

# 9<sup>èmes</sup> rencontres JEUNES & SOCIÉTÉS

*en Europe et autour de la Méditerranée*

**The 9<sup>th</sup> YOUTH & SOCIETIES (in Europe and the Mediterranean basin) Meeting**

*Lausanne, 4 -5 October 2018*

## ***Young people, VET and integration in the labour market***

For several years now, vocational education and training (VET), including upper-secondary-level VET and tertiary-level professional education, has been the focus of attention for many governments in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Delegations from as far afield as China, the United States, India and Senegal have regularly been coming to Switzerland to find out more about VET courses, in particular the dual-track, in which companies play a major role. This system presents governments with a potential solution to economic crises, especially when it comes to endemic youth unemployment. In this regard, the OECD and European Union frequently refer to the German and Swiss systems as successful models. The low youth unemployment rates in these countries are attributed to the large proportion of young people enrolled in upper-secondary-level VET (around two-thirds in Switzerland), together with the opportunities to advance to tertiary-level professional education.

In focusing on VET, the 9<sup>th</sup> rencontres 'Jeunes & Sociétés en Europe et autour de la Méditerranée' (9<sup>th</sup> 'Youth & Societies in Europe and the Mediterranean basin Meeting') will address various core themes in the humanities and social sciences that relate to or encompass the situation of young people: workplace and social integration, the transitions between school, training and work, educational and career guidance, the transition to adulthood, etc.

Issues relating to young people's integration in the labour market (e.g. young people and gender or young people and migration) have come up repeatedly in discussions at the *conference* ever since it was launched in 2002. These issues are all the more relevant at this year's conference given the importance of gender and migration for the structuring of upper-secondary VET, tertiary-level professional education, the content of training at both levels and employment prospects available to holders of vocational degrees. Indeed, vocational education and training offers highly relevant means of gaining insight into social, political and economic issues as well as ethical questions that lie at the heart of learners' experience during their training or as they enter the labour market.

The theme of this 9th conference is sufficiently broad to allow for a variety of contributions, grouped into **four thematic areas**:

### **1. Review of VET systems:**

This first thematic area will adopt social, historical and comparative international perspectives in order to highlight the specific features of different VET systems. How have these systems been instigated in the past, and what have been their successes and failures? How do the German and Swiss systems differ from those of other countries? Comparative analyses are especially welcome as they allow a more accurate assessment of the importance of the vocational component within different education systems. Nevertheless this first thematic area is also intended to clarify the political and underlying issues surrounding the development of different education and training systems. VET lies at the heart of current issues in knowledge-based societies. What strategies have been adopted to increase the number of learners in post-compulsory education and training? What types of degrees and tracks are specifically supported and which population groups are they

designed for? The first thematic area will further serve to identify certain paradoxes in education and training policy. One such example can be found in the creation of new and more accessible courses (e.g. based on lower qualification levels or prerequisites) that are nonetheless perceived as less 'lucrative' on the labour market. Is the development of professional education and of pathways to this tertiary level education uniform? Might this development end up perpetuating other hierarchies, in particular that of gender, given the same-sex oriented nature of many workplaces? Similarly, might the anchoring of VET programmes within the higher education sector (e.g. Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes for specific professions at Swiss universities of applied sciences) actually undermine the value of upper-secondary level VET or even Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in academic fields of study?

## **2. Social background of learners enrolled in VET programmes:**

The second thematic area will shed light on the different types of learners engaged in VET and their motivations for choosing this track. Special emphasis will be placed on social inequalities in terms of educational guidance as well as on the social representations associated with different educational pathways. The analysis undertaken here should enable us to identify various forms of inequalities in recruitment and selection methods, in access to certain programmes (restricted or, conversely, facilitated for young women or immigrants for example) or in social stratification between upper-secondary VET and tertiary-level professional education in particular. In some countries, learners are predominantly from working class backgrounds, although other social groups are represented too, e.g. families engaged in crafts or running small businesses. What are the sociodemographic characteristics of learners in different VET programmes? Do significant differences exist in terms of social origin and/or sex? If so, can they be related to specific positions in the social hierarchies of the relevant occupations? Does professional education offer opportunities for young people to achieve a higher level of social status compared to their parents? If so, is this social mobility evenly available to all social groups and to both sexes? In what way does the sociodemographic profile of learners opting for professional education differ from that of young people who have chosen the 'traditional' university route (if indeed it does)? Are there 'standard' training trajectories and 'transitional' pathways between upper-secondary VET and tertiary-level professional education? If so, in which fields? In a context where scholastic knowledge is requested as a prerequisite, how do young people compete with one another for apprenticeship positions? Does the very nature of this struggle change according to field of activity or company practices, especially in the case of international companies?

## **3. Impact of VET systems on the school-to-work transition and integration in the labour market:**

The third thematic area will focus on the integration of young people in the labour market. It will examine the benefits that different types of qualifications may offer in terms of access to employment (i.e. easy or difficult) in relation to youth employment rates according to the levels and types of qualification that learners attain as well as according to their individual sociodemographic profiles. This thematic area addresses the question of whether and to what extent the vocational route provides suitably managed and progressive entry to the labour market. Here, attention should be paid to the different ways in which VET is organised: full-time school-based VET versus dual VET; the creation (or not) of transitional options to more advanced levels of education and training; and the competences acquired and required by different education and training programmes. At the same time, emphasis should be given to the results of these different VET programmes in terms of facilitating the school-to-work transition. Similarly, thought may be given to whether the assumed progressiveness always leads to a high level of integration (i.e. in terms of employment status and whether training content matches the actual needs of the labour market), particularly in a labour market characterised by global competition. Attention should also be given to learners representations of the different pathways: have they an impact on enrolment levels and, above all, are such representations empirically accurate? Finally, this thematic area will address inequalities in workplace integration (whether due to social relationships defined by gender, race, class or age), in terms of access to the labour market, working conditions and career prospects. Do some pathways present fewer opportunities for integration in the labour market and/or less favourable working conditions for young people? In the context of a transforming labour market, levels of education and training and the types of qualification attained are central to the issue of the 'new' occupational trajectories. What role do these factors play in a situation of decreasing job security, are they creating new inequalities or are they perpetuating the already existing ones? Is education and training preparing people for the uncertainties that are now affecting some career paths?

#### 4. VET as a setting for workplace socialisation:

The fourth thematic area is intended to identify what is conveyed to learners during vocational education and training. In assessing the vocational route, training content shall be considered as a means of getting learners to endorse a worker position, with the system in some countries allowing people to begin working at a very young age. Beyond the conveying of the knowledge, techniques, skills and understanding required to work in a given occupation, is VET not also a place for acculturation with life as a worker? Does it also not facilitate the socialisation required to be assigned to a subordinate position in the social hierarchy of the workplace? Is VET merely an opportunity to learn how a specific professional group carries out its activities? Or does VET also provide an opportunity to learn about the different hierarchies that sometimes implicitly exist in the working environment, especially when it comes to the division of labour and the relationships between certain tasks and certain social categories, (e.g. race and gender)? Does occupational socialisation reinforce or disrupt other socialisation processes (e.g. gender, race or class)? How does this affect the way individuals develop their identity, in terms of physical or symbolic violence?

Issues around the role and position of companies in VET may also be addressed in a cross-cutting manner, especially in dual-track VET programmes, where companies provide ideal settings for training and socialisation, and in some cases play an active role in defining the framework or even content of training.

This conference is intended to be both **multidisciplinary and international**. We encourage specialists in various branches of the humanities and social sciences (i.e. sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, law, geography, psychology and literature, etc.), particularly from Europe and the Mediterranean, to take part to this event in order to share their views.

#### 1. Instructions for authors wishing to submit proposals

Proposals must contain information about the participants (name, institution and email address of author(s)) with a **summary no longer than 5,000 characters (including spaces)** outlining the nature of the problem, the theoretical and methodological frameworks, the empirical evidence and the main results.

The proposals shall present research work falling within a discipline of the social sciences or humanities, whether they use a quantitative or qualitative methodological approach or a combination. Longitudinal approaches (using examples of personal histories or educational pathways) are welcome. Texts may be submitted in French or English.

**The proposals must be sent to [RJS2018@unil.ch](mailto:RJS2018@unil.ch) and must address one of the four thematic areas. The submission deadline has been postponed until 31 January 2018 !**

After the Scientific Board have examined the proposals, the Organising Committee will respond to the author(s) (on 28 February 2018) and the accepted proposals shall form the basis of a text to be submitted by 1 July 2018.

#### 2. Instructions to authors regarding submissions (for accepted proposals)

The accepted proposals shall form the basis of a text of **35,000 characters in length (including spaces, footnotes and bibliography), to be submitted by 1 July 2018.**

The submission shall be written in French or English, with single line spacing, justified, in Times New Roman, 12 font, with page numbers at the bottom right of the page.

References in the body of the text shall appear in brackets and shall include the surname of the author or authors in lower-case letters (without first names), followed by a comma and the year of publication: (Surname, year).

References shall be listed in alphabetical order in a bibliography at the end of the article. All references in the bibliography must correspond to the references cited in the text, and vice versa. The manner in which references are presented is left to the discretion of the author(s), but must be consistent.

### Summary of deadlines:

	<b>Deadline</b>
Submission of proposals	31 January 2018
Response to author(s)	28 February 2018
Texts submitted	1 July 2018
Presentation of submissions	4-5 October 2018

### 3. Conference organising committee

- Université de Lausanne – UNIL, Farinaz Fassa
- Haute école de santé Vaud – HESAV, HES·SO, Séverine Rey
- Haute école de travail social et de la santé | EESP | Lausanne - HETS&Sa, Morgane Kuehni
- Institut fédéral des Hautes études en formation professionnelle – IFFP, Nadia Lamamra

### 4. Scientific advisers for the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting

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