Germany’s Dual Vocational Training System: a Model for Other Countries?

Lars Thies

Prague, October 21st 2014
Agenda

- The dual apprenticeship system as a model for other countries?
- The German dual apprenticeship system in elements
- Challenges
Dual vocational training has proven to be successful in bringing young people into employment

Youth unemployment rates in countries with dual apprenticeship systems are well below the European average:

- **Germany**: 7.9%
- **Austria**: 9.9%
- **The Netherlands**: 11.4%
- **Denmark**: 12.8%
- **EU 28**: 23.1%

(Source: Eurostat, Data for Q4/2013)
As a result the dual apprenticeship system is in high demand

11 countries have bilateral agreements with Germany on cooperation in VET
Why has the dual apprenticeship system been successful in bringing young people into jobs?

Apprentices acquire skills that are truly in demand ... 

... and they are in contact with employers.
The dual VET system has proven to be successful – but should other countries try to copy it?

No! Requirements, traditions and demands differ – one system does not fit all

Break VET into 11 key elements and transfer/adapt them separately
Elements of the German dual apprenticeship system

- Social acceptance
- Aim: skilled workers with flexible qualifications
- Balance of standardization and flexibility
- Dual principle: alternating learning sites
- Partnership of government and businesses
- Joint funding
- Research
- Qualified teachers and trainers
- Codified quality standards
- Complementary school-based VET

Goals

- Individual
- Social
- Economic

Aim: skilled workers with flexible qualifications

Goals

- Individual
- Social
- Economic
1. The dual principle

Learning in vocational schools and at the workplace
An event technician learns about the theory behind his profession and about how to put it to use

Curriculum in the vocational school

- Safety regulations
- Energy supply
- Optics
- Acoustics
- ...

Curriculum at the workplace

- Lighting a person on stage
- Working with actors, directors
- Complying with safety regulations
- ...

Ready for work!
2. Partnership between Government and Businesses

Government

- Vocational schools
- Design of vocational profiles
- Administering VET
- Funding
- Finding Training Places

Businesses

- Training at the workplace

Vocational Training: Opportunities for Everyone
Partnership between government, businesses and unions

Designing of vocational profiles

- Government
- Federal Institute for VET
- Vocational Profiles
- Unions
- Employers

Funding

Budget for VET in Germany (2009)

- 57.2 bn. €
- 42.8
- 18.9

Source: Bildungsfinanzbericht 2012
3. Social acceptance of VET

White- and blue-collar professions

Dual VET as a real alternative to University

New apprentices in 2012: 512,773

New Students in University in 2012: 496,083

20% of apprentices have the necessary qualification to go to university
4. Qualified teachers and trainers

Teachers in vocational schools

- Need a relevant university degree
- They don’t teach an occupation but rather a subject

Trainers at the workplace

- Usually they are regular employees of the company
- They need to fulfill the „personal and professional requirements“
- In many cases new trainers take preparation courses
The dual apprenticeship system in Germany has downsides

250,000 young people in the transition system

People without VET face high unemployment risks

Unemployment rate in %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>with VET</th>
<th>without VET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB), data for 2011
The supply of apprenticeships declined significantly in the last two decades

Source: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2014
Young people vote with their feet for university

- 300,000 - 600,000 incoming students
- 300,000 - 600,000 number of new apprenticeship contracts
Challenges: Improving the image of vocational education
Challenges: Changing the corporate environment (from stealing talent to investing in talent)

What happens if we invest in developing our people and then they leave us?

What happens if we don’t, and they stay?
Thank you very much for your attention!

Contact:
E-mail: lars.thies@bertelsmann-stiftung.de
Phone: +49 5241 81-81104