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FOR MORE PERMEABILITY OF DUAL EDUCATION IN THE ALPINE SPACE

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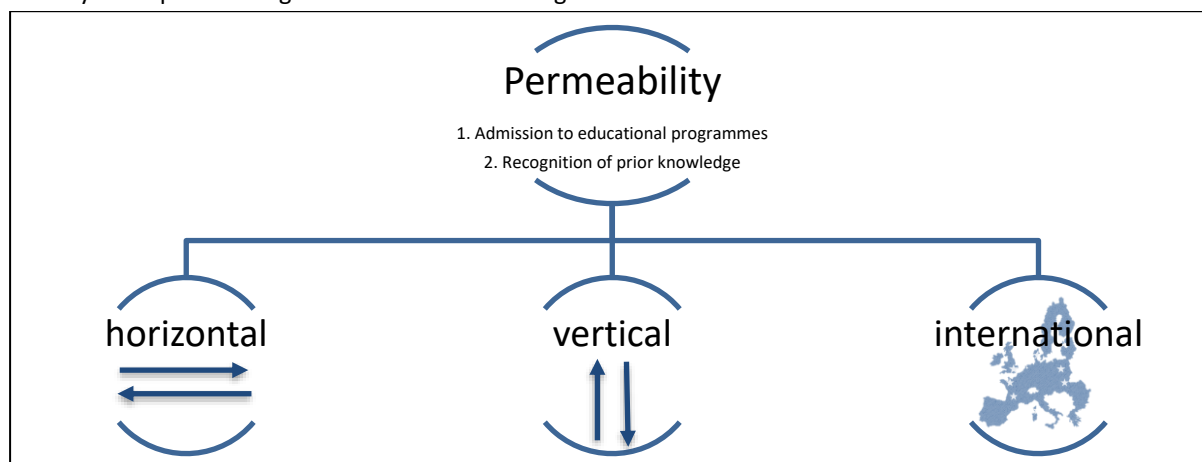
1 INTRODUCTION

Policy makers and stakeholders at national and EU levels have recognised the important role of dual vocational education and training (VET) in ensuring a smooth transition to work and in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. However, countries in the Alpine Space are in very different starting positions. Even long-established dual education systems face challenges such as attracting employers, inclusion of marginalised groups, demographic change and the transformation of work by increasing digitalisation. The “traditional” concept of apprenticeship training was initially designed as a sort of systemic “one way street” with the sole and single purpose of providing a professional qualification for apprentices and the immediate transition into the labour market. Due to the Bologna Process, permeability has gained greater attention from the educational society and therefore much has changed since then. However, there are still individual challenges regarding permeability for the education systems of all Alpine countries. These national and transnational needs were elaborated in regional workshops together with VET stakeholders. In this way, a transfer directly from practice is guaranteed. The following

policy suggestions are thus intended to provide an overview of the needs of practitioners for changes in the education system through policy, with regard to better permeability.

Permeability can be understood in two ways - on the one hand, in terms of admission to educational programmes: can a graduate of a dual education programme enrol at a university without a formal university entrance qualification? On the other hand, in terms of recognition of knowledge and competencies acquired in previous education / previous professional practice: Can a dual education graduate have previous knowledge (e.g., accounting) credited in a university course and thus shorten the duration of the course?

The concept of permeability is divided into three facets: vertical, horizontal and international. Are there possibilities to switch between VET and HE (horizontal permeability)? Does the educational system offer the possibility to change between the educational levels in both directions (vertical permeability)? And do the educational systems of the different countries offer the possibility to switch between them (international permeability)?



2 SUMMARY

Permeability is a very important feature for a successful education system in today's world. The importance of education in order to be able to survive in the labour market continues to increase. Educational paths are becoming longer and educational biographies more complex. Permeability between educational institutions must therefore be ensured. But it is not only institutional requirements that can lead to an insufficient degree of permeability, but also accompanying circumstances such as funding or the information situation. In practice in particular, obstacles to permeability between educational institutions often become apparent. Therefore, the transfer of practical experience to policy makers is immensely valuable in constantly advancing the permeability of an education system.

This document contains concrete suggestions on how to improve the permeability of the education systems in the different Alpine regions. The suggestions were developed in workshops with stakeholders of dual education, directly in the regions. In order to obtain as broad an opinion as possible and to be able to develop well-founded suggestions, people from the various vocational schools, the chambers, the employment agencies and regional development were among those involved in the workshops.

Even though the education systems of the regions are very different, the policy suggestions developed concern very different topics as well as topics that are obviously relevant in several regions. A major issue that concerns almost all regions is the information situation on the permeability of education systems, and dual education in particular. Therefore, measures for better and earlier involvement and information for parents are

proposed as well as central online orientation platforms.

Topics that are specifically relevant in the respective regions include the financing of dual education, the image and value of dual education, the transition possibilities between special educational institutions or the targeted support of talent.

The project partners and all involved stakeholders of dual education in the regions who participated in the workshops would like to contribute with these suggestions to improve the permeability of the educational systems in the Alpine Space.

This document is also available in French, German, Italian and Slovenian.

For more information about the educational systems in the Alpine Space as well as the status regarding permeability in the respective regions please have a look at the study about permeability of dual vocational education and training¹.

¹ <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/dualplus/pdfs/results/report-permeability.pdf>

3 NATIONAL POLICY SUGGESTIONS

As already indicated, the education systems of the Alpine countries are at different starting points. Accordingly, there are also different concerns for policy in the different regions. Therefore, policy suggestions for the individual regions are presented below. As some countries have more than one partner involved in the project, there are policy suggestions for several regions for these countries.

3.1 AUSTRIA / LOWER AUSTRIA

3.1.1 ENHANCE VISIBILITY OF DUAL EDUCATION'S VALUES

A key issue that occurred frequently during the empirical data collection within the DuALPlus project is the low public image of dual education, and training in general, in particular practical skills. Thus, an increase of academisation can be observed, indirectly supported by schoolteachers and parents who encourage youngsters to aim for higher education. Third level education, respectively university degrees, are considered a guarantee for a secure and well-paid job, as well as manifold career possibilities. Furthermore, there is a low public perception of reputation within certain professions, respectively trade industries. Teenagers especially, are not familiar with diverse professions as well as transition pathways after an apprenticeship certification.

HOW CAN THE VALUE OF DUAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA BE MADE MORE VISIBLE?

National and regional Chambers (e.g., Economic Chambers, Labour Chambers) as well as guilds (political level), SMEs and (vocational) schools (training and education) as well as (social) media have to pull together to enhance the attractiveness

of dual education and training, as well as raise awareness of its value. Greater public promotion of dual education and training as well as that of educational pathways and permeability (e.g., “apprenticeship with high school diploma”, admission to certain colleges) could be realised by focused information and consultation, by lectures and presentations about careers, as well as experience reports. Such services could be (more strongly) promoted by for example. local Chambers, communities, schools and companies via social media sites, newsletters, newspapers, posters or flyers.

For instance, orientation days in schools, open days in SMEs, education and training fairs, internship and public apprentice competitions are already existing strategies, which should become more widespread. Moreover, companies could be more strongly encouraged to invite students to get to know practical vocations better as well as trying out different techniques. Local Economic Chambers as well as trade guilds could promote corresponding measures and their benefits for SMEs (e.g., publicity of profession and company, recruitment of future apprentices, respectively employees) via conferences/meetings, periodically newsletters or social media sites.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

As research in the partner regions has shown, the low public image of dual education and training seems to be a key issue in the whole Alpine Space. Thus, a greater public promotion, as well as awareness rising should be a central goal in each partner region. Therefore, the certain key players, respectively stakeholders, in the regions have to be considered and included.

3.1.2 ENHANCE DUAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FORMATS FOR ADULTS

The Austrian dual education system is oriented at youngsters. SMEs' representatives mentioned that their trainees are mainly male, between 14 and 25 years old, but predominantly teenagers. Most of them completed the second or third school level as their highest education. At the same time, young adults (candidates over the teenage age) as well as trainees with university entrance qualification (high school diploma) are the most desired target groups by SMEs. This is due to the fact that these groups are expected to be more mature, more responsible, more ambitious and more willing to learn than teenagers, as well as to having comprehensive basic knowledge.

HOW SHOULD DUAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FORMATS FOR ADULTS BE ENHANCED IN AUSTRIA?

Dual education and training formats should be more strongly targeted towards (young) adults as well as people with higher education certification. So far, most educational and training offers beside classic dual education and training are addressed to people with pertinent professional practice or unemployed people with at most second level education. There are hardly any offers for adults with a higher educational background to learn a trade on second-chance education.

SMEs should be strongly encouraged and financially supported to train adults regardless of their educational background. After receiving their extraordinary apprenticeship certificate, the trainees could become regular employees. Moreover, local offers addressed to adults with professional experience should become more promoted and widespread by e.g., local Chambers, communities as well as education institutes via social media sites, newsletters, newspapers, posters or flyers. The project "Du kannst was!" ("You can") addresses

adults aged 22 and older with certain professional experience without an apprenticeship certificate. Another target group are migrants with foreign education and training, which is not renowned in Austria.

Beyond that, the curricula of vocational schools should be revised in cooperation with trade guilds to better fulfil the needs of training companies as well as the labour market in general.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Partner regions, for which adults with professional experience and/or higher education are the desired target groups of SMEs, could be inspired by existing best practice examples. Within the development and implementation of dual education and training formats for adults, certain key players, respectively stakeholders in the regions, have to be considered and included.

3.1.3 ENHANCE TRAINING COMPANIES AUTONOMY

In Austria, dual education and training is bound to a certain region. Thus, training companies and vocational schools have to be located in the same region, e.g., Lower Austria, regardless of its distance to the trainee's home or the quality of the school.

HOW SHOULD THE AUTONOMY OF TRAINING COMPANIES BE ENHANCED IN AUSTRIA?

The choice of a certain vocational school should be more oriented towards the needs of the training company (e.g., regarding certain competencies) as well as the needs of the trainee (e.g., regarding to the home and workplace). Therefore, new regulations on national and regional levels as well as intensive coordination and cooperation between SMEs and vocational schools (e.g., regarding to curricula) would be essential.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

It would be necessary to check, if the regional boundary of school and company is an issue in other partner regions as well.

Previous research within the DuALPlus project suggests a better balance between dual education and training's regulation and autonomy in general, e.g., explicit regulations of the procedure of the development of individual training plans, as well as the final assessment of trainees, but at the same time enough autonomy to fulfil the needs of SME's, vocational schools and trainees

3.2 AUSTRIA / VORARLBERG

3.2.1 INFORM HOLISTICALLY ABOUT DUAL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL PATHS

In Vorarlberg, educational pathways are not sufficiently visible and parents are often informed too late and not holistically. For example, parents know too little about the permeability of the education system. The pressure of having to decide early on which path to take should be removed. The earlier and the more knowledge parents have, the easier it is for them to make good decisions about their child's path to education.

HOW SHOULD PARENTS BE INFORMED ABOUT DUAL TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS IN VORARLBERG?

Parents need to be informed systematically and in good time, as early as in elementary school, about the various educational paths that are possible after the end of elementary and compulsory schooling (4th, 8th or 9th grade). This leads to more transparency, and families can plan their children's education continuously and systematically.

Obligatory information events for parents and teachers should be held in the elementary school. During these events, parents receive uniform, clear and transparent information. In particular, the Ministry's information platform (www.bildungssystem.at) needs to be explained

and made known and linked via the schools' websites. The measure should be taken at federal and state level.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

At the respective federal and state levels, it should be examined whether, and how, mandatory information events (such as parents' evenings) can be implemented in the respective educational system.

3.2.2 INTRODUCE A COMMON SCHOOL FORM FOR 10–14-YEAR-OLDS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In most regions of Vorarlberg, parents are already under pressure in elementary school to direct children towards grammar school. Attempts are being made to avoid the route via secondary school. The needs, talents and potential of the children are not sufficiently considered.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN VORARLBERG?

A common school form for 10–14-year-olds, perhaps even a compulsory 9th school year for all, would relax the current situation and bring benefits. Parents, pupils and elementary school teachers would be relieved of the early pressure to make decisions. Pupils have more time to discover and develop their talents, strengths and potential before they have to decide how to continue their school or professional career.

A common school for 10–14-year-olds reduces the interfaces and decision points for students and parents. The common school form can be structured, for example, in profile or pilot schools, according to main topics (music, sports, business, languages, etc.). This also leads to a harmonisation of the educational systems in Europe.

In order to implement this, a change would have to be made to the national school law in Vorarlberg.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The European and international perspective shows very different educational concepts and systems.

The explained phenomenon is more likely to be found in the Austrian education system.

3.2.3 TAKING BETTER ACCOUNT OF COMPETENCES WHEN CREDITING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The crediting and recognition of learning outcomes should be better considered and made visible. This would improve the vertical and horizontal permeability of the education system.

HOW SHOULD COMPETENCES BE BETTER CONSIDERED WHEN CREDITING LEARNING OUTCOMES IN VORARLBERG?

Establish and implement good and transparent instruments to ensure that competences acquired in the workplace are also recognised and credited, and are equated with formal qualifications, and thus access to universities of applied sciences and other universities, among other things, is made possible even without a university entrance examination. Advantages: Permeable access to education for all, greater attractiveness of apprenticeship training and master craftsman qualifications, opportunities for career changers.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

At a European level, there is already an instrument in the form of ECVET - European credit system for vocational education & training, which is being used in Vorarlberg. The ECVET system² should be applied throughout Europe in all countries and regions.

Implementation: National law, regulations and competencies of educational institutions.

² <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-credit-system-vocational-education-and-training-ecvet>

3.3 FRANCE / AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES

3.3.1 INVOLVE FAMILIES IN ORIENTATION CHOICES

There is often antagonism in the choice of orientation between parents and children. Parental involvement is a determining factor in the orientation process. It is essential that parents have the tools and keys to accompany their children without pre-empting their choices.

The ideology is still very strong regarding the dominance of the General Baccalaureate in the representation of families. It is necessary to have a broader presentation of diplomas, and training courses in particular, to change perceptions of the professional path.

These barriers to career paths and apprenticeships are being reinforced in rural areas.

One of the levers to parental awareness is to provide them with a better knowledge of the territory's trades, their opportunities and a change in representations regarding vocational training or sectors affected by gender stereotypes.

It is also a question of addressing the concept of mobility as a potential lever for young people who wish to broaden their professional and personal horizons. However, mobility should not be seen as an end in itself and young people who do not plan to leave their environment should be provided with information that will enable them to integrate into it.

HOW CAN FAMILIES BE BETTER INVOLVED IN ORIENTATION CHOICES IN AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES?

Enable local stakeholders to propose innovative solutions that primarily target families in the orientation process by focusing on:

- a collective and partnership dynamic of the key players of the territory, involving training institutions, economic players and families. Trade and skills campuses, and campuses of excellence can be associated with this new dynamic;
- a sustainable acquisition of the skills to be guided. It is essential that parents have the tools and keys to accompany their children throughout their educational journey without pre-empting their choices.

An intervention within schools to present the different sectors that recruit and give the opportunity to discover a trade through an Open Day organised within a voluntary company.

Running 2 main highlights:

1) The first step is to bring together an audience of families and young people of 50 to 100 people per action for collective information with:

- General presentation
- Presentation of economic and statistical data from the different craft sectors/ key figures of apprenticeship and employment offers by sector / highlighting occupations in need etc.
- Testimonies of different craftsmen
- Screening of testimonial videos (complementary to the presentation in order to provide as complete a vision as possible)
- Debates
- Family registration at the JPO (Open Days) proposed by craftsmen

2) In a second step, families go to the company to discover a sector, a trade within the company during its JPO to discover in real life the trades that can be offered to their children.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The need to engage families in the orientation process is an issue that can be found in all partner regions. The conduct of an action that is able to improve the involvement of families by giving them a better knowledge of the professional environment and the training and integration opportunities offered by learning partly responds to this challenge.

One of the interests is that it is a question of intervening in the territories by jointly mobilising economic players and training those players to act on the representation of parents.

The action can therefore be adapted to the specifics of each territory while meeting the shared objectives of mobilising families and enhancing learning.

3.4 GERMANY / BAVARIA

3.4.1 COMPULSORY PARENTS' EVENINGS

The Bavarian education system is highly selective. A joint schooling of all pupils only takes place up to and including the 4th grade. After that the pupils are divided into the tripartite secondary level. This is where the first decision will be made on whether to prepare for vocational or academic education. This decision is based both on the child's performance and on the parental choice. At this point, parents have a part in an important decision for the school career and the future of their child.

HOW SHOULD COMPULSORY PARENTS' EVENINGS BE IMPLEMENTED IN BAVARIA?

In order to ensure that this decision is not based on different levels of knowledge about the education system and thus does not reproduce social inequalities, primary schools in Bavaria have the task of informing all parents equally about the education system by means of a parents' evening. This parents' evening must be used to inform parents about the regional education system in the sense of an individually suitable education for each child, thus to reduce knowledge gaps and fears. Comprehensive information about vocational education and training is particularly important here because of its diversity and the associated greater complexity of the system. Specifically, parents' evenings on the education system and school careers should be compulsory for at least one parent before moving on to secondary education, ideally at the end of the third year of schooling. Since these parents' evenings are already being held throughout the country, it would only be

necessary to offer them more frequently to make it easier for parents to participate.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

In order to avoid the above-described phenomenon of reproduction of social inequalities due to varying degrees of knowledge about the regional education system, a compulsory parents' evening can be a suitable solution, but this must be examined in the context of the regional education system.

3.4.2 SOCIAL PEDAGOGUES FOR THE PROMOTION OF TALENT AT VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Since there are no formal entry requirements such as degrees for dual training in Bavaria, the heterogeneity at vocational schools is very high. There are both pupils who start vocational training without any qualification from lower secondary level and pupils who undergo vocational training after graduating from secondary school. Bavarian vocational schoolteachers are therefore confronted with a strong heterogeneity in their school classes, as well as with the task of doing justice to each pupil in their level of achievement.

HOW SHOULD SOCIAL PEDAGOGUES HELP TO PROMOTE TALENT AT VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS?

Following the model of youth social work at vocational schools for pupils with difficulties in their training, there should also be counselling for very high-performing and/or underchallenged vocational school pupils. The aim here is to make full use of the potential of each individual, since the disadvantage is often underestimated, particularly among high-performing pupils. Specifically, youth social work at vocational schools should be expanded to include a social pedagogue to promote talent. This person would act as a contact person for teachers who have particularly high-performing or underchallenged pupils in their class and would actively approach these pupils. In addition, the social pedagogue takes over information events in the classes about school and professional careers

and offers individual consultation hours for pupils as well as for parents. It is important that ways and possibilities are realistically presented in this consultation.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

If the regional vocational education and training system has highly heterogeneous cohorts, it is important to make full use of the potential of each pupil through targeted measures that are tailored to the respective education system. It is important to ensure that there is a need for support in both the lower and the upper performance range.

3.4.3 INFORMATION AND PREPARATORY COURSES REGARDING THE CHANGES BETWEEN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL TYPES

In the Bavarian education system, the selection into different education paths takes place at a very early stage. Already after four years of primary school children are recommended for one of the three secondary school types "Gymnasium" (grammar school), "Realschule" (secondary school) and "Mittelschule" (Middle school) and thus for a rather academic or more practical career. After that only a very small percentage of kids (roughly 4% p.a.) are able to correct their or their parents' decision for the selected school type. It can be observed that the system easily facilitates changes to a secondary school at lower education level, e.g., almost 40% of all students starting at a Gymnasium would change to a school type at a lower education level, whereas changes to a school type at a higher education level hardly ever happens, particularly changes from the Realschule to the Gymnasium or from the Förderschule to the Mittelschule. This gives the impression that the system facilitates mainly a "downward-oriented" permeability, but not necessarily an "upward permeability". Often the transition of a talented student from Realschule to Gymnasium is rejected, for reasons such as that the student did not learn a second foreign language at the Realschule, which is a requirement at the

Gymnasium, but not at the Realschule. Also, pupils changing to a secondary school at a higher educational level are very often requested to repeat a school year at the new school type.

HOW SHOULD THE CHANGE BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOL TYPES BE SUPPORTED IN BAVARIA?

In order to lower the burden of changing to a secondary school at a higher educational level, e.g., from the Realschule to the Gymnasium, support must be offered to talented pupils by the schools and their teachers. Interested parents and students should have easy access to information on how a school change could be realised. A standardised and transparent process should be put in place and all requirements should be clearly formulated and communicated. Also, requirements should be realistic and students should be given an opportunity to prepare themselves for meeting those requirements.

In order to avoid the fact that a school year would have to be repeated, the Bavarian state should offer preparatory courses for school changers, preparing talented students in certain subjects so that they are able to meet the requirements for the new school type without having to repeat a whole school year.

As far as the requirement for a second foreign language is concerned, “transition periods” should be foreseen for pupils who made the transition to the new schools in which they get the time to catch up on their foreign language skills (e.g., based on self-studies) without receiving marks on their performance.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Given the specific structures of the education systems of the partner regions, we cannot judge to what extent this problem is also valid for them. But we believe that absolute transparency, clearly formulated and standardised processes, as well as a good communication and “transition support offers” are a must for every education system that intends to foster permeability.

3.4.4 SPECIAL CONSULTING CONCERNING THE SELECTION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL AND ACCOMPANYING LEARNING SUPPORT OFFERS

It is fairly well-known that the Bavarian education system works well for children and parents from the educated middle class, since the parents of those kids are able to give them the support often needed for coping with the enormous amount of learning in order to enable them to pass their exams successfully. Hence, those parents often assume the role of “assistant teachers” for their children. Children with an immigration background or working-class children cannot fall back on the support from their parents, and in addition to that, often have to deal with unstable social and financial situations at the same time. Consequently, the Bavarian education system has been criticised for being unfair and even further consolidate social disparities.

Moreover, it can also be observed that there is a relatively high amount of migrants being recommended for, and thus attending, secondary schools at lower educational level (like the “Mittelschule”). Interesting enough though, a significantly higher amount of pupils with immigration backgrounds (much more than German natives) later on continue their school education at higher secondary schools, such as “Wirtschaftsschule/ FOS/ BOS”.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO MATCH MIGRANTS MORE APPROPRIATELY AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN BAVARIA?

Apparently, many pupils with an immigration background seem not to be appropriately allocated to the right school type. The tendency is to allocate them to a lower secondary school, such as the “Mittelschule” though statistics show that more than one third of them have the potential, and later on decide to pursue and achieve, a higher secondary school qualification.

Therefore, special consulting offers, particularly targeted at parents and pupils with immigration backgrounds, should be put in place at the primary schools in order to give migrants more orientation

and information on the German school system and possible career paths, in the consequences of the choices made.

At the secondary school level, qualified learning support, e.g., tutoring and homework support after school, should be offered free of charge for kids with an immigration background, but also to socially disadvantaged kids. Every child should have the opportunity to receive a proper school education and achieve good school results independent of the financial and social background in which it is born.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Given the specific structures of the education systems of the partner regions, we cannot judge to what extent this problem is also valid for them, but the concept is also applicable to other Alpine regions in which there are many socially disadvantaged children or children with immigration backgrounds.

3.5 ITALY / SOUTH TYROL

3.5.1 MATURA AFTER VOCATIONAL TRAINING

If a trainee would like to achieve the Matura after vocational training there are currently two options possible:

1. Trainees can attend a course at a vocational school after their vocational training has finished. This is possible without an age limit in the form of a full-time school year (one-year course leading to the Matura).
2. The second possibility is the conclusion of a two-year apprenticeship contract with part-time school attendance (a two-year part-time course leading to the Matura). This possibility is reserved for trainees up until the age of 24 + 364 days. Meaning that the conclusion of the apprenticeship contract is only possible up to that age. Graduates of a “Berufsreifeprüfung” receive a general university entrance through successful completion of the

preparatory courses and the Matura. In both cases, the trainee can study anything after gaining his Matura of vocational training diploma.

HOW SHOULD THE MATURA AFTER VOCATIONAL TRAINING BE IMPLEMENTED IN SOUTH TYROL?

If the apprentice has completed four years of basic vocational training either at a technical school or in the form of an apprenticeship, he or she can apply for admission to the matriculation course at a vocational school. Here the admission procedure needs to be unbureaucratic and not a hurdle. The preparatory courses must be designed to suit the level of education.

Applicants should be informed in writing about the details of the procedure in good time. Since graduates of a “Berufsreifeprüfung” can study anything via this career path, it is important to inform the students in detail about this possibility when they choose a career. The Matura of vocational training makes apprenticeships more attractive. This equality of opportunity between apprentices and Matura students is an important factor in the decision to choose an educational path. This information also needs to be communicated clearly with parents as many fear that their child won't have the same opportunities at a later stage if they pursue vocational training. This incorrect fear can only be counteracted with sufficient and correct information about the opportunities of the Matura of vocational training. Extensive education by teachers and career counsellors is therefore fundamental. Here, new strategies must be found to sensitise and guide young people in their choice of career and support parents with information.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The desire of parents regarding the possibility of free access to any education for their children must be supported with sufficient information. The responsible counselling centres, public services and information providers must be trained and be well informed about the current situation. A meeting with parents whose children attend the 7th grade is the right platform to pass on information about the Matura of vocational education, and therefore

counteract the social stigma around vocational training and the Matura. The parents of 7th grade students are to be informed about the possibilities of the Matura of vocational education and training during the evening meetings that already take place before school starts.

3.5.2 CRAFT TRADES OF THE FUTURE

The craftsmanship of the future, a field where technologies will be used more and more in the future, will change significantly. The occupational profiles in the skilled trades are developing anew in view of the ongoing digitalisation. Especially for the growing potential of new technologies, companies increasingly need more and more qualified employees who can make the best use of it. Therefore, it is increasingly important to be able to qualify employees for the digital working world by ensuring that their training does not lag behind technically.

HOW CAN CRAFT TRADES OF THE FUTURE BE DEVELOPED IN SOUTH TYROL?

In the future, craft enterprises will have to actively participate in the design of the training and continuously re-evaluate the skills needed. This is where a competence management strategy can come in handy. The elaboration must be supported and accompanied, and finally applied, through joint development.

It will be necessary to update existing training offers by developing new competence profiles. Sensitisation and information play a fundamental role here and must always be considered. Employees must not be overburdened but must be well accompanied. Further training and content inputs create security and help to develop new skills.

Of course, sensitising companies to digital innovation is a basic prerequisite. This is the only way to have an impact on the development of occupational profiles in the skilled trades. It makes professional competence profiles and a general rethinking of training a necessity.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Future technologies and digital business models support digital development. Member companies of the lvh.apa promote the adoption of these technologies and digital business models, thus accelerating its use and development. By means of a survey, they also provide continuous feedback of the actual job profiles and required skills. This information is used as a basis for the further development of the content of the training occupations: existing training occupations in the skilled trades and their competence profiles with regard to increasing digitisation can be adapted in terms of content, with the help of concrete requirement specifications.

At the same time, a screening of actual job advertisements takes place. Companies are interviewed on these topics in order to obtain a broad overview of professional competence profiles. Only through extensive sensitisation and constant cooperation, as well as continuous exchange, can a change in thinking in the companies succeed.

3.6 ITALY / TRENTINO

3.6.1 FORMAL AND INFORMAL STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PERMEABILITY WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In the context of the Autonomous Province of Trento vertical and horizontal permeability is still considered to be a challenge for the educational system. There are different formal and informal strategies to achieve a more permeable educational system through validation, recognition, and certification of previous learning experiences, or through the reform of vocational training in order to reduce the gap between VET and access to higher technical education and university training. But there are still some structural impedances, which can be experienced by some students, who may find it difficult to recognise their further opportunities

once they are dropped out of the educational system. We would like to report the case of a 17 year old student, who recently successfully completed a four-year VET course with dual experience and tried to enter the fifth year, which is mandatory to access the tertiary educational system (vertical permeability), since his four-year qualification does not allow him immediate access to higher education. He failed the exam to enter the fifth year and was not able to move into a fifth year of the technical education (horizontal permeability). The case of this student was discussed during a training course offered by the Autonomous Province of Trento to the on-the-job tutors (instructors) of the dual system, but also to some teachers and social partners. The results of this discussion could be summarized as suggestions for what can be done in Trentino in the next years to try to find a solution for these specific cases, and how this knowledge could be applied in the partner regions.

HOW SHOULD THE PERMEABILITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF TRENTO BE ENHANCED?

On this individual level the following actions were suggested, which could be already feasible now: the opportunity for the student to reflect about his future perspectives and on his motivation through a professional counselling service; to try to enter the fifth year of the technical education outside of the Autonomous Province of Trento; to try to enter a technical secondary school starting from the third year inside the Autonomous Province of Trento. In the future, on an individual level, it could be useful to work on strengthening the competences needed to access new school paths and higher education; to monitor the motivation of the student during the time and to consider changing the type of school with a different specialisation.

On the school level the following actions were suggested, which could be already feasible now: to create structured passages between the different types of schools; to activate courses in the evening to give support to prepare for the fifth-year exam of the VET for the next year; to guide the student through viable opportunities; to start a dual system project. In the future, on the level of the school, it

would be useful to think about the possibility to change at the beginning of a new school path; to organise courses to prepare for the fifth-year exam of the VET; to give support for competences built during the apprenticeship to prepare for the fifth-year exam of the VET; to give courses in the summer to enter a technical secondary school in the September.

On a business level the following actions were suggested: to organise a dual system apprenticeship with the school also finalized to pass the fifth-year exam of the VET; to certificate the newly acquired competences; to allow the student to work in the business for one year outside of the dual system. In the future, on a business level, it could be useful to be more open to taking students in difficult situations and give them support; to put in place specific actions such as stages about communication, and administrative competences to enhance basic competences (Italian, mathematics) in order to enter the fifth-year exam of the VET; to monitor and to evaluate changes and feedback through a dynamic profile of the student. On an institutional level (the educational system of the Autonomous Province of Trento) the following actions were suggested: to put in place structured paths to facilitate the passage between secondary and VET schools; to give the opportunity to have an orientation colloquium with an expert outside of the school; to recognise formally the competences acquired during the dual system apprenticeship. In the future, it could be useful to change the selection procedures/processes and study plans to devise valid alternatives for these cases and to be able to design even more individually tailored paths.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The case study highlighted the fact that there is a misalignment between the formal/regulatory elements and the real daily practices of managing student passages between different school paths, and in general of orientation. In part this is due to several system limitations (unshared rules, unshared activity objects, subjects not ready to deal with unexpected situations, etc.). These limits can be addressed by bringing out the inconsistencies of the system, and by activating a first level of learning

with the involved players (teachers, tutors, institutions), to push to find new solutions, which in the future could be institutionalised, through regulatory interventions.

3.6.2 CHANGE LABORATORY FOR PERMEABILITY

The second proposal is the implementation of the original version of laboratory which inspired the learning atelier³ inside the Dual Plus project, the so called Change Laboratory, in which people coming from different systems (world of work, VET, Schools) interact to describe “activities” systems (i.e. the permeability actions and possibilities among VET, Schools and Work, and within VET, Schools and Work) and to find out new practices to be applied (competencies recognition, new training formats, new apprenticeship formats, etc.). These Change Laboratories aim to design and produce activity systems. An activity system is a complex structure consisting of: a) objects (“the permeability solutions and practices”), b) subjects such as the people involved (“teachers, company tutors, employees, ...”), c) material technologies and tools (“skills and competencies, networks, educational technologies, ...”) that mediate the relationship between subject and object; d) rules and regulations that guide the realisation of activities; e) People in the form of communities of players, interacting through symbolic systems such as professional language, norms, and cultural values; f) the division of labour, which mediates the community of actors and the object of activity.

The activity system represented here can easily be conceived as an inexhaustible source of tension, with constant fractures and inconsistencies (i.e., permeability constraints). Tensions occur for two main reasons: because of different visions of the work that the players develop within the system of activities (i.e. the presence of rules or norms which influences the permeability); or as a result of

difficulties that emerge during the day-to-day activities, such as the malfunctioning of technologies and tools, or the ineffectiveness of the norms and division of labour, especially in reference to the fluidity of action (i.e. different norms and regulations in the VET and School systems). Inside the Change Laboratory, after a starting phase in which contradictions emerge, participants can begin to address issues and dilemmas and to identify new solutions through creative actions, supported by discursive activities. The product of this collective process is the development of new practices and conceptions of the activity and its object with the related development of a new sense of collective identity (“companies, VET and Schools acting in a common ground”). The origin of these tensions is located not only within the internal sphere of the system, but also outside of it, with other connected and interdependent systems.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN TRENTO?

After the Learning Atelier experience, a Change Laboratory can be organised to underline the tensions and pitfalls of the local permeability system and find out new solutions to be shared with the local public body (Province of Trento). As the learning atelier, the Change Laboratories are therefore small work and learning groups, managed by a facilitator, and composed in a heterogeneous way. In general, the sequence of activities within a single change laboratory includes: an introductory part in which a problem or question to be addressed is identified and presented; an operational part where all participants give their point of view in dealing with the problem, with the support of the facilitator, presenting their experiences and practices already in place; the third part of the reflection that defines the practices learned and “transferable” by the participants in their work experience. In the final phase, “crossing the borders” takes place because a practice previously developed in a specific context was, during the atelier, re-oriented, expanding it, in one or more different contexts.

³ The ateliers are small work and learning groups managed by a facilitator and composed in a heterogeneous way. The aim of the atelier is to support participation and sharing activities from different professional communities (in our case companies and training institutions), through

specific inputs given by the trainer, to share their professional knowledge, literally “crossing the borders” of their professional knowledge and skills to create new practices.

In the context of Trentino, a sequence of Change Laboratories can be organised considering the participation of all the stakeholders involved in the permeability process: PAT representatives, companies, VET institutions, and schools, with suggested participation also from students, the real subject involved in the permeability process. There would also be a standalone working group, that could be activated if necessary, to resolve permeability problems (i.e., students asking support in managing horizontal and vertical permeability inside the local system).

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Being the output of an international validated methodology (Change Laboratory), this approach can be easily applied in a cross-cultural view. The Change Laboratory is by its nature “situated”, which means that it requires a constant comparison with local cultural and normative situations on permeability. A cross-cultural version of the Change Laboratory, matching the situation of two or more countries at the same time, considering permeability issues to be faced, could be another important tool to apply in a local context (i.e., inviting people from different countries inside local Change Laboratories, to share insights from the outside).

3.7 SLOVENIA

3.7.1 FAIR PROMOTION

The key problem in the dual VET system in Slovenia is the lack of interest of young people in craft professions. Therefore, better information on the educational opportunities offered by the Slovenian system is crucial for both pupils and parents, even at primary school age.

HOW SHOULD THE PROMOTION OF CRAFT TRADES BE IMPROVED IN SLOVENIA?

For this reason, it is important to promote vocational training in such a way that as many pupils and parents as possible are reached, as early as

possible. In order to be able to guarantee this, we want to introduce the Day of Crafts for primary school pupils, which should make it possible for them to get to know different crafts and trades.

A suitable measure for this day would be a visit to the International Fair of Crafts and Entrepreneurship. The so-called "Street of trades" will be set up on the fairground, where 10-15 attractive and deficient professions will be presented. Information from the central point of the street will be provided by the so-called "Apprenticeship Office", where visitors will receive all information about apprenticeship and other educational opportunities. The street is organised according to the principle of "everything in one place", as the individual professions are presented simultaneously, the involvement of students in the process of practical training by working on the street in the form of presentations, and the involvement of the schools that run educational programmes.

It is important for the success of the measure to invite all primary schools in Slovenia and to enable them to be transported to the fair by regional municipalities. Parents should also be invited to the fair.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Given the supposedly similar problems, the problem of promotion should be internationalized in terms of the exchange of experience and knowledge, and perhaps also joint promotional appearances in the EU regional space.

3.7.2 BETTER FLOW OF INFORMATION

It is necessary to assume that the flow of information can also be better. Sometimes content that is obvious to some is a big unknown to others. From this point of view, an information system is needed which needs to be constantly updated.

HOW CAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT DUAL EDUCATION?

In order to better inform primary school counsellors, who are extremely important for passing on information to primary school pupils and their parents, we propose regional meetings at which the chambers, the Ministry and secondary schools provide key information on the implementation and benefits of the dual VET system.

It would make sense for the regional meeting to be held in primary schools. Each year the primary school in each region where the meeting will take place will be determined. This would additionally increase the interest of the primary schools and thus another problem in the provision of information and promotion of dual VET could be overcome.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Comparison of the information system of key players in primary schools and analysis of information needs.

3.7.3 SHARED FINANCING

With the introduction of the dual system, employers are taking on a heavy financial burden. The costs incurred by employers for the practice are not only the costs of rewards and meals, but also the so-called hidden costs (costs of equipping workplaces, costs of training, ...). Permeability can therefore be supported by providing appropriate funding offers.

HOW SHOULD THE FINANCING OF DUAL EDUCATION BE ORGANISED IN SLOVENIA?

A joint meeting of key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities could develop a solution for these financing inequalities between companies. At the meeting, the training companies should present the problem of financing and employers' obligations to the ministries, based

on an analysis of the costs incurred by employers in providing practical training. Given that these are sought-after and deficient occupations and that this reflects the development, not only of individual regions, but of the entire country of Slovenia, the costs of implementing the dual VET system should also be fairly shared.

As Slovenia has a voluntary membership of the Chamber of Crafts, it would make sense to establish an educational fund to which all business entities or entrepreneurs contribute. The design of the fund would be regional. A voucher system would be conceivable for implementing the financing.

In addition, the possibility of co-financing should also be available directly from the state, namely from the line ministries: the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. Funding should be provided through public tenders.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

By comparing the costs of partner countries to gain the rank of more information from each other and thus raise the strength of the arguments for negotiations with state institutions.

3.8 SWITZERLAND

3.8.1 FOSTERING LOCAL INFORMATION PLATFORMS

Switzerland's vocational-training system is one of the most successful in Europe, which can be attributed, in part, to its high degree of social permeability. Both young professionals and people looking to switch to another line of work will find many paths open to them that will allow them to achieve their goals.

In practice, however, we do find that, depending on age and social background, not everybody brings the same level of knowledge to the table—despite a well-coordinated network for job and career counselling. Particularly, awareness of regional

educational offerings, transitional opportunities, and initiatives run by specific schools is often scarce. There is clearly a need to further promote exchange between the various players in vocational training.

HOW SHOULD LOCAL INFORMATION PLATFORMS BE IMPLEMENTED?

We recommend creating or supporting local information platforms, which cater more to regional opportunities and specialties than national solutions can.

In order to get all stakeholders on the same page, various access points must be tailored to parents, children, youths, and employers, and the platform's content must be customised as well.

Such regional platforms should be directly accessible to all stakeholders in vocational training to allow for an easy exchange of information, as if they were interacting in a social network designed for vocational training. Of course, this will require a certain degree of community moderation, but the lower the obstacles for individual participants, the more widely accepted a project will be.

This is where policymakers come in, who should provide active support to local projects and promote innovation in this area.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The concept of decentralised information networks can be easily transferred to other regions. As a prerequisite, however, local requirements must be reviewed first. It's possible to pass on experiences from existing projects.

3.8.2 CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERSHIPS THROUGH JOINT-VENTURES

In conversations with young people, we notice time and again that they often have a very imprecise or one-sided idea of the profession they would like to learn and the possible career paths they can aspire to, which also includes entering a University of applied sciences, due to the permeability of the education system. Previous internships in a relevant

company help them to have a better idea of the individual activities, the requirements and the daily routine. However, in many professional fields, the availability of internships is not guaranteed. Small companies in particular are often not in a position to carry out this additional work. Through a common strategy between the training companies, the vocational schools, the cantons and the players of the local economy, new offers must be created in order to relieve the companies.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN OUR REGION?

We propose to use the infrastructure of the vocational schools, as well as the knowledge and experience of the teachers and the vocational specialists from the companies, to jointly develop workshop offers that last several days. This can be done deliberately at times when the corresponding workshops and classrooms at the vocational schools are not in use, for example during holidays, on the weekends, etc.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The concept can be applied relatively easily to other professions, especially skilled trades. The results, planning, examples and experiences will be published for this purpose.

3.8.3 ADEQUATE RESPONSE TO MARKET CHANGE IN HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

The Swiss universities of applied sciences have the mission to prepare the students for their professional occupation through practice-oriented studies and application-oriented research and development.

Digitalisation over the last decades has led to the development of a tendency towards ever-growing individualisation. This is displayed not only on an economic level, for example through the differentiation of markets towards personalised products with target group size one, but also on a social level through the desire to build one's

professional and personal life according to one's personal wishes and ideas. In addition, the professional market is changing at a very rapid rate due to digitalisation and requires more and more new abilities and competences.

HOW SHOULD UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCE RESPOND TO MARKET CHANGES IN SWITZERLAND?

Universities of applied sciences should react to that by structuring their range of studies in a more modulated way and by promoting an interdisciplinary nature for them, for example. This way, students should be able to build an individual profile during their studies which would make them able to compete on the job market.

Bachelor studies accompanying a job are still something of a rarity in Swiss universities and are mostly limited to the technical sector. An expansion in further sectors would allow more students to accommodate studies and a job at the same time

more effectively. Students could apply what they have learned during their studies in the workplace and vice versa. In this context, we also need to reconsider the presence culture and only make presence mandatory if it offers added value. To achieve this, we will have to create appropriate teaching formats and new conditions.

Here, the universities of applied sciences and the politics are encouraged to promote innovation in the field of education at an early stage, in the context of advancing digitisation and to create the respective framework conditions.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Due to our globalised markets those market changes happen in many countries at the same time and are therefore relevant to universities of applied sciences in all partner regions.

4 INTERNATIONAL POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In a globalised world with fluid borders in the labour markets, there are accordingly also overarching common needs for change in education. In order to

improve permeability throughout the Alpine Space, additional transnational policy suggestions have been developed, which are presented below.

4.1 EXPAND AND PROMOTE COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

The expansion of professional and personal skills beyond national borders and regions brings new chances and career opportunities for the future, increases the quality of training and the reputation of dual education. Joint cooperation across borders promotes the development of a common labour market.

All Alpine countries and regions should strive for transnational cooperation with SMEs and conclude agreements to enable the exchange of trainees. The legal basis is provided by national law and cooperation or harmonisation of the respective legal conditions, especially in the labour law of the partner countries. It is important that obstructive differences in regulations and law are removed pragmatically and quickly.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL?

As part of their training, trainees work for a few weeks in a company in a neighbouring country to expand their professional and personal skills and gain new professional knowledge and skills. At the same time, they learn to cope in a new environment and to organise their lives themselves.

Use a good example: Exchange Programme "Xchange "

In order to promote more cooperation across borders and the development of a common labour market, the governments of the International Lake Constance Conference and Arge Alp are successfully implementing the exchange program "Xchange".
<https://www.xchange-info.net>

4.2 INTERACTIVE TOOLBOX FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN EDUCATION PATHWAYS

A fundamental barrier to permeability is the complexity of the education systems. This is very often already true at a national level; at the international level, the complexity increases accordingly. This complexity leads to educational pathways not being followed because they are either not known or there is too little information about them. It is particularly unfortunate when the opportunities exist but are not used because the target group is simply not aware of them.

HOW CAN THE RELEVANT INFORMATION BE ADEQUATELY PROVIDED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL TARGET GROUP?

To facilitate transnational education pathways in the EU, a central online information tool should be created. This tool could function like a toolbox for educational pathways. The interested person selects his or her highest qualification and the tool indicates accordingly which educational

opportunities are possible in all EU countries. One option can then be selected and the tool indicates how to continue after this option. The tool should also contain all information on the application process and the admission requirements for the individual options and should be permanently kept up to date. In addition, experience reports or information and advertising films about the individual education programmes would be an enrichment for such a toolbox. In this way, individually tailored transnational educational pathways can be designed and followed. Transnational educational biographies could also be created in addition to those created through funded programmes such as xchange or Erasmus.

HOW CAN THIS KNOWLEDGE BE APPLIED IN THE PARTNER REGIONS?

Such an online toolbox for educational pathways can also simplify the choice of an educational pathway at a national level. In Bavaria, there is already a comparable but very simple tool: <https://www.mein-bildungsweg.de/index.html>

5 REFERENCES

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