

Training & Employment

One third of all French employees undergo vocational training every year and at the same time, one quarter of the employees declare that their needs for vocational training have not been met. The picture reflected in these two figures shows that continuing vocational training does not come up to everybody's expectations. Surprisingly, the least well qualified employees, who are the most highly exposed to labour market fluctuations, are those who express the least dissatisfaction although they are less highly trained. And yet it is for these very people that vocational training should surely play a particularly decisive role. This apparent lack of interest in vocational training is largely due to the fact that employees are not properly informed about the context, the goals and the possible advantages with which it is associated. If vocational training was explained more carefully to employees and if the advantages it can be expected to yield were set out more clearly, many people would no doubt begin to find it much more appealing.

THE REASONS WHY EMPLOYEES ARE NOT ALL EQUALLY ATTRACTED TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The national interprofessional agreement of 20th September, 2003 and the French law on lifelong vocational training and social dialogue promulgated on 4th May 2004 have marked the advent of new measures changing employees' modes of access to continuing vocational training. These measures are part of a project to promote occupational mobility to compensate for the retirement of members of the baby-boom generation, which is due to occur between now and 2010, as well as for the fact that employees are tending to retire at a later age. In this context, vocational training could play a decisive role. It does seem rather likely that the ball is now in the employees' field: the increasing use being made of the terms "employability" and "unemployability" reflects the current tendency to regard individuals as the main players on the occupational stage, who are responsible for both their own successes and their own failures. This idea might, however, wrongly suggest that the least dynamic employees are less strongly attracted to vocational training, that they follow the tide, and end up by harvesting the bitter fruits of their lack of commitment. It is therefore really necessary to define the actual reasons why vocational training fails to appeal to many employees so as to clear up all possible misunderstandings. Why indeed do the great majority of the employees who undergo no vocational training declare that they have never felt any need for it?

The least highly qualified employees frequently declare that they have no need for vocational training

Based on the results of the "Continuing vocational training 2000" survey, more than one employee out of every three in the public and private sectors underwent vocational training between January 1999 and February 2000. However, this figure masks the existence of some strong disparities between socioprofessional categories. Although employment goes to those with the best qualifications, vocational training goes to those with the best jobs: one out of every two managers and executives has undergone vocational training, as compared with only one operative out of five. The most surprising finding, however, was that which emerged when these rates of access to vocational training were compared with the needs for vocational training expressed by employees and their responses to the question as to whether or not these needs had been met.

One out of every four employees declared that their vocational training requirements had not been met during the year 1999. Now most of these employees had actually undergone vocational training during the period in question. This finding held true at all socioprofessional levels. The rates of access to vocational training and the rates of dissatisfaction both showed the existence of a huge rift between two occupational groups: on the one hand, almost 30% of the managers and executives and those occupying intermediate positions stated that their vocational training requirements had not been met, and on the other hand, only 20% of the white collar workers and operatives declared that their vocational training requirements had not been met. Future needs for vocational training showed a similar trend: two out of every three managers

Employees in the private and public sectors in 1999		Executives/ managers	Intermediate occupations	White collar workers	Blue collar workers	Combined
Rates of access to vocational training (1)		55%	49%	32%	21%	36%
Declared that they had vocational training needs						
These needs had not been met		29%	31%	23%	17%	24%
Large or fairly large future needs		67%	68%	56%	47%	58%
Which people at their firm seem to have access to vocational training						
All the employees		80%	74%	56%	44%	60%
Only the most highly qualified employees		5%	6%	7%	9%	7%
Some people, but not only the most highly qualified people		6%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Nobody		8%	12%	26%	36%	23%
No opinion		1%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Awareness that a vocational training plan or document existed at their firm						
Among those who underwent vocational training		83%	82%	68%	61%	74%
Among those who underwent no such training		71%	66%	50%	39%	51%
Among both groups combined		78%	74%	56%	44%	59%
Hoping that vocational training would result in a wage rise						
Depending on the reasons for undergoing training (2)	to adapt to the job requirements (3)	4%	9%	8%	19%	10%
	to make a change of job		57%	50%	59%	50%
	to obtain a diploma or qualifications	39%	35%	51%	39%	42%
Combined		6%	11%	13%	21%	13%
Declared that they obtained a wage rise after undergoing vocational training						
Depending on the reasons for undergoing training (2)	to adapt to the job requirements (4)	2%	3%	4%	6%	3%
	to make a change of job		44%	33%	43%	40%
	to obtain a diploma or qualifications	32%	31%	25%	19%	26%
Combined		3%	5%	5%	8%	5%

(1) Percentage of employees who underwent at least 3 hours of vocational training in 1999. (2) Other reasons or results ("Personal", "Associative or Union responsibilities" or "None") were not included in this table because the figures were too low in all the categories of employees. (3) This means for example that 4% of the middle management trainees who underwent vocational training to adapt to the job requirements also hoped to obtain a wage rise. (4) This means for example that 2% of the middle management trainees who felt that their vocational training had helped them to adapt to the job requirements also declared that it led to a wage rise.

Source: the Céreq-INSEE "Continuing training 2000" survey. Data analysis by Céreq, 2004.

▲ Vocational training for French employees: some figures

and executives questioned stated that their future vocational training requirements were considerable, as compared with less than one operative out of every two.

In short, the least highly qualified employees are both less well trained and less dissatisfied with their vocational training opportunities. This apparent paradox calls for closer examination of the conditions under which vocational training intentions develop. The urge to undergo vocational training does not of course spring from the void. It is part of a whole context, and it is nourished by the information received and the potential goals perceived, which contribute decisively to the wish for vocational training.

Perception of the context affects the urge to undergo training

In the first place, the context surrounding vocational training is perceived very differently by

employees, depending on the socioprofessional category to which they belong. Here again, the divide between the least and most highly qualified employees is highly conspicuous: eight managers and executives out of every ten felt that they belonged to a firm in which "all the employees undergo vocational training", whereas less than one operative out of two expressed this opinion. On the other hand, less than one manager/executive out of every two had the impression of belonging to a firm where "nobody gets any vocational training", whereas more than one operative out of three expressed this opinion. Although these impressions are partly true, it can nevertheless be said that the least well qualified employees are not very inclined to express their needs because of the light in which they regard vocational training. The ways in which white collar workers and operatives perceive the vocational training

context seem in fact to strongly affect the needs they express. These needs are greater among those who have the impression that "all the employees in their firm undergo vocational training" than among those who say that "nobody gets any vocational training" at their firm (see the graph on the opposite page). However, the vocational training needs of managers and executives and those of employees with an intermediate occupational status are quite similar, whether or not they have the impression of belonging to a firm which dispenses vocational training. The way employees perceive the vocational training context certainly reflects the truth of the vocational training situation, but it is also considerably affected by individuals' subjective impressions. This does not mean that less attention should be paid to employees' perception of the context but on the contrary, that this factor plays an important part, since it contributes to defining the range of possibilities available and contributes to the urge to undergo vocational training.

From information to vocational training

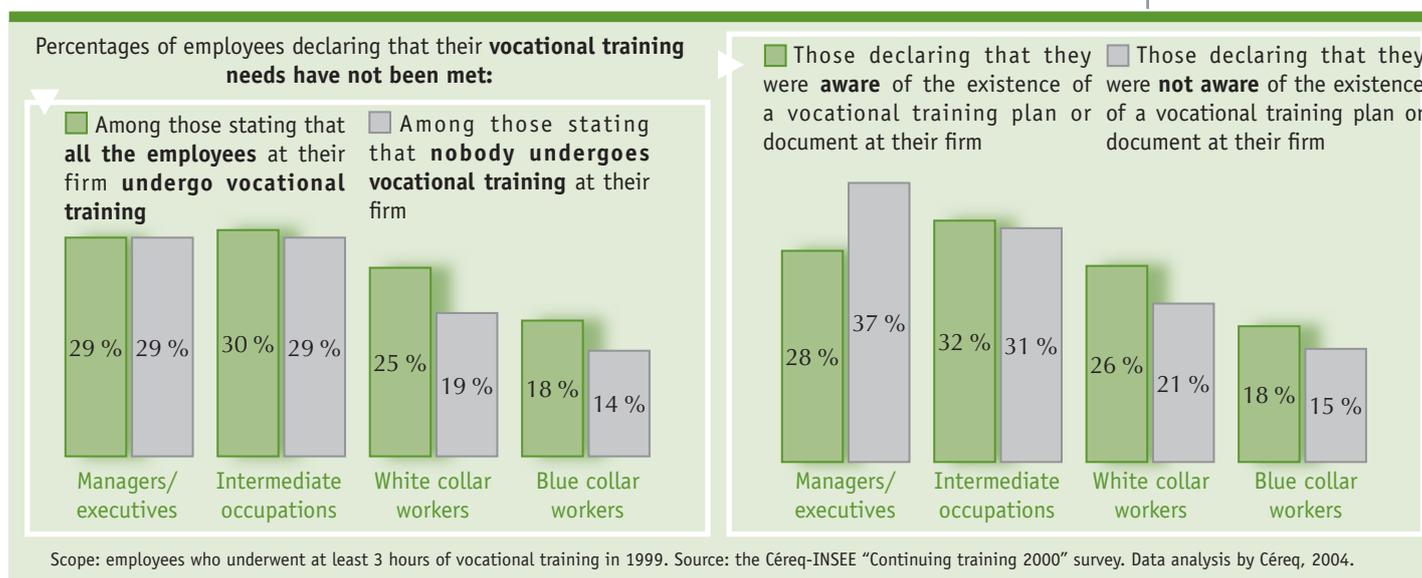
The range of possibilities perceived by employees as far as vocational training is concerned also depends to a great extent on the information with which they are provided. French companies with more than ten employees on the payroll are obliged to draw up a vocational training plan. The fact that employees declared that they were "aware of the existence of a vocational training plan or a document presenting vocational training courses" at their firm resulted partly from this legal requirement. Here again, however, a distinction was found to exist between managers and executives and those with an intermediate occupational status on the one hand, and white collar workers and operatives on the other hand: the former group stated more frequently than the latter that they had access to information of this kind. It is worth noting in addition that 59% of the employees

with managerial, executive or intermediate status were aware of their right to vocational training or competence assessment leave, as compared with only 42% of the white collar workers and 38% of the operatives questioned.

The level of qualification therefore obviously determines the information about the scope for vocational training with which employees are provided: the less qualified members of this population inhabit more obscure environments. One might imagine that people wanting to undergo vocational training might begin by looking for information, since employees who have benefited from vocational training seem to be better informed than the others. It is nevertheless true that vocational training is not always very visible. The most highly qualified employees in the firm may well occupy positions giving them easier access to information about the vocational training possibilities open to them. Whatever the case may be, simply circulating announcements on the subject does not suffice and the methods of information used could be considerably improved. Some firms are beginning to develop individual interviews on vocational training matters, for instance. Although this practice is still quite rare, it has been encouraged by a recent measure in the framework of the national interprofessional agreement of 20th September 2003 on the access of employees to vocational training throughout their working lives: "all employees who have worked for at least two years for the same firm are entitled to an interview on vocational training run by the firm at least once every two years".

For the moment, however, all that can be said is that the vocational training needs expressed by employees seems to have depended on whether they felt they had been informed about the vocational training opportunities available at their firm. The less they claimed to have been informed, the smaller these needs turned out to

From awareness of the context to declaring vocational training needs



be (see the graph on the previous page). Only managers and executives showed a different pattern from the others: they were keener to undergo vocational training when they were not aware of the existence of any vocational training plan or document presenting the vocational training opportunities available at their firm. However, even when they were not directly informed in this way, it seems likely that because of their position, these managers and executives probably knew more about the vocational training situation and how to take advantage of it.

Hopes of getting a rise are often dashed

Although people's projects are aimed towards the future, they often result from past experience. This rather commonplace statement is particularly applicable to the urge to undergo vocational training. One of the main driving forces which leads employees to engage in vocational training is the hope of earning a larger salary.

On the whole, 13% of the employees questioned expressed the hope that vocational training would lead to a salary increase. This hope was not expressed equally strongly by all the socioprofessional groups, however: only 6% of the managers and executives versus 21% of the operatives associated vocational training with the hope of a wage rise. In addition, contrary to what was found to occur as far as perception of the context and the vocational training possibilities were concerned, the hope of a wage rise was not a point on which managers, executives and employees with an intermediate status differed conspicuously from white collar workers and operatives. In this case, two extreme categories emerged, namely managers/executives and operatives, while all the other employees merged together forming an intermediate group.

These contrasting patterns raise questions as to the objectives pursued by those who engage in vocational training. The main motive of the great majority of those who had undergone vocational training courses, but especially that of the most highly qualified trainees, was the need to adapt to the requirements of the job: this reason was given by 84% of the managers and executives, 80% of those with intermediate occupations, 73% of the white collar workers and 71% of the operatives. The less well qualified employees tended more frequently than their more highly qualified colleagues to aim at making a change of occupation, obtaining a diploma or having their qualifications recognized. The latter objective was mentioned by 16% of the white collar workers and 18% of the operatives versus only 7% of the managers and executives and 9% of those with an intermediate status who engaged in vocational training.

Now these various objectives were not always associated to the same extent with the hope

of getting a rise: 50% of the employees who engaged in vocational training with a view to making a change of occupation hoped that this would improve their salary, as against 42% of those who aimed at obtaining a diploma or having their qualifications recognized and 10% of those who felt the need to adapt to the requirements of their job, and only 1% of those who underwent vocational training for personal reasons. However, the reasons why people underwent vocational training do not suffice to explain the differences in terms of the hope of financial gains observed between socioprofessional categories: only 4% of the managers and executives who engaged in vocational training in order to adapt to the job requirements expected that this would also lead to a wage rise, as compared with 19% of the operatives. What grounds did these employees have for their expectations? Did the results obtained by those who underwent vocational training come up to the expectations they had upon enrolling for vocational training courses?

After completing their vocational training courses, very few managers and executives stated that "their wages increased at the end of the vocational training"; whereas the operatives more frequently declared that their vocational training resulted in a wage rise. The responses given by employees with an intermediate occupational status and white collar workers fell mid-way between the two latter groups. The results obtained by the trainees fell very short of their expectations: only 5% of the trainees declared that their "wages increased after the vocational training course". In addition, if one compares the percentages of the employees hoping for a wage rise when they started vocational training and those of the employees who felt that their wages had in fact increased after the vocational training course, the outcome can be said to have been particularly disappointing among those who were the least well qualified. Although operatives declared more frequently than the other groups that their vocational training led to a wage increase, a higher proportion of this group were hoping for this outcome in any case, and many of them were therefore disappointed in the end. It thus seems quite logical to conclude that the more disappointed people are with the outcome of vocational training, the less likely they are to engage on this pathway another time.

Improving the appeal of vocational training to employees seems in the end to depend on making vocational training processes more easily understandable by explaining what is involved and what the future possibilities are, as well the advantages employees can expect to gain from vocational training, including simply maintaining the *status quo*, which many unskilled workers have to strive quite hard for.

Christine Fournier (Céreq)

The main results of the "Continuing Vocational Training 2000" survey are available on the Céreq website: www.cereq.fr, under the heading "Études et Recherches".

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Briefing

Updates

On 11th and 12th May 2006, the University of Graz in Austria hosted a conference on quality assurance in higher education and vocational education and training, under the aegis of the Austrian Presidency of the European Union. This meeting was attended by more than one hundred participants from European Union member states.

Considerable debate has been focusing on quality assurance in Europe since the Lisbon objectives were first adopted, although this issue was already included in the Bologna process (in connection with higher education) and the Copenhagen process (in connection with education and vocational training). The creation of a European Qualifications Framework and the development of the ECTS (the European Credit Transfer System) and ECVET (European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training) have led to quality assurance rules being defined.

Questions as to how specific quality levels should be defined were first raised in connection with higher education, where vocational training and qualifications differ from one establishment to another in most of the EU member countries. To facilitate the processes involved in the setting up of European LMD degrees (the French term for Bachelors'-Masters'-Doctorate) and the student mobility in which they are expected to result, various action principles have been defined which have led to the creation of several European and international accreditation bodies. In the case of education and vocational training, the situation is much more complex. There exist a wide range of configurations, depending on whether qualifications are drawn up and/or awarded by public, para-public or private bodies and whether the vocational training involved in these qualifications is also defined and/or dispensed by public, para-public or private bodies.

At both higher educational and vocational levels, standards are defined and the modes whereby qualifications are set up and awarded are defined; the bodies responsible for creating and awarding qualifications and those authorized to dispense vocational training are listed; and at the highest level, the persons dispensing these authorizations are themselves subject to authorization.

One of the main issues discussed at this conference was the links which could or should exist between the quality assurance principles pertaining in the fields of higher education and vocational training. There was some lively debate between those in favour of keeping the two spheres separate and their opponents: the former proclaimed that the differences should be maintained, since the missions pursued are not the same in both cases; while the latter stressed that quality criteria can be expressed in terms of learning outcomes in the case of vocational training, but not at higher educational level: care should therefore be taken to prevent vocational training from developing on too strictly academic lines.

The second important issue discussed at this meeting was the need to find quality indicators and to draw up statistical data for benchmarking purposes, i.e., to be able make quantitative comparisons between establishments.

In his closing speech, the Austrian spokesman recognized the existence of divergences, but suggested a long list of topics worth investigating with a view to reconciling differences of opinion. Emphasis was placed on the need to find indicators and make statistical comparisons, as well as on the building of links between vocational educational and higher educational systems.

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✓ The texts presented at this meeting are available on-line at the following address: <http://www.ensieta.fr/jecompetence>

□ A one-day workshop took place on 9 March 2006 at the CNAM in Paris on “**The social uses of the ‘competence’ concept**”. The scientific and planning committee in charge of this meeting consisted of Christine Buissou, Maude Hatano, Denis Lemaître, Sylvie Monchatre and Sophie Divay. The plenary session, which was attended by about 130 participants, was opened by Hugues Bertrand, former Director of Céreq and Jean-Marie Barbier, Director of the CRF at the CNAM. Bernard Rey then spoke about the social uses of “competence” in educational spheres, quoting the educational competence standards set up in Quebec, Belgium and France. Marcelle Stroobants traced the history of the “competence approach” in working spheres since it was first invented. Lucie Tanguy then recounted the pioneering studies she carried out with Françoise Ropé in the early 90s on the uses of “competence management” at schools and places of work. More than 70 papers were presented at the six workshops which took place in the afternoon. The social uses of the notion of competence were examined from the point of view of mobility, integration and return to employment (Workshop 1), mobilisation policies in occupational settings (Workshop 2), occupational situations (Workshop 3), setting up occupational groups (Workshop 4), the new public action standards (Workshop 5) and vocational training, validation and qualification schemes (Workshop 6). These workshops were chaired by the organisers of the meeting, as well as by Cédric Frétygné, Nathalie Richebé, Didier Demazière, Charles Gadea, Pascal Ughetto, Bernardine Rivoire and Frédéric Séchaud. One quarter of the papers were presented by doctoral students from all over France, as well as from Belgium, Switzerland and Quebec. Pierre Rolle and Hugues Bertrand concluded the meeting.

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□ On 13th and 14th May 2006, an international symposium organized by the French Centre for Research on Economics applied to Development (CREAD) and LISE (CNAM-CNRS) was held in Algiers (Algeria) in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The theme of this symposium was vocational training and the development of competences and performances at small and medium-sized firms. For the last decade or so, the economic reforms going on in Algeria have been transforming small and medium-sized firms into economic players which now contribute considerably to the country’s economic growth. These firms are currently undergoing many changes which are inciting them to develop the knowledge and competences of their employees. However, vocational training practices are few and far between at small and medium-sized Algerian firms. This situation is largely due to the fact that the traditional vocational training supply does not respond appropriately to the specific needs of these firms. This symposium, at which the practices adopted in various countries were presented, was intended to help define policies promoting the development of suitable vocational training practices at these firms. Elyes Bentabet from Céreq presented a paper entitled “Small firms and vocational training mediators. The example of the Languedoc-Roussillon region”. The proceedings of this symposium will be published at the end of the year.

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In June 2006, Dr. Jang-Ho KIM, President of KRIVET (the Korean Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training), paid an official visit to Céreq in the framework of the **cooperative agreement signed in 2002 between the two institutions**. This visit provided an opportunity of taking stock of the situation in each of the two countries. Subsequent to a recently adopted national priority, KRIVET has become a National Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Korea: this means that the Centre is henceforth responsible for promoting education and vocational training while taking the requests and the needs of firms and the country’s economy into account. One of its departments has therefore been re-named “Lifelong development of occupational competences”. The KRIVET also houses the National Career Guidance Centre, which caters for both young people and adults. In a country where the great majority of vocational qualifications and the corresponding initial and continuing vocational training schemes are designed and managed by the private sector, career guidance and the analysis of the relationships between the vocational training supply and employment seem to be of prime importance. At this meeting, the terms of the cooperative agreement of 2002 were rediscussed and it was agreed that both partners wished to reinforce their joint activities. Mr. Tae-Joune Park, a researcher from KRIVET, has been working at Céreq since March 2006, for instance. The idea was launched of studying the relevance and the feasibility of creating a network of organizations in Asia, Europe and the South Sea Islands with similar profiles and missions.

The CEDEFOP has proposed a series of study visits designed to promote exchanges and discussions between various players in the vocational training field (representatives of institutions, members of research centres, teachers and trainers, social partners, etc.). In this framework, Alain Savoyant from Céreq visited Slovenia, where he attended a meeting on **“The recognition and assessment of non-formal and informal learning”** organised by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training (www.cpi.si). One of the main tasks of this centre is to draw up occupational standards in collaboration with firms, and to translate these standards into vocational educational programmes, and in some cases, into New Vocational Qualifications. The study group also visited the Slovenian Institute for Adult Vocational Training (www.acs.si), which carries out surveys and research on adult vocational training and trains advisers and assessors to participate in the process of recognition and assessment of non-formal and informal learning processes. The candidates for this training are previously selected by a third institution, the National Examination Centre (www.ric.si), which is responsible for accrediting and certifying the Assessment Commissions which run school examinations throughout the country. The meeting ended with a visit to a firm (belonging to the HIT Casino group), a technical training college and the college of tourism and catering.

The following three points are worth mentioning in particular about the Slovenian method of recognizing non-formal and informal learning:

- non-formal and informal learning can be recognized only in the frame of specially designed NVQs, which are defined in a catalogue of knowledge and competences;
- the assessment process is based on a portfolio drawn up by each candidate with the help of an adviser, as well as on a test if the Assessment Commission finds the portfolio insufficiently convincing.
- Assessors are trained at national level by the Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

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The meeting organised by the research group on Education and Employment in Nancy in June 2006 focused on the following theme: **“Work, employment, wages and qualifications in Europe: what inertial forces, common trends and degrees of convergence?”**. Three main questions were addressed at this meeting:

- In the field of public employment policy, what level of convergence exists between the dispositions and measures adopted?
- To what extent have the reforms launched at both national and European levels since 1980 been tending to result (if at all) in a new wage structure model?
- How can the link between economic mondialisation and the recomposition of productive patterns be described? What effects have occurred and what resistance has been put up by labour markets and the national configurations responsible for setting up qualifications ?

These topics were discussed at five work sessions. Representatives from Céreq presented papers at two of these sessions:

- At the session on Productive transvocational training and the modes of employment and labour market regulation, Nathalie Moncel spoke about “The integration of young people at a multinational firm: do societal factors persist here?”, based on a study carried out at the request of the Peugeot company.
- At the session on “Vocational training, qualifications, and competence: common standards?” Jean-Louis Kirsch outlined the efforts made on these lines in Europe and presented the various national points of view in a paper entitled “Qualifications in Europe: from Rome to Copenhagen via Lisbon” .

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2001-2004 : les sortants de l'enseignement supérieur face au marché du travail

[2001-2004: higher educational graduates on the labour market]

> Jean-François Giret, Mickaële Molinari-Perrier and Stéphanie Moullet

NEF no. 21, March 2006

The authors of this NEF analyse the conditions under which young higher educational graduates entered the labour market in 2001, based on Céreq's "Génération 2001" survey. Because of the unfavourable economic conditions pertaining at that time, the rate of unemployment in this group was still as high as 11% after three years of active life, which is almost twice as high as that of the peers who left the educational system in 1998. Among those who were in employment three years after leaving the educational system, 71% had long-term contracts and 74 % were working as executives or in the intermediate occupations. However, relatively few of those who had not studied for at least 5 years after obtaining the baccalauréat had become executives. The numbers of openings available to those with diplomas in the healthcare and social fields, and to a lesser extent, those with BTS or DUT diplomas, remained fairly stable during this period. This NEF gives data on specific populations. Young people who started higher educational studies after the baccalauréat without obtaining a diploma had the greatest difficulty in entering the world of work; whereas one extra year of study leading to a vocational degree turned out to be an asset on the labour market in comparison with STS and DUT diplomas. Lastly, young people who trained in Physical Education and Sport Science were less subject to unemployment than other university graduates, but the jobs they obtained were more often under short-term contracts, and quite a large number of those who had secured jobs were working in fields other than sport.

*This publication
is available on the
Céreq website :*

www.cereq.fr/net.htm

Transitions professionnelles et risques

[Occupational transitions and risks]

> P. Béret, V. di Paola, J.-F. Giret, Y. Grelet, P. Werquin (eds)

RELIEF no. 15, June 2006

The thirteenth workshop on the use of longitudinal data in labour market analysis, which took place in Aix-en-Provence in June 2006, focused on the theme of occupational transition and the risks involved. The themes traditionally addressed at these meetings, namely unemployment and trajectories, were approached via the risks associated with vocational training (downgrading), employment and the lack of employment. Some questions which had been less frequently raised at previous meetings were also discussed: the links between health and work, people's personal lives and their relationships with work, the roles of various players in occupational relationships, and risk protection. The 27 papers by economists, sociologists, and legal and management specialists which were discussed at this meeting are presented in this issue of Relief in the order in which the sessions took place: Dealing with the risk of unemployment, Broken courses and trajectories, Living conditions and occupational risks, Transition and employment risks, Downgrading: a calculated risk, Risky occupations, Firms and occupational risks, and Vocational training and occupational risk reduction.

■ These publications are available at the Céreq bookstore or by mail order to Marie-Christine Antonucci, Céreq, 10, place de la Joliette, BP 21321, 13567 Marseille cedex 2. Tel. 33 (0)4 91 13 28 89 Fax 33 (0)4 91 13 28 80. E-mail: antonucci@cereq.fr. Orders must be accompanied by payment (please include 4 € for postage and handling).

Regards croisés sur la formation continue en entreprise. Dix études de cas

[Looking at continuing vocational training at firms. Ten case studies]

> Céreq, Dares, Laboratoire "Genre, Travail et mobilités de l'université Paris X

Net.doc no. 21, May 2006

This document includes ten monographs which were drawn up in the framework of the study on "Looking at continuing vocational training at firms" carried out by Céreq and Dares in collaboration with the University of Paris X laboratory on "Gender, work and mobility". This study outlines and analyses how vocational training policies are drawn up and applied, how they are perceived by employees and how the latter have access to vocational training, by comparing the points of view of various players. It was based on interviews carried out in 2004 with heads of human resource departments and/or vocational training departments, members of the intermediate occupations, employees who had undergone one or several vocational training courses and staff representatives from ten firms of various sizes belonging to different sectors, all located in the Ile de France and Provence - Alpes - Côte d'Azur regions.