

Challenges for funding TVET / lifelong learning in the light of research on workplace learning and individual career development

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Adaptability as a systems driver for LLL

Context

- Changing context for careers and learning at work
- Transitions & life-course perspective

Research

- Career pathways 1100 people: 10 European countries
- 64 career biographies from England & Norway
- 125 career narratives: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain

Findings

- Key findings: learning at work and individual career development
- Implications for funding TVET / lifelong learning

Nature of transitions:

- Extended transitions into career-related employment
- Changes within job: role, context, technology, work organisation
- Job changes: employer, sector, location, recognised career paths (upskilling or downward drift)
- Major job shifts: role, sector, employment (reskilling)
- Adjustments required at many different levels
- Extended transitions from career-related employment
- Transformational shifts in perspectives as careers unfold

Need for lifelong learning

- Dynamic engagement across the lifespan:
 - up-skilling
 - re-skilling,
 - entry, re-entry, exit
 - re-direction
- Formal TVET and informal learning important
- Adaptability rather than employability as driver
- Vulnerability to being 'locked into' particular ways of working & thinking
- Public policy - recognition of the need to: raise individual aspiration; encourage greater autonomy; promote lifelong learning

Case for adaptability as a system driver 1

- ‘capability to make a series of successful transitions where the labour market, organisation of work, occupational and organisational knowledge bases subject to considerable change’
- role in raising aspirations (higher & lower skill levels)
- potential to empower positive decisions & actions
- facilitates participation in skill development
- value in different labour market conditions

Case for adaptability as a system driver 2

- value in increasing equitable access to training & learning
- progress even if not able to secure stable employment
- produces level of engagement beyond simple updating
- driven by a desire for sense-making and developing identity
- professional and personal identities seen as complementary
- process of knowledge updating and re-contextualisation.

Role of learning at work in developing adaptability:

- learning through challenging work (or mastering the practical, cognitive and communicative demands linked with particular work roles and work processes);
- updating a substantive knowledge base (or mastering a new additional substantive knowledge base) at work;
- learning through (and beyond) interactions at work;
- being self-directed and self-reflexive.
- Also learn at work through changing jobs – at low and high skill levels.

Implications adaptability as a driver

- Initial education and training important: mastery of a knowledge base
- Experience of work important: demands linked with particular work roles and processes;
- Upskilling: spend less on formal programmes and more on facilitating job change – career guidance infrastructure
- Reskilling – major changes of direction – keeping people in the labour market – career guidance
- Adults programmes of own choosing – not explicitly linked to employability – more likely to develop a continuing commitment to learning in other ways.

Implications for funding lifelong learning where funds are limited – give support to:

- Initial (TV)ET: substantive programmes leading to mastery of a knowledge base are more transferable than generic programmes
- Helping people move between different types of low skilled work – career guidance – more effective way of improving adaptability than remedial courses
- Career guidance for mid-career workers (re-orientation; reinforcement; re-engagement) – stay in labour market longer
- value of experience of work, training, education and other contexts: guidance ‘binds’ learning to transfer between contexts etc.
- Adult programmes of learning which are not **necessarily** vocational
- Reorienting a small proportion of the initial education and training budget (but pay attention to learning between work contexts) to support for adult programmes and particularly adult career guidance
- Programmes emphasising adaptability rather than employability.