



Scaffolding: the case for Apprenticeship

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Development of scaffolding

As a system

- Used since prehistoric times, early 1900s introduction of standard fixings for metal scaffolding
- 1944 SGB developed frame access system and from 1950s more use of system scaffolding

As an occupation

- Can be carried out by users of scaffold e.g. bricklayers etc. in Poland
- Specialist occupation with specialist training centres post WWII e.g. Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, UK
- Germany full *Beruf* with full 3-year apprenticeship 1998, Denmark 2-year modular apprenticeship 2009, Ireland 2-year 2021 alongside certificated training

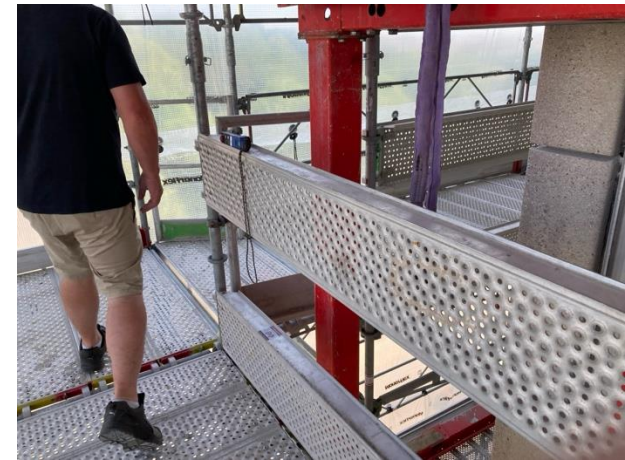
Questions addressed

- How is scaffolding as apprenticeship occupation grounded?
- What form does it take in Ireland, Germany, and Denmark?
- What are opportunities and challenges for scaffolding apprenticeship?



The Scaffolding Cycle

- Scaffolding work follows a typical sequence:
 - Planning
 - Erection
 - Maintenance and alteration
 - Dismantling
 - Removal of equipment
 - Evaluation of work



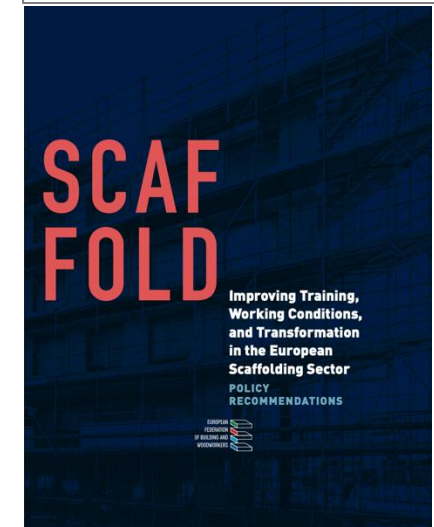
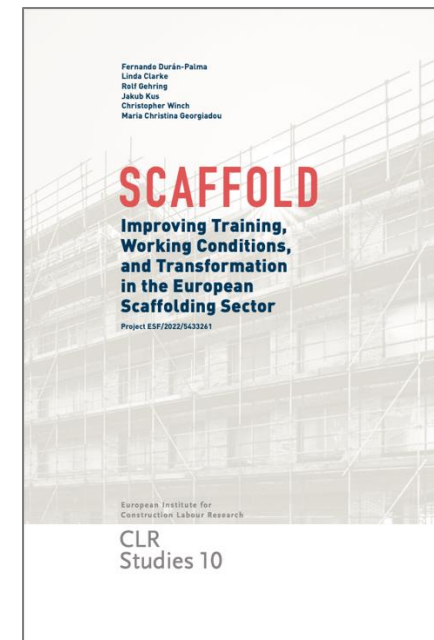
What We Understand by Apprenticeship

- Apprenticeship is an IVET (initial VET) programme focused on the workplace.
- Apprentices are employees with a special type of employment contract that takes account of their status as learners as well as workers.
- It requires a significant degree of preparation outside the operational conditions of the workplace, including classroom, workshop activities and simulation.
- Typically, an EQF level 3 or 4 programme with a minimum duration of two years.
- When completed and assessed successfully results in a qualification that has labour market and educational value and can be used in an occupational labour market.
- Typically, but not necessarily, a programme for under 25-year-olds.



SCAFFOLD Methodology

- *EU-funded research project* led by European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), examining scaffolding occupation and sector in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, and Poland
- *Themes*: Employment and working conditions; VET and OSH training; technological developments and standardisation; and Social Dialogue structures.
- *Methodology* consisted of:
 - production of national reports by social partner organisations
 - evaluation of national reports by project evaluators
 - visits to scaffolding training centres and firms in four countries
 - steering group meetings and workshops
 - analysis and discussion of findings among partners, evaluators, coordinators and other stakeholders in workshops on each theme
 - production of a final report by project evaluators and coordinators
 - proposals for policy recommendations in 11 languages by social partner organisations.



European Federation
of Building
and Woodworkers



Funded by
the European Union

Ireland

- *Two-fold VET for scaffolding:*
 - Traditional CSCS training leading to certification
 - New scaffolding apprenticeship leading to qualification
- *CSCS pathway:* 7-10 days off-the-job, 'does not sufficiently equip people with knowledge/awareness (necessary to operate in) a safety-critical trade' (NSAC, 2020)
- *Apprenticeship pathway* provides well-structured and comprehensive VET programme, with clear advantages over alternatives (e.g. traineeships) in terms of duration, structure, and status.
- *Programme* aims to provide apprentice with knowledge, skills, and competence to perform safely and effectively as scaffolder, plus academically robust and vocationally relevant qualification
 - 2-year programme: 80% on-the-job and 20% off-the-job
 - 8 modules span the scaffolding cycle.
 - QQI Level 5
- *Key enablers:*
 - Social partner cooperation
 - Solid national apprenticeship system
 - Disregard of ESCO? Despite formal adoption, no evidence of influence on scaffolder occupational profile



Germany

- IVET is through apprenticeship.
- The German dual system apprenticeship is 3 years long and built around the scaffolding cycle.
- It aims for workplace autonomy, project management and problem-solving abilities.
- It provides access to an advanced Meister Qualification at EQF level 6.
- However, the apprenticeship qualification is not mandatory.



Denmark

- *Combination of IVET/CVET* i.e. obligatory 2-year modular training (25 weeks off the job), including migrants, with truck driver licence and crane/forklift certificates and OSH programmes
- 51% scaffolding workforce completed
- *Programme includes:* different scaffolding systems and general competences (e.g. customer service, understanding drawings)
- *Unionization levels:* 94%, with strong involvement in all aspects, including technological innovation
- *Regulation of scaffolding through collective agreement*, with Akkord wage system incentivizing further training, safe practices, and mentoring apprentices



Conclusions

- *Training leading to certification* goes together with fragmentation of work process and different hierarchical levels
- *Apprenticeship leading to qualification* implies relatively autonomous workforce able to undertake most of scaffolding cycle activities
- *Differences in apprenticeship* in Ireland, Germany and Denmark in terms of comprehensiveness, project management abilities, inclusiveness, and permeability
- *Stable labour market* necessary for work-based training infrastructure but construction beset by subcontracting and self employment
- *Scaffolding needs mandatory VET and direct employment* to avoid two-tier labour market
- *Irish case* shows role apprenticeship can play in according recognition as skilled occupation
- *High quality apprenticeship* for scaffolding necessary for ensuring safety of entire building process and needs consideration by all EU countries

