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PARTIAL CRAFTS QUALIFICATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR WITH EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

TRAINING PROGRAMME REPORT

● WORK PACKAGE

T2 - Innovation and Quality in Dual Education

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1 SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The present report summarises the activities carried out by the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Munich and Upper Bavaria within the DuALPlus project in order to innovate and complement the already well-established dual education offers within Bavaria.

The intention behind the innovative dual education programme described in the following was to make dual education accessible not just for secondary school leavers, but also for adults and so far socially deprived individuals such as refugees, school drop-outs, etc. On the other hand, the more flexible approach to dual education as it is proposed within this concept is an answer to the urgent need of the construction industry for skilled workers.

In the following we will introduce the background and the objectives of the innovative dual education concept, describe the curriculum and structure as well as our attempt to run a pilot course and the lessons learned out of the process.

ACRONYM

Teilqualifizierung im Baugewerbe (Partial qualification in the building industry)

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2 BACKGROUND

2.1 SITUATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

The crafts sector, in particular the building industry, is facing a serious lack of skilled workforce that cannot be fully covered by the number of regular apprentices in the dual education.

Consequently, construction businesses are currently falling back to unskilled workers, many of them are migrants, school drop-outs or other low-skilled workers who change career to the construction industry.

However, this is not the ideal solution for the construction industry which would in fact require more professionally qualified than unskilled workers.

2.2 NEED FOR NEW DUAL EDUCATION MODELS

In the light of those developments, the Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Munich and Upper Bavaria and the Bavarian Construction Guilds (Landesverband Bayerischer Bauinnungen) jointly developed a model concept of partial qualifications for the building

industry in preparation of the external examination. In contrast to the traditional full time dual vocational education and training for crafts professions in the building sector, this new format will give access to dual vocational training for target groups which do not have the possibility to do a traditional full-time apprenticeship after secondary school, but change career to the building industry at a later time of their life.

Moreover, this new format facilitates the job market integration of the target groups described above, playing an increasingly important role on the job market: the NEETs and other low skilled workers, e.g. school-drop outs or migrants.

The new dual training programme gives them the opportunity to build up on their prior work experience, yet benefit from the high quality of the German dual vocational education and training.

By applying for an external examination (Externenprüfung) by the Chamber of Skilled Crafts after having accomplished the qualification modules at level 3 (TQ3) and at level 5 (TQ5), they even get the opportunity to acquire fully recognised vocational qualification titles in the building industry.

3 GOAL

3.1 AIMS OF THE NEW TRAINING FORMAT

The aims of the partial qualification format can be summarised as follows:

- Integration of new target groups on the job market into dual education such as low-skilled individuals, such as migrants, NEETs, school drop outs and other often marginalised individuals
- Making dual education accessible not only right after secondary school, but even at a later period of life
- Making dual education compatible with family life and job by part-time dual education modules
- Offering a second chance to obtain a fully recognised crafts qualification in the dual education system to school drop-outs, migrants or other marginalised individuals who did not have the chance to take part in or succeed in the regular school system
- Supporting the construction industry by training their unskilled workers to skilled professionals according to the German high-quality standards in dual education.

3.2 INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE NEW TRAINING FORMAT

The partial qualification for the building industry is a completely new, modularised qualification concept. It

consists of 5 modules building up on each other and representing different partial qualification levels.

Module 1 is the lowest and module 5 is the highest qualification level. This highly modular approach makes it possible for NEETs and other low skilled workers to benefit from the dual vocational training system by accessing and leaving it at different vocational training levels according to their prior work experience.

At the end of each partial qualification level a skills assessment takes place. If it is successful, the trainee acquires a certificate that can be credited nationwide.

If module 1-3 are accomplished successfully, the trainee has the opportunity to participate in an external examination (Externenprüfung) at the Chamber and acquire the official qualification of a “construction worker” (Baufachwerker).

A successful accomplishment of the external examination after TQ5 leads to the qualification title “skilled construction worker” (Maurergeselle).

The concept does not compete with the regular dual education set in place for professions in the construction industry. It complements it perfectly, as it is tailored to the needs of a specific new target group, which could not be reached by the usual organisation of apprenticeships.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW DEVELOPED PROGRAMME

4.1 CURRICULUM

The complete partial qualification concept for the building industry consists of five qualification modules with a total duration of 12 months.

Module 1: General basic education in the construction trade

Module 2: Specialised training in one of the three fields: building construction, underground construction, interior construction

Module 3: More specialised training in one of the three fields

Module 4: More specialised training in one of the three fields

Module 5: More specialised training in one of the three fields

In the framework of the DuALPlus project, the training contents have been elaborated in greater detail and cover the following 6 areas of learning:

Learning field 1: Preparation of the construction site

Learning field 2: Accessing and exploring the construction object

Learning field 3: Brick laying of single walls

Learning field 4: Making of reinforced concrete elements

Learning field 5: Making of a wood construction structure

Learning field 6: Coating and cladding of a building structure

Those training contents are accompanied by German language training, social studies and technical calculation.

Given the particularities of the target group (NEETs, migrants), a socio-pedagogical support is foreseen to accompany the pilot training.

4.2 TARGET GROUPS OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The target group are low skilled adults who are 25 years old and older. This includes adults:

- Without any vocational qualification
- With a formal vocational qualification, but no employment
- Who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment
- Who acquired competences by their prior work experiences, but do not hold any qualification certificate
- Having an interrupted professional biography with several periods of unemployment
- Having dropped out of vocational education and training
- Having dropped out of university/ higher education studies
- Job returnees (after longer periods of leave)
- Having migrated to Germany and have a perspective to stay
- Holding foreign qualification certificates and degrees, which are not recognised in Germany.

4.3 REQUIREMENTS ON THE PARTICIPANTS

The prior scholar education of the trainee is not relevant. However, practical work experience in a related trade/ job is an asset.

In order to qualify for the external examination by the Chamber of Skilled Crafts and acquire the official qualification title, approx. 4,5 years of trade-related work experience is required according to the German VET act (Berufsbildungsgesetz).

4.4 TRAINING FEES

The training fees until level 3 are calculated to 8.352,00 EUR. The fees for further modules until level 4 amount 7.497,60 EUR.

However, since the training programme was certified by the German employment agency according to the AZAV standard, the participants can apply for funding

by the employment agency for up to 100% of the training costs.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 RESOURCES AND ACTORS INVOLVED

For the realisation of the partial qualification course the following resources/ partners are needed:

- the vocational training centre in Traunstein of the Chamber of Skilled Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria (Bildungszentrum Traunstein)
- Vocational trainers (external experts) for training the participants off-the-job
- Socio-pedagogical staff
- Support by the Employment Agency Traunstein in promoting the pilot training to the target groups and giving them the financial aid, they might require for being able to attend the training

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE TESTING PHASE

Our testing phase was supposed to start in spring 2020 with the promotion of the partial qualification concept to the target groups. Those were mainly migrants and NEETs, who are currently unemployed respectively working for construction companies as unskilled workers.

The Chamber of Skilled Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria decided that the first implementation of the new developed dual education concept should take place in the catchment area of the Traunstein Training Centre (Bildungszentrum Traunstein).

In order to plan, organise and promote the first implementation of the new dual education format, the Chamber also involved the local employment agency, since it has direct access to the target groups envisaged with this training format, i.e. low-skilled individuals, unemployed migrants and school drop-outs and similar. For being able to support in the promotion and financing of the training measure, the training course had to be certified according to the

AZAV standards of the German employment agency. So, in early 2020 the Chamber of Skilled Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria worked on the AZAV certification process with a successful result.

Both, the regional employment agency as well as the Traunstein training centre then started promoting the partial qualification in the construction sector within their networks. The Traunstein training centre informed all regional stakeholders of the construction industry such as the construction guild and the district craftsmen association in order to inform as many construction businesses about this qualification opportunity for their low-skilled workers. A press release in the local newspaper about the start of the pilot training, which was published in August 2020, was supposed to inform an even larger audience.

The employment agency reached out to the unemployed low-skilled individuals registered within the region of Traunstein informing them about the excellent opportunity to enhance their professional perspectives and careers.

Although both entities started already in spring/summer with the promotion, the response rate was considerably low. Until October only two participants registered to the training, so the Traunstein training centre decided to postpone the start of the measure to November 2020. In the beginning of November we counted four registered participants and would have started the training course nevertheless. However, in early November the Bavarian government announced a new lockdown due to increasing Covid 19 infections in the city and district of Traunstein and the entire region of Upper Bavaria.

Given the persistent lockdown in Bavaria since November with only very short-term relaxation periods, it was impossible for us to start with the training measure until April 2021. Carrying out the training measure online was no option since the target group lack the IT skills, technical devices and infrastructure for being able to participate in online training. Moreover, a large extent of the training

consists in practical training that needs to be carried out in the workshops of the Traunstein training centre.

We are hoping the lockdown to end in the middle of May or beginning of June, but carrying out the training during the spring and summer months, which is the peak season of the construction business, is no reasonable option as companies do not have the time to train the trainees properly as foreseen by the dual education programme.

So our intention is give the implementation of our training course another try in October 2021. Unfortunately, this means that we will not be able to report about the implementation and the evaluation still within the project period.

6 EVALUATION

Since we were unable to run our pilot implementation as planned we could not carry out an evaluation at all.

Originally, we planned to carry out a 360 degree feedback and the evaluation of this feedback was foreseen after the training by feedback forms to be handed over to:

- The trainees
- The trainers
- The consultants at the Employment Agency
- The instructors in the training companies

Aspects and criteria of evaluation would have been:

- the process of promoting the training to the target groups
- the appropriateness of the off-the-job training content, didactics, methods and tools

- the appropriateness of the duration and time frame of the training module
- the quality of the practical training in the training company
- the cooperation and communication process between all stakeholders involved
- the socio-pedagogic challenges met during the pilot training
- the process of assessing the competences acquired by the trainees after training
- the financial requirements related to the realisation of the training module

7 LESSONS LEARNED

Although we could not run a full implementation of the dual education measure, there are some lessons we could learn in the course of the organisation and realisation of the dual education programme. Our promotion activities proved not be as effective as we had planned, since they resulted in only four registered participants to the dual training, which is a considerably low number given the fact that there is quite a significant number of low skilled individuals, unemployed refugees or migrants in the catchment area of the employment agency of Traunstein.

Our promotion strategy included involving the construction guild, since construction business often complain about the fact that they have to employ low-

skilled workers as they cannot find qualified construction workers on the job market. So we were highly confident that the construction business would send us their unskilled workers for training as soon as they learn about the attractive opportunity.

However, it seems that there is a certain contradiction in what the construction businesses usually claim and complain about and what they actually want to have. On the one hand, they call for more qualified workers and staff, on the other hand, they also benefit from the low-skilled workers as they represent cheap labour, since they do not need to be paid according to the collective labour agreements of the industry. It seems that construction businesses are reluctant to

send their low-skilled workers into training, because as soon as the low-skilled workers would improve their qualification level and achieve a recognised vocational training, the construction businesses would have to pay higher wages according to the collective labour agreement of the construction industry.

Also, the cooperation with the Employment Agency showed some difficulties. It seemed that not all consultants were fully informed about the dual education opportunity and therefore, did not promote it sufficiently to their clients. We also learned about interested individuals who applied for the dual education programme at the Employment Agency but were rejected as the selection criteria for entering the training were not fully clear to the consultants.

On the basis of those lessons learned, the Chamber of Skilled Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria will adjust

the promotion strategy for the next dual training, which is foreseen for October 2021:

- Involving the guild in the district, however, giving them more information about the advantages and benefits for their businesses if they send their low-skilled workers to training
- Better briefing of the consultants of the Employment Agency about the intention of the dual education measures and the selection criteria for participants
- Stronger involvement of local media and newspapers in order to promote the dual education measure directly to interested individuals.



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