

Workshops on VET Teachers and Trainers: Key Actors to Make Lifelong Learning a Reality in Europe

Regional-specific background paper country cluster 3:

The Situation of VET Teachers and Trainers in Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

Overview of the VET systems

The countries in this cluster have a common background in the Scandinavian educational reform movement ('comprehensivisation') that has overshadowed the development of vocational education and training. The key feature of this movement was the integration of VET into the upper secondary school. The contrasting model within this cluster is provided by Denmark, where an alternating model of apprenticeship training is in place.

The Danish apprenticeship system is based on a model of alternance where a school-based basic course is followed by a main programme that consists of alternating phases of in-company training and school instruction in vocational colleges. The access to vocational training is relatively flexible: trainees can enrol directly at a vocational college and apply for a training place in a company during the basic course, or they can conclude an apprenticeship contract already at the beginning of their training period. All vocational qualifications that are recognised according to the national standards are available through apprenticeship training, and they allow for transition to special vocational tracks in higher education and from there to the academic track, i.e. university education.

In Iceland there is a strong emphasis on the public sector in vocational education and the other types of education. Only few private institutions exist. Initial vocational training is school-based and part of upper secondary education, but it is only a minority of students (approximately 36%) who enrol in vocational instead of general education programmes. Training programmes in certified trades and for special sectors such as healthcare or civil service are offered by industrial vocational schools, comprehensive schools and specialised schools and include both school instruction and workplace training on the basis of a training contract with a company or a master craftsman. Vocational training for non-certified trades takes place only at schools. The relatively low level of VET graduates and the high demand for skilled personnel have led to the immigration of foreign workers partly or fully qualified to journeymen standards.

In the Norwegian system vocational education and training at the upper secondary level normally consists of two years in school, including practical training in a school workshop, and another two years of apprenticeship training in a company or public institution. This apprenticeship period may be substituted by a third year in school.

In Sweden upper secondary vocational education and training has been provided in the same institutions as general upper secondary education since the 1970s. Within these institutions, vocational programmes are offered. The introduction of a new upper secondary apprenticeship training programme has been proposed as an alternative within national vocationally oriented programmes in upper secondary school. The rationale is that the quality of VET needs to be improved as enterprises need qualified workers whose competences match the needs of the labour market. Enterprises are thus required to take responsibility for high quality education, but they will also receive funding. The introduction of this new scheme was to take place in autumn 2008. Students will have the option to reduce the proportion of general subject studies, but will have to acquire a minimum of general studies, enabling them to build on these later to gain access to higher education.

Specific issues related to VET teachers and trainers

In the Danish VET system two teacher profiles can be identified, namely general subject teachers and vocational subject teachers. The former are usually university graduates or graduates from a general teacher college. The latter typically have a VET background and relevant experience in the field. There are no requirements for teachers to have a pedagogical qualification prior to their employment. Pedagogical training is provided as in-service training and is based on interaction between theory and practice. It is provided by the Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (*Danmarks Erhvervspædagogiske Læreruddannelse - DEL*). The training course is developed by colleges and teacher organisations in co-operation with the Ministry of Education. Teachers are involved in the development of local educational plans, in research and development projects, in quality management and the organisation of lessons. The role of teachers has changed into one of a learning facilitator and coach due to the introduction of new pedagogical and didactical approaches as well as a change in the structure of qualifications, and increased modularisation.

Trainers in companies are very important for the Danish VET system given the principle of alternance in training. There are different types of trainers, e.g. workplace instructors and training managers. There are no formal requirements for becoming a trainer, although in some trades at least 5 years of work experience are prescribed. In recent years there has been increasing interest in in-company training and trainer skills, especially with regard to the improvement of training quality. The pedagogical skills of trainers are now addressed by short courses offered by technical and commercial colleges. A major innovation has been the development of a web-based guide (*TrænerGuide*) which was developed, along with a standard trainer course, in a pilot project of the DEL and the trade committees. The guide describes the tasks and responsibilities of trainers and makes available simple training tools.

In Iceland there is also a variety of teachers in public VET institutions. VET teachers in the strict sense of the word can be classified into practical subject teachers and vocational theory teachers. The mandatory qualification for the former is training in a particular subject and pedagogical training at a university, the requirement for the latter is a vocational qualification plus pedagogical training at a university. Besides these VET teachers there are also general subject teachers in comprehensive schools and industrial-vocational schools, who have undergone teachers' education at university level. Practical subject teachers and vocational theory teachers teach in workshop settings whereas general subject teachers teach in classroom settings.

Whilst these teaching occupations are regulated professions in their own right, the training personnel in enterprises is not recognised as a distinct profession. The function of workplace trainers in companies is fulfilled by certified master craftsmen. The qualification of master craftsman is sufficient to be authorised to train and includes a two-credit course on teaching and training. Trainers in the healthcare sector do not need a formal qualification as a trainer. Typically healthcare trainers have a vocational qualification in a relevant occupation and several years of work experience.

In the Norwegian training system a distinction can be drawn between formally qualified VET teachers, trainers and training facilitators. VET teachers provide formal school-based IVET and CVET, which includes both theoretical and practical training. Trainers are vocationally qualified staff without a particular trainer certificate who are involved in apprenticeship training in officially recognised training companies. Training facilitators are involved in non-formal and informal learning in the workplace. They do not necessarily have a formal vocational qualification and may as well work on the basis of the knowledge and skills acquired during their own work experience.

Education programmes for VET teachers are offered by most public as well as two private

universities and university colleges. The institutions develop the detailed training programmes in accordance with national guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Research. The guidelines indicate content and structure, didactics relating to the different vocational subjects and regulations for assessment, but leave room for some flexibility. The programmes have to be approved by the Board of the individual higher education institution and by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). VET teacher training programmes are adapted to the international degree system with a 3-year Bachelor degree and a 2-year Master degree. VET teacher training is delivered according to two different models, namely, a 1-year programme for students who already possess vocational or professional competences (consecutive model) and a comprehensive 3-year programme that includes vocational as well as pedagogical training (concurrent model). The consecutive model is often used by trainers who have a preliminary employment contract and need to acquire a formal pedagogical qualification during their in-service training.

There are no formal qualification requirements for trainers and training facilitators and hence no formal training arrangements for them. According to the regulations the trainers' qualifications for in-company training must be relevant for the training offered and fit for the target groups as assessed by the employer. Trainers and training facilitators may, on a voluntary basis, attend educational courses - either as pre-service or as in-service training. Most trainers and learning facilitators are offered and participate in in-service courses after they have become trainers or tutors. Almost 16 000 trainers and training supervisors involved in apprenticeship training participated in an extensive upgrading programme in the second half of the 1990s, after a comprehensive IVET reform. The training was provided free of charge and travel and accommodation costs were covered by public funds.

In Sweden, as in the other Nordic countries, only VET teachers are a regulated profession while trainers are not. A new, integrated teaching degree was established in 2001, which will result in all future teachers sharing common basic competence, combined with a chosen specialisation in particular subjects/subject areas and/or age groups. The new teaching degree comprises a programme ranging from 3.5 to 5.5 years of full time study. To teach IVET at the upper secondary level, 120 credits are required, 60 of which can be validated based on worklife experience in a vocation. Instead of a specialisation in certain subjects, this degree requires extensive professional experience, combined with 60 credits in relevant, vocationally oriented, higher education courses. The degree for Upper Secondary School was replaced by a degree for teaching in the higher levels of the compulsory school and upper secondary school. The older degrees will be phased out during a period ending in 2008.

As there is a shortage of vocational teachers, there has also been a special initiative to attract more vocational teachers. Those without a teaching degree can teach half time and study half time in order to achieve a teaching degree. In the autumn of 2006 Sweden's government announced a plan to invest special teacher certification for IVET teachers. This will comprise 1.5 years of study in addition to competence in the vocation, which will result in validation of experience.

As regards workplace trainers for programmes that include work-based education, there are only minimum requirements concerning their competence to teach, which may be based on formal education or experience. Trainers are skilled workers or craftspersons who assigned their training roles by the companies who provide work-based training opportunities. Although no formal pre-service training for IVET and CVET trainers exist, some institutions offer introductory courses for trainers. The way the trainers have been introduced varies, ranging from a three-day basic education within school for new trainers to four-hour briefings after work. Distance education via Internet was also used in some cases. The main focus of these introductory courses has been the objectives for the work-based training.