

## **CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS STUDY TOUR OF GERMANY'S APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM: KEY TAKEAWAYS / SUMMARY REPORT**

### **Background**

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) led a delegation of union leaders on a mission in Berlin, Germany from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> to study their apprenticeship system and learn key insights that can strengthen apprenticeship training in Canada

### **Significant challenges with Canada's apprenticeship system.**

Average age of entry: - completion rate is low;- lack of harmonization across provinces; - labour mobility and completion rates; - employer engagement low; - key groups are under-represented.

### **Canada lacks a national vision when it comes to apprenticeship training. We need federal leadership and provincial cooperation.**

Canada also lacks the symbiotic relationship that exists between the social partners in the German system.

**The federal government can address this need:** by creating a national public agency with a mandate to bring key stakeholders together in a systematic manner to develop a cohesive national vision for apprenticeship training, work together on common issues related to the design and implementation of apprenticeship training.

**Attracting youth and high completion rates:** Average age of an apprentice in Canada is about 28, the average age of an apprentice in Germany is 20

**The completion rate for apprenticeship training in Germany is 85%;** the completion rate in Canada is only 50%.

**It is not possible for Canada to copy the whole German VET system.** The German Economy is Europe's largest economy and booming.

**Germans educational pathway is based on three options:** Full-time vocational education; Dual vocational education and training (VET); Higher academic education (university)

### **The dual VET system, the CLC delegation studied during its tour.**

Training takes place in two learning venues: (1) A company workplace and (2) A vocational training school. About 70% and 30% vocational school.

### **Overview of the German apprenticeship system**

- German decisions about their educational path as early as 10 years old, and by the age of 16.
- The VET system is open to all young Germans
- Around the age of 18, the young person will enter the VET system. , choose a specific occupation, search for training places on offer
- About 55% of young Germans enter the apprenticeship system yearly.
- It is compulsory for every single company to be a contributing member.
- Chambers advise companies on apprenticeship training, assess and approve companies to conduct training, help match companies with apprentices, monitor the quality of training, and administer exams.
- A legal training contract is signed between the employer and the apprentice
- The employer must pay the apprentice a monthly training allowance
- Employers cannot lay off an apprentice at any time during the contract.
- Training takes place on company premises Technical training lessons take place at vocational schools.

- The training period is complete usually 3 to 3.5 years).
- The apprentice receive a dual VET certification portable Germany wide.
- Successfully completed, the apprentice has options: enter into employment contract with the company; enter into an employment contract with another company; or enter into further vocational or academic education.

**A national framework and collaboration:** The success of Germany's dual VET system is governed by a single, national legislative framework called the *German Vocational Training Act*.

**Employer engagement;** Employer engagement is an area where Germany sets a strong example for Canada to follow.

**The Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK)** is an intermediary organization in Germany that ensures high quality training. The specific tasks of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry include:

- Connecting employers with apprentices & Checking suitability of the company to conduct training.
- Monitoring the personal and professional qualification of instructors in workplaces and at company training centres
- Keeping a register of training contracts
- Establishing audit committees and conducting audits (Employing training consultants to advise companies; and
- Administer interim and final exams for apprentices
- Every employer is mandated by law to be a member of the Chamber. In Berlin alone, 280,000 companies are members of the local Chamber.

### **Going forward in Canada**

The good news is that governments in Canada are making significant investments to strengthen skills development across the country.

The labour movement has an opportunity to influence how this new money can improve apprenticeship training and strengthen Canada's workforce and economy.

Canada's unions will use the facts gathered on this German study tour to make ourselves heard in the various policy discussions aimed at strengthening apprenticeship training.

### **More specifically, we will advocate for:**

- a national vision of apprenticeship training;
- greater collaboration between stakeholders in an ongoing and structured manner;
- building parity of esteem between apprenticeship and post-secondary education pathways;
- removing financial barriers and improving job security for apprentices;
- and investing in innovative ways to increase employer engagement in apprenticeship training.

### **Report Summary Submitted By:**

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Note: The full report compiled by the CLC full delegation is available on the Unifor National Skilled Trades Web Site at [uniforskilledtrades.ca](http://uniforskilledtrades.ca)