Developing Innovative and Attractive CVET programmes in industrial shoe production

Contribution to the ECER

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Potentials of (Re-)Establishing Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET) in Shoe Industry in Germany, Romania and Portugal

Topic, approach, research questions, etc. 600

In many countries like Romania (RO) and Portugal (PT) Vocational Education and Training (VET) is considered as second choice (for example Abrassart et al. 2019); as an educational pathway for those who failed in reaching Higher Education (HE). One of the main reasons of this rather poor image of VET is that it often considered as a "dead-end" educational pathway; once you started a "blue collar" job, no or only few options of career opportunities in terms of Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET) exists (for example: EU 2018). Thus, more challenging occupations like working for the Quality Assurance (QA), Design or Production Planning departments are reserved for colleagues with an educational background in HE.

But even in countries with established CVET-programmes like Germany (DE), where the qualifications of an industrial or handicraft foreman or technician are country-wide acknowledged and have a very good image, the academic drift is obvious. For our sector (industrial shoe production) a worrying indicator is: In the last three years, when the industrial foreman course for this occupation was offered, not enough participants (countrywide only six needed) applied – and the courses had to be withdrawn.

Thus, strengthening CVET is a crucial element of increasing attractiveness of VET and assuring its high quality. Target groups are colleagues, who are qualified via Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) in the sector of industrial shoe production.

For this purpose, partners of project "Developing Innovative and Attractive CVET programmes in industrial shoe production" (DIA-CVET 2022) have chosen 13 spheres of activities of industrial shoe production like "operational organisation" or "materials for shoe production" where autonomous work is beyond competences of skilled workers (considering skilled work on European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 3 or 4). We aim at developing, piloting and implementing comprehensive courses for each of these spheres on EQF levels 5 or 6; available in English (EN) as well as in DE, RO and PT. We do not aim at developing a unified European CVET (like an "EU industrial foreman") profile, as we respect the principle of subsidiarity in educational subjects and are aware of the different preconditions and needs regarding qualifications in our three countries.

Apart from developing these courses the project has a broader scope: it aims at transparency at CVET levels within shoe sector for all stakeholders - especially social partners, companies, and authorities. Accepting Learning Outcomes (LO) from another learning venue, hiring a skilled foreman from another country, or trusting national qualifications from another country is an ongoing challenge for all European Countries. In a previous project, the consortium developed successfully a Sector Qualification Framework for footwear sector for level 2-4 (ICSAS 2019). Consequently the development of (and the referencing of existing or developed national CVET qualifications in DE, RO, and PT to) a Sector Qualification Framework for levels 5-7 will be another important objective of the project DIA-CVET and available for future levelling of new CVET-profiles or profiles of other countries after the project's lifetime.

Before the development parts of the project, drafted in the last paragraphs, can start, a stable fundament containing three basic research questions must be set:

* Parts of which spheres could be learnt in work-processes of departments that could offer placements for CVET-qualified workers?

* Which of the 13 spheres of activity of CVET-qualified workers are of relevance in the participating companies/competence centres?

* What parts of these relevant spheres should (according to curricula (if existing) and the perspectives of stakeholders) be learnt in work-processes?

Methodology 400

Overall, we applied rather conventional vocational education research methods:

We executed a couple of Task Analyses an adapted version of established research methods like work-process or learning station analyses (LSA, cp. f. e. ICSAS 2018) according to specific work processes of foremen in chosen shoe-producing companies and shoe competence centres in Germany, Portugal, and Romania to work on the first question.

Methods applied to answer the other two questions were (and still are) semi-standardised expert-interviews (for example Bogner et al. 2009) and a row of small workshops with regional national authorities, teachers from VET-centres and delegates from companies.

In Germany, determining what should be learnt via curricula-driven WBL was based additionally on a comparison of findings from Task Analyses and the national curricula of the industrial shoemaker foreman (desk research).

Conclusions/Results 300

Findings on the first question reveal, not very surprisingly, enormous and comparable learning potentials for CVET within shoe-producing companies and shoe competence centres. Not each company/competence centre offers the option to learn parts of all 13 spheres; but from most of them. The distribution is as follows:

Country	Germany	Portugal	Romania
Spheres that could be learnt in the company/centre	10	10	12

To structure the findings on the second question, it was decided that each participating country highlights the five spheres that are mostly relevant:

Country	Germany	Portugal	Romania
Sphere 1	Design	Design	Design
Sphere 2	Technical Development	Technical Development	Technical Development
Sphere 3	Production Planning	Social responsibility management	Production Planning
Sphere 4	Sustainability Management	Environmental Management	Sustainability Management
Sphere 5	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	Quality Management	Environmental Management

Research on the third question is still ongoing, preliminary findings indicate that there will be no “one size fits all” solution. There is consensus that the Knowledge, Skills and Competences (KSC) of all spheres should be imparted in a blended approach, combining classroom lessons with projects in the respective departments. The concrete configuration will depend strongly on the learning potentials

in the companies/competence centres – we are very optimistic that we can present exemplarily curricula in 08.2022 in Erevan.

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Keywords:

CVET, Transnational Comparisons, Governance of VET-Systems, Work Based Learning