

## **Vocational education, citizenship and participation: Problematizing relations between education, work and politics from contemporary and historical perspectives**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference for Vocational and Education and Culture-research network

4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> July, 2015

Universitat de València, Valencia, Spain

<http://www.peda.net/veraja/uta/vetculture/>

The VET & Culture research network invites junior and senior researchers, experts and educational administrators to discuss critically and historically about global trends in policies, practices and discourses of vocational/work-related education.

The current financial crisis has been used to widen the gap between capital and work, as data on how wealth has grown and its distributed clearly show and as an increasing number of scholars explain. This is a global trend that however manifests in diverse ways in different countries and regions throughout the world.

Two years ago, the international conference held at the University of Tampere on ‘Myths and brands’ in Vocational Education referred to “the triumph of industry- and market-relevant learning in all education and in all parts of the world”. We invite now discussions on whether and how can vocational education keep its educational worth and on whether and how is vocational education able to contribute in a proactive way to the demands -not merely neither necessarily of the market but- of citizenship and of an increasing participation of the large majority of the working force.

The labour market undergoes continuous changes that have accelerated in the past decades. While the labour market demands for a skilled workforce, working conditions are increasingly precarized, as the ILO or the European Social Committee have been reporting for more than a decade now, claiming for decent work: The old divide between blue-white collar workers is now taking different shapes.

Along the past three decades, vocational education has contributed to the improving of general education as a whole and helped it approach demands of the world such as more application of content or the reduction of the academic weight through the introduction of work experience of various kinds.

It may be the right time to consider whether despite these efforts, vocational education is an autonomous educational offer, providing its own identity; or perhaps it is still and again being considered a subaltern educational offer, reserved for those not willing to pursue academic work. If it were the case, we wonder whether vocational education is ready to accept this challenge or if it is ready to subvert it and play a role in the formation of a strong working class conscious about its role in politics and economic discussions.

All of these transformations happen in parallel and within the framework of the revision of the social contract of the welfare State that ruled continental Europe since the II World War. The European social protection system seems to be witnessing the end of its days and it is having a huge impact upon the workforce and the working culture. Will vocational education nowadays be able to educate the workforce in terms of cooperation, political consciousness and the will to look for

collective solutions and to share common problems instead of searching for individual alternatives to current difficulties of the labour market?

With this 22<sup>nd</sup> conference, we invite contributions to continue discussions on cross-cultural historical research on vocational education that enlightens our present, challenging approaches towards vocational education and transitions between education and work, new forms of precariousness, low-quality employment and unemployment.

Call for contributions, relevant deadlines:

We welcome abstracts, suggestions for panel discussions or symposia, maximum 1 page, by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015, as email attachments (word or pdf-document) to [Fernando.Marhuenda@uv.es](mailto:Fernando.Marhuenda@uv.es)

You are free to select your topic, but we hope that they will both contextualize and problematize approaches to vocational – or work-related – education.

Announcements on acceptance of abstracts and suggestions, and more details about programme with practical information will follow by 13<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

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