A way of integrating stakeholders’ views in the advancement of permeability between VET and HE

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What is TANDEM?

• ‘Looking Forward Project’ under Erasmus+
• 24 months – January 2016 to December 2017
• Partners:
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  - eucen
  - Cámara Oviedo
  - Leido / CHAIN5
  - EWF
  - Prysmian Group
TANDEM has examined...

• Current changes of VET-HE pathways, in the current very dynamic situation
• What is happening if companies are willing (or are forced) to have their employees (workers) up-skilled...
• What is or has to be the role of the (formal) VET and HE providers in this...
• Having the levels 4, 5 and sometimes 6 of the EQF in mind...
Taking into account the role of governments specifically...

• ... in lifelong learning
• ... in formal education and training (control, financing...)
• ... in non-formal education and training (to be influenced by ‘tax-arrangements’, subsidizing, regulations...)
TANDEM intends...

• To propose new structures, to be promoted at the European level – to ‘inspire’ all stakeholders

• And to have an international network for exchanging experiences, expertise, good (and not so good) practices

• And to involve employers’ organisations in the discussions on ‘personal development’
Some of the first findings and our ideas

• We are having the focus on the levels 4 and 5 (and 6) of the EQF
• But... we are at the edges of the whole system for education (training, course, study, programme...) two sub-systems...

... based on the needs of companies (big, small, medium...) and the policies of the employers (HRM department, Business Academy)
... based on the job-profiles and the short term requirements
... based on regional, national and international developments, to stay competitive
Sub-system 1

• New skills and relevant competences... non-formal... tailor-made... direct usable... actual requirements for the work-place...

• Having learning outcomes on different levels of a national, international or sectoral qualifications framework

• Short... flexible... not every year the same programme...

• The programme is guaranteed by the ‘world of work’

• Question is: Who will provide this programme?

• And maybe also: Can the learning outcomes also be used for the personal development, for a formal programme and degree, at a certain level?
Sub-system 2

• At the other side: the formal education system, based on formal levels and formal programmes – under control (quality, exams, standards...)

• Basis is a structure and a framework for youngsters (initial education)

• Aim is to get a job... but also to give general competences for the personal development (a position, having a certain working and thinking level)

• Finding a job in a sector, a group of companies, a branch in a certain field of the labour market...

• Formal adult learning: linking both sub-systems – based on a structure under control of the government – having a national strategy?
In between those two sub-systems...

• Employers have their own reasons for offering education and training to their employees – a personnel approach

• And employees will accept those reasons...

• So: what are those reasons?

• But: Is it possible to use the whole system for making this kind of education and training also relevant for the personal development?

• Are the ‘certificates’ useful for getting a formal diploma (or a non-formal, state recognised one)?

• So: How are the providers of VET and HE (at level 4 and 5) involved?
Communication Triangle identified and strengths

**EMPLOYERS**
- Business, SMEs
- Sectoral Associations
- Learners’ Unions
- Trade Unions

**PROVIDERS**
- Universities
- VET sector (colleges, polytechnics, etc)
- Chambers of commerce
- Publishers (literature)

**POLICY MAKERS**
- Governments
- Ministries
- Rectors
- Principals
- EC

- Knowledge on market’s needs
- Expertise in specific topics
- Expertise in transversal content

- Future employers
- ‘Advancers’ – can make policies to move on
- Adapt internal rules
- Prestige
Specific subjects

• How about international qualifications – in the sector for non-formal education and training, based on international requirements for jobs (ISO–NEN and other systems under control by ‘the world of work’)?

• Can this be used for a ‘push’ to have more ‘lifelong learning Universities, Colleges, Polytechnics’?

• Can this be combined with looking at the consequences of the so-called vocational drift of Polytechnics (higher education), driving Higher VET out of the system?

• In general: How can the EQF and the NQFs be used for this all?
Discoveries (1)

• Employers and companies are always willing to offer ‘education and training’ to their employees... knowing that ‘learning’ is vital for both of them

• But:
  - relevant
  - now, here... and practical
  - fitting in the work-conditions
  and:
  - level is not relevant for the modules and competences
  - quality = usefulness... satisfaction... and having results in practice

• Companies are willing to cooperate with providers of VET and HE in case of more standard modules... but still based on ‘the needs’ of the company

• Question: Do we need an intermediary organisation for this, bridging the cultures of both ‘worlds’? Chamber of Commerce? Employers’ network? Or? Using international networks for this?
Discoveries (2)

• The role of the government can be crucial – having a strong policy, to convince all stakeholders
• The intermediary organisation can be financed by the government
• And that includes a (national) Platform for LLL
• It looks bureaucratic... but... who else??
• Knowing that employers are paying taxes... and they are not willing to pay twice: once for the formal education and a second time for similar modules in a private setting...
  (of course: tailor-made courses are always expensive...)
Discoveries (3)

• The role of Universities: students, parents, counsellors, politicians...
  higher status = status of the provider

• But there is huge need for people at higher levels – qualifications with a mix of academic and really professional competences and learning outcomes

• In some countries dual education is part of the ‘economic structure’, needed for the companies to be (international) competitive

• So: Polytechnics are showing a ‘vocational drift’
Discoveries (4)

• So: We need a new formal system... but that will take a lot of efforts, discussions, and a strong leadership of the government (national...)

• An idea:
  - Universities:
    - Academic / Research
    - Academic / Professional / Research
  - Polytechnics
    - Professional / Vocational (VPET)
    - Offering level 5, 6 and 7
    - involved in LLL
    - Cooperating with VET providers

• Polytechnics are cooperating with Business Academies (private, tailor-made and non-formal)
Discoveries (5)

- We need an area for bridging:
  - VET and HE
  - Formal and non-formal

- This can be a ‘European Level 5 Area’ for all kind of qualifications – having a broad spectrum

- With respect for all providers – giving space for agreements about transfer of certificates (Learning Outcomes), in a vertical and horizontal way

- The EQF can be the reference for this all – and having a National Coordinating Point for agreements – also a ‘broker’, funded by the government (The EQF for LLL, but using it for formal and non-formal qualifications)
Discoveries (6)

- The future is for... apprenticeships (but only if they are used in the right way!)
- Why: Better to have a job and to combine with a study (instead of having a diploma, at a certain level, finding no job... or by far not having a job at the right level...)
- Education is a 'Merit Good'... but it will be more and more an 'Economic Good' (Education to be seen as an investment...)
- Higher Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Degrees...
- UK: Levy for big companies... to be spend for their own apprentices and this kind of learners in SMEs (with some funding by the government)
Discoveries (7)

- An important player in offering qualifications at levels 4 and 5 is the ‘publishers world’
- They can be involved in material for the programmes (books, guides, exams, cases, and so on)
- They can cooperate with ‘quality assurance bodies and agencies’ for private education...
- ... and also for ‘work-based learning’ like apprenticeships
- Example: Pearson (publisher) involved in (owner of):
  - BTEC (diploma / secondary): BTECs are career-based qualifications designed to give students the skills they need to move on to higher education or go straight into employment
  - Edexel (education and examination body)
Thanks for your attention

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