



CEDEFOP

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Session 3.

Factors associated with dropping out and related policy responses

Daniela Ulicna and Gabriele Pessl

ICF International and IHS Vienna

Expert Workshop:

The role of VET in reducing early leaving from VET

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What is already known?



Single indicator many different realities

- » School phobia
- » Demotivation & low self-esteem
- » Mismatch between aspirations and reality
- » Need to work
- » Health and family problems

- **Early leaving is (often) a result of progressive disengagement**
- **Characteristics often associated with early leaving:** previous academic failure (grades, repetition), gender (male), socio-economic origin, migration background
- **The periods when young people are most at risk of leaving are:**
 - Transition from one programme/institution to another
 - 1st year of a programme
 - Failure at examination

Study methodology

- **Country coverage: AT, BE (fr & nl), DE, DK, HR, FR, IT, PT**
- **50 interviews per country including:**
 - National level: ministries, key stakeholders and experts
 - On-site interviews:
 - 5-7 towns/cities in each country
 - VET teachers and heads of schools
 - Apprenticeship centres and companies
 - Guidance personnel
 - Second chance institutions
 - Regional/ local policy makers
- **Focus of interviews**
 - Context
 - Factors related to early leaving
 - Policies and measures
 - Use of data



Factors associated with early leaving (specific to VET)

'If a young person feels good in a group s/he will get up in the morning to go there'

Sense of belonging or its lack - feeling part of a group

(negative) Self-perception joined with negative perception of the VET track

Lack of 'professional project' for oneself

Mismatch between the perception of a profession and its reality

Teachers' perception of their own role

(apprenticeships) Conflict with employer

(apprenticeships) Lack of readiness to work

Working conditions (apprenticeships)

Recruitment before achievement of exams (apprenticeships)

'I am not good at anything' & 'If you re not good you will end up in a VET school'

'Good students valorise the teacher - so s/he does not focus on those who are academically not strong'

'They are 15-16 but they are suddenly expected to be a man and go to work'

Factors related to early leaving – specificities of some professions

Car maintenance (medium to low)

- + positive image of the car
- increasingly complex – needs good basis in terms of reasoning and problem solving

Catering services (high)

- hard working conditions
- low barriers at entry
- Positive image but not corresponding to the reality

Industrial sector (low to medium) - apprenticeships

- + large companies – good conditions
- + availability of facilities
- +/- high requirements at entry

Example of an artistic profession (high)

- mismatch between perceptions of the training and the reality
- high technical requirements not in line with aspirations of those interested

Personal services (high) – beautician

- idealised image of the work
- high requirements in terms of contact/way of being with clients

Observations

- Those who drop out because of problems outside 'school' (and the 'school' does not help addressing these) – too many things to cope with
- Those who drop out because they are disengaged from education (education style, teachers, lack of meaning)
- Those who drop out because they are not in the right programme for them

- Not mutually exclusive and one situation can turn into the other

Country specific observations

- **Austria:** selective system, early tracking, huge inequalities according to social-economic background of early leavers
- **Belgium:** high rate of repetition in early years – repeated failure + very bad image of VET
- **Denmark:** difficulty of finding an apprenticeship contract
- **France:** bad image of VET among parents, students' allocation to programmes is not fully based on their choice
- **Germany:** differences between Laender regarding image of apprenticeship and drop out rates
- **Portugal:** relatively high rate of young people who leave because they need to work

Austria

▪ Youth Coaching

- **Basis:** government strategy (by the Ministry of Social Affairs)
- **Factors addressed:** negative self-perception, mismatch between professions' perception and reality, complexity of support measures

pupils in their last year of compulsory schooling + risk to drop out

- prevent early leaving

youth who already dropped out (,NEETs')

- support them to get back

- **Underlying principles:** focus on the strengths of the young person, (missing) link between compulsory school – VET – continuing school – all different types of supporting measures

Germany

- **carpo - Assisted Training in Baden-Wuerttemberg**
- **Basis:** project funded by ESF, PES and the Land
- **Factors addressed:** negative self-perception, modest quality of dual VET, SMEs unable to cope with more challenging trainees

young persons & training companies	
• prepare them	• bring them together
• give advice	• support them

- **Underlying principles:** Long term (before and during training), youths are part of the 'regular' system

Belgium (fr)

- **Expairs**
- **Basis:** Government strategy
- **Focus:** network of 45 schools
- **Factors addressed:** class repetition, bad image of VET → negative choice of pathways, complexity of the support system
- **Underlying principle:** Schools as main players in developing innovative actions

Motivation

School climate
Valorisation of
programmes &
students
Professional
projects of students

Organisation

Education
planning
School activities
Classroom
practices

Orientation

Discover different
professions
Integrate
orientation into
school project

Conclusions

- Moving away from searching for causes outside education and training to understanding how education and training can prevent and address early leaving
- Shared responsibility between education and training, civil society and employment organisations
- The potential of VET in supporting positive and meaningful learning pathways BUT this requires significant changes in approach of many teachers/ trainers
- Orientation measures – positive and reflected choice
- Potential of WBL in re-motivating & improving of himself/ herself

