Switzerland’s Vocational Education and Training System

A Model for Apprenticeships in the United States?

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Table of Content

• Switzerland in Brief
• Vocational Education and Training System in Switzerland
• Q+A / Discussion
Switzerland in Brief

- **GDP 2020**
  - USD 750+ bn

- **GDP per capita**
  - USD 86’300+ bn

- **Population**
  - 8.484 million

- **Area**
  - 15’940 sq. mi.

USA – Swiss Bilateral Economic Relations

- **FDI: # 6**
  - 300+ bn USD
  - ½ mio. jobs
  - #1 in R+D
”Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

Confucian philosophy (Xun Kuang / Xunzi, c. 310 – c. 235)
One mission – three partners

Confederation
(SERI / SFIVET)

Cantons
(cantonal offices / vocational schools / career guidance)

Private sector
(professional organisations / companies / social partners)

Implementation and supervision

Training content and apprenticeships

Strategic management and development
Swiss education system
Swiss education system

- **Professional education (PE)**
  - Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher Education
  - Federal Diploma of Higher Education

- **Vocational education and training (VET)**
  - Federal Diploma of Vocational Education and Training
  - Host Companies, Classroom Instruction, Branch Courses

- **General education**
  - Specialised Baccalaureate
  - Specialised School Certificate

- **Universities (academic & applied sciences)**
  - Master Bachelor
  - PhD/Doctorate Master Bachelor

- **Compulsory School**

~2/3 ~1/3
Permeability
Apprenticeship: Duality of theory and practice in VET

Company
- Several times per year
- 3-4 days per week

Branch Courses
- Several times per year

VET School
- 1-2 days per week
High employability through labour market orientation

- University and university of applied sciences: 90% employed, 7% not seeking employment, 3% unemployed
- Professional education: 92% employed, 7% not seeking employment, 2% unemployed
- Baccalaureate: 82% employed, 14% not seeking employment, 3% unemployed
- Vocational education and training: 83% employed, 14% not seeking employment, 3% unemployed
- Secondary level I: 68% employed, 26% not seeking employment, 6% unemployed

Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) / Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS);
Estimates by Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER)
Funding: Who pays? How much? For what?

Costs

- 60% Private Sector
- 30% Cantons
- 10% Confederation

Subsidies to cantons
Development of VPET

Vocational schools
Career guidance

Training & wages of apprentices
Wages of in-company trainers
Branch courses
Funding: Costs and benefits for companies training apprentices

Figures are millions CHF

Net benefit

Productive output of apprentices

Gross costs
# The private sector – key actor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional organisations</th>
<th>Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social partners &amp; others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training content / curriculum development</th>
<th>Apprenticeship positions / practical training in company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualification procedures</td>
<td>Teachers for VET schools, trainers and experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch courses</td>
<td>Co-funding: Private sector’s expenditure on VPET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A win-win-win-situation

Dual VPET system

**Individuals**
- Job prospects
- Work experience
- Recognized qualification
- Career opportunities

**Companies**
- Qualified workers
- Economic competitiveness
- Innovation capacity
- Cost-effective training / recruiting

**State/society**
- Low youth unemployment
- Right mix of skills and qualifications
- High integration capacity
- Cost-effective education
Challenges

Demographic changes

Demand for qualified workers

Internationalization & mobility

Rising expectations and specifications

Changes in society

Structural and technological change of the economy

VPET in Switzerland
Key features of the Swiss VPET system

- Public-private partnership
- Permeability
- Labour market orientation
- Cost efficiency
Thank you!

Further Information:

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