



# **Gearing Adult Education Towards Occupational Mobility (GATOM)**

## **National Assessment Report Spain**

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## 1 Introduction

The typical professional career of the European workforce has traditionally been characterised by working in the initially learned occupation until the end of the professional life. During the last decades, however, the European labour markets have experienced dynamic developments, caused by economic, political, technological, social and demographic changes. These developments imply that a growing number of persons do not find an employment in their initial occupation and need to take on occupations that can be classified as a second career. Furthermore, today's rising skill shortages require companies to rely more on re-qualified workers. Hence, **occupational mobility** can increasingly be observed on labour markets and is also fostered to some extent by national governments and Public Employment Services. At European level, the European Commission designated the year 2006 as the European Year of Workers' Mobility, and Guideline No. 20 of the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Employment (2005 - 2008) calls upon Member States to remove obstacles to mobility for workers.

As there does not exist, however, a standardised and/or commonly applied understanding of **"occupational mobility/change"**, a working definition has been elaborated for the analyses of the study on hand. An occupational change is thereby characterised by the change into a new field of professional activity. This includes a substantial alteration of the work contents related to the job before and after the occupational change. In the context of an occupational change significantly different core competences are necessary to fulfil the new job-related tasks and it is not only an enlargement of activities/responsibility in terms of career development. The occupational change may be conducted with or without geographic mobility as well as within the same company or in conjunction with a new employer.

For successfully mastering an occupational change it will, among other issues, in most of the cases be necessary to **acquire new or at least update/strengthen existing knowledge**. Data for Germany, for example, show that about one fifth to one third of the workforce experiences an occupational change (*Seibert, 2007* or *Isaoglu, 2006*), and half of them cannot use their existing competences for their new job (*Hofbauer/König, 1973*). In Italy, the share of people (with apprenticeship training) changing occupation is estimated to be as high as 35 % - 41 %, and for Austria this percentage lies between 15 % and 68 % (depending on the time horizon considered) (*Klicpera et al.*, no date).

So, the question arises whether the existing VET/adult education systems provide effective (re-)qualification opportunities geared towards persons intending to change to a job not strictly corresponding to the occupation they have initially been trained for. National research studies have shown that there exist a wide range of (re-) qualification instruments for qualifying the workforce for a second career. However, these are rather targeted at unemployed and hardly ever suitable for persons preparing their occupational change while being employed (e.g. inflexible time schedules, no public support for training costs, no advice from the Public Employment Service concerning the most appropriate measures etc.). In terms of both, the intention to reduce unemployment/foster employment and increase the participation in lifelong learning – both pinpointed by the Lisbon strategy – actively supporting planned and strategic occupational changes to a higher extent would be advisable. This form of occupational change is on average more successful than those conducted out of unemployment (*Mandl et al.*, 2006).

So far, little is known, however, about the specific needs and requirements of persons strategically planning and preparing an occupational change while being in upright employment. Furthermore, no assessment has yet been made regarding the coherence of available (re-)training measures with the demand of the mobile workforce and their potential employers. Against this background, the project “Gearing Adult Education Towards Occupational Mobility – GATOM” which has been conducted with the support of the European Commission<sup>1</sup> follows the **objectives** to

- identify the demand of employees and employers with regard to (re-)qualification measures in the context of an occupational change planned/prepared during an upright employment
- investigate on the availability of VET/adult education measures being suitable for the (re-)qualification requirements of the mobile workforce
- analyse in how far the available VET/adult education system corresponds to the needs of people changing occupation
- eventually propose suggestions to gear the available education/training instruments towards occupational mobility

The project covers **eight European countries**. Research is conducted at national level under the co-ordination of the Austrian Institute for SME Research by the following partners:

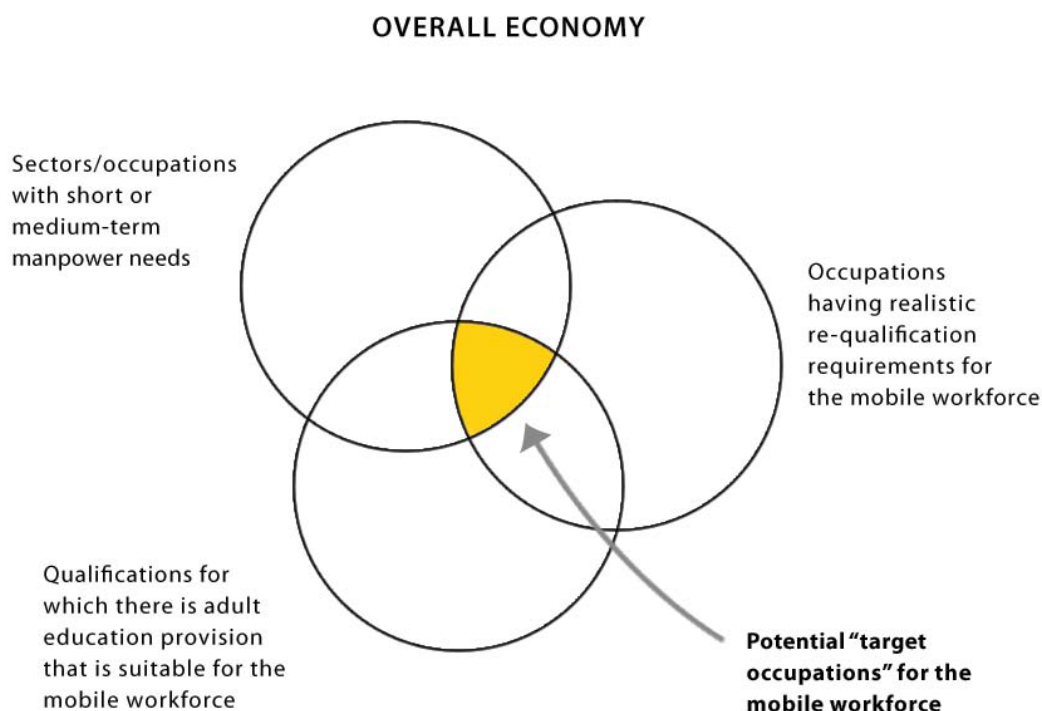
- Austria: Austrian Institute for SME Research
- Finland: Turku School of Economics (TSE)
- Germany: Berufsbildungswerk des DGB gGmbH (bfw)
- Ireland: Tom Martin & Associates (TMA)
- Poland: EEDRI Institute
- Romania: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF ROMANIA (CCIR)
- Spain: Ikei Research and Consultancy
- Switzerland: Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung (SVEB)

The report on hand constitutes the **National Assessment Report** for **Spain** providing a comparison between demand (i.e. employees’ and employers’ requirements) and supply of VET/adult education dealing with (re-)qualification for occupational change. Thereby, a focus has been set on **three professions** (plumbers, cooks, assistant nurses<sup>2</sup>) as target occupations for mobile workers. These jobs are deemed to be characterised by good job opportunities in the future as well as realistic qualification levels (see Graph 1).

<sup>1</sup> Lifelong Learning Programme by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

<sup>2</sup> ISCO Codes (International Standard Classification of Occupations) of the selected professions: plumbers – 7136, cooks – 5122, for assistant nurses: institution-based personal care workers – 5132 or nursing associate professionals – 3231



**Graph 1 Selection Criteria for the “Target Occupations” of the Mobile Workforce**

Source: Austrian Institute for SME Research, Tom Martin & Associates/TMA

In Chapter 2, an overview of existing **VET/adult education measures** suitable for (re-) qualification in the framework of occupational change is given. The identification of respective education/training instruments in the investigated sectors was conducted on the basis of the following criteria:

- Location: decentralised offer or e-learning
- Duration: not more than approximately 1 year
- Time schedule: evening/weekend classes, few blocked seminars
- Costs: reasonable with respect to the average income in the target job
- Teaching method and contents covered: focus on practical orientation and no particular specialisation within an occupation (broad, basic qualification)
- Eligibility criteria: no or little previous subject-oriented knowledge/skills required and accessible for adults
- Status of the implementing organisation: private or public
- Preferably certification after the attendance of the training measure

The necessary information was gathered in the form of **desk research**, supplemented by **qualitative interviews** with representatives of the training providers.

To analyse whether the VET/adult education system is generally suitable for people changing occupation during an upright employment the requirements of the enterprises and the workforce have been investigated by **qualitative interviews with mobile workers and concerned enterprises** (15 each at national level). On the basis of a semi-standardised questionnaire the 15 enterprise interviews per country focused on small and medium-sized enterprises in the construction sector, tourism and health/elderly care and analysed their point of view on the qualification needs of the employees and the most suitable ways to acquire them. Similarly, the 15 interviews with persons that have already experienced an occupational change (or were planning to do so in the near future) focussed on their experiences with (re-)qualification courses in terms of fostering and hindering factors, beneficial methods and support as well as potential improvement possibilities<sup>3</sup>. The results of these 30 interviews per country (i.e. 15 with entrepreneurs, 15 with the workforce) are summarised in Chapter 3 of the report on hand<sup>4</sup>.

Chapter 4 derives **conclusions** regarding the suitability of the existing VET/adult education measures for strategically conducted occupational change. Corresponding **recommendations** for relevant stakeholders (i.e. governments, Public Employment Services, training providers etc.) have been pinpointed to better gear adult education to occupational mobility.

Next to the National Assessment Reports also a **European Assessment Report** has been elaborated, providing cross-national comparisons of the issues under consideration.

The main findings of both, the National and European Assessment Reports are summarised in **Policy Manuals** in the national languages of the countries covered by the project.

Furthermore, at national level **individual training inventories** for the three occupations under consideration have been elaborated in national language aiming to make the training markets more transparent for persons planning an occupational change.

All reports and outcomes of the project on hand may also be downloaded for free on [www.mobility-training.eu](http://www.mobility-training.eu).

<sup>3</sup> Ikei has applied this methodology strictly in the elaboration of the Spanish report. Additionally, to obtain a broader picture, Ikei has conducted a distance non face-to-face survey (nearly 200 trainees have participated in this survey). Ikei expresses its gratitude to all the companies and trainees that have collaborated in this research and, particularly, to the managers and trainees of CEBANC-CDEA, Línea Maestra, Instituto Inter, Centro de Estudios Suministros Adarra, CEAC, ASEFOSAM, AEFI, ARGI, Escuela Superior de Hostelería de Artxanda and Escuela Bell-art. Thanks to the kind collaboration of these training providers it has been possible to obtain the information required to prepare this report, and at the same time fully observe the Spanish law of confidentiality of personal data.

<sup>4</sup> Thereby, it is to be considered that the research on hand was conducted in summer 2008, i.e. before the economic and financial crises affecting demand and supply on the labour market started.

## 2 Overview on the available training and education measures suitable for supporting occupational change

### 2.1 General overview of the Spanish vocational training system

The administrative framework of VET in Spain is as follows, in each of its three subsystems:

- Responsibility for **initial vocational training** (“Formación Profesional Inicial/Reglada” in Spanish) lies with the education authorities (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport), though this is now transferred to the authorities of the 17 Spanish Autonomous Regions;
- Responsibility for **vocational training for the unemployed** (“Formación Profesional Ocupacional” in Spanish) lies with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and has been transferred to all the Autonomous Regions except the Basque Country;
- And, finally, **continuing training** (“Formación Profesional Continua” in Spanish) is administered jointly by the central government (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) and the social partners through the Tripartite Foundation for Training and Employment, as well as the regional governments of the 17 Autonomous Regions.

It is noteworthy that **there have been some recent important changes in the regulation of the Spanish training system:**

- The Organic Law 5/2002 of June 19<sup>th</sup> on Qualifications and Vocational Training establishes the creation of the National Qualification and Vocational Training System and indicates that one of its purposes is to evaluate and officially accredit vocational qualification, whatever way it may have been acquired;
- The introduction of the Royal Decree 1046/2003 of 1st August substantially modifies the regulation of the Spanish continuing vocational training. This Royal Decree established three main groups of initiatives to be supported, this is, demand-driven actions, supply driven actions and complementary actions (see 2.2). Additionally, it introduces reductions in social security contributions for companies which train their employees, and gives small and medium-sized enterprises special treatment (the smaller the company, the higher the reductions).
- The Fourth Agreement on Vocational Training for Employment (signed the 7th February 2006), and developed in the Royal Decree 395/2007 of 23rd March 2007, includes a number of interesting changes in the scope and goals of the Tripartite Foundation, where the most important one refers to the inclusion of training activities specifically aimed at unemployed workers.

As it refers to occupational changes, it is important to stress the relevance of the new National Qualification and Vocational Training System. This system creates a comprehensive framework for professional skills<sup>5</sup> and, more specifically, an identification system for the different qualifications. Moreover, it makes much easier to officially accredit vocational qualification when the skills have been obtained through non conventional ways (different from initial vocational training).

## 2.2 The Spanish Vocational Training System from the perspective of occupational change

The Spanish Vocational Training System is structured in three main groups:

**1. Initial Vocational Training:** initial vocational training is mainly aimed at young students, although they are open to any type of individual, and it<sup>6</sup> has the aim of providing training for vocational jobs. Initial Vocational Training is structured into two grades: Middle-level Vocational Schooling (“Grado Medio” in Spanish) and Higher-Level Vocational schooling (“Grado Superior” in Spanish).

**Vocational training centres may be private or public.** Middle-level Vocational Schooling may be given in dedicated centres or in centres teaching other schooling as well (together with compulsory secondary education and the Bachillerato). On the other side, the centres which deliver upper-level Vocational Schooling also offer middle-level training (although some Autonomous Regions are creating vocational training institutes exclusively for upper-level Specific Vocational Schooling).

On the other hand, the requirements to access Initial Vocational Training are lower/easier in the case of Middle-level Vocational Training (Compulsory Secondary Education or equivalent knowledge), than in the case of Higher-Level Vocational Training (Bachillerato or other equivalent degrees).

The length of Middle-level and Higher-level Vocational Schooling courses is 2 years (1,300-2,000 hours) and time schedules usually take 6-8 hours on a daily basis from Monday to Friday. These courses are structured in modules and they also include a final practical period in a company (up to 25% of total hours).

Considering occupational change, it is important to stress that there are other training programmes provided by specific training centres, with a shorter duration (about 1,000 hours), and specifically aimed to qualify individuals in order to pass the free access exams created by some Autonomous Regions to obtain the official certificate in Initial Vocational Training in certain degrees (trainees also enjoy the opportunity to pass each year just certain modules of each degree).

<sup>5</sup> The exhaustive list of qualifications can be obtained in [http://www.mepsyd.es/educa/incual/ice\\_catalogoWeb.html](http://www.mepsyd.es/educa/incual/ice_catalogoWeb.html) (only in Spanish).

<sup>6</sup> It is true that workers that want to gain access to initial vocational training programmes can do it through examinations in which they must accredit a level of knowledge equivalent to the one attributed to students that have finished Compulsory Secondary Education (linguistic, social, scientific, technological skills, etc.)

**Box 1 Validation and recognition of professional experience**

The Spanish government is preparing a Royal Decree that will facilitate the validation of professional experience (at least three years of experience), and its equivalence with vocational training degrees. This measure is intended to recognize officially the experience of workers of many occupations (plumbers, cooks, etc.), that have been working for several years but do not hold an official diploma. In order to obtain this validation, workers will have to present a request that will be assessed by a committee, and this process will also include a practical exam. In some regions (for example, the Basque Country), this measure was implemented some years ago and there is a relevant number of individuals (more than 600 in the Basque Country), that have obtained the vocational training degree this way (see <http://www.hezkuntza.ejgv.euskadi.net/r43-2333/es/>, only in Spanish and Basque).

**2. Continuing training** is mainly aimed at improving the skills of workers in their current occupations. According to 1046/2003 Royal Decree, continuing training includes three main groups of initiatives:

1. Demand-driven training schemes (“Formación de Demanda” in Spanish), this is, training courses requested either by companies (and organised and managed by the companies themselves), or by individuals and authorised by the companies (the so-called individual permission for training or “permisos individuales de formación” in Spanish)<sup>7</sup>. Companies plan and organise these courses: they can select the training provider from a list of available training centres (theme, region, etc.), and as it refers to financing, they can use the amount annually allocated to each of them depending on their personnel.
2. Supply-driven training schemes (“Formación de oferta” in Spanish) are aimed at both employed and unemployed workers (since 2007 for this last group). In this case, training is provided directly to workers, without direct participation of the enterprises themselves (it is workers’ responsibility to participate). These training schemes are organized by social partners’ training organizations and financed by the Tripartite Foundation (“Fundación Tripartita” in Spanish). This kind of training includes:
  - Training activities aimed at employed people, which include the Intersectoral Training Plans (“Planes de Formación Intersectorial” in Spanish) and the Sectoral Training Plans (“Planes de Formación Sectoriales” in Spanish). The Intersectoral Training Plans are aimed to the provision of skills and qualifications that can be transferred horizontally and transversally to different sectors of activity. It is important to underline that these measures are aimed to improve employability of workers, but they do not qualify participants specifically for a distinct occupation<sup>8</sup>. On their side, Sectoral Training Plans are devoted to workers belonging to a concrete sector of activity, so developed training actions respond to specific training needs of the sector (sectoral training plans are defined by representatives of employers and trade unions)<sup>9</sup>;

<sup>7</sup> According to statistics 1.5 million individuals took part in these training courses in 2007. These courses mainly provided training in general competences and horizontal skills (foreign languages, informatics, etc.), and their duration was very short (mean length of 28 hours in 2006).

<sup>8</sup> In 2006 about 55,000 individuals participated in intersectoral training plans. The mean length of these training courses was about 50-60 hours.

<sup>9</sup> In 2006 about 550,000 individuals participated in sectoral training plans. The mean length of these training courses was about 60-70 hours.

- Training activities aimed at unemployed workers (only available since 2007), to support their effective and successful insertion in the labour market. These activities have to be aimed at providing certificates officially recognised included in the National Catalogue of professional Qualifications.

**3. Vocational training for the unemployed** is focused mainly on unemployed people and also on apprentices. However, it also offers a wide array of courses in which employees might be eligible<sup>10</sup> (but in these cases priority is always given to unemployed individuals). Even if each vocational training programme has its own specific characteristics, in general, these courses are quite appropriate for employees: they are flexible in their time schedules, they combine theoretical and practical contents, they have a medium length (600-1,000 hours), and trainees can follow these courses in several training centres (public and private training centres, managed by trade unions, business associations, etc.). Additionally, these courses are financed by the Spanish Institute for Employment (“Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal – SEPES” in Spanish).

The contents and structure of these training courses are highly correlated with the competence units identified in the certificates of professionalism. In this way, the reference is the occupation’s professional profile, and training contents are structured according to proficiency units that include professional performances and their execution criteria. As it refers to accreditation, the trainees that complete these courses and pass the final exams obtain a **certificate of professionalism**<sup>11</sup> (Royal Decree 797/1995). Interestingly also, the training units of these courses are validated with certain contents of initial vocational training programmes.

## 2.3 Construction sector/Plumbers

### 2.3.1 First approach to the issue of training in plumbing sector

Training activities in the construction sector are mapped by the Sector Referential Plan and Training Priorities of the Construction Sector – 2007<sup>12</sup> (“Plan de referencia sectorial y prioridades formativas del Sector Construcción” in Spanish<sup>13</sup>). According to this plan, the most important training task is to upgrade the skills of manual workers (plumbers, bricklayers, laborers, house painters, etc.), and specifically in SMEs.

However, the **training activities specifically addressed to improve plumbers’ skills are ranked as “medium priority”**, whereas there is a very long list of training activities ranked as “maximum priority”. This means that **training activities specifically addressed to plumbers are not considered the most urgent ones in construction sector**.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably, the rate of participation of employees in these courses will go down in the new economic scenario. Probably, this rate has been higher until mid-2007 (during the booming economic situation, when unemployment rates were low), than it will be during next years (with higher unemployment rates).

<sup>11</sup> The exhaustive list of certificates can be obtained in [http://www.mtas.es/es/empleo/cerprof/cerprof\\_idx.htm](http://www.mtas.es/es/empleo/cerprof/cerprof_idx.htm) (only in Spanish).

<sup>12</sup> This document identifies and defines the main training priorities of the workers of this sector (employees).

<sup>13</sup> See *Fundación Tripartita. Plan de referencia sectorial y prioridades formativas del sector. Planes de oferta 2007*.



Notwithstanding this, it must be mentioned that the very recent and marked slowdown of the construction sector probably has changed completely this general overview. As a consequence of the decreasing rhythm of the activity in new housebuilding, it can be expected that there will be a lower demand of some professions (bricklayers, house-painters, etc.). As a consequence, some of these workers will have to find a new job in other activities more linked with maintenance and rehabilitation activities (e.g., plumbing activities).

Interestingly enough, according to the results of a survey carried out in 2005 by the Spanish Institute for Employment among 404 companies of the construction sector, the degree of difficulty to recruit plumbers is assessed as “medium”. However, it must be mentioned that this qualification is the overall result of a high share of companies that say that they have “minimum” difficulties, and another important share of companies that mention that they suffer “important” or “very important” difficulties.

More interestingly, when companies that affirm that they are suffering difficulties to recruit plumbers are questioned about the reasons, most of them mention the “lack of skilled personnel” as the main reason.

### 2.3.2 Analysis of the training supply addressed to workers that want to re-qualify as plumbers

First of all, it must be mentioned that the **initial vocational training** includes a medium degree course, this is, Production Maintenance and Services (“Mantenimiento y Servicios a la Producción” in Spanish), that qualifies students to work in plumbing activities. However, as it is always the case with Initial Vocational Training, this course is designed for young students in terms of duration (2,000 hours) and time-schedules, and therefore, this training programme can not be considered adequate for employees thinking about an occupational change.

Second, in the framework of **continuing training**, courses are financed by the formerly mentioned Tripartite Foundation for Training and Employment and provided by training organisations related to business associations and trade unions. In this context, one of the main training providers is the **Construction Labour Foundation** (“Fundación Laboral de la Construcción”, in Spanish), a bipartite and paritarian entity with representation from employers’ associations and trade union representatives.

Another relevant training provider is **CONAIF** (“Confederación Nacional de Asociaciones de Empresas de Fontanería, Gas, Calefacción, Climatización, Protección contra Incendios, Electricidad y Afines” in Spanish). CONAIF is the **national level business representative organisation of plumbing companies** (and other closely linked activities). The main purpose of these training centres is to upgrade the skills of plumbers or to complement the skills of close-related activities’ workers (air conditioning installers, natural gas installers, etc.). An additional objective is to help short-time experienced plumbers (apprentices) to obtain the official card in plumbing issued by the DG of Industry of the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce.

Similarly, **trade unions' training supply** is addressed mainly at workers already working in plumbing and other close activities (metal working activities, construction activities, etc.), even if unemployed individuals can also attend these courses. The offer is very broad, ranging from courses with the most basic contents to other more advanced. Besides, as the courses are designed principally for workers, their timetable is adequate for people thinking about an occupational change (from 18.00 to 22.00 hours, Saturday mornings, etc.).

Thirdly, it must be mentioned that the Construction Labour Foundation and CONAIF also provide **occupational training courses for unemployed people**<sup>14</sup>.

More precisely, **CONAIF** also has about 16 training centres located all through Spain that are accredited to provide vocational training courses for unemployed people. These courses combine theoretical and practical contents and they are focused on teaching the most basic tasks to carry out elementary plumbing activities. In this sense, no special requirement is needed to attend these courses. The characteristics of these courses may be quite different but, in general, they are quite appropriate for individuals working in terms of length (6 months) time-schedules (i.e., from 18.00 to 22.00 hours) and duration (about 80-100 hours each module, 600-800 hours in the total).

As it refers to the certification, after each module trainees are prepared to take the official exams of the Spanish DG of Industry (various exams for different qualifications: official card for water installations, for gas installations, etc.), and some of these courses also allow to obtain the certificate of professionalism in plumbing activities. The cost of these courses ranges between 800 and 1,600 Euro (approx.), and participants may get subventions for 100% of total costs when they are unemployed (usually), or reductions when employed (in certain courses).

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<sup>14</sup> A detailed list of the training centres officially accredited by the Spanish Institute for Employment (Instituto Nacional de Empleo – INEM), can be consulted in the following web page (only in Spanish): <http://www2.inem.es/sggfo/FormacionOcupacional/programas/formacion/listatabla.asp>



## Box 2 Certificate of professionalism: plumbers

The certificate of professionalism for plumbers is regulated by the Royal Decree 2008/1996. According to this Decree, individuals that want to obtain this certificate have to hold the following competences:

General competences: to install, repair and maintain installations for cold and hot water, fittings and fixtures of drainage and toilet sanitary devices, according to the rule in law.

Specific competences:

- Unit of competence N. 1: to install collective and individual installations for cold and hot water.
- Unit of competence N. 2: to install pipelines for drainage and sewerage systems.
- Unit of competence N. 3: to install toilet sanitary devices.
- Unit of competence N. 4: to repair and maintain plumbing installations.

In this sense, in order to acquire these competences the decree establishes a training itinerary with a total duration of 730 hours (550 hours for practical contents, 150 hours for theory and 30 hours for the assessment). The itinerary includes the following training units:

- Unit N. 1: general inner installations of a building (180 hours).
- Unit N. 2: installation of specific inner systems of a building (180 hours).
- Unit N. 3: installation of systems to collect rainwater and sewerage (80 hours).
- Unit N. 4: installation of drainage pipelines (120 hours);
- Unit N. 5: installation of toilet sanitary devices (100 hours);
- Unit N. 6: plumbing repairs in buildings (70 hours).

As it refers to the requirements, trainees do not have to show any previous experience, and it is only recommended that they have a minimum educational attainment (certificado de escolaridad). On the other side, teachers are requested a specific academic level (university degree or equivalent professional skills), and at least three year of experience. Additionally, according to this regulation, the maximum number of trainees per group is 15 and the classrooms must meet certain conditions in terms of equipments and size.

Finally, it must be taken into account that regional governments are allowed to modify partially the contents of this regulation (add new contents, etc.).

Complementarily, there is a wide array of training institutions that provide **other courses** in order to acquire a professional qualification in plumbing activities (employed, unemployed, etc.). There are some institutions that provide distance learning courses that combine theoretical and practical contents (via multimedia, CD-ROMs, etc.), and some of them have been officially accredited (official certificates). The length of these courses is quite diverse (from 1 month to 1 year), and so it is their duration (from 120 to 700 hours), and their costs (usually trainees have to pay for these courses even if some of them may be supported by public institutions). In any case, it is difficult to assess properly these courses, because there is not a comprehensive list of available measures.

Finally, it is interesting to point out that, according to contacted providers, the share of occupational change is different in the various training programmes: this share is higher in the vocational training courses for unemployed (about 30% of the trainees), and lower in the rest of cases (5% or less).

## 2.4 Tourism/Cooks

### 2.4.1 First approach to the issue of training in the HORECA sector

There is a wide supply of training courses for individuals that want to work in the HORECA sector and, specifically, in cooking. The growth experienced by the Spanish economy during the last decade, and the relevance of tourism sector in Spain, has caused a high demand for workers in the sector (waiters, cooks, etc.), and business associations have played a very relevant role in training provision for unemployed people.

The lack of candidates has made it difficult for many companies to fill their vacancies. Social perception of working conditions in the sector is rather negative (long working days, difficulties to conciliate work and personal life, low salaries, etc.), even if differences among distinct professions are perceived (for example, social perception is more positive for cooks than for waiters). Therefore, in a positive context for employment in Spain (until mid-2007), immigrants with low professional expectations and young people with low educational level (elementary education) have filled many vacancies, above all in the lowest professional categories.

In this way, according to a study commissioned by the Spanish business association of the HORECA sector ("Federación Española de Hostelería – FEHR" in Spanish), one of the main challenges of the sector consists of recruiting qualified/trained workers.

**Table 1 Companies experiencing difficulties to hire professionals in the HORECA sector**

	% Total*
Companies with less than 20 employees	46%
Companies with 20-49 employees	48%
Companies with 50-499 employees	64%
Companies with more than 500 employees	67%

\* Sample: 790 companies.

Source: FEHR. Situación de la Gestión de los Recursos Humanos en las empresas de Hostelería. Own elaboration.

This research points out that is necessary to carry out an in-depth reflection about the role of training in the sector (contents, matching needs of companies, etc.). In this respect, it is worrying to notice that up to 47% of companies of the sector do not foster any training activity (result of a survey carried out in the context of the research of the FEHR).

On the other hand, the Sectoral Referencial Plan and Training Priorities of the HORECA Sector 2007 (“Plan de Referencia Sectorial y Prioridades Formativas de la Hostelería” in Spanish<sup>15</sup>), identifies that adapting workers’ skills to the changing evolution of professional activities is the main training challenge of the sector. Some relevant deficits are perceived in some jobs (waiters, cooks, etc.), and concerning specifically cooks, there are several training initiatives ranked as “maximum priority” ones. Therefore, this plan shows that upgrading cooks’ low skills is one of the main training challenges of this sector.

#### 2.4.2 Analysis of the training supply addressed to workers that want to re-qualify as cooks

Cooks can work in very different companies: hotels, restaurants, catering companies, pubs and even hospitals, education centres or other big companies that have their own kitchen. Of course, in general terms, the higher the relevance of the elaboration of the meals (high quality/price restaurants and hotels), the higher are the level of the skills requested. In this sense, workers coming from other sectors have an easier access to jobs that do not need long training periods.

To start with, it must be said that the Spanish **initial vocational training** system includes a medium degree course entitled Cooking (“Restauración” in Spanish), specifically designed for individuals that want to be professional cooks. However, as it is always the case with initial vocational training, the length (2,000 hours – 2 years) as well as the time schedules are not particularly adequate for adult workers.

Second, considering **continuing** training, courses are financed by the Tripartite Foundation and provided by employers’ association and trade unions. The main goal of these courses is to upgrade workers’ qualifications, and it must be said that, in the framework of this research, there has not been found any measure relevant from the point of view of occupational change.

Thirdly, business associations and trade unions are also the main providers of **vocational training courses for the unemployed** (remember that these courses are targeted mainly to unemployed persons, but also to occupied individuals and that they are financed by the Spanish Institute for Employment).

These training courses are structured in modules that combine theory and practice to teach most basic techniques to elaborate meals, their length ranges between 450 and 900 hours (4 to 8 months) and their time schedule is quite flexible (morning/afternoon), all of them adequate characteristics for workers that want to change their occupation.

As it refers to certification, these courses are adapted to the regulation issued by the regional governments, and the trainees can obtain the **certificate of professionalism in cooking** at the end of the course. On the other hand, the courses are free for unemployed people and other preferential collectives.

<sup>15</sup> See *Fundación Tripartita. Plan de referencia sectorial y prioridades formativas del sector. Planes de oferta 2007.*

**Box 3 Certificate of professionalism: cooks**

The certificate of professionalism for cooks is regulated by the Royal Decree 301/1996. According to this Decree, individuals that want to obtain this certificate have to hold the following competences:

General competences: to prepare meals according to the needs and characteristics of customers, and taking into account the proceedings and the rules to obtain the quality and profitability objectives. Planning and performing the tasks to prepare the meals (materials, ingredients, etc.).

Specific competences:

- Unit of competence N. 1: to manage the acquisition of provisions and control consumptions.
- Unit of competence N. 2: to manipulate and conserve all kind of crude foodstuffs.
- Unit of competence N. 3: preparation and presentation of basic meals.
- Unit of competence N. 4: preparation and presentation of pies and desserts.
- Unit of competence N. 5: preparation and presentation of meals for buffets, self-services, etc.
- Unit of competence N. 6: preparation and presentation of regional, national and international meals.

In this sense, in order to acquire these competences the decree establishes a training itinerary with a total duration of 1,045 hours (680 hours for practical contents, 315 hours for theory and 50 hours for the assessment), scheduled in 22 training units:

As it refers to the requirements, trainees do not have to show any previous experience, and it is only recommended that they have a minimum educational attainment ("certificado de escolaridad" in Spanish). On the other side, teachers are requested a specific academic level (upper vocational training degree or equivalent professional skills), and at least three years of experience. Additionally, according to this regulation, the maximum number of trainees per group is 15 and the classrooms must meet certain conditions in terms of equipments and size. Finally, it must be taken into account that regional governments are allowed to modify partially the contents of this regulation (add new contents, etc.).

Complementarily, there is a **group of heterogeneous training courses**. For example, there are some training programmes, provided by both official public and private training centres, with a shorter length (150-200 hours) that provide the minimum necessary training to start working urgently (mainly aimed at unemployed individuals but also available for employees). And, additionally, there are other training institutions that provide distance learning measures (different lengths, structures and purposes), that combine theoretical and practical contents (via multimedia and CD-ROMs), and may be convenient for workers with severe time restrictions.

Interestingly also, there are some other special initiatives designed for quite a different and less numerous target group: high-skilled individuals (engineers, economists, etc.), that want to change their occupation because they have realized that their real vocation is cooking. These measures provide qualified training, in quite long courses (9-18 months in a 16 hours per week basis), with a flexible time schedule (mornings/afternoons), and a higher cost (about 5,000 Euro/year). In this kind of courses, there is a significant proportion of trainees that decide to start their own restaurant.

Finally, relying on contacted providers' point of view, it must be pointed out that the share of occupational change in these training programmes is medium-high (between 20% and 50% of the trainees). Nevertheless, there are many individuals without any previous specific professional qualification and quite a heterogeneous experience (similar to the case of trainees in elderly-care courses).

## 2.5 Health and elderly care/Assistant nurses

### 2.5.1 First approach to the issue of training in the health care sector

Health care sector is a peculiar activity because of the **high participation of the public sector**. Public health care institutions constitute a very relevant share of the total number of companies (about 35%) and, as their size is usually higher than the size of private institutions, their share is still much higher in terms of volume (around 66% of beds). Additionally, the intervention of the public sector is important because health care sector is highly regulated in aspects like the formal qualifications that must be accredited in order to work in certain health professions.

It is important to take these specific characteristics into account because they sometimes represent a very important barrier for the workers that want to change their occupation and start a new career in health care activities. In this sense, most health-care jobs (doctors, nurses, assistant nurses, etc.), both in private and public institutions, are occupied by individuals that have completed the formal and specific studies that are necessary for that purpose. In other words, **initial vocational training and university studies constitute the main way to obtain a job in health care sector**.

Interestingly enough, the **specific situation of the institutions providing care to elderly people** is significantly different. It is true that also in this case public institutions represent a very important share of the sector (about 25% in number of companies and around 55% of beds), but formal qualification (technical knowledge) is not always so important and, therefore, it is possible to obtain a job without such a long period of formal training. Therefore, it can be concluded that **occupational change is easier when aimed at elderly care sector** (of course, there are highly qualified people such as doctors, nurses, etc.).

Additionally, due to the ageing of the Spanish population, the longer life expectancy of elderly people and the wish of elderly to stay at home, more and more frequently families hire individuals to help them taking care of their elder relatives. In these cases, working conditions are quite poor (low salaries, no contract, etc.), and many of these workers do not have any specific training (or the minimum one). But, despite these poor conditions, it must be recognized that these jobs represent an opportunity for individuals that can not have access to more qualified jobs and urgently need money (for example, many immigrants in the case of Spain).

Finally, as it refers to the priorities of assistant nurses' training activities in health care sector, it must be said that the most important training needs identified by the Sectoral Referencial Plan and Training Priorities of the Health Sector – 2007 ("Plan de Referencia Sectorial y Prioridades Formativas de la Sanidad" in Spanish<sup>16</sup>), are linked to permanent learning and re-training activities (new technologies, new working methods, etc.). In this framework, **training measures addressed to assistant nurses are ranked as "medium priority" activities**, and more importance is given to specific skills of nurses and to general health care skills.

<sup>16</sup> See *Fundación Tripartita. Plan de referencia sectorial y prioridades formativas del sector. Planes de oferta 2007.*

### 2.5.2 Analysis of the training supply addressed to workers that want to re-qualify as assistant nurses

As mentioned before, initial vocational training is the most usual way to work in assistance nursing. More specifically, the **Initial Vocational Training** general framework includes a course entitled Assistance Care in Nursing (“Cuidados Auxiliares de Enfermería” in Spanish), that qualifies students to work in nursing activities. However, this course is designed for young students in terms of duration (1,400 hours) and time schedules and, therefore, these training schemes are not the most adequate ones for employees thinking about an occupational change.

Notwithstanding this, it must be mentioned that this research has identified, and for this profession, that there are alternative training schemes designed to obtain the Initial Vocational Training degree. The duration of these alternative courses is shorter (from 600 to 1,000 hours), and their time schedules are flexible and quite adequate for individuals working. Moreover, some of these courses are long-distance learning courses, and therefore, trainees can study at home without any time restriction. On this respect, it is important to mention that these distance learning courses combine theoretical and practical contents (via CD-ROMs and other multimedia support). These courses prepare students to take the official exams for passing the Medium-Level Vocational Training Degree.

As it refers to **continuing training**, it must be said that most of the training courses provided by trade unions and business associations are targeted to already occupied assistant nurses. These courses are financed by the Tripartite Foundation and are free for participants, but of course, are not available for individual looking for an occupational change.

On the other hand, both trade unions and hospitals do also play a relevant role in the framework of **vocational training courses for unemployed people**<sup>17</sup>. Many of these organisations have accredited training centres that provide courses financed by the Spanish Institute for Employment. These courses are focused on unemployed people, however they are also addressed to employees and in this sense, they may be adequate for individuals that want to change their occupation.

In the case of contacted training providers, it is necessary to attend to class and the contents include basic health-care topics (basic sanitary attention) and other horizontal skills more linked with communication and organizational issues. Usually the length of these courses is about 600 hundred hours, but there are also shorter ones. And, as it refers to costs, these courses are free for participants.

It is also interesting to mention that there does not exist a certificate of professionalism to accredit the skills in the case of assistant nurses for hospital attention or assistant nurses for elderly care. In this sense, the most similar certificate of professionalism is the one addressed to home nurses, this is, a kind of nursing associated with a lower qualification level.

<sup>17</sup> However, there are other specialized training centres that have been accredited to this purpose A detailed list of the training centres officially accredited by the Spanish Institute for Employment (Instituto Nacional de Empleo – INEM), for each measure can be consulted in the following web page (only in Spanish): <http://www2.inem.es/sggfo/FormacionOcupacional/programas/formacion/listatabla.asp>



#### Box 4 Certificate of professionalism: home nurses

The certificate of professionalism for home nurses is regulated by the Royal Decree 331/1997. According to this Decree, individuals that want to obtain this certificate have to hold the following competences:

General competences: to collaborate in the planning and coordination of tasks, to identify the needs of patients and guarantee that all these needs are satisfied (diet, hygienic needs, psycho-social needs, health, etc.).

Specific competences:

- Unit of competence N. 1: to participate in the monitoring of tasks with social assistants and other professionals.
- Unit of competence N. 2: to control the diet of patients.
- Unit of competence N. 3: to guarantee that hygienic needs are satisfied.
- Unit of competence N. 4: do the cleaning of the household.
- Unit of competence N. 5: to guarantee that affective, physic and social needs are satisfied.
- Unit of competence N. 6: to contribute to the social integration of patients.
- Unit of competence N. 7: to manage the documentation and the maintenance of the household.

In this sense, in order to acquire these competences the decree establishes a training itinerary with a total duration of 445 hours (290 hours for practical contents, 130 hours for theory and 25 hours for the assessment). This itinerary includes the following training units:

- Unit N.1: planning, developing and monitoring tasks (50 hours).
- Unit N.2: nutrition, dietetics and alimentation (100 hours).
- Unit N.3: hygiene and health (50 hours).
- Unit N.4: cleaning and homework (50 hours);
- Unit N.5: prevention and socio-sanitary help (125 hours);
- Unit N.6: social resources and social integration (45 hours);
- Unit N.7: management and basic administration of the household (25 hours).

As it refers to the requirements, trainees do not have to show any previous experience, and it is only recommended that they have a minimum educational attainment (certificado de escolaridad). On the other side, teachers are requested a specific academic level (university degree or equivalent professional skills), and at least three years of experience. Additionally, according to this regulation, the maximum number of trainees per group is 15 and the classrooms must meet certain conditions in terms of equipments and size. Finally, it must be taken into account that regional governments are allowed to modify partially the contents of this regulation (add new contents, etc.).

Complementarily, there are many **other training courses** provided by different training centres that may be adequate for people thinking about an occupational change. Some of them are designed to enable trainees to work in less qualified assistance nursing tasks. These are the shortest ones (about 100 hours), but in general they do not facilitate access to an official certification. However, if a regional/local public body participates in the design and implementation of these measures, the certification is better considered in terms of access to market.

The cost of the rest of courses depends on their length and methodology, but in the case of contacted providers it is between 1,200 and 1,800 Euro (some of them are supported by local/regional public institutions and are free for unemployed and other specifically targeted groups).

To conclude this section, it must be said that contacted training providers affirm that the share of occupational change in their programmes is very high (more than 50% and even 80% in some cases). However, it should be considered if it is appropriate to talk about occupational change when individuals have had several short experiences in other activities and are not specifically qualified for any other profession (this is the case with many of these individuals).



### 3 Requirements of training and education measures in the context of occupational change<sup>18</sup>

#### 3.1 Construction sector/Plumbers

##### 3.1.1 Demographic and social characteristics of the trainees in plumbing courses

According to the experience of training providers, most participants are men (95%) and between 30 and 45 years old. In this sense, according to some interviewees, most women are not interested in plumbing activities because of the professional stereotype traditionally attributed to this profession (intense physical effort, need of physical strength, etc.). However, some training providers have designed specific measures for women.

Additionally, training providers confirm that there is a high participation of immigrants (20-25% of the trainees), particularly in Spanish regions with highest immigration rates (Catalonia, Madrid, etc.). As it refers to previous professions, training providers affirm that a high share of the trainees come from declining industries (graphic arts, coal industry, etc.), or from other activities linked with construction sector (electricians, bricklayers, housepainters, etc.).

The perception of training providers is globally confirmed by the data obtained from the profile of the trainees contacted by Ikei. These data show that nearly all the participants are men (in fact, 100% of contacted trainees), mainly 25 to 44 years old (but with a relative high share of younger and older individuals), and with elementary or secondary studies.

Similarly, the perception of training providers turns out to be correct concerning previous professions. In this way, most of the individuals come from the construction sector and other manual professions (maintenance activities, installations, carpenters, etc.), and only a few of them from more intellectual professions (accountants, administration auxiliaries, etc.). Interestingly also, a majority of the trainees want to change their occupation because of the lack of opportunities/bad working conditions of their previous occupations (and not because of vocation reasons).

In this respect, it is interesting to mention that many trainees have already participated in several other training programmes not linked to plumbing activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that many of the trainees do not have a clear perspective of their professional career; plumbing is just another possibility to get a better job (this is true especially in the case of trainees taking part in short-length courses).

<sup>18</sup> The information provided in this section has been obtained through in-depth interviews with relevant training providers, companies and trainees. Complementarily, Ikei has also carried out a survey among the trainees of some of these initiatives.

### 3.1.2 Requirements to work in plumbing: formal and informal knowledge and skills

When trainees are questioned about the formal requirements to work in plumbing activities, a big number of them mention the official card in plumbing issued by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce (“carnet de instalador” in Spanish), and others consider that the accreditation of a training course is sufficient. As it refers to informal qualifications, many of the participants mention manual skills and the knowledge of certain elemental plumbing tasks.

Contacted companies, on their side, do not pay much attention to formal accreditations as they seem to be more concerned about “knowing how to do” certain tasks and “knowing how to use” the necessary tools (practical knowledge). Personal skills and personal behaviour are important, too (listening, asking, obeying, a positive attitude to work, etc.), and also some physical capacities in certain specific plumbing activities.

Coherently, companies point out that even if it is not a requirement, previous experience is very relevant to them, because they know that individuals that have worked before in plumbing have the essential minimum practical knowledge (which is not always the case with the trainees without experience).

Finally, it must be said that these conclusions are, on overall terms, consistent with the results of a research carried out by the Spanish Institute for Employment (INEM Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal). In this research it is found that, in general, companies do not require formal qualifications, and that their focus is placed on practical skills and personal capacities.

**Table 2 Companies’ requirements to recruit plumbers**

<b>1. Personal and non-formal skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manual skills</li> <li>- Capacity to organize tasks</li> <li>- Productivity</li> <li>- Skills to maintain machinery, equipments and tools</li> <li>- Communications skills</li> <li>- Skills to operate machines.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Formal skills</b>
2.1 Academic record
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In general no academic studies are requested.</li> </ul>
2.2 Other formal skills
Professional card in plumbing (“carnet de instalador”).

\* Sample=404 companies of the construction sector.

Source: INEM. Ocupaciones generadoras de empleo y sus perfiles ocupacionales en la construcción. Own elaboration.

### **3.1.3 Assessment of available training measures to acquire the necessary knowledge/skills to work in plumbing (general and specific from the occupational change point of view)**

In general terms, trainees are satisfied with training measures (contents, flexibility of time-schedules, duration, methodology, etc.). However, trainees think that perhaps training measures could put more emphasis on practical aspects, and some of the trainees would also prefer shorter and more intensive measures. Besides, some of them insist on the relevance of making practical exercises in “real conditions”.

Additionally, some participants think that public authorities should pay more attention to occupational change, and a relatively high proportion mentions that they would like to receive a public allocation to pay the fees of the courses (occupied individuals do not receive public aids in several training programs). Apart from that, a high share of the trainees is aware of the relevance that companies attribute to experience, and they do not show much confidence on the degree of recognition of the courses.

Companies, on their side, are less satisfied with available training measures. In their opinion, training measures do not provide the necessary training, and this deficit is still higher in the case of short training courses. From their point of view, trainees without previous experience are short of practical knowledge and, therefore, they conclude that available training measures are not adequate to their needs.

Contacted companies point out that there are knowledge areas that are not taught in these training courses (specific tools, complexity of installations, etc.), and that practical exercises are carried out in artificially easy conditions (no practice in outdoor works, works at height, etc.).

### **3.1.4 Attitude and experience of plumbing companies with occupational change**

Due to the importance attributed to previous experience, companies are not particularly inclined to hiring workers coming from other professions. Besides, according to companies' experience, sometimes it is also the case that some of these workers are reluctant to start a career from the lowest professional levels (mainly because of their age).

Additionally, companies that have had some kind of experience with occupational change mention that workers coming from other professions frequently experience problems because they are not used to working in certain concrete difficult conditions (suffering bad weather conditions, etc.), and because they lack certain necessary personal skills (mental attitude, physical strength, etc.). One of the interviewees also alludes to the important consequences of the training deficits of these individuals, because they hinder the normal progress of these workers.

### 3.1.5 Desirable training measures in plumbing (general and specific from the occupational change point of view)

Trainees think that there should be a broader regional training supply in order to facilitate the access to these measures (closer training centres, different time-schedules and durations, etc.), and they also consider that there should be more public aids, specifically for the individuals that are occupied during the training scheme.

Additionally, both trainees and companies think that training courses should be more oriented to practical exercises/knowledge. On the contrary, companies and trainees totally disagree concerning desirable duration: while companies think that quite a long period of training is necessary, trainees prefer short duration courses. More precisely, companies suggest, for example, the creation of an initial vocational training degree with a specific specialization in plumbing activities.

## 3.2 Tourism/Cooks

### 3.2.1 Demographic and social characteristics of the trainees in cooking courses

According to the opinion of training providers, participation in cooking courses is quite balanced between men and women (50-50%), and most of them are young people (mean age around 30 years). However, there are some details that must be taken into account:

- women usually come from rather distinct professions (telephone operators, house cleaners, etc.), whereas there are more men that have previously worked in other professions of the sector (waiters, cook's assistants, etc.);
- there is a relevant share of medium aged women (30-50 years) that have worked before in housework or that have not had any remunerated job;
- about 20% of the trainees are immigrants with a very heterogeneous professional career (teachers, chemists, etc.);

On the other hand, according to training providers, the reasons for occupational change are mainly two:

- individuals without a well defined professional profile that consider that they have an opportunity in this emergent activity;
- individuals moved by their vocation.

Meanwhile, data referring to the trainees that have been contacted within the frame of this research show that there is an equilibrium between men and women (4 and 5, respectively), and a high dispersion in their age (20-55 years old). Nevertheless, there are two common characteristics: nearly all of them have a low education attainment (primary or secondary studies) and there is a significant share of unemployed people, even if most of them have had various different low salary jobs (housecleaners, cook's assistants, elderly-care assistants, etc.). In this sense, most of them mention that the poor working conditions of their previous jobs (low salaries, temporary contracts, etc.), and the wish to improve these conditions are the main reasons to follow a training course (and to a less extent vocation reasons).

Finally, it must be said that there is also a small segment of trainees following high-level cooking courses that were previously occupied in medium and high level professions (lawyers, psychiatrists, administration officers, etc.). In this case, there is also an equilibrium between men and women, but there is a higher concentration in medium ages (35-45 years old individuals). In this group the main reason for change is vocation, but there are also some individuals that have not succeeded in their previous occupation and consider that there are better opportunities for them in this business (to start their own business, etc.).

### 3.2.2 Requirements to work in cooking: formal and informal knowledge and skills

Most of the trainees mention that it is necessary to have a formal accreditation (an official diploma) in order to find a job in cooking. Additionally, they consider that there are some basic tasks (elaboration of basic meals, cutting and cleaning methods, etc.) they need to learn if they want to be hired. As it refers to informal skills, trainees do not seem to be aware about the requirements of their new profession.

On the other hand, contacted companies (catering and prepared food companies), mainly prefer individuals that have completed initial vocational training courses, this is, 2 years length courses that require much dedication. In this sense, when questioned about other shorter length courses, they think that they do not provide sufficient training (a minimum of 1,000 hours is mentioned by one of them). As it refers to non-formal skills companies mention team working and organisation capacities, the ability to solve problems, working time flexibility and a positive attitude to work.

Complementarily, in the framework of a research carried out by the Spanish Institute for Employment (INEM)<sup>19</sup>, it was found that more than half of the surveyed companies (sample=371), suffered “medium” or “high” degree difficulties to recruit cooks. Moreover, the “lack of skilled personnel” was the main reason of these difficulties (57% of these companies) even though another relevant share mentioned that these difficulties were due to the “lack of workers, in general” (31% of total).

According to this research, formal training requirements turn out to be highly dependent on the size and the typology of companies. In this sense, the training requirements of companies with more than 20 employees tend to be more demanding (initial vocational training), whereas smaller and familiar companies do not put so much emphasis on formal training. Similarly, bigger companies are more demanding than smaller ones concerning previous experience requirements.

<sup>19</sup> Ocupaciones generadoras de empleo y sus perfiles ocupacionales en la actividad de Hostelería. INEM.

**Table 3 Companies' requirements to recruit cooks**

<b>1. Personal and non-formal skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Productivity</li> <li>- Team working</li> <li>- Functional flexibility</li> <li>- Ability to solve problems</li> <li>- Attitude to sharing the objectives of the company</li> <li>- Punctuality</li> <li>- Respect of security and health rules at work</li> </ul>
<b>2. Formal skills</b>
<b>2.1 Academic record</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- None (71.1%)</li> <li>- primary studies (10.4%)</li> <li>- secondary studies (6.3%)</li> <li>- vocational training (10.3%)</li> </ul>
<b>2.2 Other formal skills</b>
Professional card to manipulate food ("carnet de manipulador de alimentos" in Spanish).

Source: INEM. Ocupaciones generadoras de empleo y sus perfiles ocupacionales en la actividad de Hostelería. Own elaboration.

In fact, previous experience is the most appreciated quality in the recruiting processes carried out by companies of the HORECA sector (32% of the surveyed companies). Experience is more important than disposition to work (quoted by 18% of companies), working time flexibility (8%), training/academic record in HORECA sector activities (7%), and personal skills (7%). Therefore, it can be concluded that, at least in theory, experience constitutes an important barrier to occupational change. However, in practice, the lack of experienced candidates has moved many companies to hire workers without previous experience.

**Table 4** Qualities most appreciated by companies in candidates in the HORECA sector

Companies < 20 employees	Companies 20-49 employees	Companies 50-499 employees	Companies > 500 employees
Experience	Experience	Experience	Experience
Disposition to work	Disposition to work	Disposition to work	Disposition to work
Working time flexibil.	Training in HORECA	Training in HORECA	Languages
Training in HORECA	Working time flexibil.	Working time flexibil.	Training in HORECA

\* Sample: 790 companies of the HORECA sector.

Source: FEHR. Situación de la Gestión de los Recursos Humanos en las empresas de Hostelería. Own elaboration.

### 3.2.3 Assessment of available training measures to acquire the necessary knowledge/skills to work in cooking (general and specific from the occupational change point of view)

Trainees are quite satisfied with the training courses they are following. First, they consider that the eligibility criteria of these courses are not difficult to meet. Second, they think that the length and the time schedules of these training courses are adequate to their needs (a few of them would have preferred a bit longer duration). And, third, they assess very positively the combination of theoretical and practical exercises within the classroom. In this sense, the importance of practical exercises is underlined by most participants.

According to trainees, probably the main weakness of these training courses lies in the lack of recognition. In this sense, several participants show doubts about the recognition of gained skills. Additionally, some of them also mention that training centres are too far from their home (this is, there are few training centres), with consequences in time and cost factors.

Companies hold a positive opinion of initial vocational training courses, and they assume that trainees will not be able to carry out their tasks properly from the very beginning. In this way, even if theoretical knowledge is usually enough, they often perceive that manual skills are not sufficiently developed (speed to execute some tasks, etc.). Nevertheless, it is something considered to be normal and companies know that these skills will be improved through practical experience.

On the other hand, companies are more negative when it refers to short-medium duration training courses (600 hours and shorter), and all of them agree that participants of this kind of courses are not sufficiently prepared to be cooks.



### 3.2.4 Attitude and experience of catering – prepared food companies with occupational change

Companies underline that coming from other professions does not represent an obstacle in itself. All applications are assessed following the same objective criteria, basically, knowledge/skills (official diplomas), previous experience in cooking and a positive attitude to work. However, as far as experience is concerned, this is very relevant for all of them, so individuals coming from other professions are in a weaker position.

Despite of it, companies that have hired individuals coming from other professions say that their experience is positive, even if it is true that these individuals have been hired in cook's assistance jobs (this is, in a lower professional category), because their training is not enough to be cooks.

It is interesting to stress that most companies agree that in the case of individuals coming from other professions a positive attitude to work is still more necessary than in the rest of cases.

### 3.2.5 Desirable training measures in cooking (general and specific from the occupational change point of view)

Some trainees point out that training schemes should include agreements between training providers and companies in order to assure that they are going to have the opportunity to put into practice their new knowledge (and, in fact, several of the analysed training schemes do include this kind of agreements). Interestingly also, one of the trainees thinks that individuals with low educational levels should have an easier way (eligibility criteria, duration of courses, etc.) to obtain a high degree accreditation in manual professions (plumbing, cooking, etc.).

Concerning costs and public aids, trainees think that there should be more allocations, especially for those individuals with less economic resources. Vocational training courses for unemployed people are free, and there are some additional aids paid to cover transport costs and other possible extra costs (e.g. in the case of individuals with children, etc.). In this sense, some trainees suggest that these additional aids could be divided into two or more payments (anticipated), instead of being paid at the end of the course.

On the other hand, companies think that training measures should have a longer duration, about 1,000 teaching hours and some additional internship or practical experience period in companies. There is a broad consensus on this issue. Of course, companies are aware that costs and financing is a very relevant issue for trainees (and still more, if training courses were longer as they suggest), and one of the interviewees mentions that financing problems could be addressed if unemployed people received a salary during these longer and more complete training schemes.

Finally, as it refers to non formal skills, some companies say that training courses should pay more attention to team working and to organisational skills.



### 3.3 Health and elderly care/Assistant nurses

#### 3.3.1 Demographic and social characteristics of the trainees in nursing courses for elderly people

First of all, it must be said that according to training providers, there are relevant differences in the profile of the trainees depending on the field of expertise of the measures: on one hand, trainees participating in assistance nursing courses for general hospitals are, in general, younger and with a higher educational level; on the other hand, participants in assistance nursing courses for elderly people are more mature and with a lower educational level.

Focusing on trainees in assistance nursing courses for elderly people, training providers affirm that the majority of them are females (more than 70% and close to 100% in some cases), and distinguish two different groups according to the age:

- The mature group (older than 40) is formed by women that have been occupied in low paid jobs (i.e. in the HORECA sector or cleaning houses) or that have not worked before (domestic labours). Immigrants represent a substantial share of these trainees (about 30%). These trainees are usually looking for low level and short length courses to work in home nursing, so they can start working as soon as possible.
- The young group (younger than 25) is formed by individuals that frequently have abandoned their academic studies and that hold some experience in a wide array of low-salary jobs (cleaning houses, telephone operators, retail stores or mall centres, etc.). Within this group, two sub-groups can be distinguished: trainees looking for higher level and longer duration training courses in order to work at elderly-hospitals and trainees looking for the formerly mentioned low level and short length courses to work in home nursing.

Finally, it is important to mention that the profile of the trainees contacted by Ikei is very similar to the “more mature group” mentioned before. In this sense, 100% are women, with low educational levels (elementary or secondary education), and most of them are more than 45 years old and have worked previously in low paid jobs (waiter, house cleaners, etc).

As it refers to the reasons for the occupational change, most of them mention the bad working conditions in previous jobs and the lack of professional opportunities. Nevertheless, vocation and the wish to aid people is also important for an important share of contacted trainees.

### 3.3.2 Requirements to work in nursing for elderly people: formal and informal knowledge and skills

Trainees taking part in short length courses (about 100 hours), are mostly individuals looking for a job in home nursing for elderly people. They think that they do not have to meet any specific requirement, and they just want to acquire and accredit a minimum knowledge to get a job. As it refers to informal qualifications, these trainees mention kindness and a positive attitude to working with elderly people.

On the other hand, participants in longer and higher level training courses (mainly vocational training courses for unemployed) are aware of the need of more in-depth knowledge and an official certificate in order to have any possibilities to work in elderly care institutions.

On their side, contacted companies, this is, elderly care institutions, have relatively strict requirements as it refers to formal training (even compulsory requirements if they are public institutions), and most of them demand the initial vocational training degree in assistance nursing. Not only that, elderly care institutions value very much previous experience and they also think that some additional skills are truly relevant (social/communication skills, patience, responsibility, vocation, etc.).

### 3.3.3 Assessment of available training measures to acquire the necessary knowledge/skills to work in nursing for elderly people (general and specific from the occupational change point of view)

Contacted trainees think that the courses they are following are quite adequate to their purposes (mainly, to work in elderly home nursing), but they do not have an overall perspective of the general available training measures (in part, due to their low educational level). However, some of them consider that it would be positive, if the training courses were complemented with a period of practical experience.

This perception is shared by interviewed elderly-care institutions. Most of them think that both formal and informal knowledge/skills should be reinforced through specific internship periods (3-4 months), because experience is really relevant to this profession. As previously mentioned, these companies think that it is necessary quite a long period of training (at least 2 years), in order to acquire necessary skills. And, in this respect, these companies think that the design and methodology of initial vocational training courses is good enough, especially, if they include some kind of internship.

In general, short/medium-length training schemes (for example, 6 month duration courses, 200-300 hour courses, etc.), are assessed negatively by companies. It is considered that contents are not sufficiently well developed in these courses. However, one of the interviewees affirms that his experience with this kind of trainees is rather positive, and mentions that it is only because of legal reasons (due to access conditions in public services), that they do not hire this kind of individuals with permanent contracts.

### 3.3.4 Attitude and experience of elderly care institutions with occupational change

Elderly care institutions do not hold a positive opinion about individuals coming from other professions, and they stress that usually the individuals that have participated in short-term training courses are not ready to work in nursing.

Moreover, some companies think that individuals that have worked previously in other professions probably do not have the informal skills and the personal values that are needed in this profession. In this respect, one of the companies points out that the vocational component is very relevant in this profession and that individuals that follow elderly care nursing courses just to get a job have higher probabilities to fail in their new job.

As an exception to this general perception, one of the companies says that its experience with individuals coming from other professions has been quite positive and that trainees showed sufficient theoretical knowledge and a positive attitude to work.

### 3.3.5 Desirable training measures in nursing for elderly people (general and specific from the occupational change point of view)

Companies' suggestions refer mostly to the characteristics of internship periods. One of them mentions that companies and training providers should reach agreements in order to pay a salary to the trainees during internship periods. Another one says that internship periods should be experienced in "real working conditions", this is, working during weekends, in different working-times, etc. Interestingly enough, one of the interviewees mentions that it would be positive, if trainees could share internships with more experienced workers, and underlines the relevance of monitoring trainees' performance (to assess their competences and attitude).

Finally, one company mentions an old scheme provided by the Spanish Institute for Employment (INEM) as an example of "good practice". In this scheme, trainees attended classes every day during 12 months, and each day trainees had some time for theoretical contents at class (4 hours) and some time for practical experience in companies (4 hours). The INEM paid these individuals a part-time salary, and the experience was very positive for participants and for the company.



## 4 Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 Assessment on the suitability of the available VET/adult education measures for supporting occupational change

A first conclusion obtained from the interviews with experts is that there is not much centralized and systematized information about occupational mobility. Social agents and public policy makers do not have overall data about the number of workers that change their occupation, so there is not much information on the profile of people affected by this situation (reasons to change, origin/destiny sectors, etc.), apart from anecdotic information. Only the training providers that have a close relationship with these individuals have some quantitative/qualitative information and some kind of intuition about the relevance of this phenomenon in their specific activity sector. **The lack of reliable data/analysis is a relevant barrier to carry out an accurate analysis of the occupational mobility issue in Spain.**

Second, considering available training courses, it is found that supply-driven **continuing training schemes** were designed taking into account, among other goals, occupational mobility issues. However, the implementation of these schemes shows that, until now, these schemes have not been fully successful to this purpose. In this way, in practice, there are not many training initiatives adequate for occupational change in the framework of continuing training. Most of these courses are quite short (50-60 hours), and they are not structured in a proper manner for occupational change purposes (independent, non-integrated courses).

On the contrary, the characteristics of **vocational training courses for unemployed** are quite appropriate in terms of length (600-800 hours, 4-8 months), methodological approach (theory and practice to carry out the most elemental tasks), flexible time schedules (night courses, weekend courses), and costs (free).

Finally, there are **several other training courses** with a short-medium duration (100-200 hours, 1-2 months) that may be adequate for individuals that urgently want to change their occupation (and also for unemployed individuals that urgently need a job). The cost of these courses depends on their length and methodology, but usually it is round 1,200-1,800 Euro (some of them are supported by local/regional public institutions and are free for unemployed and other specifically targeted groups). However, the problem is that **it is not easy to obtain an exhaustive list of available training courses for employees**. Moreover, it is quite complicated for potential trainees to analyse the main characteristics of these courses and select the most appropriate one to their profile. In this sense, it can be said that **the Spanish training system suffers a relevant lack of transparency that hinders occupational change.**

Third, from the point of view of the **demand**, and in the specific case of the three professions analysed in this research (plumbers, assistant nurses and cooks), **the upward economic trend (until mid 2007) has attracted many workers from other occupations**. In fact, due to the global economic expansive cycle, several companies have experienced difficulties in filling their vacancies, particularly in the case of cooks and plumbers. However, working conditions in these professions are not particularly interesting for many qualified workers (low salaries, long working days, temporary contracts, etc.), and therefore **individuals looking for a job in these professions are mainly mature people (35 years or older) with a low educational level and an**

**heterogeneous professional background (several previous low-paid jobs, often in different sectors-occupations, without specific qualifications, etc.).**

On the other hand, during this research the **participants of the Spanish training system** have been asked to assess the adequacy of available training supply for occupational change. The perception of contacted **training providers** is that the availability of courses is good. From their point of view the Spanish training framework is so broad that all individuals that want to re-qualify can find an adequate measure that fit their needs (whatever their personal/professional specific situation).

**Trainees**, on their side, are quite satisfied with the training courses (length, flexibility, etc.) they are following (or they have completed). Notwithstanding this, trainees consider that there are some aspects that could be improved: they consider that perhaps training courses should put more emphasis on practice, they would like to have more public aids and, more important, they are not too confident about the recognition of their training effort.

Finally, contacted **companies** think that in general available training courses are not sufficiently well designed to enable participants for the most elemental tasks, and most of them stress that training periods should be longer. Moreover, due to the lack of confidence in training schemes, many companies point out that they often require previous experience in the job (in the three analysed occupations). From the companies' point of view, initial vocational training programmes are the most adequate training measures, and training courses for occupational change should have a minimum duration of 1,000 hours and include practices in companies in real working conditions.

Considering all the aspects mentioned before, in this research it is concluded that, in the case of Spain, **Vocational Training Courses for Unemployed represent the main option for occupational change in these professions**. Moreover, as it concerns analysed professions (plumbers, assistant nurses and cooks), and probably in general terms, it has been found that **the Spanish training supply for occupied individuals is mainly aimed to upgrading workers' qualifications in their current occupation**.

Presumably, the positive recent trend of Spanish labour market (until mid 2007) has contributed to a lack of relevance of occupational change issues in the context of public training policies. Contacted experts agree that economic activities (and professions) expel workers when the economic situation is bad, and that they attract workers when the economic situation is good. In fact, the expectation to improve working conditions and develop a professional career is the main reason for occupational change (more relevant than vocation). In this way, due to the positive global economic situation experienced until mid 2007, there has been no relevant activity sectors expelling workers in a massive manner ("push factors"), but perhaps workers interested in occupational change ("pull factors") have had the best chances for this (this situation is not the case in the new economic situation).

In any case, some examples of these “push factors” have taken place. **The Support Plan for the Textiles Industry** (“Plan de Apoyo al Sector Textil y de la Confección” in Spanish) was implemented in 2006 by the Spanish Government to foster competitiveness in the sector and to alleviate the negative consequences on employment and workers<sup>20</sup>. In this sense, even if the plan includes measures to keep as many workers as possible working in the sector, it also pays attention to **initiatives intended to re-train and relocate surplus workers**, and it also contains special measures to provide special help for older workers that can not be relocated. Interestingly enough, the specific initiatives to retrain workers include a previous “ad-hoc” research of the professional profile of the workers of the sector, followed by counselling activities to orientate the professional career of these workers, and specific support initiatives in order to provide training to these workers in growing activity sectors with a deficit of workers in certain detailed occupations. To this purpose, the plan also includes special incentives (reductions in payments to social security), addressed to those companies that hire workers coming from the textiles industry.

The kind of measures adopted in this plan may be assessed as a “good practice” for occupational change. However, at the same time, the exceptionality of this plan reveals a weakness of the Spanish training system concerning the deficit of a well defined set of tools to help workers that want to get trained for an occupation (because of any reason), while they are employed in a different occupation. In this sense, the Spanish training system is mainly adapted to the needs of the workers that want to upgrade their skills in their current profession, and to the needs of unemployed people looking for a job, but not to the needs of those employed individuals interested in an occupational change.

## 4.2 Recommendations

A final purpose of this research is to provide some recommendations in order to improve the training framework for occupational change. These recommendations have been classified in two main groups depending on their final target group.

### 4.2.1 Recommendations addressed to public policy makers

The Spanish and the regional governments should **pay more attention to occupational change**. It would be very interesting to know how many individuals want to change their occupation (during the different economic cycles), what are the reasons and the profiles of these individuals, etc. More important, **a specific training framework for occupational change should be implemented**, properly designed to these individuals’ training needs.

From this research it can be concluded that the Spanish training system is currently focused on continuing training and unemployed people, whereas training for occupational change plays a minor role. In this sense, these new training schemes **would allow a softer/more progressive adjustment process from declining to growing industries (“push factors”), and would mitigate the impact of economic down-**

<sup>20</sup> The agreement reached by social partners (the Spanish government, the main two trade unions and the Intertextile Council), includes several measures to adapt the industry to the structural changes of the sector in world trade, and to limit the negative effects of this liberalisation. It is important to stress that the 12,000 companies of the sector employ about 140,000 workers.



**turns** (it would not be so necessary to adopt extraordinary measures for declining industries).

Complementarily, a reflection process on the limits of occupational change would be necessary because, presumably, the rate of success of occupational change will be higher when the formal qualifications/skills requested in the new profession are not very demanding. More interestingly, **this new framework should be adequate to the specific needs derived from the profile of the individuals that are planning an occupational change** (in terms of age, family responsibilities, etc.).

Besides, training measures for occupational change should try to satisfy trainees' and companies' needs. Flexibility is absolutely necessary for participants (duration, time-schedules, etc.), but it should be necessary to **reach a new agreement on the minimum contents that trainees need to know when they complete these courses**, because companies assess negatively current training measures.

And, finally, **considering that a large share of the individuals that want to change their occupation ("pull factors") have a low education level, it should be necessary to implement an effective counselling service (e.g. in the public employment services), to advice these people about most appropriate destiny professions (depending on their previous experience and personal non-formal skills), and also on adequate training providers**. In this context, these individuals should be aware that, depending on their background, they will have to start working in the new occupation with the lowest qualification level.

#### 4.2.2 Recommendations addressed to training providers

Training providers should try to improve the matching between the contents/methodology of their courses and trainees' and companies' needs. In particular, as far as practice turns out to be really important, **practical experience should be given a more relevant role in training schemes**. Taking this into account, **a best practice would include a theoretical period, a practical period in the training centre and an internship in a company in a real working environment**.

However, if trainees could not share their present job with an internship period, **training providers should try to create a sheltered environment as similar as possible to a real working environment**. Besides, in the case of long training courses (1,000 hours and more), it would be important if trainees could earn some money during the training process (via internships or other methods), because that way it would be easier for them to follow long duration courses.

Additionally, **training providers should improve their feedback communication channels for evaluation purposes**. On one hand, training providers should **work more closely with companies** in order to check if trainees show any specific deficit that requires more attention. On the other hand, training providers should try to **obtain more feedback from the trainees**, and particularly from those trainees that have been working in their new occupation for some time, to know if they think that there is any aspect that could be improved.



Apart from that, and even if most training courses are already structured in modules, usually it is not possible to select just some of these modules. In this sense, training providers should try to adopt **new measures to foster flexibility, including not only further additionality of modules but also those that may facilitate the participation of trainees from relatively distant locations.** The mix of distance-ICT based and presence (practical) classes in the same course may represent an interesting combination for trainees and companies.

Finally, **training providers should pay more attention to counselling/mentoring tasks.** Logically, it is not easy for trainees to adapt to their new occupation and, therefore, probably it would be helpful for them to receive some advice from their teachers. Interestingly enough, **training providers could create networks with companies' representatives to monitor trainees' progress and facilitate occupational transition.**



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