



The future of VET

- learning from the Nordic countries

Jørgensen, Christian Helms; Stenström, Marja-Leena; Thunqvist, Daniel Persson; Tønder, Anna Hagen

Publication date: 2013

Document Version Early version, also known as pre-print

Citation for published version (APA): Jørgensen, C. H., Stenström, M.-L., Thunqvist, D. P., & Tønder, A. H. (2013). The future of VET: – learning from the Nordic countries. Paper presented at Helix Conference, Linköping, Sweden.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
 You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact rucforsk@kb.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

International HELIX Conference 2013 Thursday June 13 2013

Christian Helms Jørgensen, Roskilde University Marja-Leena Stenström, University of Jyväskylä, Finland Daniel Persson Thunqvist, Linköpings universitet, Sweden Anna Hagen Tønder, Fafo, Norway

The future of VET - learning from the Nordic countries

- 1. Aims of the comparative Nordic research project
- 2. Challenges and innovations in Denmark
- 3. Challenges and innovations in Finland
- 4. Challenges and innovations in Sweden
- 5. Challenges and innovations in Norway



Christian Helms Jørgensen · Department of Psychology and Educational Studies· Roskilde University

Nordforsk research project (2013-16) on transitions from VET to the labour market and Higher Education in the Nordic countries:

Finland: Jyväskylä University Norway: Bergen University, NIFU, FAFO Sweden: Linköping University Denmark: Roskilde University

Main question: How do the VET-systems handle the double challenge of qualifying for employment and providing access to higher education?



Comparative research in four Nordic Countries

How do the VET systems handle the dilemmas of

- Qualifying for employment in a specific occupation and
- Providing higher education entrance qualifications
- Being open to the weak learners and
- Maintaining high esteem among young people and
- Being attractive for business (training placements)



1. Transitions in Denmark



Share of a youth cohort entering the main programmes of higher secondary education 1950 - 2005



As some students shift program, they count twice and the numbers add up to more than one. Data from Dk Statistics and Min.of Educ 1998

The advantages of the dual system are also weaknesses:

- Transfers students out of the educational system
- Diverts young people from higher education
- Appear as 'blind alley' in the educational system
- The social partners give priority to employability over opportunities for progression to higher education
- This result in low permeability from dual VET to higher education



Innovation: a new hybrid programme in the Danish educational system



The future of VET – learning from the Nordic countries Finland

Marja-Leena Stenström The Finnish Institute for Educational Research University of Jyväskylä, Finland marja-leena.stenstrom@jyu.fi



FORMAL EDUCATION IN FINLAND

(http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/koulutusjaerjestelmae/?lang=en)



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Position of Vocational Education

- The position of vocational education in the Finnish school system has changed in recent years.
- The popularity of vocational education and training has increased since the early 2000s.
- The year of 2009 was the first year when the majority of applicants listed a VET programme as their primary choice (RefereNet Finland, 2011).

Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos - Finnish Institute for Educational Research

IYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

UNIVERSITY OF IYVÄSKYLÄ

Reasons for Popularity of VET in Finland

- 1) Vocational education and training has been developed towards the world of work.
- 2) There has been several campaigns organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture and social partners to improve the image of vocational education.
- 3) Skills competitions, like The Finnish National Skills Competition "Taitaja" organized yearly, have increased popularity.
- 4) A vocational qualification gives general eligibility for higher education studies.

Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos - Finnish Institute for Educational Research

IYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

UNIVERSITY OF IYVÄSKYLÄ

Current challenges in VET in Finland

- Dropping out is reflected in slower transition to employment and consequently at risk of exclusion.
- Although dropping out has been *decreasing* since the beginning of the 21st century in VET, the absolute number of dropouts has not fallen much. The percentage of discontinuation was 9,1 in years 2010/2011.
- Dropping out is highest in VET, if we compare it with the other educational levels(upper secondary general education 4,0 %, university of applied sciences 8,6 % and universities 5,9 %).
- The picture is also different, if we look at the discontinuation of the starting cohort. Of the students starting in vocational education in 2004, almost a quarter (23%) discontinued their studies in 2004–2009.

Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos - Finnish Institute for rEducational Research

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Current challenges and innovations in Finland

- 1) To tackle the exclusion of young people, the *Finnish Youth Guarantee (social guarantee)* was launched in the beginning of 2013. It will offer everyone under the age of 25, as well as recent graduates under 30, a job, on-the-job training, a study place or rehabilitation within three months of becoming unemployed.
- 2) The preparatory instruction (vocational start) has been developed to lower the threshold to education and training and to reduce drop-out. The aim is to improve students' capacities to obtain a place in vocational education and training. The essential principles are individuality, flexibility, practical and activity-based studies and vocational orientation. Instruction takes 6 - 12 months between basic education and vocational education and training.

Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos - Finnish Institute for Educational Research

IYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

UNIVERSITY OF IYVÄSKYLÄ

Current challenges and innovations in Finland (Contd.)

- 3) Youth workshops offer training and work experience placements to unemployed young people under 29 years of age. They offer a place for young people to learn life skills, grow into adulthood and get hands-on work experience, encouraging and helping them to seek further training.
- 4) In order to respond to the requirements of the changing world of work the flexibility of vocational qualifications has been further increased *diversifying opportunities* to include modules from other vocational qualifications (further and specialist vocational qualifications) or UAS degrees.
- 5) Students will be supported by implementing flexible and supportive practices such as improved recognition of prior learning.

Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos - Finnish Institute for Educational Research

IYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

UNIVERSITY OF IYVÄSKYLÄ

Challenges and Innovations Initial VET in Sweden

Daniel Persson Thunqvist, Linköpings universitet, Sweden

Major challenges

- High levels of drop outs and non-completers (approx. 25 % of a cohort, SCB, 2012).
- Youth unemployment in Sweden is paramount among the Nordic countries – around 25 % of the 20-24 year olds (Lindahl, 2011; Eurostat, 2013).
- To develop more efficient transitions from school-based VET to work life and higher education

The 2011 reform – introducing a modified initial VET-System

- Three broad orientations:
- A. General education, mainly for those intending to pursue higher education
- B. School-based vocational programmes
- C. Workplace-based apprenticeship

At the core of the reform is a clearer distinction between upper secondary programmes that more specifically focus on preparing students for 1) particular vocations and 2) higher education.

Possible positive outcomes of the 2011 reform

- The connections between school-based VET and work life could be strenghtened - while simultaneously retaining a strong theoretical core that is necessary to get access to higher education
- The new apprenticeship programe can be advantageus for school-tired students who want to get a job as soon as possible

Some problematic possible outcomes

- Entry into vocational programmes that do not qualify for HE has declined since 2011 (6-8 %).
- Deadlocks will increase
- Young people will have to make career decision at a very early stage of their career
- As a consequence, differences related to class, gender and ethnicity will increase

Norway – institutional setup

- Combination of state-controlled and corporatist model
- Apprenticeship system integrated part of the formal education system (upper secondary level)
- Dual model: 2+2 model as the main model since 1994



The Norwegian education system 2011

Challenges and innovations in Norway

Norway - challenges

- Dropout one out of three VET students have not completed their exams within five years
- Lack of apprenticeship places
- Increasing number of students switch from VET programmes to academic programmes

Norway - innovations

- The Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006 broader VET programmes and the in-depth study project
- The new «social contract for VET» tripartite agreement to increase number of apprenticeship places
- Measures to ease transitions from VET tracks to higher education