Making sense out of VET
The views of non-profit organizations

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Transicions

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1. Context
2. Theory
   - and fieldwork
3. Organizational / VET identity
4. Discussion

1.

Context

VET & Culture 2024

- AEP: Inclusion through employment
- VET in the margins for vulnerable people
- **VET professionals making sense of their work**
- VET as socialization work
- A kaleidoscope of work on others

2025:

VET providers making sense

Conditions

- Diverse and limited funding sources
- Organizational & site culture
- Restricted enactment of values and principles
- Applying *while* lobbying VET policies
- Differentiation *vs* blurring
- Networking *while* competing

broad VET practice

- Training – technical and soft-skills
- Guidance
- Assessing and fostering employability
- Coaching
- Job search
- Intermediation with companies
- Sheltered employment

2.

Theory

Transitions
(Ye, 2024)

- Transitions in youth *and* adult life - LLL
- Uncertainty, risk, failure
- Employability agenda
  - Self-autonomy
  - Self-management
- Project work = transition

- Activation paradigm

Intermediation actors

(Semenowicz, 2023)

- Active employment policies *exclude*
- Relevance of recruitment practices
- VET as evaluation
- VET as outreach work
  - Persuading participants

- VET impacting only individuals
  - No right but merit/necessity

Trainees

(Semenowicz, 2023)

- Unemployed rather than jobseekers
- Autonomy?
- Informal learning and informal work
- Need to produce their own plan

- Motivation more relevant than skill
- Transforming beneficiaries' subjectivity

Employability of the unemployable?

- Market needs
  - Qualifications or soft skills?
- Prejudice in recruitment
  - placing in work
  - skilling process
  - developing employability

Fieldwork

- Sources: 12 non-profit organizations
  - local scope
  - 2 working with people in prison
- Information
  - 2-5 interviews in each – 4 hours average
  - Documentation
  + Transcripts 20 years back

3.

Changing vs stable VET and organizational identity

Case 1

- Local roots association
- Trainees:
  - young people and young adults (also in prison)
- 3 locations in same town
- Diverse funding
  - Social / labor / education

- Participation/social transformation

Case 1

- Professionalism vs bureacratic work
- Autonomy – self-direction
- Search for stability
- Democratic decision taking
- Networking as part of the misión
- Success lies in access to work

- Industrial-civic compromise

Case 2

- National Foundation
- Trainees:
  - young people
  - adults with addictions (also in prison)
- 2 locations of its own in town
  + 2 sites managed for the administration
- Diverse funding
  - Social / education
  - Private Foundation

- Stability and internal coverage

Case 2

- Local identity *yet* Foundation spirit
- Foundation covers
  - for needs
  - for paper work
- Hierarchical decission-taking
- Expansion and diversification
- Generational shift
- Success lies in personal wellbeing

- Domestic-civic compromise

Case 3

- Local foundation
- Trainees:
  - changing profile
  - unemployed adults
- Diverse board of trustees
  - broad and complex
- Diverse funding
  - Social / education
  - Private Foundation

- Risk and wish to produce impact

Case 3

- Change as the main feature
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Exploration and innovation
- Problematic management
- Sucess lies in prestige

- Project convention

4.

Discussion
relevance and successful VET

Commonplaces

- Specialization *vs* polyvalence
- Capabilities *vs* deficit
- Employability *vs* employment
- Competence development *vs* becoming adults

Case 1
evolving vocational identity

- Vocation and trade
- Learning tools, training procedures, professional providers
- VET as a long term process
- VET as formation of character

Case 2
personal reconstruction

- VET as an excuse
- Unemployment and the dole as life expectations
- Intermediation with companies rather than VET

Case 3 **entrepreneurial and commodification**

- Investing in networking
- Market needs as drivers of VET
- Involvement of trustees to increase visibility and impact
- Short-term VET

Is this VET?

- Is intermediation replacing VET?
- Is *this* VET enough?
- Does VET qualify without including?
- Does accreditation increase chances?
- Labor market before individual needs?

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