



Apprenticeship: Governance modes and financing approaches

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In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in apprenticeship based on the 'dual system of vocational education and training (VET)', where classroom teaching in an educational institution is combined with work-place learning in a company. Such arrangement is perceived as an attractive policy option, particularly in the context of the current challenges: high youth unemployment and public budget constraints aggravated by the economic crisis, globalisation and technological developments resulting in rapidly changing labour market needs and in skills becoming obsolete quickly, and labour market mismatches causing simultaneous skills shortages/gaps and unemployment.

There are several advantages to apprenticeship forms of learning. It develops the skills relevant to the local labour markets and thus, brings benefits to companies, their employees, the wider economy and society. It is an important (though not necessarily sufficient) tool in improving the labour market transition of young people. It has been observed that the countries with strong VET systems and well established apprenticeships (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland) tend to perform better in terms of youth employment, with quicker transition to the labour market. Interestingly, in some countries apprenticeship is also a way of up-skilling/re-skilling adults (e.g. in Australia, Denmark and England substantial numbers of apprentices are individuals aged 30 and over). In addition, a dual VET system with financial contribution by employers could release, to some extent, States' budgets constraints.

The revival of apprenticeship is reflected in the EU agenda. The recent European Commission's Communication 'Rethinking Education' (November 2012) highlights the importance of VET and of 'dual systems' as a key priority for the EU. Further, the European Council of 7-8 February 2013 invited the Commission to establish the European Alliance for Apprenticeship (bringing together EU Member states, social partners, businesses, other relevant actors and the European Commission) to develop high-quality apprenticeship/work-based learning.

Many countries have started or expressed their intention to establish/expand apprenticeship systems. However, the successful establishment or expansion of a dual VET system is a challenging task. It requires identifying the necessary conditions/principles for well-performing/modern apprenticeship (for example through ascertaining the key success factors in countries with advanced dual systems), careful analysis of opportunities and constraints of the national/local context in a given country, considering different options for implementing the apprenticeship and assessing their feasibility.

To support the process, Cedefop is starting a research and policy analysis project on apprenticeship focusing on two crucial areas: governance and financing. There are several important governance and financing aspects which can determine the performance of apprenticeship system: setting



clearly the rights and responsibilities of the actors involved and encouraging their cooperation, overcoming market failure and getting the cost-sharing right, and providing incentives to provision/participation while considering equity issues. Although the ways apprenticeship systems are governed and financed differ across the countries, it is possible to identify and analyse common elements underpinning successful systems. This is valuable information for policy makers. Nevertheless, when it comes to transfer of policy and practice, a wider national context (cultural traditions, labour market regulations, etc.) should not be underestimated.

The workshop 'Apprenticeship: governance modes and financing approaches' will bring together researchers and experts in the field and address the following questions:

- What are the criteria for well-performing/modern apprenticeship system?
- What are countries' models of governance and financing of apprenticeship and how these (may) affect the performance of apprenticeship system?
- What are the conceptual frameworks and possible methods for assessing governance and financing of apprenticeship?
- How to assist the countries in developing apprenticeship system? What are the lessons learned from the previous transfers of policy and practice?
 - Which elements/conditions are essential for establishing/expanding apprenticeship system?
 - What are potential opportunities and constraints of the national/local context that should be taken into account when establishing/expanding apprenticeship system?
 - How to facilitate transfer of policy and practice? How to devise a strategy for establishing/expanding apprenticeship with involvement of and consensus among the relevant national stakeholders?