Innovative Apprenticeships: 
Promoting Successful School-to-Work 
Transitions – the Example of Switzerland

Torino, 17th of September 2009

Ursula Scharnhorst
Swiss Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training SFIVET
General Goals of VET

- Create learning environments for students to build up the competencies for successful integration into the labour market and for life-long learning

- Occupation-specific goals to meet the qualification demands of the labour market

- General education goals (academic, personal and social skills)

→ Young people have to manage two important points of transition to work in a market-driven, apprenticeship-oriented system
Switzerland

- Population: 7.5 Mio residents (20% residents without Swiss nationality)
- 3 linguistic regions (75% German, 25% French, 5% Italian)
- 200,000 students in VET at upper secondary level
Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Switzerland

- Most popular form of education and training at upper secondary level
  Two thirds of all youths of a cohort choose a VET programme

- Over 250 careers, with national regulations (ordinances) specifying the curricula and qualification procedures

- Mostly school-based and work-based (apprenticeship, dual system)
  VET takes place in companies, vocational schools and industry courses
  - 60-80% work-based, 20-40% school-based
  - in school: 50% vocational and 50% general subject matters

- Option to enroll in a programme leading to the Vocational Baccalaureate (extended academic requirements)
Professional Education and Training (PET)

- PET may follow basic VET training: approx. 30,000 PET qualifications per year

- Programmes at **tertiary B level** for specific qualifications (managerial and specialised positions) combining practical skills with theoretical expertise
  - 400 federal PET examinations (PET Diploma and PET Advanced Diploma)
  - 400 PET college degree programmes (full time or part-time)

- Access to **tertiary A level** for holders of a **Vocational Baccalaureate**
  - at Universities of Applied Sciences UAS (directly)
  - at Universities and Federal Institutes of Technology (University Aptitude Test)
The Swiss VET/PET System
Ausbildungs- und Erwerbsssituation 1-6 Jahre nach Entlassung aus der Schulpflicht

Quelle: Bertschy, Böni, Meyer 2007

Source: OPET Facts and Figures, 2009
VET as a Share of Upper Secondary Education (2006)

VET by Linguistic Region (2007)
Education and Training Completed at Upper secondary level (2006)

Source: OPET Facts and Figures, 2009)
VET Graduates Obtaining a FVB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funding of VET

• 45% private funding for upper secondary level VET programmes (2006)

• Public funding split between the Confederation (25%) and the cantons (75%)

• Vocational School in apprenticeship-based VET programmes is free

• Tertiary level PET is primarily in the responsibility of the employers and the employees and, to a large part, paid by them
Cost/Benefits of VET

- Professional Organisations provide services and funding to the VET/PET system in a different ways (groundwork of practical training, running of training centers, promoting occupations) which otherwise would have to be funded by the state.

- But training is profitable for two thirds of the companies because the productivity of the apprentices is higher than their costs.

- A cost/benefit study showed that gross costs in VET/PET amounted to 4.7 billion CHF, but productive output generated by VET apprentices amounted to 5.2 billion CHF.

- About a third of the companies engage in apprenticeship training.

- Certain sectors have VET funds, but there are no national regulations on contributions of companies that do not take on trainees.
Low Youth Unemployment Rates

2006:
• 7.6% in Switzerland (age 20-24)
• 11.3% average mean across OECD countries (age 20-24)

• 7.9% in Switzerland (age 15-19)
• 15.1% average mean across OECD countries (age 15-19)

• Youth unemployment as a ratio of overall unemployment is around the OECD average

Source: OECD, 2008
Relative Professional Income by Education Level
2000-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Upper secondary VET</th>
<th>Upper secondary General</th>
<th>PET</th>
<th>University &amp; UAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Swiss Labour Force Survey (Schweizerische Arbeitskräfteerhebung SAKE), FSO.*
In summary, strengths of Swiss VET/PET: The system

- is strongly employer and market driven
- integrates school and work-based learning well; in-company training is not too company-specific
- is well resourced
- has a positive cost/benefit ratio for apprenticeship-based VET programmes
- is strong in tertiary VET, offers a broad spectrum of options
- allows for flexible pathways
- has qualified teachers, trainers, expert examiner, school directors
- ensures quality control and uses national assessment procedures
- provides systematic and professional career guidance and counselling
VET – a Swiss Quality Product and a Model for Export …
... holes and other inaptidudes?