



## **Innovation in European Vocational Education and Training: Learning in Inter-organisational Partnerships and Networks**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the paper is to research innovation

in European Vocational Education and Training (VET) with a focus on social innovation in inter-organisational partnerships and networks. The study draws upon case studies from England, Finland and Germany to explore social innovation in partnerships and networks of VET organizations with local, regional, national and European reach.

The qualitative research interviewed VET professionals in three European countries about their observations, experiences and perceptions of innovation in inter-organisational partnerships and networks in VET in local, regional, national and European contexts. The approach of the study is that innovation is closely related to learning and competence building to change and innovate on policies and practices of VET in social interaction.

A multitude of organisations involved in VET participate in partnerships, networks and social learning systems in VET in all three countries. Partnerships and networks are formed to build knowledge and competence, and share resources in VET. Different aspects of VET are developed in the partnerships and networks, ranging from VET curricula and qualifications to new VET programmes and structures. Learning in partnerships and networks is problem-based, where knowledge and expertise is shared through discussion, brainstorming and other methods of non-formal and informal learning. The study argues that human agents participate in social learning and innovation systems in inter-organisational partnerships and networks involved in VET to reshape and renew policies and practices in European VET. The findings of the study are supported by literature on social innovation.

The paper contributes to the research field of social innovation in the context of inter-organisational partnerships and networks in the education sector of VET. The role of human agents in inter-organisational partnerships and networks is to renew and reshape policies and practices in European VET.