are the social but also the micro-economic implications of the emerging information society?', and the principal aim of it is to find an answer to this question. It focuses on developments in the domain of companies, assuming that the informatisation of work is a key factor behind the emergence of information society.

The project represents a break with traditional technological determinism as it is based on a 'bottom up' approach, analysing the concrete processes of building up an information society by implementing modern information and communication technologies within companies and in inter-organisational networks. This will shed light on the possible emergence of Europe-specific ways to an Information Society.

'Technological practice' is used as a key concept; this describes specific ways of embedding information and communication technology applications into organisational forms and cultural patterns. The project will analyse the development process of such technological practices in different intra- and inter-organisational fields, including co-operation within work groups up to regionally based networks of companies and supporting institutions. It will further investigate the ways emerging technological practices within companies are influenced by and exert influence over the institutions of regional and national environments. It will also analyse the social and micro-economic implications of different technological practices. As regards social implications, the project will focus particularly on the aspect of social exclusion and integration. In the project a mix of different methods will be applied including case studies, secondary analysis of existing data sets, a company survey, and a comparative analysis.

Based on the results of the research project an answer can be given to the question whether a common European model of information society is emerging, or whether different countries follow different paths into the information society.

34. Labour demand, education and the dynamics of social exclusion

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Abstract

The project will explore the post-1970 effects of technological change and market integration on the demand for labour with different levels of education and skills, and on unemployment and the process of social exclusion across Europe.

The proposed research has the following key objectives:

a) to analyse the effects of technological change on the demand for labour in terms of education and skills;

b) to develop new indicators of 'social exclusion' and new analytical techniques to explore the dynamics of exclusion for problem groups;

c) to investigate how different labour market, educational, immigration and social policies have moderated this process;

d) to suggest alternative policy directions. Brief description of the research project.

The project is designed to test a specific and highly important hypothesis: that social exclusion can be regarded as a step-wise and potentially reversible process. The analysis will therefore, emphasise the processes of exclusion and inclusion, not merely the characteristics of those already excluded or included. This has important policy implications, since it allows for the possibility that exclusion can be halted and even reversed. New indicators will be designed to take full account of the multidimensional nature of social exclusion: these measures will reflect not only income and labour market outcomes, but also other aspects of exclusion such as housing, access to public services, crime and health.

In order to analyse the above issues, a number of explanatory variables will be used. These

will include, on the supply side, factors such as work skills, number of years of labour market experience, education, language skills, age, gender, cultural factors (including religion), urban experience, and social background (family characteristics); and, on the demand side, variables representing factors such as economic structure (qualifications, 'ethnic' jobs, etc.), degree of market integration (the 'EU effect') and business cycles.

Institutional factors will be taken into account through an examination of immigration and integration policy, labour market and unemployment policy, and policies for education and vocational training.

35. New employment opportunities in the third sector. An evaluation of innovative policies for social integration in Europe (NETS)

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The aim of this project is to identify the contribution to social integration and employment creation in Europe which may come from what (for ease of use) is called 'third sector' (non profit, socially useful activities also known as 'third system', 'social economy'). Their job creation potential and their ability to address new needs will be assessed, and alternative policy actions will be evaluated, considering their economic efficiency and effectiveness, and the impact on social integration.

The survey will be carried out in three European countries – Germany, Italy and Spain – representative of the different problems and institutional frameworks present in the European Union. The results of the surveys will be combined with information from the sources already available and with in-depth interviews to major player and policy makers in the field.

A database containing empirical data will be produced for both researchers and policy makers and a wide audience book will be published. During the project a strong interaction is envisaged between researchers, representatives of third sector organisations and policy makers at the national and European level in order to assure consideration of all contributions to the policy debate and the widest dissemination of the results of the project.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE2-CT97-3046 – New Employment Opportunities in the Third Sector. An Evaluation of Innovative Policies for Social Integration in Europe (NETS), M. Mellano

36. Technology, economic integration and social cohesion

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The project aims to provide insight into the impact of several important and interrelated developments on social cohesion and exclusion in the European Union. The issues analysed are:

a) Technological change as the single most important factor shaping the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the fundamental economic factors influencing social cohesion, such as employment and economic growth;

b) Globalisation, broadly driven by technology (e.g. telematics) and by the liberalisation and deregulation of trade and capital flows. This globalisation trend leads to qualitative changes in the form and effects of the exposure of countries to foreign competition, not only in the form of trade, but also through increased foreign direct investment flows.

The project discusses a number of implications for different policy areas at the European level. With regard to macroeconomic policy, it is suggested that the EU economy is now well placed to adopt a more expansionary economic policy. The key point, however, is that a policy framework in which decisions affecting the demand-side are taken without considering the supply-side will be less effective.

With regard to the regulatory system, it is argued that especially in the emerging areas of ICTs and biotechnology, the early adoption of appropriate standards and the manner in which regulations are framed can have a crucial impact on the pace at which the industries develop.

Europe needs to adopt a wider and more inclusive definition of science and technology policy than in the past. EU sponsored Framework Programmes have played a useful part in financing and encouraging specific scientific research. Little effort has, however, gone into promoting capability amongst 'users' of ICTs and in providing a social and institutional setting that encourages their implementation.

With regard to labour market policies, the project follows a twin strategy of targeting those occupations or professions which support competitive advantage in order to boost economic growth, while having a separate strategy for job creation aimed at cutting unemployment. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the bulk of new jobs must come from expansion of personal services in areas such as care.

It is evident from the project that in responding to the challenges of the new knowledge economy, many policy areas are asked to give directly or indirectly a significant contribution. Therefore, there is a need for more intra-European policy co-ordination both between different sector policies and across different territorial areas. In other words, important policy issues arise in determining the level at which policy should be implemented so as to be the most effective.

Publications:
Final Report: SOE-CT95-1005. Technology, Economic Integration and Social Cohesion, B. Verspagen, 2000.

Studies: TSER004. The globalising learning economy: Implications for Innovation Policy, BA, Lundvall- December 1997

37. Youth unemployment and processes of marginalisation on the Northern European periphery

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The main aim of this project is to develop a clearer knowledge of processes of marginalisation affecting young people through comparative research among the countries within the northern European periphery. The research will highlight strategies and processes, which protect against marginalisation, as well as trajectories, which carry a high risk of subsequent unemployment.

In order to conduct this study, representative sample surveys are carried out for between two and three thousand young people in each of the seven countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Scotland and Sweden).

Representative samples will be drawn from national unemployment registers in each country with eligible respondents defined as young people between the age of 18 and 24 who have been unemployed for a period of at least three months over the previous year. The samples will therefore consist of young people with a variety of work histories that, at the time of the interview, are located in a full range of positions inside and outside of the labour market. This survey design will allow a comparison of young people with unemployment experience some whom have managed to establish positions in the full time labour market, others who have re-entered full-time education and others who

have remained unemployed, withdrawn from the labour market or become marginalised in some other way.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE1-CT96-3025 – Youth unemployment & processes of marginalization on the Northern European periphery, T. Hammer

38. Youth unemployment and social exclusion in Europe

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Abstract

The main objective is to study how different welfare strategies and fiscal structures in different countries influence the risk of social exclusion among unemployed youth. The following research questions can be identified:

a) Do non-standard forms of labour force participation, such as part-time or temporary work or work in the informal economy, represent a step towards social exclusion and labour force marginalisation or can they be regarded as a step towards permanent work careers?

b) Comparative data will enable us to study young unemployed probability of entry to post compulsory education in countries with different educational systems. What are the proportion of unemployed youth that return to education, and what kind of factors seems to influence such careers?

c) How do different welfare strategies with mixes of public (insurance systems) and private (family) support influence job chances of youth unemployment in different countries?

d) To what extent do unemployed youth feel integrated in their society and how does this impact on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship? Are unemployed youth excluded politically in the sense that they do not participate or engage themselves in politics, and what kind of political attitudes do they have?

e) Previous research has revealed large differences in work ethics or work involvement between European countries. What is the relationship between stigmatisation, mental health, and work involvement and job search activity?

f) The project will also analyse young peoples' experience with different measures in a comparative perspective, and assess the extent to which such measures increase job chances or return to education.

In each of the countries involved, researchers will disseminate findings widely among practitioners and within the academic community continuously through the project period. The project group will also give priority to keep in contact with practitioners and national government's ministries , and other interested parties to be able to provide information about main research results which have implications for policy. A European conference of youth unemployment involving both policy makers and the research community will also be arranged at the end of the project.

39. Youth unemployment and social exclusion

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The project aims at empirical research on the causes and key mechanisms of social exclusion, and among them, especially unemployment. The empirical research work in six European countries is, on the one hand, dedicated to different national problems of youth unemployment, and on the other hand follows different scientific orientations and methodologies, namely sociological, psychological, psychiatric and cultural.

This project will be undertaken on the vulnerability of specific groups of young people and on the processes and stages of social exclusion often associated with unemployment.

The project aims to identify critical steps in the process of victimisation in order to formulate social options counteract it; it follows the concept of victimisation on three levels:

1. the loss of social features connected with employment;
2. the experience of continuous exclusion from paid employment with accelerating 'daily hassles';
3. the selective evaluation of the unemployed by their social surroundings.

Each partner contributes specific expertise to the project. In particular, the partner from a public health institution will study self-perceptions of shame associated with financial difficulties, and. the partner from a university hospital will research attempted suicide (the most radical form of self-exclusion from society). Other partners will focus on labour market factors (the weak bands of the labour market for youth), and the cushioning effect of the informal economy – which is for many young people the only entrance to the labour market. A number of issues will be addressed such as the relationship between family support and control. A more psychological approach is to identify the stages of victimisation.

The project is carried out in three phases which are terminated in common workshops, at which the results and contributions from the six countries will be compared and discussed:

1. the definition of concept of social exclusion: analysis and description of the forms it takes in the six countries;
2. empirical research (data analysis and qualitative interviews) with different socially excluded groups or groups-at-risk;
3. the identification and evaluation of innovative options of institutional and political intervention and counteraction.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE2-CT97-3051 – Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion, T. Kieselbach

40. Education and training, new job skill needs and the low skilled

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

The quality of the skills of EU citizens is crucial for the European productivity. Thus is a top priority for European governments is to ensure that every young person gets at least a basic level of skill, and that disadvantaged adults have reasonable opportunities to make up lost ground.

The purpose of the project was to contribute to the basic framework for the design of these policies. The first step was to document what is happening and to diagnose its causes. This involves a clear analysis of what is happening to labour demand, as well as an understanding of why the pattern of supply does not always respond adequately (inadequate student motivation and institutional constraints). The next step was to distil from this experience what are the most effective ways for developing the necessary skills-both in terms of curriculum and teaching methods (including the newest technology). The aim was to work towards defining a Europe-wide definition of the 'platform for learning ' with which every European citizen should be equipped.

The project brought together an interdisciplinary team of economists and education specialists from five EU states: the United Kingdom (UK), France, (FR), Netherlands (NL), Portugal (PR) and Sweden (SW) and the programme of work consisted of four specific studies as follows:

1. the demands for labour by skill in the EU (FR, SW)

2. the factors determining the supply of and demand for labour by skill in the EU (NE, UK)

3. the profile of education and training provision at the basic level in the EU (PR, SW)

4. Defining a minimum learning platform for the EU (NE, UK)

Methodology work on these areas was led by one or more researchers from one of the five participating EU states (indicated by abbreviations above), and all project participants were involved in the investigation of date sources, in the collection of data and in the work defining a minimum learning platform. The team produced improved datasheets linking earnings, qualifications and employment using labour force survey and similar surveys and to analyse their interaction over time. The relative significance of a number of factors influencing supply of and demand for skills have been analysed and assessed using, among other sources, data from the OECD Adult Literacy Survey. The profile of educational provision at the basic level was investigated at the level of curriculum content, pathways and progression for young cohorts. Work on the minimum learning platform involves an extensive literature survey, consultation with governments, employer and employee representatives and field work samples of companies.

Summary:
New Job Skill Needs and the Low-Skilled. Eugenia Kazamaki Ottersten, September 1998.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE2-CT95-2006 – Low Skills: a problem for Europe, Steven McIntosh & Hilary Steedman, 100p.

41. Changing working life and training of older workers

Co-ordinator:
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http://www.nvi.no/prosjekter/worktow.htm

Abstract

From the points of view of education, training and learning, the research focuses on individual and organisational effects, needs and opportunities emanating from the intersection of two trends: the ageing of populations and the changes in working life.

The key objectives of the research project are:

a) to investigate the extent to which the knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes of older workers (45+) can be recognised, valued and utilised in work and learning situations;

b) the ways in which older workers learn within work settings;

c) the extent to which human resource development (HRD) practice and educational interventions involving older workers can facilitate lifelong learning and productivity;

d) the ways in which the diversity of the workforce in these terms can contribute to the development of learning organisations in the work context and, more generally, to the creation of the learning society;

e) through case studies and comparative analysis of good practice in different countries the ways in which the above objectives can contribute to the flexibility and productivity of the European older workforce and to social cohesion generally.

In order to achieve these objectives, cases of work organisations representing different work types (industrial work, office work, service work) in small and larger SMEs are selected in each participating country. The research work (quantitative and qualitative) comprises:

- descriptive studies of knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes, work context and involvement's in formal and informal learning of individual older workers;

- introduction, monitoring and evaluation of work-based education and training interventions and human resource development practices (including some based on use of new information technology);

- dissemination of new knowledge through professional and academic journals, project newsletters, development of materials, scientific and professional conferences and meetings, and through the active involvement of local organisations, social partners and policy-makers in discussions of implementation and strategies.

Summary:
Working Life Changes and Training of Older Workers. Tarja Tikkanen, June 1998.

Publication to be expected:
Final Report: SOE2-CT97-2016 – Changing Working Life and Training of Older Workers, T. Tikkanen

42. Crivet unemployed. The effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed

Co-ordinator:
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Abstract

This research project concerning the effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed, focuses on the question of what works and does not work in training for this target- group. More specifically, it focused on the process variables – that is the organisational, curricular and instructional characteristics of training programmes – that might make one training programme more effective if compared with another training programme.

The main objectives of the project were:

a) to develop a set of hypothesis with regard to effectiveness;

b) to test these hypothesis in order to identify the important parameters (e.g. organisational characteristics, contextual conditions);

c) to develop a multilevel model (several parameter model) of effectiveness of training;

d) to investigate and interpret the differences between countries;

e) to develop a monitoring instrument for individual managers of programmes to assess the effectiveness and quality of their own training programme.

The project encompasses the following three stages:

1. *Case studies*. On the basis of an inventarisation and description of relevant training programmes per country, two cases per participating country are selected for this multiple and comparative case study. In the case studies, trainers, (former) trainees and employers (who employ trainees and have participated in the selected training programmes) were interviewed; major issues of the interviews are the characteristics of the training organisation and programme, the experiences with and evaluation of the training programme. The result of the case studies serve the refinement of the developed conceptual model and hypothesis.
2. *Survey Study*. This stage of the study aims at a test of the conceptual model by means of a large scale survey design. Based on the outcomes of the case studies, questionnaires were designed for the collection of data among trainers, (ex-) trainees and employers.
3. *Development of a monitoring instrument*. On the basis of the results of both the case studies and the large-scale survey study, (preliminary) monitoring instruments have been developed for managers of train-

ing programmes; this monitoring instrument should help them in assessing and improving their programmes' effectiveness and quality.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-2003 – Crivet unemployed – The effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long term (TSER030)

43. Employment precarity, unemployment and social exclusion

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Abstract

This project examines the processes that link employment precarity, unemployment and social exclusion. It involves a comparative research in eight EU countries: Denmark, France, Germany, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Ireland, Italy and Sweden.

The project focuses on three main issues:

1) the cumulative disadvantages associated with employment vulnerability;
2) the causal relationship between employment situations, economic poverty and cultural and social poverty, including household and social relations;
3) the relationships between the form of the welfare state provision and the extent of cumulative disadvantage/opportunities for re-integration in order to provide theoretical interpretation of the results of the statistical analysis.

The project leads to the provision of standardised variables across a range of national data sets, new statistical tabulations and a set of interpretative papers.

Publication:
Final Report: SOE1-CT95-3003 – Employment precarity, Unemployment & social exclusion, G. Duncan, 2000, 67p.

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