INTRODUCTION TO TRACER STUDIES

Learning Programme on measuring labour market outcomes of participants in VET courses, Prizren, 3-5 May 2017

1. INTRODUCTION TO TRACER STUDIES
2. DESIGN
3. APPROACHES: CENTRALISED VS. DECENTRALISED
4. THE QUESTIONNAIRE
5. IMPLEMENTATION
6. CHALLENGES, COUNTRY PRACTICES AND LESSONS
WHAT AND WHY
WHAT ARE TRACER STUDIES

- SURVEYS OF FORMER PARTICIPANTS OF (INITIAL AND CONTINUOUS) EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES
  
  - SIMILAR TERMS: GRADUATE SURVEY; ALUMNI RESEARCH; FOLLOW-UP STUDY OR SURVEYS; GRADUATE CAREER TRACKING

  - TARGET POPULATION: GRADUATES OF AN INSTITUTION/EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROVIDER (REGARDLESS LEVEL AND TYPE OF DEGREE)

  - WHEN – AFTER GRADUATION
RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSES OF GRADUATES THOUGH A STANDARDISED SURVEY, WHICH TAKES PLACE AFTER GRADUATION (VARIOUS POINTS IN TIME)
TRACER STUDIES VS SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION SURVEYS

TRACER STUDIES

• HOMOGENEOUS COHORT OF GRADUATES (NORMALLY)

• GRADUATES FROM AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAMME

TRANSITION SURVEYS

• (SAMPLE OF) YOUTH UNDER A CERTAIN AGE (NORMALLY BETWEEN 15 AND 29 YEARS)

• MIGHT NOT HAVE FINALISED (EVEN OR FOLLOWED) AN EDUCATION PROGRAMME
OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTIONAL TRACER STUDIES

1. SUPPLY OF SKILLS
   Development of the Education / training institution (e.g. curriculum)

2. DEMAND OF SKILLS
   Evaluate the relevance of education / training offer to demand

3. To inform students, parents, lecturers and administrators

4. Contribute to accreditation

Data from graduates
WHAT HAPPENS TO GRADUATES AFTER LEAVING THE EDUCATION/TRAINING INSTITUTION?

WERE THEY ABLE TO GET EMPLOYMENT IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME AND CONDITIONS?

DO THEY USE THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCES THEY HAVE ACQUIRED IN THEIR EDUCATION/TRAINING? IF NOT WHY?

WHAT ARE THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCES DEMANDED IN THE LABOUR MARKET?

!!! TRACER STUDIES CAN COMPLEMENT FINDINGS OF EMPLOYERS’ SURVEYS
### Indicators of Career/Employment Success

#### Objective Indicators
- Short job search duration
- Employed (or in further education)
- High income
- Appropriate position regarding level of education
- Work tasks closely related to field of study

#### Subjective Indicators
- Perceived links between the job and own level of education
- Perceived high use of competences
- Perceived high status (income, career perspectives)
- Perceived high work autonomy
- Perceived high job satisfaction
DESIGN
TARGET POPULATION: DEFINE THE COHORT OF GRADUATES AND:

• CENSUS: ALL GRADUATES (FROM A COHORT)

• SAMPLE OF GRADUATES (FROM A COHORT)
TS DESIGN (2), TIME AFTER GRADUATION

TIME AFTER GRADUATION

Graduation (y)  Y + 1/2  Y + 1  Y + 1.5
TS DESIGN (3), HOW MANY SURVEYS?

CROSS-SECTION VS PANEL

• **CROSS-SECTION**: ONE SURVEY TO EACH GRADUATE

• **PANEL**: MORE THAN ONE SURVEY TO EACH GRADUATE

graduation  Questioning
### DIFFERENT DESIGN POSSIBILITIES

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One survey, every cohort

### ETF

graduation  Questioning
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One survey, every X cohorts

graduation
Questioning
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Two surveys, every cohort - panel: same cohort twice (i.e. 1 year + 4 years)
Two surveys (exit + employment), every cohort - panel: same cohort twice (after graduation + 1 year before graduation)
THE RESULTS ARE ALWAYS TIME RELATED:
• In which year was the survey conducted?
• Which graduates were invited to participate?
• Which graduates participated (response rate?)
• At what after graduation was the survey conducted?

MANY CONTEXT FACTORS HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
• Individual abilities and motivation
• Labor market situation
• Education and training before and after

CAUSAL EFFECTS OF THE COURSE OF STUDY/TRAINING ARE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE
WHICH INDICATORS DO WE NEED?

HOW TO MEASURE THE LABOUR MARKET SIGNALS?

WHICH FACTORS ARE RELEVANT TO EXPLAIN THE SUCCESS OF THE GRADUATES BESIDES EDUCATION?

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS/CAREER CAUSED BY EDUCATION?

WHICH ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION (STUDY CONDITIONS AND PROVISIONS, ETC) HAVE AN IMPACT?

!!! TEST AND ADAPT THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
DATA COLLECTION MODES
QUESTIONNAIRE
## Data Collection Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Cooperation Rate</th>
<th>Cost per Respondent</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>interviewer rapport, nonverbal cues</td>
<td>respondent apprehension, expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>Limited time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mall</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>fast, in-person</td>
<td>Difficult cooperation without incentive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>automatic data entry</td>
<td>Requires computer literacy</td>
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</table>
APPROACHES TO TRACER STUDIES (CENT/DECEN)

CENTRALISED APPROACH

CENTRAL BODY

Contact details of the graduates

TVET PROVIDER 1  TVET PROVIDER 2  TVET PROVIDER 3

DECENTRALISED APPROACH

central body

TVET PROVIDER 1  TVET PROVIDER 2  TVET PROVIDER 3  TVET PROVIDER 4
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

• Structured (few open questions)
• ONE QUESTIONNAIRE: CORE + MODULES (i.e. Add questions on a pilot traineeship)
• Some tailoring (to institutions, fields, regions) can be allowed

We should assure comparability (between providers and within years)
1. Core questions
(have to be fixed for the whole project, mandatory to all institutions, contained in all versions of the questionnaire, warranted / guarantees comparability for institutions and national monitoring)

2. Optional questions
(should be fixed for the whole project, optional for institutions, institution decide the use in its questionnaire, give comparability only for institutions which using it, but no national monitoring)

3. Specific / individual questions
(institutions are completely free for the content, no comparision possible, except some institutions using the same specific / individual questions, the layout have to fit the other quest. )
## THE CONTENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE: MODULES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module number and title</th>
<th>Minimum questionnaire Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A The course of studies at the TVET institution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Internship and work experiences during course of studies at the TVET institution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Evaluation of study conditions and study provisions at the TVET institution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Satisfaction with study</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>E After graduation from the TVET institution</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Employment and work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Work requirements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Relationship between study and employment</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Work orientation and job satisfaction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Vocational education/training before your study at the TVET institution</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Further vet or higher education after the study at the TVET institution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Further vocational/professional training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Demographic information</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Migration and regional mobility</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Your comments and recommendations</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>50</strong></td>
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</table>
• What will be the key objectives,
• The target population (all students / a sample of students),
• The time after graduation when graduates will be reached,
• Preparing and testing the questionnaire
• Contact details of graduates
PHASE 2: DATA COLLECTION

Instruments ready

- Online platform / telephones / interviewers
- IT infrastructure
- Trained team
PHASE 3: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION

• Coding and data storage (technical) [QTAFI is automatized]
• Data analysis tools (excel, statistical packages: SPSS, r, STATA) [QTAFI allows some basic analysis]
• Proper interpretation of the data (expert/s)
• Preparation of method report by team
• Preparation of content report/s
• Dissemination and use of the results
CHALLENGES
COUNTRY PRACTICES
LESSONS
CHALLENGES

• Clear objectives
• Structured questionnaire, of good quality and proper length.
• Institutional setting with clear roles and responsibilities and capacity
• Good response rate
• Appropriately interpret the results, and with the right level and depth of analysis
• Good method report
• PROPER DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS (WEB? Research? Good expertise)
COUNTRY EXAMPLES

SIMPLE APPROACH (SELDOM)

- United Kingdom: First destination survey (six months after; focus only on employment status at one time point; one page length)

COMPLEX APPROACH (FREQUENT)

- E. g. France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland (one to two years after graduation; panel study about 3 to 5 years after graduation; competencies, work requirements, mobility, competences, retrospective study assessment; 10 to 30 pages length)
TRADITIONAL – REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE SURVEY TO INFORM THE MINISTRY AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

• Since more than 30 years
• E.g. France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland
• Irrelevant for individual institution
• Relevant for research

NEW TYPE – INSTITUTIONAL GRADUATE SURVEYS (ALL GRADUATES FROM ONE INSTITUTION OF VET/HE)

• Germany, Hungary, Italy, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Romania
• Combination of a national monitor and a feedback instrument for VET/HE institutions
• Relevant for individual institutions (reports for individual institutions, study program level breakdown of results)
• Relevant for a national monitor and research

ETF Partner Countries examples: Kyrgyzstan, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova
SINCE 2013 SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION (ETF)

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE TRACER STUDY METHODOLOGY WITH AND FOR INITIAL AND SECONDARY VET PROVIDERS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR VET PROVIDER STAFF (INITIAL AND SECONDARY VET)

JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

18 VET PROVIDERS IN THE SURVEY 2014

ABOUT 1,500 RESPONDENTS, MAINLY ONLINE

EXTENSION OF NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS 2015
SKILLS AND INNOVATION SUPPORT PROJECT AT MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE (WORLD BANK LOAN) WITHIN THE SKILLS OBSERVATORY (TO BE ESTABLISHED)

LAUNCH OF ACTIVITIES TO BUILD CAPACITY AND CARRY OUT SURVEYS AND ANALYSES, NOTABLY GRADUATE TRACER STUDIES IN VET AND HIGHER EDUCATION (2015-2016)

ALL VET AND HE INSTITUTIONS; 2 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION; CENSUS; ONLINE SURVEY (QTAFI 3 SOFTWARE)

SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION (ETF)
LES SONS LEARNED

HIGH RESPONSE RATES ARE POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE IN ALMOST ALL COUNTRIES

HIGH QUALITY OF THE DATA IS A PRE-REQUISITE OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF GRADUATES’ CONTACTS/ADDRESSES

DOCUMENTATION OF SURVEY PROCEDURES AND DATA EDITING IS NECESSARY – CULTURE OF CRITIQUE

CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION/TRAINING PROVIDERS AND EXPERTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

METHOD REPORT – DETAILED DOCUMENTATION OF SURVEY PROCEDURES

TEST OF REPRESENTATION OF THE SAMPLE

USE OF A PROFESSIONAL TOOL FOR DATA ANALYSIS LIKE SPSS, STATA OR R (THE USE OF EXCEL IS NOT SUFFICIENT)
THANK YOU