

Seven questions about apprenticeships: insights from international experience

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Six working papers



OECD Education Working Papers
No. 153

Striking the right balance
COSTS AND BENEFITS OF APPRENTICESHIP


Małgorzata Kuczera



OECD Education Working Papers
No. 152

Incentives for apprenticeship


Małgorzata Kuczera



OECD Education Working Papers
No. 150

Work-based Learning for Youth at Risk
GETTING EMPLOYERS ON BOARD


Viktoría Kis



OECD Education Working Papers
No. 135

Work, train, win: work-based learning design and management for productivity gains


Viktoría Kis



OECD Education Working Papers
No. 180

Making skills transparent
RECOGNISING VOCATIONAL SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH WORKBASED LEARNING

Viktoría Kis, Hendrickje
Catriona Windisch



OECD Education Working Papers
No. 175

Working it out
CAREER GUIDANCE AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Pauline Musset, Lucia Mytna Kurekova

www.oecd.org/education/vet



Work-based learning (WBL) in VET

- There is growing interest in WBL as a means of easing school to work transitions and serving the economy, developing skills that employers demonstrably want across a wider range of professions.
- Between 2015-18, the OECD VET team produced six working papers on how to make WBL work as effectively as possible for a wide range of employers and learners.
- Six working papers supported by: Australia, Canada, England, the European Commission Germany, Norway, Scotland, Switzerland, the United States.



Seven Questions: the synthesis report



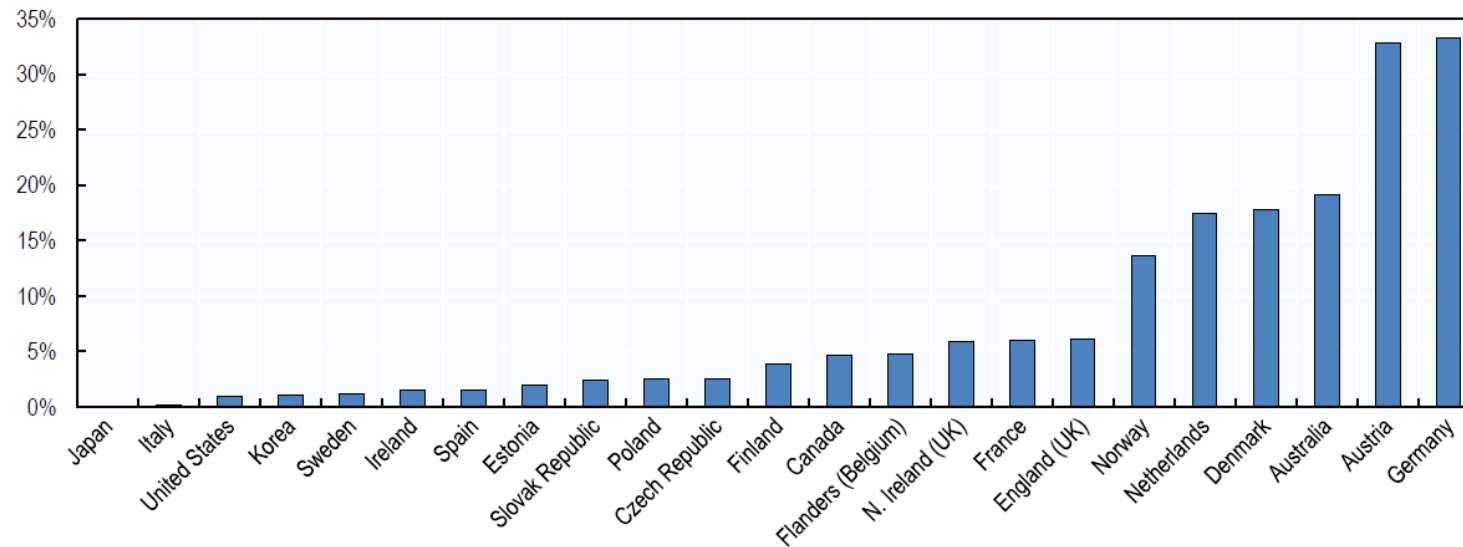
1. Can apprenticeships provide a useful contribution in every country?
2. Should employers receive financial incentives to provide apprenticeships?
3. What is the right wage for apprentices?
4. How long should an apprenticeship last?
5. How to ensure a good learning experience at work?
6. How to make apprenticeships work for youth at risk?
7. How to attract potential apprentices?



1. Can apprenticeships provide a useful contribution in every country?

There is wide variation across countries in the use of apprenticeships

Current apprentices in programmes leading to upper-secondary or short post-secondary qualifications as a share of all students enrolled in upper-secondary and short post-secondary education



Note: 16-25 year-olds pursuing a programme at ISCED 3 and ISCED 4C level.

Source: Kuczera, M. (2017^[2]), “Striking the right balance: Costs and benefits of apprenticeship”, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 153, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/995fff01-en>.



1. Can apprenticeships provide a useful contribution in every country?

- Apprenticeships were once seen, in many countries, as only relevant to a small number of occupations (eg, the trades).
- In Germany, Switzerland and Austria Apprenticeships have long been found in non-traditional areas (eg, service sector).
- England, Australia and Ireland are examples of countries extending the use of Apprenticeships by sector and level.



1. Can apprenticeships provide a useful contribution in every country?

For apprenticeships to flourish:

- There must be fair competition between apprenticeships and alternative forms of education and training.
- No artificial incentives should undermine the relative attractiveness of apprenticeships.
- It should be expected that the design features of apprenticeships (such as wage and duration) will vary by national and sectoral context to ensure that they are attractive to both employers and prospective apprentices.
- This variation reflects differences in the cost-benefit balance of the apprenticeship. The secret to rolling out apprenticeships is to get the balance right between the costs and benefits incurred by employers and apprentices.

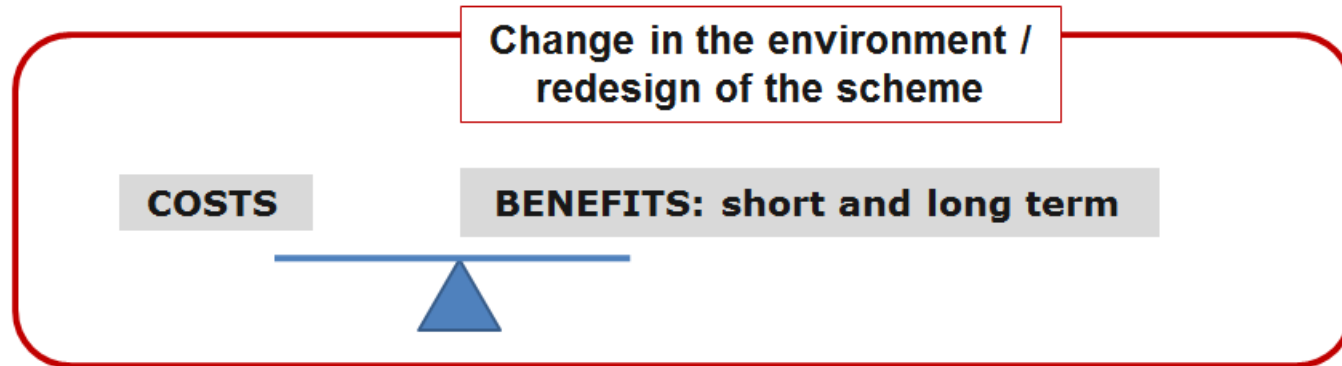


2. Should employers receive financial incentives to provide apprenticeships?

- While there is a good case for Apprenticeship being supported by governments where they form part of upper secondary provision, governments should be wary of universal subsidies aimed at employers.
- Where there is resistance to Apprenticeships, governments should tip the cost-benefit balance more in the favour of employers.



2. Should employers receive financial incentives to provide apprenticeships?



Adjustment of the apprenticeship model to make it more beneficial to employers through:

- Adjustment of the apprentice's wage
- Adjustment of the programme duration
- Reorganisation of work placement within the firm



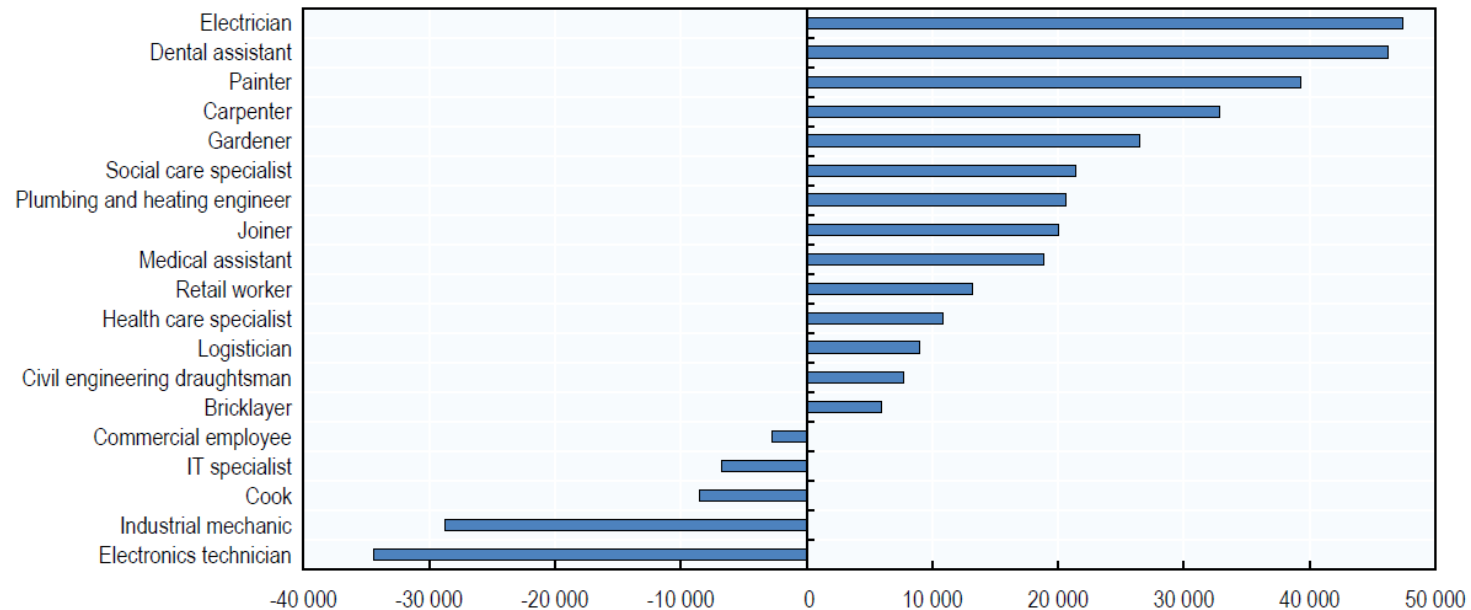
3. What is the right wage for apprentices?

- While protecting apprentices from exploitation, wages need to be high enough to attract trainees and low enough to be attractive to employers.
- Social partnership (with representatives speaking for employer and trainee) is an excellent means of finding the wage equilibrium.



3. What is the right wage for apprentices?

The costs and benefits of apprenticeship vary considerably and so should apprentice wages. Example: Switzerland



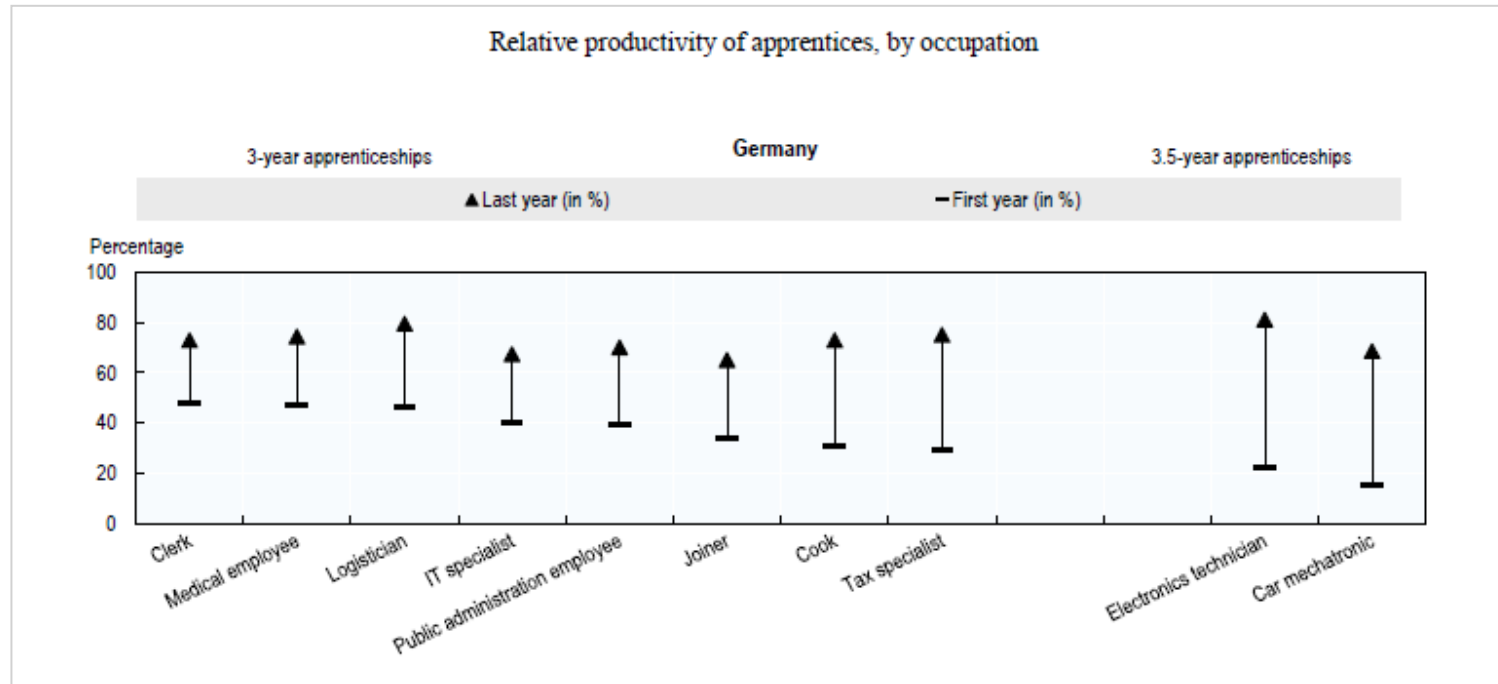
Note: Reference year 2009.

Source: Mühlemann, S (2016_[4]), “The cost and benefits of work-based learning”, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 143, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5j1pl4s6g0zv-en>.



4. How long should an apprenticeship last?

Duration should reflect the target occupation – how long it takes to develop occupational skills varies by occupation. Example: Germany.

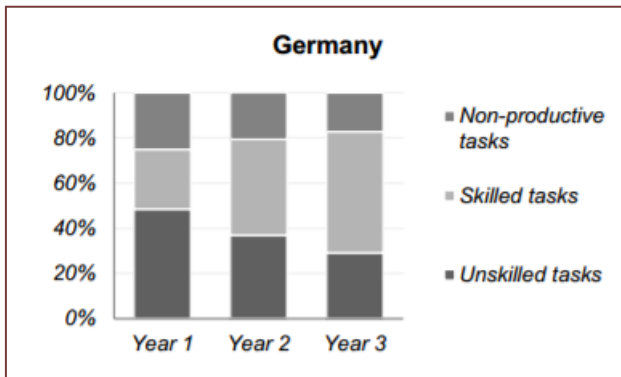




4. How long should an apprenticeship last?

Duration needs to ensure that the apprenticeship is attractive to the employer (allowing them to recoup costs), but not so long that it is unattractive to learners (especially adults who bring with them knowledge and skills)

Apprentice productivity increases over time



Reference year 2007 for Germany, Source: Jansen, A. et al. (2015), "Labour Market Deregulation and Apprenticeship Training: A Comparison of German and Swiss Employers", European Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol.21/4, <http://ejd.sagepub.com/content/21/4/353.abstract>

Recognising individual variation:

For adults with existing vocational skills and for trainees with initial low skill levels - Varying the duration of the apprenticeship to reflect the balance of skilled and unskilled work.



5. How to ensure a good learning experience at work?

Apprentice productivity can be enhanced through government (and social partner) intervention:

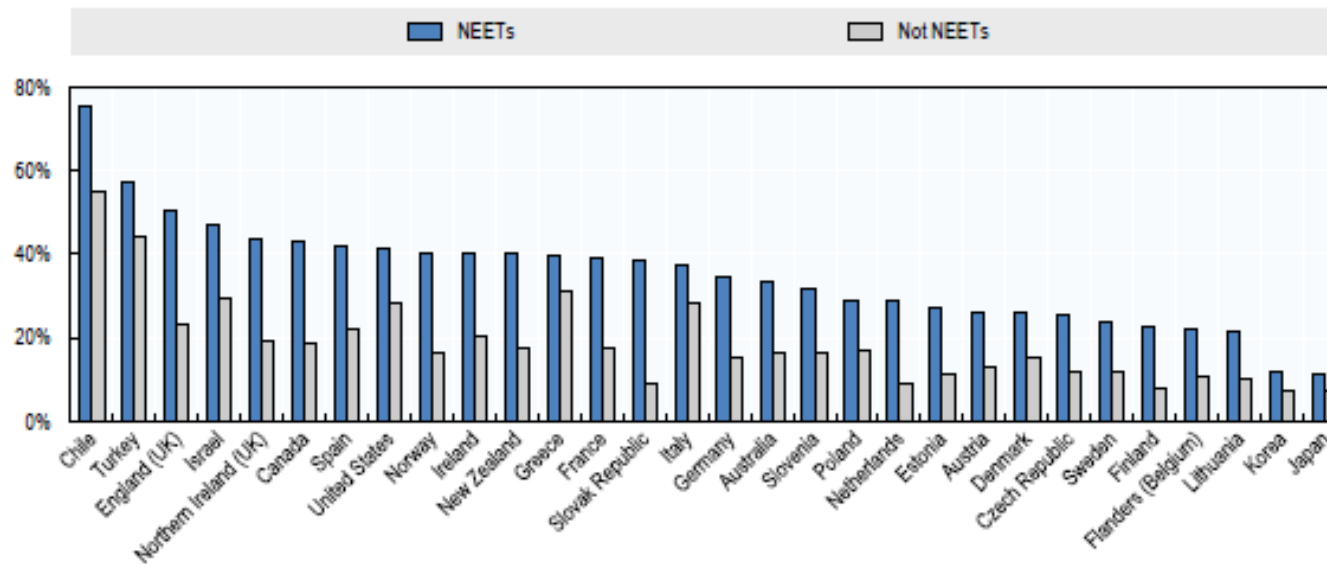
- Providing training to apprentices' trainers;
- Using training centres;
- Evaluating and assessing apprentice skills;
- Reducing administrative costs.



6. How to make apprenticeships work for youth at risk?

Governments often see apprenticeships as a means to help youth at risk of poor outcomes (eg, NEETs). NEETs though typically will come to apprenticeship with lower levels of basic skills meaning they need a different approach.

Percentage of adults aged 16-29 with weak literacy or numeracy skills



Note: Weak literacy or numeracy skills are defined as below Level 2.

Source: OECD (2015^[6]), OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (Database 2012, 2015), www.oecd.org/site/piaac/publicdataandanalysis.htm



6. How to make apprenticeships work for youth at risk?

Governments can make Youth at Risk more attractive to employers by enhancing their productive capacity (including the cost-benefit balance) by:

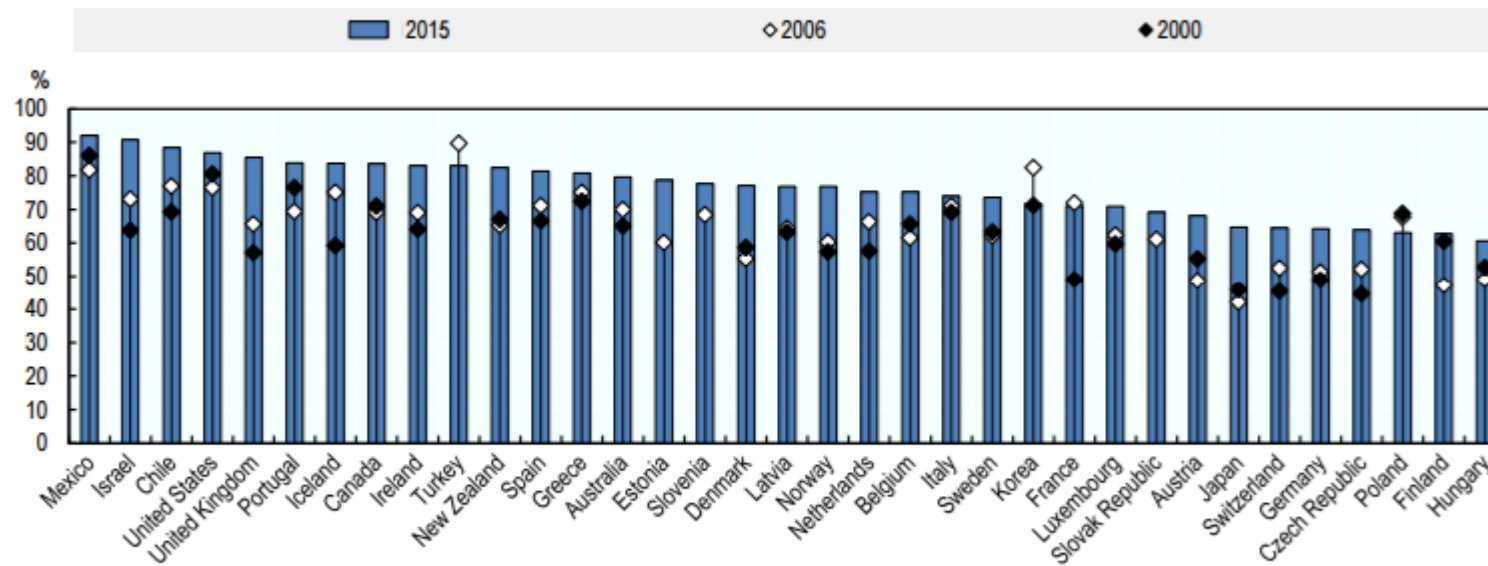
- Adapting the design of apprenticeships
- Preparing youth for WBL (eg pre-apprenticeships)
- Providing support during WBL



7. How to attract potential apprentices?

The career aspirations of young people are rising – and driven by social background

The jobs that 15-years-olds expect to have by age 30: percentage expecting to have high-skilled jobs (ISCO 1-3)



Note: ISCO 1-3 categories include managers, professional and technicians and associate professionals.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database, www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/.



7. How to attract potential apprentices?

A primary means of broadening career horizons and challenging stereotyping is career guidance. Among other things, effective career guidance:

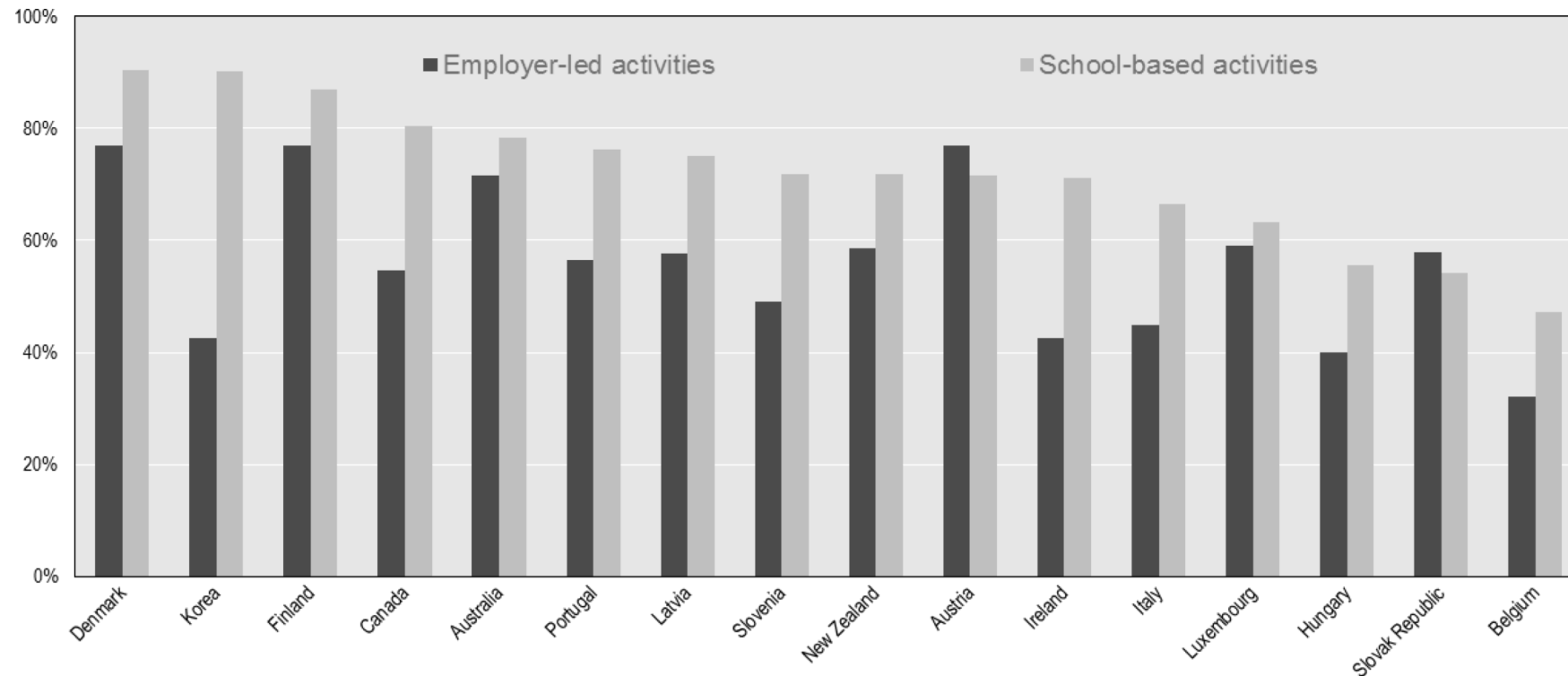
- Should begin early and intensify at transition points
- Challenge gender and ethnic stereotyping
- Target young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds
- Amplify skills shortage areas
- Be enriched by plentiful employer engagement activities (jobs fairs, job shadowing) - employers offer uniquely authentic insights into occupations into which VET is a route



7. How to attract potential apprentices?

Fewer students participate in career guidance activities in which employers are engaged across the OECD

Percentage of students participating in the different activities





Thank you

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WorldSkills Conference 2018 Amsterdam

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