



National Report

The German educational system / VET system

Marc Beutner / Sebastian Rohde / Sebastian Rose

The German educational system consists of different stages: pre school education, primary education, secondary education in two substages and the field of continuous education and higher education.

Main principles of the German educational system are:

- transparency
- mobility
- permeability
in a vertical and a horizontal way

Transparency means that it should be easy to find out which school could be the next for an individual. The educational system is clearly described and divided in separated parts which directly refer to each other.

Mobility is one of the main points. It is necessary to ensure that learners can move from *Land* (Land = a federal state – like North-Rhine-Westfalia) to *Land* in Germany without bigger educational problems and with an easy way to find the fitting school.

One of the aspects of our educational systems which is steadily improved is permeability. Vertical permeability means that every individual should have the chance to go step by step through the different stages while getting older. For example you can easily step forward from primary stage (e.g. a primary school) to lower secondary education (e.g. intermediate schools).

Horizontal permeability means, that all barriers which could exist on one stage between different schools and types of schools should vanish. For example it should be easy to change between grammar school and intermediate schools (two types of secondary general schools) which are both on secondary stage.

All parts of the educational system in Germany should be innovating continuously. In Germany we try to dismantle existing barriers between educational areas. One of the most important aspects is that qualifications in one educational area can constitute entry to another one.

Next to these aspects there are four special core ideas in German VET:

1. Combination of Market- and State-control
(a) continuing education (b) initial vocational education
2. Berufsidee = special German idea of a profession
3. Corporatism = involvement of Employer and employee organizations
4. Federalism = involvement of federal (BUND) and states (LÄNDER)

In Germany we strictly divide between general education and vocational education.

So let's have a look at general education.

In Germany compulsory full-time education begins at the age of six and lasts nine years. In some Länder it can also be up to an age of ten years, depending on the Land. Compulsory education exists for persons aged 6-18 and for trainees/apprentices in the dual system. These apprentices can also be over 18 years old.

In Germany after the optional Kindergarten the general education starts with four years of primary school for everybody.

After this primary education stage the educational paths of the learners are divided. In the first stage of secondary education (=substage 1) you can find secondary general schools, intermediate schools, grammar schools and, in some *Länder*, also comprehensive schools as well as schools for pupils with special needs.

On top of these secondary general schools a second stage of secondary education is established. On the one hand the grammar schools provide



COR-VET
Career orientation
in vocational education and training in Europe
Reflections of the German partners
Workshop 1 in Paderborn, Germany

two/three years in this stage (=substage 2). Also the vocational schools are settled in this area. The main distinction of vocational schools is the differentiation between part-time and full-time vocational schools. Despite the fact that of the schools, the full-time schools have the highest numbers of learners, full-time vocational schools are the smaller part in vocational education. In Germany the part-time vocational education in the Dual-System (alternation of apprenticeship between enterprise and vocational school) is appreciated most. The dual system is far and away the largest field of vocational education. Approximately 55 % of an age cohort are doing an apprenticeship in this system. The learners are generally completing their apprenticeship in the dual system in 3 years. After that many of them take up employment as a skilled worker but several are selecting an enhanced educational career, for example at an university of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) or if possible at a university. Sometimes they work and come back to Fachoberschulen or other vocational secondary schools. These schools are normally built on vocational training in the dual system.

The normal vocational full-time schools provide general education as well as vocational education in different fields. In some vocational schools like the “preparatory” or “foundation vocational year” (Berufsgrundschuljahr) the learner get the chance, that their attendance in this school can be credited as the first year of training in the dual system.

In all vocational schools you can find certificates or exams.

Especially in the dual system there are examinations which are held by the chambers to ensure the quality of educational work.

In Germany tertiary education includes a great variety of schools, colleges and other institutions offering programs of study. They provide vocational qualifications for learners who have already completed secondary stage. The tertiary education is free to educational market but the primary and the secondary stages are working under state control.



Lifelong Learning Programme

COR-VET

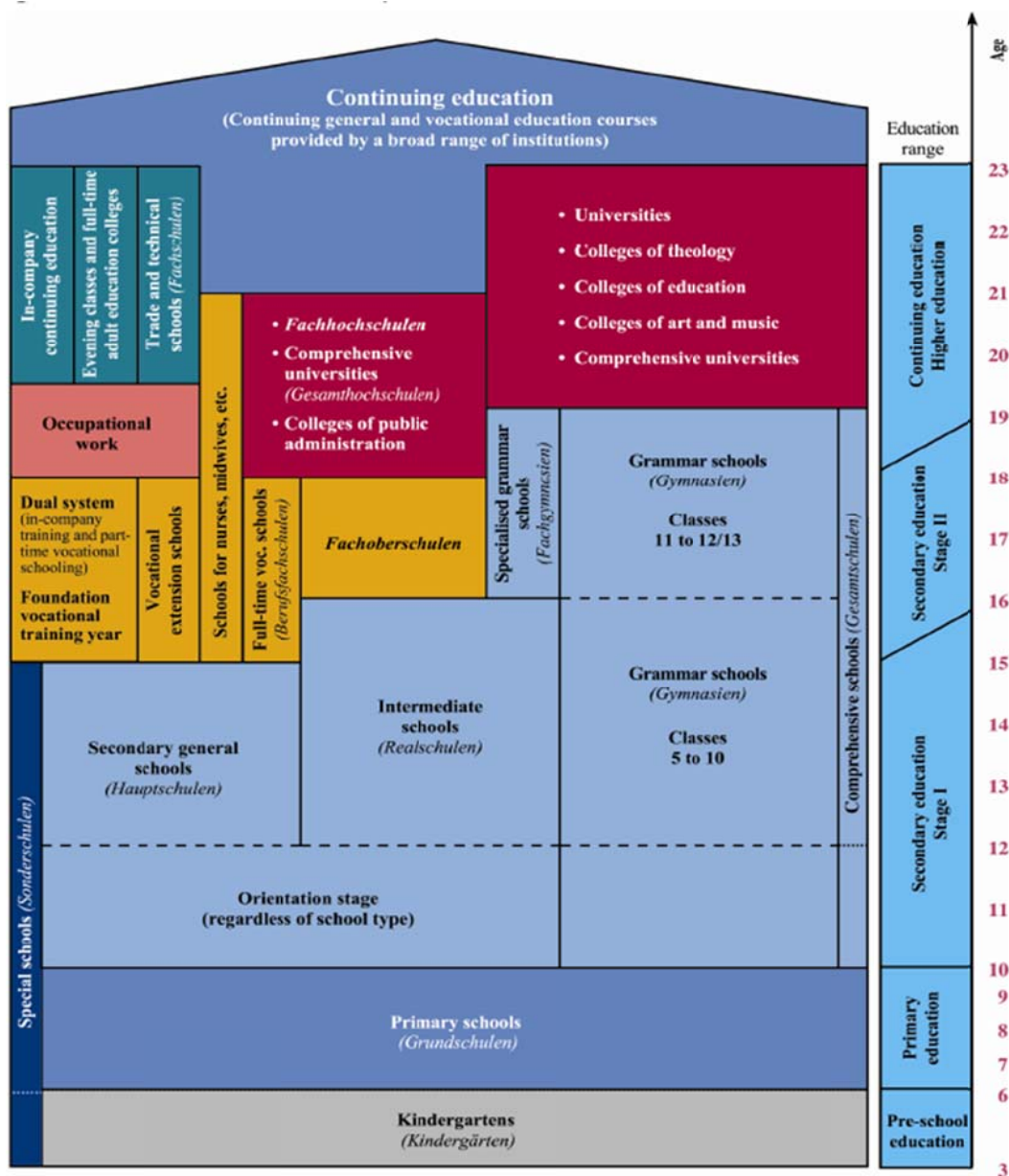
Career orientation

in vocational education and training in Europe

Reflections of the German partners

Workshop 1 in Paderborn, Germany

Appendix:



The German Educational System

see: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5173_en.pdf, p. 21
(20.01.2012)