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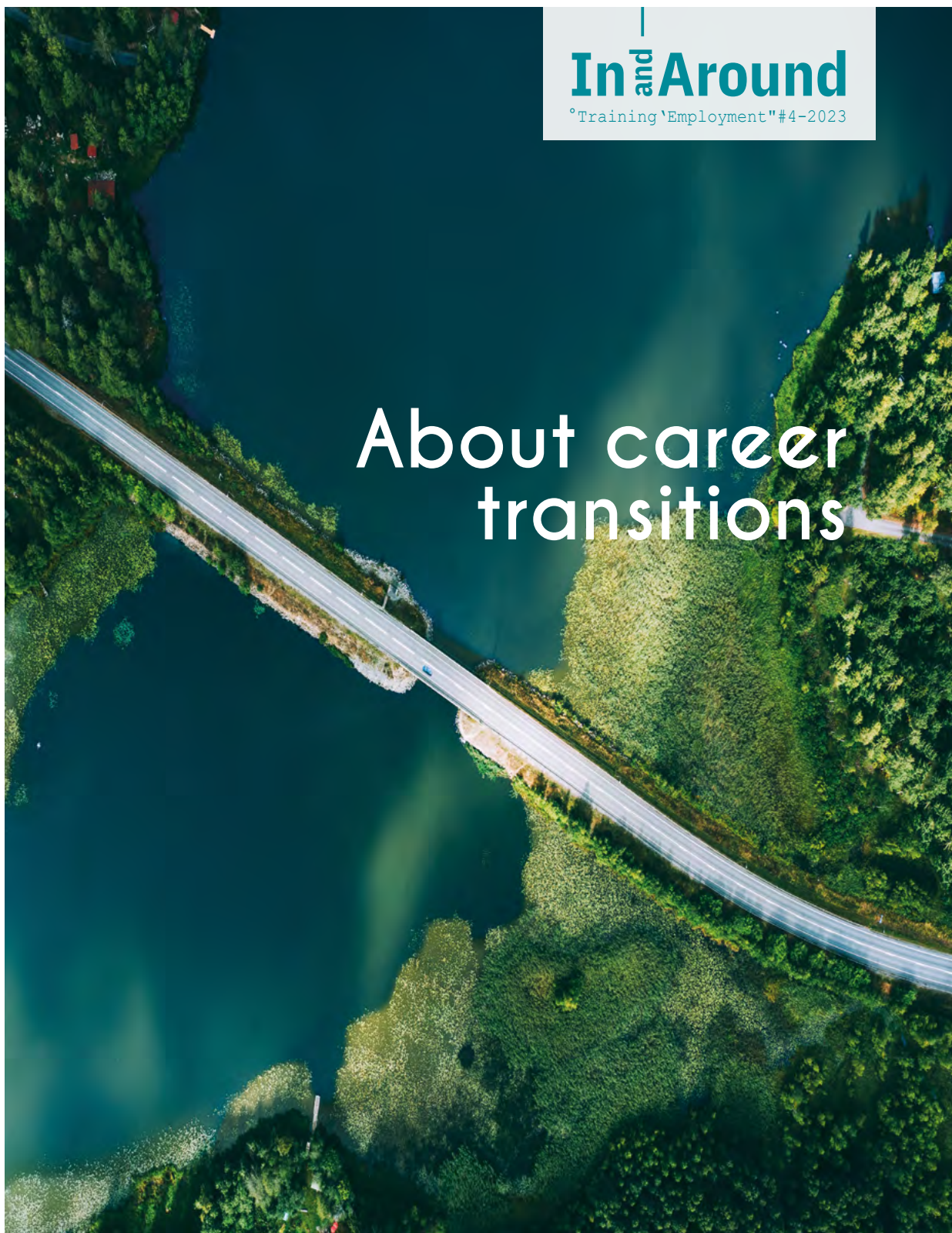
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Céreq

In and Around

°Training 'Employment" #4-2023

About career transitions





In^{and} Around

°Training`Employment"#4-2023

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An aerial photograph of a two-lane road winding through a dense green forest. The road is light-colored with white lane markings. A small blue car is visible on the road. The surrounding forest is lush and green, with some small structures and a body of water visible in the background.

In and Around

° Training Employment" #4-2023

 ABOUT CAREER TRANSITIONS

Summary

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road through a dense, lush green forest. The road curves from the bottom left towards the top right. To the left of the road, a large body of water, likely a lake or reservoir, is visible, with some lily pads on its surface. The forest is thick with various types of trees, showing a rich green color palette. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

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Matteo SGARZI

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Discipline: International Relations

Main research areas: Education and training systems analysis and evaluation - International projects coordination, vocational training

Introduction by Matteo SGARZI

In a fast-changing global context impacted by major societal shift (climate, digital, demographic) and turmoil (pandemics, international political instability), economies are transforming, skills required on the labour market are evolving and professions are changing. It is in these conditions that career transitions and professional reorientation take place.

Change is part of people's lives, affecting both the private and professional spheres, driven by the need to secure one's own situation in the face of future uncertainties, or to improve working and employment conditions and/or meet personal aspirations. In France, public policies are increasingly focused on supporting careers and transitions. In a variety of ways, they are seeking to anticipate change and cope with the increasingly frequent shocks that our economies are facing and that have repercussions on people's lives.

This is why in this fourth issue of *In and Around*, we want to address the broad theme of professional transitions and their regulation by public policy. It is precisely Béatrice Delay's starting point in her introductory article, which aims to highlight how public schemes, particularly those stemming from the latest 2018 reform of vocational training in France, seek to respond to employees' need for support. She identifies the levers that lead people to embark on a transition process, distinguishing between intentional transitions and those endured. She also analyses the obstacles to public policy support and the conditions for access and success of career changes.

However, in the following article by Camille Stephanus and Josiane Vero, it becomes clear that not all employees share the same

opportunities. Céreq data (Defis) highlights inequalities in access to training, and hence to career development. Less-qualified workers are disadvantaged compared to their colleagues in executive positions, despite equivalent underlying aspirations.

What's more, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue of professional reorientation, not just in the economic sectors most impacted by the period of lockdown, but more generally for a vast number of people who have suffered from the health crisis, leading them to question their priorities, values and their professional and life plans. Nathalie Bosse, Arnaud Dupray and Alexie Robert thanks to a dedicated survey entitled "*Génération Covid, what's next?*" illustrate the changes in situation, attitudes and behaviors brought about by this major crisis that has turned the course of our lives upside down. In the following article, Alexandra d'Agostino, Catherine Galli and Ekaterina Melnik-Olive examine the impact of the pandemic on the achievement of career transition plans envisaged and scheduled before the onset of the crisis, shedding light on the extent to which plans have had to be revised and adapted to the new conditions.

In fulfilling its mission as a public expert in the training-employment relationship, the Céreq is most often led to favour a national scope to fuel the debate, document the

population and support political decision-making. However, the question of the major trends that are sweeping the world often remains in the background and invites us to broaden our horizons of observation. With this in mind, Anaïs Chatagnon, Christine Fournier, Françoise Kogut-Kubiak and Matteo Sgarzi, have tackled the issue of the development and recognition of skills acquired in the workplace as basic elements enabling professional development, through the prism of an international comparison between France, Argentina, Morocco and Senegal. The results highlight common trends, not very sensitive to contextual conditions, in the conditions facilitating workplace development of skills, and show that the issue of recognition of skills acquired in the workplace is far from settled at all latitudes. This latter result has for sure negative repercussions on workers trajectories and professional transition opportunities.

This overview of Céreq's recent studies on the theme of professional transitions should be of interest to a large number of European and international stakeholders and partners. It is the task of our International Relation to focus on dissemination of research findings towards a large European and international audiences, to cultivate exchanges, to stimulate debates and by these means, to enrich Céreq's expertise.





Béatrice DELAY

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Expert's outlook

An arsenal of instruments that aim to support individuals in their occupational mobility plans (career transition counselling, business start-up assistance, skills assessments, personal training accounts, career change plans, the collective career change programme, promotion or retraining through block-release programmes, the resignation scheme, which enables those planning to leave their jobs in order to set up a business or to retrain to resign and claim unemployment benefit without any waiting period, the validation of experiential learning and so on) were introduced or reconfigured by the Act of 5 September 2018 and the recovery plans following the crisis. The government has also recently announced its desire to revisit these programmes with the aim of improving their efficiency, both in terms of accessibility and from the point of view of the relevance of the support they provide.

The *Défis*, *Génération* and *Impact* studies carried out by Cereq, the results of which are reproduced in this publication, as well as a study conducted in 2022 by *France compétences*¹, provide some data that will make a valuable contribution to the coming negotiations. They shed light on the processes from which the desire to retrain emerges, the resources deployed, and the obstacles encountered in realising a plan to change occupation. These studies help to render intelligible the plurality of individual experiences of retraining and the social determinants that influence them and to point out to those engaged in public action some avenues for further reflexion.

Dissatisfaction, an omnipresent dimension in desires for change

Dissatisfaction emerges as an omnipresent dimension in the reasons cited in justification of a desire to change occupation. This finding, which is confirmed by professionals with experience in the area, puts into perspective the binary opposition between enforced and voluntary career changes. It also helps to explain why, for those seeking above all to escape from an unbearable situation, the possibility of returning to one's former job offered by schemes such as the collective career change programme (*Transition*

Collective) if the planned career change falls through does not always constitute an attractive guarantee. And in any case the dissatisfaction that engenders a desire for change is not confined to the later stages of a career but may come into play even at the beginning of an individual's working life.

The study carried out by *France compétences* shows that this dissatisfaction can take three forms. The first is linked to job insecurity. It affects employees who feel they are at risk of redundancy or dismissal and jobseekers whose searches in their original occupational field have proved fruitless. The second relates to the contractual characteristics of the job held, such as a level of pay regarded as too low, precarious employment status or atypical or even unpredictable working hours. The third is linked to the meaning of the work, which can be structured around three components: its social usefulness, its compliance with ethical standards and the opportunities for development it offers to workers.

¹ This study gave rise to a report entitled "Parcours de reconversion professionnelle" and two synthesis papers in the series *Analyser pour Réguler* ("Des reconversions professionnelles variées et éloignées des modèles linéaires"; "L'offre publique d'accompagnement à l'épreuve des reconversions professionnelles"). All three documents can be accessed on the *France compétences* website.

Those individuals affected by a loss of meaning speak of the impoverishment of their work due to diminished prospects for development or reduced opportunities for deploying their expertise.

This erosion of the meaning of work can also be observed among individuals torn between their approach to quality and a more instrumental and quantified approach advocated by management. The stories are many and various, but they all bear witness to “frustration at work”.

The narratives collected during this study indicate that the search for meaning is by no means confined to the higher occupational categories. Nevertheless, the *Défis* survey provides some valuable clarifications. It shows that dissatisfaction differs in scale and nature depending on socio-occupational positioning. For blue- and white-collar workers with little in the way of qualifications, the aspiration to change occupation is primarily part of a defensive strategy linked to job (in)security and pay. For more highly qualified blue- and white-collar workers, it has more to do with the arduousness of the working conditions, a lack of recognition or a feeling of having been downgraded. Conversely, career changes for managers and those in intermediate occupations are more often managed as part of a preventive strategy and driven by a search for greater fulfilment.

The level of risk depends on individual and contextual factors

Firstly, an individual’s initial degree of confidence in their chances of success and their perception of the level of risk inherent in a career change are heavily dependent on their previous trajectories. Two contradictory types emerge from the study conducted by France Compétences. On the one hand, there are those who have already experienced repeated changes – supported to a greater or lesser extent – in their technological, functional, or organisational environments and who are in no doubt about their ability to cope with the level of unpredictability

and destabilisation that goes hand in hand with a change of occupation. On the other, there are those who have spent their entire careers confined to the same job, who have not benefited from any measures to maintain their employability and who express fears about their aptitude for learning and making a change. This finding highlights the profoundly constructed nature of the resistance to change and the potentially preventive role of management policies.

Above and beyond individual trajectories, the economic crisis has had contrasting effects on career change plans. Although more than one third of the young people in the 2017 cohort of the *Génération* survey stated that the crisis had led them to reconsider their plans, the variable that seems most strongly linked to the desire for a change of direction is the degree of anxiety about the future. Those young people who declared themselves to be anxious were more likely to mention that they had reconsidered their plans. Based on the Impact survey, four typical situations can be identified in which the effects of the economic situation on career change plans make themselves felt. In the first, the process is halted. Faced with the crisis, employees opted for job security and cast doubt on their plans or even abandoned them completely. In the second scenario, the individuals concerned postponed their career change to a time more favourable to putting their plan into action. In the third, conversely, the availability associated with short time working created an opportunity to energise both the deliberation phase (honing the plan, making the decision) and the implementation phase ([re]training). The last typical situation concerns those individuals who continued to pursue a change of direction on which they had already embarked, even if the course they had taken had to be adjusted to fit the new context.

Finally, the probability of realising a career change unmistakably bears the hallmark of social inequalities. According to the Defis survey, in 2019 scarcely one unskilled blue-/white-collar worker in five aspiring to change

career was to put their plan into action, compared with one skilled blue-/white-collar worker in four and one manager/intermediate professional in three. Access to stable employment is even more selective. Findings of this kind call into question the room for manoeuvre individuals enjoy, particularly the least skilled, in order really to become actors in their own career trajectories as policy makers and the wider society demand. Clearly, such an ambition is not solely a matter for the economically active but is also an issue for employers, the social partners, and public institutions.

The public offer of support put to the test by career change trajectories

According to the study carried out by *France compétences*, 36% of the career changers received public support². Although those who were unemployed enjoyed a high level of assistance, those who were in employment were far from excluded. This confirms the value of confidential spaces for deliberation at some distance from employers. Non-receipt of support is linked, broadly speaking, to two categories of behaviour. The first is ignorance of the contents of the public offer or the existence of other resources in the immediate environment, enabling individuals to dispense with any additional measures. The second is a well-argued rejection that manifests itself in opposition to the perceived aim of the public schemes. Public support is indeed connoted negatively by some, who go so far as associating it with the figure of the helpless person. Expressing pride in their ability to succeed through their own efforts and to be the sole author of any actions they may take, these individuals state that they have no confidence in the ability of the institutional operators to adapt their support measures to their problems.

When called upon, public or para-public networks seem to play to the full their role as catalysts for resources. Beneficiaries are more likely than others to state they were able to access training or public funding, particularly those who sought career

transition counselling, which is often used to support a career change. The study also confirms how enabling or empowering the support provided can be (by extending the range of possibilities, helping to construct informed choices, providing reassurance and legitimisation etc.), even more so when a commitment to career change is occasioned by a distressing experience at work. In these cases, counsellors testify to the need to shift their position by adopting an approach which, rather than being forward-looking and focused on the plan, emphasises introspection to help those affected regain their confidence in their ability to act.

Nevertheless, the accounts given by users of the public offer of support reveal four recurrent pitfalls. Firstly, the support provided is sometimes overly prescriptive, insufficiently individualised and, above all, oriented to the needs of the economy, whether with regard to the occupations of the future or those experiencing labour shortages. Secondly, several interviewees regretted that the providers of the support they had received had not immediately raised the question of the feasibility of their plans. This complaint is not unconnected with the linear and sequential logic that still underlies many schemes, in which the initial focus is on a “decontextualised” account of individuals’ aspirations; it is only subsequently that counsellors begin to investigate the compatibility of those aspirations with individuals’ professional and personal constraints. Furthermore, the instruments deployed to support the management and implementation of career change plans could usefully be expanded to incorporate immersive techniques that would bring users face to face with the actual activity, thereby enabling them to enter into situations on a practical level and thus to decide on the feasibility or otherwise of their plans.

² Public support here encompasses the services provided by providers of career transition counselling, local authorities, chambers of commerce and industry and business incubators.

One final source of dissatisfaction is linked to the time frame of the support. Some users would have liked their support to continue after their training or even until they had obtained the job, they were seeking to reassure themselves of the wisdom of their change of direction and to have a space in which to analyse the new context in which they were now operating.

By virtue of the wealth of knowledge it provides, the present publication constitutes a resource for public action, which faces the challenge of establishing sufficiently regulated forms of support to guarantee social equity and a consistent quality of service without for all those confining individuals within standardised and predetermined formats.





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- capability Approach -socioeconomics of organisations

Retraining is hard work! A survey of unskilled workers

The question of retraining lies at the heart of current employment policy issues. However, wanting to change occupation is no guarantee of completing a retraining programme, even less of finding a job. While low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers are the ones most likely to seek a change, they are also the ones who benefit least from a retraining programme. Workers' desires to retrain are also driven by different motivations depending on their socio-occupational category: it may be an enforced reaction to the ups and downs of working life, a rejection of downgrading and deteriorating working and employment conditions or a search for meaning.

Reforms of employment law and policies, as well as the collective bargaining system, are the arenas in which calls for retraining are made. The Act of 5 September 2018 on the Freedom to Choose One's Future Career and the Skills Investment Plan brought into action instruments that have been further strengthened by the Recovery Plan. Thus, since the summer of 2020, retraining programmes for shortage occupations or the occupations of the future have been a major element of the efforts being made to rebuild following the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and to deal with the digital and ecological transformations.

Such policy trends are prey to high levels of ambivalence inasmuch they fluctuate between a desire to make space for initiative and individual freedom (in keeping with the reforms undertaken since the beginning of the 2000s) and a concern to steer retraining programmes towards shortage occupations or occupations of the future. Thus considerable uncertainties remain as to the room for manoeuvre individuals, particularly unskilled blue- and white-collar workers, actually enjoy to move into new occupations and to benefit from such moves. The main targets of retraining policies, they are also being called on to become actors in their own working lives even though the pathways along which they might construct their careers are far from being mapped out. The health and economic

crisis has made their situation more visible: at the heart of significant changes, they are being singled out and urged to adapt, get themselves trained and change jobs.

However, some of them were wanting to change occupation well before the crisis. The Defis survey, with its four-year observation period, enables us to take stock of individual pathways and to contextualise these aspirations in the original company in order to capture the dynamic within which the idea of retraining was forged and what the motivations, constraints and outcomes were in 2019.

In 2015, according to the Defis survey, 33% of all employees wanted to change occupation. Those in low-skilled jobs were the group most likely to be wanting a change, with 39% of them seeking a move, compared with 32% of skilled blue- and white-collar employees (SBC-SWCs) and 29% of those in the intermediate professions (IPs) and managerial positions (cadres). These intentions had not arisen out of nowhere. They reflected widespread dissatisfaction among workers with their employment situation. Although it is a decisive factor in shaping a desire to leave one's job, this dissatisfaction does not have a single cause; on the contrary, it varies in scope and nature depending on socio-occupational category. A desire to change job or occupation arises from one of three different motivations

depending on whether the employee in question is in a low-skilled, averagely skilled or highly skilled position: it may constitute an enforced reaction to the ups and downs of working life, a rejection of downgrading and deteriorating working and employment conditions or, finally, a search for meaning and a more widespread desire for more free time to devote to one's personal life. Such are the results of three logistic regressions. There are a number of different ways to start an investigation into retraining.

Low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers: when jobs are at stake

For workers employed in low-skilled jobs, the idea of retraining is usually forged when difficulties are encountered in the labour market, e.g. in the event of a massive upheaval caused by a social plan or redundancy programme or the experience of precarity, particularly when it goes hand in hand with pluriactivity. A desire to change occupation may also be expressed when the share of an employee's basic salary is reduced in order to make way for a variable share based on performance. In this case, therefore, the desire to retrain is more a matter of security linked to the current job and wage. Several signals tend to show that it is when a job is at stake that the time to think of retraining has arrived, that is to say in a constrained situation or defensive position. Employees are less likely to embark on a retraining programme as a purely preventive measure, in the absence of any threat to their jobs or in response to deteriorating working and employment conditions.

However, it is all the easier to throw oneself into a retraining programme when the employer has drawn up an employment protection plan that includes a reclassification plan. This plan must contain measures such as training, validation of knowledge acquired through experience (VKE) and retraining programmes in order to facilitate employee reclassification, whether internally or externally. It is usually in such a context that low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers

are motivated to consider retraining. They are also more likely to do so if they work in the hotel and catering or construction sectors.

1 Measuring skill level

Employees are classified on the basis of the skill level of the job they hold: managerial and executive (cadre), intermediate profession, skilled white-collar, skilled blue-collar, low-skilled white-collar and low-skilled blue-collar. The job skill level was recorded in 2015 at the time of the first wave of the Defis survey when respondents were voicing their career aspirations for the next five years. The occupation recorded at that time was categorised initially according to INSEE's PCS-ESE classification. The distinction between managerial and executive, intermediate profession, white-collar and skilled and low-skilled blue-collar is based on Olivier Chardon's classification (*La qualification des employés*, Insee, document de travail, n° F 0202, 2002).

Skilled blue- and white-collar workers: when work and its recognition and organisation are at stake

For skilled blue- and white-collar workers, the situation is more nuanced. The desire to change job or occupation is less likely to erupt suddenly, when a redundancy plan is drawn up, for example. Nevertheless, as for low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers, the wish to train for a new occupation also emerges out of a rejection of precarity and experience of fixed-term jobs. While there are as many reasons for wanting to leave an occupation as there are individuals, for skilled blue- and white-collar workers the motivations generally cluster around work itself and the recognition thereof: the impression of not being paid sufficiently well given the work they do or a feeling that they are overqualified for the jobs they are currently doing. Such a feeling of downgrading or loss of status reflects a gap between an individual's skill level and the job currently

held. Highly skilled jobs are being created, but at a slower pace than the quickening flow of graduates leaving our universities. Some of these graduates are having to accept jobs requiring lower qualifications than those they have obtained in the education system. The triggering events also usually have something to do with working conditions reminiscent of Tayloristic work practices: when employees carry out monotonous, repetitive tasks, have to work in arduous conditions or when they have a health problem that prevents them from accomplishing certain tasks on a long-term basis. And finally, another important motivation is being better able to reconcile work and personal life. These are all motivations that do not come to the fore as absolute priorities for workers in low-skilled jobs.

Managers (cadres) and intermediate professionals: when what is at stake is an anticipated risk of job loss and a search for meaning

For managerial staff and intermediate professionals, the desire to change jobs or occupation does not emerge in exactly the same context. Although, objectively,

they are less affected by unemployment and less exposed to unfavourable working and employment conditions, they are more aware of the changes taking place in their company. These changes may appear to them as risks or threats to their jobs and lead them to consider retraining as a preventive measure. This is more likely to be the case when there is a change in the management team or when they believe they are at risk of losing their jobs even though the company is in a healthy position. These categories of employees seem more likely than the others to plan for and manage their retraining. The significant situations that appear to prompt a wish to retrain are also more likely to be connected to disparities between individual aspirations and the work itself: to look for more interesting work, to work less frequently on a just-in-time basis or to stop their work conflicting with their personal lives seem to be important motivations. All these factors lead us to suppose that such about-turns have more to do with a search for personal development - in essence, a search for a job and a life that have meaning. These situations are more likely to be observed in the finance, insurance and real estate sectors.

2 Employees' views of working and employment conditions in 2015 %

Share of employees concerned by	LSBC-LSWC	SBC-SWC	Managers-IP
Repetitive work	80	64*	32
A feeling they are underpaid in view of the work they do	61	41*	48
A job not commensurate with their qualifications	37	26*	17
A change in the management team	30	28*	37*
Difficulties in reconciling work and personal life	22	21	29*
A health problem/handicap that prevents them from holding down a job on a long-term basis	17	13*	5*
Frequent boredom at work	14	12	7*
Fixed-term job	9	6*	4

LSWC: low-skilled white-collar **SBC:** skilled white-collar **LSBC:** low-skilled blue-collar **SBC:** skilled blue-collar. **IP:** intermediate profession **M:** managerial and executive.

Source: CNEFP-France compétences-Céreq, dispositif Defis- enquêtes 2015.

Scope: all employees in the Defis employees field employed in the same company between December 2013 and summer 2015.

Example: 80% of LSBC-LSWCs stated they did repetitive work in 2015, compared with 64% of SBC-SWCs and 32% of Managers-PIs. *All other things being equal, doing repetitive work increases the probability of wanting to change occupation for SBC-SWCs. This is not the case for LSBC-LSWCs or for managerial and executive staff.

One surprising finding is that it is the least qualified workers who are both the most exposed to deteriorating working and employment conditions and, paradoxically, the least inclined to think of retraining in response. In fact, they are more likely to be doing repetitive work (80%), to regard themselves as inadequately remunerated for the work they do (61%), to be in a job that does not match their skill or qualification level (37%), to have difficulties reconciling their personal lives and their work (22%), to have a health problem that prevents them from holding down a job on a long-term basis (14%) or to be in a temporary job (9%). And yet, these increased difficulties do not trigger a desire to retrain, whereas they push other employees into seeking a change of job or occupation. Such a finding is suggestive of a phenomenon known as adaptive preference. Low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers seem more likely to internalise the constraints, thereby hampering their capacity to aspire to better things.

Between retraining as a “voluntary” endeavour and retraining as an imperative with which those concerned have to come to terms, the various socio-occupational categories do not embark on their retraining

projects from the same starting line. If their capability to aspire is unequal and workers in low-skilled jobs adapt their preferences, why is this so?

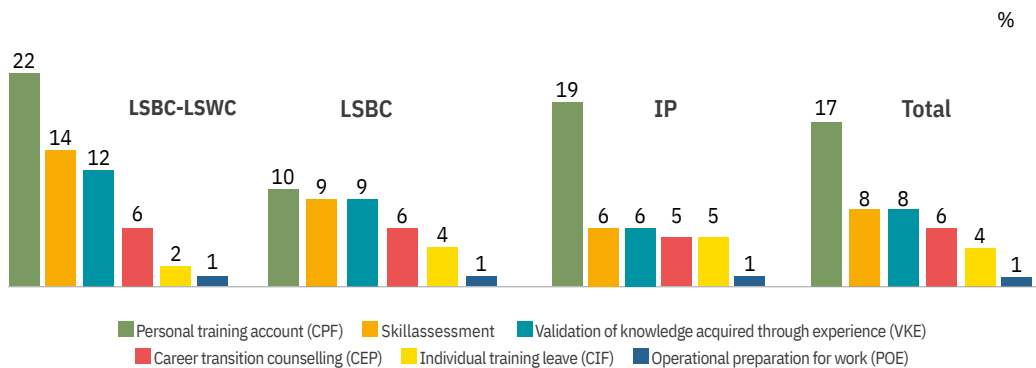
Just as the plans target the future, so they are largely a product of the expected benefits. To what extent do low-skilled workers take advantage of retraining programmes? How many chaotic and failed attempts are there for every successful retraining effort?

Employees in unskilled jobs do not make less use of retraining support

There are numerous support measures available for those seeking to retrain: career transition counselling («*conseil en évolution professionnelle/CEP*»), VKE and personal skills assessments are part of the arsenal of existing measures. Although such measures remain relatively unused, low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers are no less likely than the other categories to take advantage of them. Between 2015 and 2019, 6% of them sought career transition counselling, 14% undertook a personal skills assessment and 12% opted for VKE (Figure 3).

Between 2015 and 2019, it was the low-skilled categories that made greatest use of personal training accounts (CPF), at a

3 The use of retraining support measures (Between 2015 and 2019)



LSWC: low-skilled white-collar **SWC:** skilled white-collar **LSBC:** low-skilled blue-collar **SBC:** skilled blue-collar **IP:** intermediate profession. **Source:** CNEFP-France compétences-Céreq, dispositif Defis-enquêtes 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. **Scope:** all employees in the Defis field who remained in the same company between December 2013 and the summer of 2015 and seeking to change job or occupation in 2015 (excluding retirees). **Example:** 22% of the LSWC-LSBCs who wished to change occupation in 2015 undertook a training course funded by their personal training accounts between 2015 and 2019.



rate of 22% compared with 10% for skilled blue- and white-collar employees. Before the Act of 5 September 2018 monetised personal training accounts, the 150-hour ceiling for continuously employed full-time workers after eight years was a very modest level indeed for embarking on a retraining programme without additional resources. Whereas the personal training accounts tend to be used to finance short training courses, this tendency has been reversed with the individual training leave arrangement (CIF)*, which is the cornerstone of an approach that links training, promotion and social mobility. This new leave arrangement enables employees to undertake a training programme of their own choice in working hours while retaining their job and their pay for a period or one year or more, depending on the particular industry-level agreement. However, only 2% of low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers have taken advantage of this arrangement, despite the fact that long training programmes of this kind are intended to play a central role for these categories.

Retraining and returning to work:

**As of 1 January 2019, the CIF evolved to become the «Projet de Transition Professionnelle» (Career Change Project – PTP) by Act No. 2018-771 of 5 September 2018*

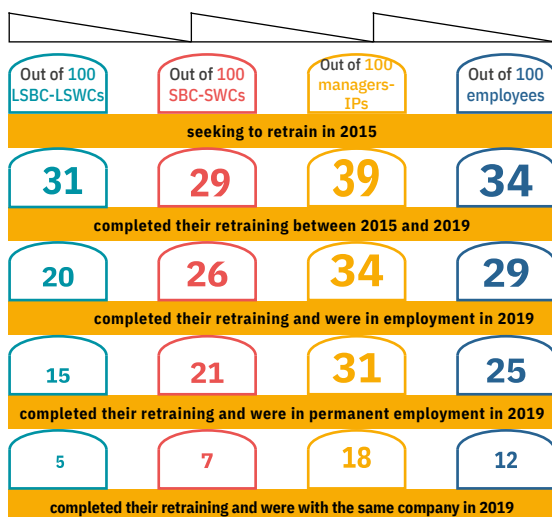
uneven prospects depending on socio-occupational category

In 2015, 33 out of every 100 employees wanted to change job or occupation. Four years later, 10 of them had completed their retraining, 9 were employed, 7 were in stable employment and 4 were still with their original company. These five figures trace out a turnaround that is difficult to negotiate. It was employees in low-skilled jobs who were most eager to retrain but they were also the ones who were most likely to fail in this endeavour. For them, a change of occupation is less likely to go hand in hand with access to employment, particularly stable employment, and is usually achieved through external mobility.

The highest retraining success rates are, after all, observed among employees in the most highly skilled jobs, although the differences between the categories remain relatively small: between 2015 and 2019, 39% of managers and IPs wishing to retrain did so successfully, compared with 29% of SBC-SWCs and 31% of LSBC-LSWCs (Table 4).

On the other hand, at the end of a retraining programme, a key question remains, namely that of the return to employment. This is an issue where the inequalities are

4 Employees' retraining trajectories (between 2015 and 2019)



LSWC: low-skilled white-collar
 SWC: skilled white-collar
 LSBC: low-skilled blue-collar
 SBC: skilled blue-collar
 IP: intermediate profession

Source: CNEFP-France compétences-Céreq, dispositif Defis-enquêtes 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Scope: all employees in the Defis field who remained in the same company between December 2013 and the summer of 2015 and seeking to change job or occupation in 2015 (excluding retirees). Example: 31% of LSWC-LSBCs seeking to retrain in 2015 completed their retraining between 2015 and 2019.



more pronounced: in 2019, scarcely one LSBC-LSWC in five seeking to retrain had completed their retraining and was in a job, compared with one SBC-SWC in four and one manager or IP in three (Table 4). Access to stable employment is even more selective and unequal. LSWCs and LSBCs were only half as likely as managers to complete a retraining programme and be in permanent employment in 2019 (Table 4). Staying with the original employer after completing a desired retraining programme follows the same trend but further widens the gap between the socio-occupational categories. Managers and IPs are more likely to move jobs internally following a change of occupation: 18% of those who wished to retrain in 2015 did so internally between 2015 and 2019, that is to say changed occupation within the same company compared with just 7% of SWC- SBCs and 5% of LSWC-LSBCs. The latter category was 3.5 times less likely to complete an internal retraining programme than managers and IPs. A change of company is their principal mode of occupational mobility (Table 4).

Conclusion

Findings such as these call into question the opportunities and room for manoeuvre low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers enjoy when it comes to retraining. They echo the CESE finding of unequal access to long retraining programmes and point to some possible solutions, through a strengthening of actual rights to ambitious training programmes designed as preventive measures unrelated to the employer's right

to make employees redundant. If every worker is being called on to become "an actor in their own professional development" and to shoulder the responsibility for it, this will require them to have at their disposal the means to assume such a responsibility. It is not the role of workers alone to make such means available; employers, the social partners and public institutions must also be involved. The Act of 5 September 2018 and the Skills Investment Plan have brought into play new support and training measures. The urgency resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a redeployment of collective and individual measures, the most recent being the so-called «*Transitions collectives*» (TransCo). Their effects will have to be assessed at some point in the future. At the same time the question arises of the return to employment. While recruitment is becoming increasingly difficult in more and more occupations, many workers are not managing to find a job on completion of their retraining. The majority of them are low-skilled blue- and white-collar workers. Not all the social categories suffer equally the consequences of the lack of jobs as measured by DARES, the research and statistical section of the French Ministry of Labour: in the third quarter of 2021, the number of jobseekers exceeded vacancies in France by a factor of 13. While there is not room in the labour market for everyone, it is just as essential to put in place an ambitious training policy for those seeking to retrain as it is to promote the creation of sustainable jobs in order to take up the challenge of unemployment among the least qualified.

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Career change plans in a health crisis: fewer in number and rather defensive in nature

The unprecedented scale of the health crisis, the sudden lockdown in the spring of 2020 and the uncertainties that were still present at the beginning of 2021 with an easing of the pandemic in sight may have led some people to question and rearrange their priorities in life, and in particular the place, content, and organisation of their work. Others may have seen their employment situation or working conditions turned upside down by the crisis, leading them to question their career prospects. Thus, the economic and social consequences of the period may have acted as disruptive elements of varying significance in every worker's trajectory.

Our purpose here is to shed some light on these effects by reviewing and analysing career change plans launched after the beginning of the health crisis. The data used are drawn from the “Génération, Covid et après?/After Covid what?” survey carried out in the spring of 2023 as part of a project funded by DARES¹ among a nationally representative sample of the cohort that left the education system in 2010 (Box). Aged 31 on average and already well integrated into the labour market when the crisis erupted (86% were in work), they form the “hard core” of the economically active population in work and are still in an upward growth phase of their career trajectories compared with their elders. They are also at a stage in their lives and careers at which issues arising out of the linkage between work and family and private life (70% of them live with a partner and almost half have children) are more pressing and more complex than for other age groups. After an outline of the main sociological approaches that enable us to understand the origins of career changes, we report what the quantitative survey reveals of these career changes in times of pandemic. While such changes of direction did not increase after the beginning of the crisis, they nevertheless had certain specific characteristics in terms of the motivations and expectations of the individuals concerned. The previous labour market situation and the impact of health measures on the activity in question also had

a role in triggering such moves. We then shed some additional light on the role of the crisis in career changes by means of an analysis of two biographical narratives derived from the qualitative survey.

Career changes at the confluence of circumstantial and identity-related problems

Desires for a career change or for retraining can be analysed and understood using a number of different approaches. They include those that address the career changes that arise at times of crisis (whether personal or collective, as here) and great unpredictability and identity-based approaches, in which a desire for a change of career is interpreted as the condition for and means of effecting a biographical change of direction. However, career changes can also serve “to avoid change”, that is to preserve certain aspects of the previous activity that are regarded as

¹ This research was financially supported by DARES, the research department of France's Ministry of Employment, as part of the call for research projects entitled “*Quels impacts de la crise sanitaire liée à la covid-19 sur le marché du travail ?/How has the COVID-19 health crisis impacted the labour market?*”, which was launched in July 2020. The results presented here are drawn from the final report, is available online: <https://www.cereq.fr/Debuts-de-parcours-professionnels-et-crise-sanitaire>. The Génération 2010 Survey, the aim of which is to study the education-to-work transition, provides information on respondents' educational trajectories and labour market situation on a month-by-month basis during the first seven years of their working lives.



Génération

Covid et après ?

The data

By extending the surveys carried out by Céreq in 2013, 2015 and 2017 among the cohort of young people who left the education system in 2010, the survey carried out in April and May 2023 (4,887 respondents out of a total of 8,800 in the 3rd wave) enables us to get a handle on the evolution of the career trajectories of young people who had already been in the labour market for ten years when the health crisis erupted. Thus, the survey documents the changes in people's employment situations that occurred between 1 March 2020 and the survey date, with a specific section of questions on the existence of career change plans formulated since 2018 or that arose during the crisis. It also included a qualitative part, with 30 biographical interviews conducted with respondents who had embarked on a career change. The narratives thus gathered facilitate understanding of the processual dynamic of which the career change was part and also of the way in which it made sense for the individual concerned.

important by recreating them; these might include standard of living, a favourable link between family life and work, job security, fulfilment at work, a particular employment status, a high degree of autonomy and so on. They are also a product of the past: gaps in the previous career trajectory and family socialisation may act sometimes as brakes and sometimes as levers.

Thus, a desire for a career change may be driven by a whole range of motives, from an urgent need to take defensive action to an aspiration to fulfil oneself by giving free rein to an emerging vocation.

Changing course in a health crisis: the statistics

Our results first put paid to a common idea, namely that the number of people harbouring career change plans increased during the crisis. What is more, the motivations, although varied, often had more to do with making good an unsatisfactory or deteriorating situation than with rethinking a promising start to a career and changing a life plan. The immediate repercussions of the crisis and the periods of lockdown on work and the nature of individuals' previous career trajectories are

obviously not unconnected with the origins of these plans.

No boom in career changes

It is true that more than one third of the respondents stated that they had contemplated changing career since 2018 and that 68% of these had actually taken steps to put their plans into practice. However, if we focus more narrowly on those plans that were beginning to be put into practice, only 22% actually emerged during the period of the health crisis, rather fewer in fact than if such plans had developed at a uniform rate between the beginning of 2018 and the survey (May 2021). Most of these plans (59%) that were launched after 1 March 2020 were still ongoing in May 2021, while 14% had already been completed, 21% had been put on hold and 6% abandoned.

Of those plans that were set in motion as the health crisis unfolded, only slightly more than half had their origin in or were triggered by the crisis, according to the respondents. It is evident from these statements that, while the number of individuals intending to change career or retrain may have increased during the crisis, as reported in numerous

press articles, as far as actual realisation of those intentions is concerned no concomitant increase can be observed in the cohort under investigation, though it was the one best placed in terms of age and position in the life cycle to contemplate such a plan. Thus the pauses in life’s rhythms caused by the lockdowns did not give rise to an increase in career changes.

The primary motivations: improving employment and working conditions and safeguarding one’s personal life

For those whose plans were launched during the crisis, the main motivating force appears to have been a desire to improve employment and working conditions, particularly when the plans had their origins in the crisis itself (Table 1). Next on the list of motivations was a desire to make work more meaningful and to better reconcile paid work and family life (7 out of every 10 whose plans were linked to the crisis). It should be noted that more defensive reasons linked to a lack of prospects in the sector of employment or to a risk of job loss also came into play, usually in the case of career change plans arising out of the crisis.

Networks made up of friends, family members and work colleagues were the main source of support for these plans (60% of plans linked to the crisis, 54% overall), whereas training was a lever for just slightly less than one in two of those launching a plan. Nevertheless, the need to acquire new skills was the main obstacle to realisation of the plan (mentioned by 7 out of every 10 respondents), ahead of a lack economic resources, which was mentioned by half of those whose plans were launched during the crisis.

Previous career trajectory and the effects of the crisis: factors influencing the origins of plans

The various manifestations of the crisis associated with the lockdowns, such as temporary cessations of activity, enforced leave or reductions in working time and sickness leave, considerably increased the likelihood of embarking on a career change plan after 1 March 2020, taking other given characteristics into account (cf. Dupray et al. 2022, Table 32, p. 97). This does not apply to experience of short time working, which usually led to the establishment of a link with the crisis among those who had embarked on

Table 1: The motivations behind career change plans

What was the motive for this plan?	All plans since 2018	Plans launched after 1/03/2020	Of which: Plans linked to the crisis
To make work more meaningful	78	67	71
To improve your employment conditions (pay etc.)	68	74	76
To improve your working conditions (arduousness etc.)	66	67	74
To better reconcile paid work and private life	66	65	70
Sector of employment offers few prospects	43	46	53
Job was at risk or cut	16	27	35
Health problems	16	13	12
Desire to find fulfilment in work	6	2,6	3,4
To discover something different	3,8	5	ns

Example: Of all those individuals who had launched a career change plan since 2018, 78% declared that *making work more meaningful* was one of the motives driving their desire for change. The score was 11% fewer for plans launched during the health crisis.

Scope: all individuals who stated they had formulated a career change plan since 2018 and had taken steps to implement it, N=1,002.

Source: *Génération, Covid et après?* Survey.

a career change plan.

As far as prior career trajectories are concerned, those broken up by highly visible periods of unemployment, inactivity or training/return to education, as well as situations on the margins of the labour market just before the beginning of the pandemic, were conducive to the formulation of career change plans during the period of the health crisis. Among the young people in work at that time, employees on temporary contracts and the solo self-employed were the ones most inclined to take this kind of step, usually citing the pandemic as a triggering factor.

Understanding the pandemic's role in career trajectories: an analysis of two career change narratives

In order to shed additional light on the role of the crisis in career change plans, we shall examine two career change trajectories put together from interviews. These individual cases, which are not intended as a basis for generalisation, nevertheless enable us to show what makes them typical of such trajectories. In both situations, the crisis was regarded as being the trigger for the decision to change career. The associated objectives echo those most frequently declared in the statistical survey, namely, to find better working conditions and to make work more meaningful. An understanding of the work-related and personal contexts prior to the first lockdown will enable us to identify the changes brought about by the crisis, from both an objective and subjective point of view, and to better capture the motives for these career changes.

Mélanie and Renaud's stories illustrate career changes driven by different logics. Although they were both employed on open-ended (i.e. permanent) contracts, they did not have the same relationship to work and the pandemic affected them in different ways. In Mélanie's case, the health measures made it very difficult to carry on doing a job in which she was heavily invested; in Renaud's case, the lockdown constituted a period of reflection that led him to question

his choice of a career that had until then been acceptable by virtue of the material security it provided.

Trajectory and situation prior to the crisis

In March 2020, Mélanie (30 years old) was a special needs support worker in a home for persons with brain damage. She said her career choice was linked to her personal history and the search for a "restorative" occupation. After training as a mental health assistant (level 3), she wanted to work with handicapped people. Her early experiences in this area were gruelling. She then decided to retrain as a special needs support worker and found this occupation, in which - as the job title suggests - the provision of support plays a greater role, more motivating and interesting. She was heavily invested in her work, had a good relationship with her managers and appreciated the diversity of the work and the autonomy she enjoyed.

Renaud (33 years of age) had been an optician for ten years, employed by the same company. From the outset, he stated that he had entered the profession by default. After the baccalauréat, he entered engineering school without a specific goal in mind and left at the beginning of the second year. He then decided to go down the same path as his brother, an optician, and registered for a BTS (brevet de technicien supérieur, an EQF level 5 vocational qualification). This was a quick alternative solution, involving a relatively short course of training with employment opportunities at the end, even though it was not an occupation that interested him:

"more than any other [...]. It's not my vocation [...] There are times when you say to yourself... you're going, not to the labour camp exactly, but...you're going to graft, you're going to earn your crust".

His employment conditions offered a degree of compensation, enabling him to work four days a week and to have time for the band he plays in. Although he declared himself not attracted by further responsibilities, he was, nevertheless, taking a company training course in order to become an

assistant shop manager, having been encouraged to do so by his managers. When he was obliged to become acting manager of his shop at the beginning of 2020, he said the experience had “really put him off the job”.

The March 2020 lockdown: intensification of work in worsened conditions vs. “me time”

The eruption of the pandemic was to transform Mélanie’s working conditions. She mentioned the fears of staff and residents, the increased work rate due to the need to cover for absent colleagues and a deterioration in her personal life: “We were working almost seven days a week”. The situation did not improve when the first lockdown ended: on the contrary, it deteriorated further as the months passed by and the fatigue gradually increased. She described the tensions, the mistakes that were made and the resignations.

For Renaud, on the other hand, the lockdown was to epitomize his “best life”. The shop closed and, having no work to go to, he took advantage of this freed-up time to “refocus” on himself and the activities that interested him, more particularly drawing, which he had stopped doing since high school:

*“I started doing the things
I love doing again... [...] I
was as happy as Larry!”.*

These two situations were to lead each protagonist to consider a change of career. For Mélanie, a change had become essential given the difficulties she faced in doing her job, her aim being to obtain better working conditions. For Renaud, whose occupation essentially reflected his need for paid work, it was motivated by a desire to find a job that more closely matched his aspirations.

For both of them, this change of direction entailed only a limited risk, since they both explained that if necessary, they would easily be able to find work in their original occupations.

A decision to change that was essential

in order to safeguard her health (Mélanie)

It was the consequences of her work for her state of health that alerted Mélanie:

“I suffer from psoriasis, and I had it over 80 % of my body [...] physically I wasn’t going to hold out [...] I said to myself I’m going to think of myself, I’m going to quit”. This decision was frustrating for her: “because I love what I do”.

Nevertheless, she expressed a need for a break, explaining that she wanted to stay “in social care work” but to focus more “on the handicapped”.

Her first step was to look for training “in rehabilitation”. In the end, however, she seized “an opportunity” by applying for a job with the local council, thanks to the support offered by a former colleague.

She applied for the job without knowing exactly what it entailed. Hired as an “education support worker” (three year fixed-term contract, renewable), she was trained in-house in her new occupation:

“it isn’t straightforward, because I have to understand the system... the priority areas [...] and then everything’s political [...] I support children between the ages of 3 and 18 who are disengaged from school [...] and have associated problems”.

After a few months in this job, she particularly appreciated the fact that her efforts were being acknowledged by both service users and management. Her job also offers her working conditions that she regards as manageable and that enable her to embark on other projects: she is planning to develop a sideline career as a hypnotherapist by setting up a practice in her own home.

A decision to retrain in order to find meaning in work again (Renaud)

For Renaud, the lockdown offered a welcome break from his work and made the return all the more difficult. He had to deal with an increased workload, awkward customers and a difficult relationship with a new manager. This stressful return to work led him to

contemplate retraining for an occupation more in tune with his aspirations:

“I said to myself: but in fact, wouldn’t you be better off at home, doing things you really get a buzz out of? [...] So, very quickly, I said to myself, you’ve got to change”.

Having rediscovered drawing during lockdown, Renaud’s current objective is to turn this passion into an occupation by becoming an illustrator of “children’s books, medieval stuff, heroic fantasy, comics and so on”. In this way, he is reviving a plan that was aborted when he left high school:

“I’ve always had a bit of an artistic bent [...] I was interested but on the other hand it was true that in terms of job opportunities, it was uncertain [...] so I said to myself “you’re going to be reasonable”, then my parents rather pushed me in that direction”.

In contrast to the instrumental motivation of his initial choice of training course and career, which was “inspired” by others (his parents and brother), his objective today is “to work in something in which he feels good”, reflecting a change in his relationship to work.

To put his plan into practice, Renaud wants to retrain while remaining in employment in order to ensure his financial security: “that gives me peace of mind”. Thus, he has enrolled on a distance learning course that gives him a certain degree of freedom to organise his studying:

“It’s a course lasting three years max where you have several modules (...) you can do them all in six months, or you can take three years”.

Conclusion

The joint analysis of data from the “Génération, Covid et après?” survey and the life stories outlined here highlights the specificities of the career change plans launched during the health crisis. It is important to note that the extraordinary circumstances did not give rise to any increase in career change plans

among these people in their thirties.

The main effect of the crisis was to encourage the formulation of plans that were defensive in nature in response to difficulties at work caused or aggravated by the crisis.

Thus, those making such plans tended to be on the margins of the labour market or employed on fixed-term contracts at the beginning of the first lockdown and had usually experienced temporary cessations of activity, enforced leave or reductions in working time or sickness leave. Consequently, the primary aim of these plans was to find another job that would, most importantly, provide an income and stability and, secondly, make work more meaningful or make it easier to reconcile family life and paid work.

Thus, Mélanie and Renaud’s stories illustrate the way in which the context of the pandemic led to a change of direction: “defensive” retraining in the wake of external events experienced as a loss of control for the former, retraining driven by internal motivating factors for the latter - changes that can be understood in the light not only of the crisis but also of their personal histories.

As in these two cases, some of the changes of direction that occurred as a result of the crisis could not have been foreseen; they had not been envisaged at this stage and were sometimes decided on in what seemed to be an emergency situation. However, “a career change cannot be reduced to the formulation of a career plan that merely involves an individual adapting to a new job; if the change is to succeed, the plan must be understood as the projection of oneself into the future. (...) a process that is constructed over time”.

It may be that some decisions to change career, which appear to be lifesaving in an emergency, are put into perspective when things return “to normal”. Most of the career changes explored here are still works in progress and their outcome remains uncertain.

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Between giving up and launching the project: career change plans challenged by the crisis

An event as unprecedented as it was unexpected, the health crisis, interfered with employees' plans for career change. How did they come to terms with this situation? In particular, what happened to blue-collar workers, or more broadly the least skilled categories? The qualitative section of the [Impact](#) survey, carried out by Céreq in 2021, reveals the effects of the crisis depending on the stage the career change plans had reached. Between giving up and persevering at all costs, this Céreq Bref analyses the ways in which career change plans were conceived and put into practice in a period of crisis.

The health crisis has profoundly affected the world of work since it first erupted in March 2020. While the short-time working scheme helped to mitigate its impact on employment [1], an increase in the number of contracts terminated has been observed in the sectors most seriously affected [2]. Furthermore, organisational restructurings and changes, hastened by the crisis, have led not only to involuntary mobilities but also to instability in individuals' employment situations [3]. The repercussions on individual career trajectories, whether already at work or to come in the future, have resurrected some of the problems around career change plans, notably for the least skilled groups. These workers, who are more likely to be on precarious contracts, are, after all, at greater risk than others of enforced severance and tend to be less satisfied with their employment situation. Although they are more likely than the more skilled categories to express a desire to change occupation, they enjoy less access to training [4] and experience greater difficulty in putting their plans for a career change into practice [5]. How did the crisis facilitate the implementation of some career change plans or, conversely, hinder their realisation, particularly for the least skilled? The [Impact](#) survey (cf. methodology box), carried out by Céreq in the spring of 2021, provides the beginnings of an answer to this question.

According to the survey's statistical section, 17% of employees were planning to change occupation in 2020-2021 and 23% to change employer, while 70% of these were planning to make both changes. Furthermore, 40% of employees were planning to undertake training. For almost two thirds of employees who had a more or less clearly defined plan, the crisis had effects that were more often reported as negative than favourable (cf. digital supplement). Over and above these general tendencies, the qualitative section of the survey (cf. methodology box) has enabled us to examine in greater detail the different ways in which the crisis situation affected these plans.

Four typical situations emerge from the crisis

The interviews we conducted reveal the effects of the health crisis on the processes of career change, which varied depending on the stage individual plans had reached. After all, the planning of a career change encompasses the conception phase (which some sociologists describe as the "latency" phase), the formulation and decision-making phase (deliberation) and the implementation phase (branching out), and extends as far as a renewed commitment to a new occupation [6] [7]. Characterised by considerable toing-and-froing, gradual adjustments and reconsiderations depending

on the various stages, a career change is not a linear process. It is linked, on the one hand, to the previous career pathway, to the origins of the plan and the factors that triggered it, to the career objectives and the degree to which they are clearly defined, to the risks to be taken and to individuals' personal situations (notably their material and relational circumstances, available time and other resources). However, it also depends on the situation in the company and its training and human resource management practices (work environment and organisation, access to training and informational resources, management of employee mobility). The survey enabled us to identify four typical situations in which the effects of the crisis on the career change processes made themselves felt. In the first, they constituted an obstacle to individuals' plans, in the second, they forced those affected to defer their plans, in the third they provided an opportunity to implement the plans and in the fourth they enabled individuals to pursue the process.

An obstacle to the process

Here, the crisis halted the career change plan and led the employees in question to cast doubt on their plans or even, particularly in the case of those whose plans were in the "latency" phase, to abandon them altogether. For many, the anxieties and difficulties engendered by the crisis further reinforced

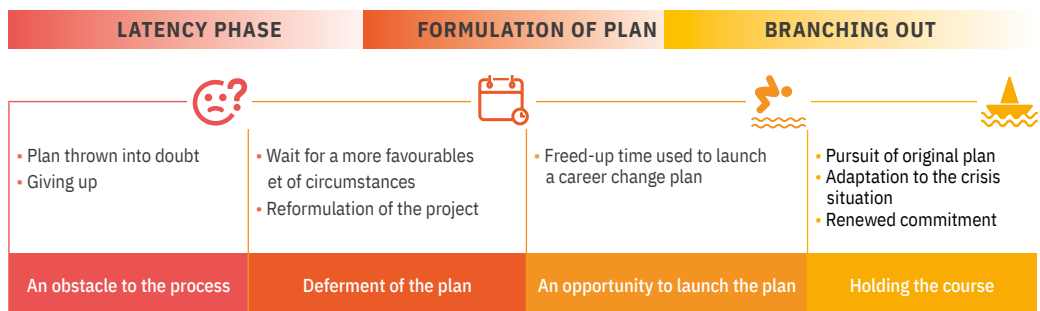
the priority they attach to job security over pursuing their career change plans, now judged to be risky. "To take the plunge" or "to accept the challenge" was to take a risk that some were unable or unwilling to agree to. As M. Carmet* (age 51, initial training: vocational certificate in winegrowing and vocational baccalaureate in commerce and service, cellarman for a reputable company for 25 years) explains:

"And then, it's a lack of courage, because you're afraid of the unknown, and when you don't have the education or training, taking a step in the dark, sometimes, it's very hard. All things considered, we've got good working conditions and decent wages, so it's difficult to give it all up."

These employees appear to have internalised a deterioration in the labour market, leading them to reconsider their career options in the light of their relative material security. Between obtaining a job "at all costs" regardless of field and conditions and retaining one's current job, the actual work content seems to have been downplayed or even excised altogether. The crisis led these individuals to put into context those aspects of their own work situation with which they were dissatisfied (arduous working conditions, lack of recognition, feeling of being undervalued, etc.):

"you know what you might lose, but you don't know what you're going to find".

Typical situations observed during the health crisis by plan's progress status



Source: Céreq, Impact 2021.



Despite this dissatisfaction, some even ended up regarding themselves as “lucky” or “resigned” and resolving “ultimately to settle for very little”. Social isolation, age, a career already well advanced, low levels of qualification, as well as the sacrifices required by personal and family situations and uncertain employment prospects, are all blocking factors whose effects were exacerbated by the crisis.

Deferment of the plan

In this scenario, pursuance of the process was deferred to a period more favourable to the operationalisation of the career change plan and to putting it into action. It might be a question of waiting for the “peripheral” obstacles (such as the family constraints complicating a geographical move) to be removed or for the activity in question to resume (particularly in the sectors affected by the health crisis, such as construction and tourism). In some cases, putting the career change plan on hold was seen as a temporary pause that did not vitiate its essential nature. Having already been thought through or even tried out beforehand, it was simply put on hold because of the instability that, in the short term, limited the prospects for career development. This was the case for M. Nisbet (aged 39, former security guard working as a site foreman/heating installer, without formal qualifications), whose aim was to set himself up as a self-employed plumber and heating engineer. The crisis led him to put his future career on hold; although it added an element of uncertainty, it did not change his initial idea:

“Let’s wait until the crisis is over, and then when everything has returned to normal, we’ll start all over again calmly and collectedly.”

In other cases, the career plans were adjusted or even reformulated, notably because of the lasting consequences of the crisis for the evolution of the target industry or occupation. This was the case, for example, for M. Felix (aged 49, qualified refrigeration and air conditioning technician, refrigeration fitter on a permanent contract for 30 years), who

was no longer considering the same possible prospects in the international tourism and travel agencies. Because of his trade union activities, he was instead focusing on the possible alternative career of labour inspector, while putting off implementing his plan until a point in the not too distant future in order to avoid disrupting his child’s life (he is a single parent).

An opportunity to put the plan into practice

In this scenario, the crisis, and in particular the increased availability created by the extended period of short-time working, constituted an opportunity to re-invigorate the career change process. The periods of reduced hours favoured the deliberation phase (honing the plan, making the decision) and made it possible to initiate the branching-out phase. For some, this time freed up during normal working hours made it easier for them to access training. This was the case for M^{me} Ferrier (aged 40, living with a partner, one child, sales assistant-beautician on a permanent contract in a large group), who saw this as an opportunity to embark on the process of validating her acquired experience in order to obtain a BTS (senior technician’s certificate) that would qualify her for a career change as a teacher in a beauty therapy school. Other not insignificant factors came together to encourage this move, including professional support (her employer’s support for skill development measures) and a loosening of certain family constraints. She had been mulling her plan over beforehand, but the crisis helped to cement her decision:

“... I began the process after the first lockdown, it had been running through my mind for a long time, that is to continue working in the same occupation but as a teacher. And to that end I had made some enquiries in schools and had already applied to ... beauty therapy schools, but I needed the BTS, which I didn’t have. I didn’t talk to my employer about it but I had to take certain steps in order to have my prior experience validated, and I said to myself this is the right year to do it because we’ve shut down, we’ve got less work because of the lockdown, ... and so I got started on the process.”

Holding the course

This scenario groups together those individuals who during the crisis continued pursuing a change of direction on which they had previously embarked. The process may have been affected at various stages. For those individuals already settled in a new job or allocated new responsibilities, the crisis may have influenced their relationship to work (by affecting their working conditions) but not their career plan, since it was only recently that it had been put into practice. For those who had embarked on a training course, the effects were ambivalent.

The lockdown was used to complete the training; moreover, when the training programme was provided in-house, the period of inactivity also increased the availability of tutors. Nevertheless, the introduction of protective measures or safety precautions certainly made work-based training more complicated, as M^{me} Rodriguez (aged 47, married, two children, vocational baccalaureate in health and safety, had just completed her training on an upskilling contract) testified:

“ ... You have to understand that when you're working on an engine and you have to hold something and your colleague comes up right beside you ... you can't stay 1.5 metres apart from each other, the engine is just 30 centimetres wide. There are some things that you just can't do despite everything.”

The sudden changeover to distance learning was also a destabilising factor (family situations to be managed, difficult isolation in some cases, lack of digital tools and skills). Family and learning support, as well as the adjustments made by training organisations, were an essential resource for holding the course. Generally speaking, the training pathway was usually seen as a pathway for fighters:

“it was a lengthy process, but you had to be able to fight your way through it”.

Crisis catalyses obstacles for the least skilled

Several instruments were rapidly deployed in order to mitigate the social and economic consequences of the crisis (extension of the short-time working scheme, strengthening of the *FNE Formation* scheme through which the state provides financial assistance to companies impacted by the crisis that wish to upgrade their employees' skills, introduction of distance learning). Nevertheless, the crisis did create additional obstacles to training and job searches which, for the least skilled categories, catalysed the already familiar barriers to career changes. These obstacles, which exist because of the difficulties experienced in mobilising the instruments and resources required to support the plan, may be individual in nature (advanced age and career stage, personal situation, isolation) and/or linked to the person's job (type of contract, work environment and organisation) and to the employer's practices, which may be more or less supportive of career development. By creating greater uncertainty and further stretching social ties, the crisis made it even more difficult to put career plans into practice.

Methodology: The Impact survey

The *Impact* survey (*Impact de la crise sanitaire sur les Mobilités, les Projets, les Aspirations professionnelles, les Compétences et le Travail/Impact of the Health Crisis on Mobility, Plans, Career Aspirations, Skills and Work*), comprising a statistical and a qualitative section, was carried out by Céreq between March and May 2021. It was supported financially by DARES, the research and statistical directorate of the French Ministry of Labour, as part of an invitation to tender for collective interdisciplinary research projects on “The impact of the health crisis on skills and vocational training 2nd wave”. It was based on the *Defis* training and employee trajectory surveys carried out by Céreq from 2015 to 2019 in partnership with *France compétences*. The *Defis* sample is representative of all employees who were working during the month of December 2013 in companies with 10 and more employees in the market sector. The statistical section of the *Impact* survey contains 2,728 respondents, of whom 2,340 were in employment in March 2020. The sample for the qualitative section was selected in several stages on the basis of prior consent for an interview obtained in 2019. Preselection centred on those individuals who, at first glance, had low skill levels, in view either of the job held in 2019 or their level of diploma as recorded in the *Defis* survey.

The selection process was subsequently refined with the responses obtained to the open question asked in the 2019 *Defis* survey on individuals’ career plans for the next 5 years: in the first place, plans for a career move or to establish a business, as well as other career development plans, for example putting into effect a vocational qualification obtained or further career development within the present company. Other selection criteria, including age, sex, employment situation at the end of 2019 and geographical location, were adopted in order to diversify the interviewees’ profiles. In all, 20 in-depth interviews (lasting from 20 minutes for the individual with less than perfect French to almost an hour and a half on average for the others) were conducted by telephone because of the health restrictions between March and May 2021.

The interviewees’ profiles were divided between 9 men (average age 45) and 11 women (average age 44), the youngest being 27 and the oldest 54. Several regions and departments were represented as well as towns and cities of various sizes and rural communities. The vast majority of the interviewees had no qualification higher than a lower secondary certificate or, at best, an initial education qualification no higher than a CAP/BEP (the lowest level of vocational qualification), except for one business worker employee with a BTS (a 2-year post-secondary qualification) and a graduate with 5 years’ post-secondary education working in a precarious job as a call centre agent. At the time of the survey, they were all in work in a range of different sectors and with a variety of different employment statuses, except for one inactive individual on maternity leave. Those on fixed-term contracts or employed as temporary agency workers remained registered with *Pôle emploi*, the French public employment service. Of the 20 individuals interviewed, 8 had experienced a period of short-time working in various sectors (construction, transport, sales, service, state education). Four female employees had had experience of teleworking during the health crisis: a purchasing assistant, a stock exchange employee, a hotline technician and a civil service administrator.

The semi-structured interview protocol comprised several thematic sections: presentation of the individual and their career trajectory, of their current employment situation and their plans for career development and/or career change, knowledge and experience in terms of training and support and personal and work-related experience since March 2020, i.e. a sort of review or assessment of the past year.

Conclusion

The survey has revealed that the crisis had two categories of effects on career change plans. Firstly, the economic situation and the difficulties specific to certain sectors had an impact on the very nature of the plans (abandonment of plan to go self-employed or to seek work in a sector heavily affected by the crisis, for example). Secondly, the crisis situation may have further complicated implementation of the plans, that is the process of putting them into practice and mobilising the necessary resources, particularly training. Whether or not the plans were pursued was determined by how well defined and advanced they were: the less definite they were, the less they were regarded as a priority during this period. In the career change plans, training was perceived as a prior stage requiring serious commitment and risk taking, as well as a factor in revitalising personal and biographical trajectories. Nevertheless, poorly informed or socially isolated individuals who had not clearly defined their plan did not perceive it as a key factor. As far as employees' access to training was concerned, the company's role depended heavily on its HR practices in this area. In some, they were highly developed, but in others they were limited to the provision of information on personal training accounts (much requested by employees) and in many cases were perceived as non-existent by our respondents. None of the 20 employees interviewed said they had benefited from the *FNE Formation* programmes or had been informed about them. The crisis situation,

with all the adjustments it required employers to make, seems to have left little room for the organisation and implementation of career development plans in companies. Finally, the survey shows that the health crisis was an opportune time for individuals to question their relationship to work and employment. Job security was a cross-cutting concern and frequently emerged as a key factor in these times of crisis. In this respect, the results of the qualitative and quantitative surveys concur: it was one of the three most cited factors in response to the question intended to ascertain "what emerged as most important from the crisis", after the work-life balance and working conditions respectively. For the least skilled categories, it was actually the second most important factor and the most important one for the unemployed (cf. digital supplement). Signed by the social partners on 15 October 2021, the inter-occupational framework agreement that aims to adapt the Act On The Freedom To Choose One's professional future places expanded access to retraining schemes and incentives for firms to offer their employees training at the heart of the negotiations to come in the future. Facilitating employees' access, particularly the least skilled, to the resources required to promote career development is acknowledged as a key issue. Improving job security and working conditions, which gained in importance during this crisis period, also emerge as key factors to be taken into account in responding to career aspirations, notably those of the least skilled.

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“Learning from and through work”, an alternative route to qualification

A good number of young people leave the education system without qualifications. For most of them, coming as they often do from disadvantaged areas, from areas on the periphery of towns and cities or from rural areas, access to the formal education and training system cannot be taken for granted. For them, “learning from and through work” may represent an alternative. Drawing on a study carried out in Argentina, France, Morocco and Senegal in the construction and public works sector, this edition of Céreq Bref focuses on the conditions that encourage the development and recognition of skills “acquired from and through work”.

To enable each individual to gain a recognised qualification that helps to expand the opportunities for them to obtain decent work throughout their working life is a major challenge that echoes the UN’s Agenda 2030. This challenge becomes even more acute in the case of those young people who either did not attend school or left education early and entered the labour market, whether formal or informal, at a very young age. In the four countries investigated for the study (see box), the situation for such young people differs. These four national contexts can be sketched out with the aid of certain available indicators. Since the 1990s, Argentina has seen a sharp rise in unemployment and in the “popular” subsistence economy because of successive crises, which have led to the development of welfare and employment programmes aimed in particular at young people and the least well qualified from low-income households. Approximately one young person in five in Argentina is neither enrolled in education nor in work. Almost 70% of the young people who have not finished secondary education are working in informal jobs, which account for 34% of all jobs [1]. In France, 14.4 % of young people aged between 18 and 24 were considered to be NEET in 2021, that is to say they were neither in employment nor in education or training (in formal ways, it should be added) nor in education or training.

Of these, the share with lower secondary qualifications at best who have never worked was put at 20% [2]. These latter individuals, sometimes described as “vulnerable NEETs”, are the principal focus of public employment policy programmes.

This group is sometimes extended to include illiterate young people, who account for approximately 5% of young people in metropolitan France aged between 18 and 25 but almost 15% in Martinique and 29% in French Guiana [3]. The notion of “informal” economy in France is based on surveys that often target particular sectors and focus on undeclared work (2% of employees in 2020 in the sectors surveyed according to ACOSS, the national body responsible for collecting social security contributions [4]). In Morocco, almost 29% of young people aged between 15 and 24 [5] are regarded as NEETs. Starting in the 2010s, Morocco has launched a number of large-scale strategic programmes aimed at expanding the number of good quality jobs in order to meet young people’s expectations. However, informal employment is estimated to account for 36% of total employment [6]. Most of people in informal employment have no more than a primary school education, and one third of them are under 35 [6]. For its part, Senegal has seen a succession of growth and development plans and launched various initiatives to promote

Méthodology: Methodological reference points

This edition of Training & Employment is based on a study supported by the French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement/AFD) and coordinated by Céreq. Carried out between 2020 and 2022 in partnership with CIS-CONICET (Argentina), INE-CSEFRS (Morocco) and ONFP (Senegal), the aim of the study was to compare the means whereby and the conditions under which skills are developed from and through work and are recognised in Argentina, France, Morocco and Senegal.

The study builds on existing studies, both qualitative and quantitative**, of informal learning in work environment. Strengthened by the lessons to be drawn from this earlier work, the investigations took place in two stages. In the first, the issues at stake and the contexts in which learning from and through work takes place in each of the national frameworks were highlighted. To that end, a data collection grid was shared out among the four partners so that a non-exhaustive overview of each country's labour market, education system and demographics could be compiled. Secondly, an exploratory survey based on semi-structured interviews following a common interview protocol was carried out by the respective national teams among young people with few qualifications, employers and institutional actors. In order to ensure the consistency of the observations carried out, we decided to investigate comparable work environments in the four countries, hence the choice of the construction and public works sector as the field of investigation. Regardless of the country, these environments have several common features, including the presence of young people with few qualifications at the beginning of their working lives and the pronounced impact of learning from and through work on skill development. The construction and public works sector is also a field in which (more or less completed) processes leading to the recognition of prior learning are carried out, whether or not they are at this stage still experimental. Analysis of all the information thus gathered enabled us to highlight common features, to identify the different forms they take in different contexts and to point up the contrasts..*

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the employment and training of young people, often with a focus on self-entrepreneurship and access to credit. Illiteracy remains a significant problem in this country and almost 33% of young people aged between 15 and 24 are regarded as NEETs (cf. World Bank data 2017). The share of jobs in the informal sector is put at 69% of total employment [7], and approximately 40% of the workers in the informal economy are aged between 15 and 35 [8].

The observations made in the course of our study arise out of these contrasting contexts, which influence young people's participation in formal initial vocational training (including block-release and apprenticeship schemes) and the more or less marked presence of informal learning in work environments. Moreover, in those countries in which work is characterised by a greater degree of informality, processes of hybridisation occur with the various, more or less organised forms of informal or traditional apprenticeship that enable experienced craft and manual workers to transmit skills to young people. For the young people interviewed, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or areas on the periphery of towns and cities or rural areas, access or return to formal education or training cannot be taken for granted. Their entry into the labour market often involves precarious work. In the construction and public works sector, most workers are recruited for limited periods of time, often for just as long as the construction site is to be in operation. These situations call into question the scope (and the current limits) of the systems for developing and recognising skills. More inclusive systems that encompass and interweave formal, non-formal and informal pathways prompt us to reconsider the various routes to qualification, and notably the contribution of "learning from and through work" leading to a recognised qualification, which can expand the opportunities for decent work. The survey conducted in Argentina, France, Morocco and Senegal serves to highlight – above and beyond the socio-economic differences – the

common factors in the development of skills through work-based learning.

Favourable sectoral dynamic and personal motivation: two driving forces

Among the factors conducive to learning from and through work, the dynamic of the occupational sector and the young people's personal motivation emerge as fundamental. Those sectors facing recruitment difficulties are more inclined to take on young people with no qualifications and to consider training them "on the job" so that they can quickly become operational by acquiring skills. This observation applies in particular to the construction and public works sector, which recruits a high share of workers with low levels of qualification. Moreover, the reasons why young people with little knowledge and few skills seek access to work influence the opportunities for and the intensity of learning. Above and beyond the initial motivation for seeking paid work, which is common to all four countries, whether it be to become independent of family (often cited in Argentina and France) or to contribute to family resources (more commonly cited in Morocco and Senegal), a declared commitment to the sector has a favourable effect on the potential for work-based learning. This is the case, for example, when that commitment reflects a desire to "replicate" and to perpetuate a family's craft or trade (as can be seen in Senegal, for example). On the other hand, entering the sector by default, seeing it as a "dead end" or in the hope that an alternative more in keeping with the young person's preferences will eventually present itself, often tarnishes the motivation to progress in the occupation.

Foster interactions in order to learn from and through work

Regardless of the country, interactions with other experienced workers emerge as the first vector for learning. Such interactions involve "imitation" by reproducing gestures, approaches and procedures, or verbal exchanges using technical language,

particularly when instructions are being given, sometimes with the aid of diagrams or drawings. The language issue is a crucial factor here, since the number of different languages spoken on site may hamper exchanges. It is not uncommon for workers employed on the same site, or even in the same team, to be from different countries (in France they may be from North Africa or Portugal as well as France itself) or to be of the same nationality but to speak different languages. In Morocco, many young workers come from the south of the country and speak one of the Berber languages. Those of them who have not been educated have no command of Arabic (the official language of instruction), which is the language used on construction sites. The linguistic diversity is even greater in Senegal, where there are several national languages, which are themselves broken up into various dialects. On the other hand, learning from and through work can also be stimulated by exchanges within solidarity networks based on proximity of background (family, region) and a shared common language, as was observed in Morocco and Senegal. Young workers may also benefit from membership of an occupational community, as is the case with the *Compagnons du Devoir*, a French organisation of craft workers and artisans. In terms of work organisation, pairing young workers with experienced colleagues is a practice found in all four countries and generally proves to be effective. In France, it is common practice for a young person newly arrived in a company to be paired with a more experienced colleague whom he assists by carrying materials, handing out tools and so on while at the same time observing them at work. Little by little, the experienced worker involves the novice more and more until they are able to carry out the tasks independently. In Argentina, it is the “capataz” (the equivalent of a foreman in France) who is usually tasked with organising support for young workers. The “capataces” have some freedom to act on their own initiative, which they use to a greater or lesser extent to design work processes from which the young workers can learn; they often place young workers under

the wing of a more experienced worker who becomes a sort of informal tutor, acting as both guide and point of contact. In Senegal, the practice of “doubling up” involves allocating two workers to the same work station. The pairs thus established are usually made up of a young, unqualified worker and a foreman with solid work experience, although they may also be composed of a young, newly qualified person fresh out of school and a more experienced but not necessarily qualified worker. In Morocco, the tradition of the *maâlem* (in Arabic literally “he who has skill or is a master”) still exists; this is an honorific figure linked to the traditional apprenticeship system to whom young people from lowly family backgrounds were entrusted in order that they should learn a trade. Today, however, the diminishing number of *maâlams* on construction sites are reluctant to pass on their skills for fear of seeing their jobs taken from them once the young workers have acquired the necessary skills, particularly since they receive no additional remuneration for their role as trainers.

Periods of reflection and diversification of tasks: two levers used in various ways

Reflecting on the work done consolidates the assimilation of new skills and enables young workers to envisage those yet to be acquired. Such periods of reflection, which often occur unexpectedly during discussions with colleagues, could be further institutionalised. Very often, these periods of discussion are neglected or even seen by employers as unproductive. Nevertheless, a new skill that has been consolidated is actually a guarantee of a young worker’s increased effectiveness and hence of time saved in achieving a better quality of work. As is often the case, the *Compagnons du Devoir* in France stand out as an exemplary model: young workers meet each evening in order to discuss the work done in the course of the day and improve their practices. In Senegal, when mistakes are detected, the possible ways of correcting them are discussed during site meetings. Regardless of the country, the progressivity

and diversity of the situations to which young workers are exposed are also factors in the development of learning. In this respect, if an employer is considering offering a young worker stable employment, he will be more inclined to put in place a training programme leading to a qualification and an increase in skill levels structured around a variety of tasks to be completed, “challenges to be met” and solutions to be found. However, young people are too often required to practice their trade within narrow segments of activities as a result of practices that differ from country to country: the massive use of subcontracting in Argentina, agency work and the parcelling out of tasks in France, the confinement of less skilled workers to basic tasks in Morocco, the competition between qualified and unqualified workers not managing to hold certain jobs in Senegal, and finally the priority attached to immediate productivity and profitability.

The use of the recognition of prior learning (RPL) remains limited

The recognition of skills acquired at work by means of arrangements for the evaluation and validation of skills remains a key issue that was highlighted by the institutional actors interviewed in the four countries investigated. Implementation of these RPL arrangements is based on measures which, in the case of Argentina and France, enjoy the advantage of a national regulatory framework. This is not yet the case in Morocco or Senegal which, despite several experiments conducted in this area, are still waiting for draft bills enshrining their implementation to be promulgated. In Argentina, the national system for the certification of vocational skills, the early experiments with which date back to 2004, operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the jointly managed occupational organisations in the sectors concerned, which are authorised to issue vocational skills certificates within the RPL framework. These certificates differ from the vocational qualifications issued by the Ministry of Education, and there are no cross-over points between the two. While they are

recognised within work environments, their social value is less well regarded by young people and their families. The assessment of candidates, which is organised by the employee’s trade union and employer, is based on a socio-occupational interview and observation of the worker’s performance at the workplace. Trade union delegates play an important role in the circulation of information about the assessment procedures. In the French RPL system, which was reformed again at the end of 2022 on its 20th anniversary, any individual, regardless of the length of their experience, can be awarded any of the certifications (or part thereof) registered in the National Directory of Vocational Qualifications. Candidates are assessed on the basis of a written application describing their activities and the skills acquired that are relevant to the certification being sought; depending on the certifying body, this written application may be supplemented by role-play scenarios and an interview with the assessment panel. This arrangement is based on a highly normalised system for the construction of certifications and their recognition at national level by a quadripartite regulatory body (state, social partners, regional councils). In Morocco, starting in 2007, sectoral experiments have been launched by the public authorities and the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises, notably in the mechanical engineering and construction and public works sectors. The Moroccan RPL system is more restrictive, since the certificates issued within its framework pertain solely to the occupational sectors concerned, which raises the question of their transferability. The launch of these experiments was preceded by a considerable effort to commit to paper reference frameworks for jobs, occupations and skills in virtually all the occupational sectors in Morocco. In Senegal, finally, one of the experiments that has been conducted is part of a vast programme initiated by the public authorities to integrate informal apprenticeship into the wider vocational training system. One of the programme’s

main objectives is the certification of skills acquired through practical training in a production unit, better known under the name of “updated apprenticeship”. This experiment, in which three sectors were involved (automotive engineering, clothing and construction), led to the award of a vocational specialisation certificate, which since 2019 has been included in the national register of vocational training qualifications. Whatever the arrangements put in place for the validation of acquired skills or the experiments conducted within the construction and public works sector, the same observation applies to all four countries, namely that very few of the employees and employers interviewed were aware of them. However, once the arrangements had been explained to them, most of them concurred with the view that RPL had positive effects on skill development, employability, the raising of wage levels, career management, workforce loyalty and the reduction of training costs. Nevertheless, some employers oppose it, on the grounds that possession of a qualification is not, in their view, a guarantee either of expertise or of the possession of certain behavioural skills. They also fear that their employees might leave for rival companies or that they will have to accept higher wage bills. In France and Argentina in particular, the improvements that interviewees would like to see in these RPL systems included better information and greater awareness among the target groups, a simplification of the application process, stabilisation of the sources of funding and better support for applicants. These are all challenges to be met by the promoters of RPL, including the actors at sector level and employers, as well as the trade union organisations that are heavily

involved in promoting RPL, as we saw in Argentina. For their part, the stakeholders in Morocco and Senegal still await the political decisions that will enable them to make the experiments already conducted more widely applicable.

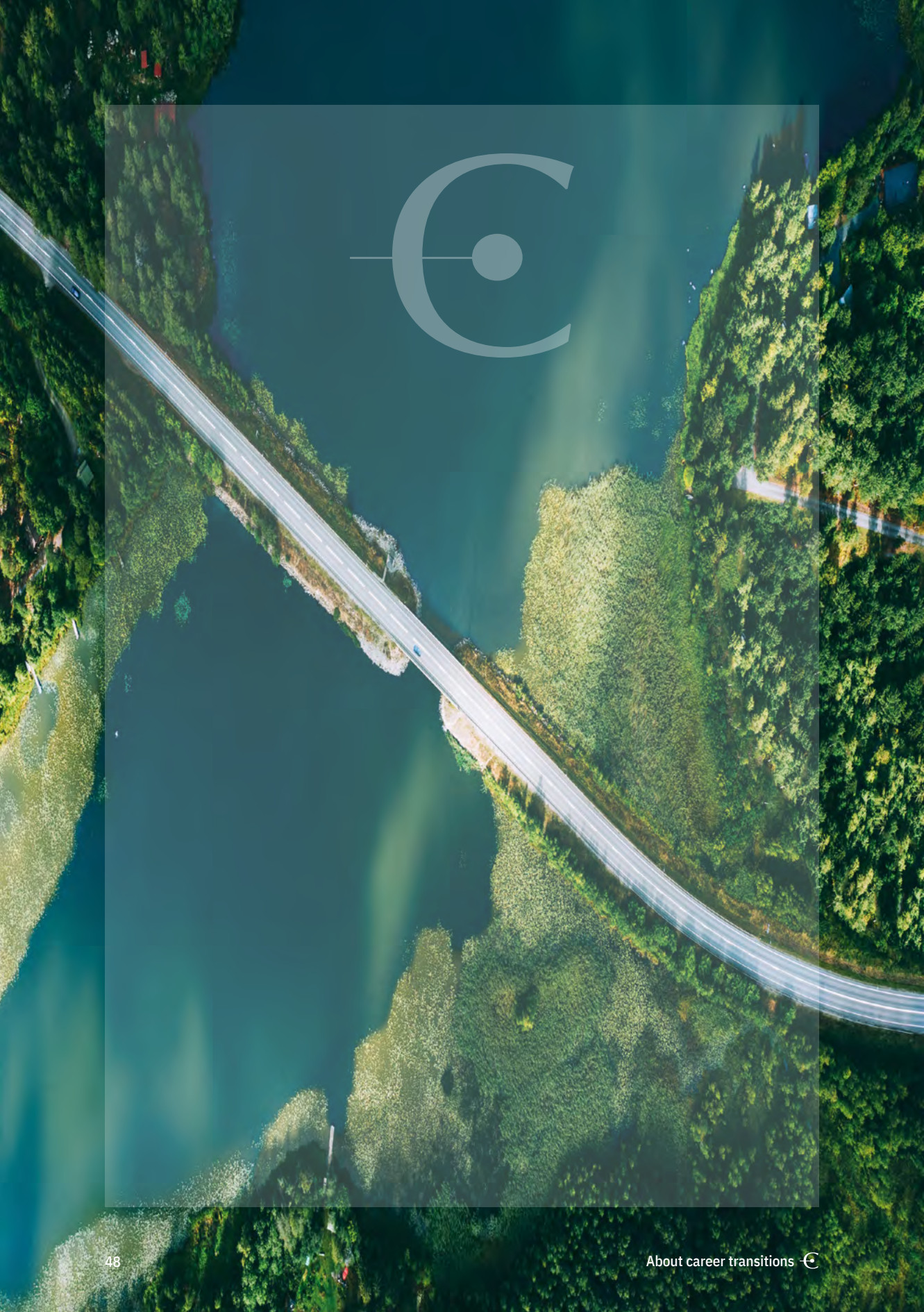
Conclusion

Stimulating support, varied work situations, the construction of a well-designed pathway for employee development and progression and opportunities to reflect on the work done are some of the key elements of an approach to the promotion of multiple forms of learning. Nevertheless, any new skills acquired currently struggle to obtain recognition. They very often remain subject to employers’ assessments, who may (or may not) make use of them as a lever for the management of human resources (employee loyalty, employee motivation, promotion, award of bonuses etc.). The formalisation of skills through RPL certainly constitutes the ultimate goal in all the countries, particularly if it is accompanied by forms of regulation concerned with career progression and pay initiatives. In the absence of these conditions, more pragmatically, it is still appropriate to implement some intermediate tools, more flexible forms of recognition of more limited scope, leading for example to recognition within an industry, a sector, a group of companies or a labour catchment area etc., and capable at the same time of making individuals’ career trajectories more secure. The observations carried out in the four countries are evidence of the advances that have already been made and of the considerable progress that remains to be achieved by pursuing them further.

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French Thematic Country Review (TCR) on Upskilling Pathways (UP)



WHO ?



Céreq and Iredu – Université de Bourgogne are working together on the French TCR on UP on behalf of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop).

WHEN ?



Start date: end of 2020 > expected end date: end of 2023

WHAT ?



The Review revolves around the European Council 2016 Recommendation on “Upskilling Pathways: new opportunities for adults”. The Recommendation puts low-skilled adults into the spotlight of EU and national policies with the aim to help them acquire or strengthen core skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) and / or progress towards a higher qualification (at least level 3 or 4 in the EQF) in order to improve their social and professional integration.

The Review intends to examine to what extent and how the UP Recommendation has been interpreted into the French policies; to highlight which learnings and good practices to share at both national and European levels; to suggest improvements. The French response to the UP recommendation is a complex one, relying on a long history of the vocational training system, and is grounded in the last vocational training reform (2018) as well as the overarching Skills investment plan (in French – *Plan d’investissement dans les compétences* (PIC)).

A steering group for the TCR on UP has been appointed by the French ministry of Labour to comment and validate the intermediate and final outputs of the Review. The SG members also defined the scope of the Review. The latter focuses on the issues of reaching out and providing learning guidance to the low-skilled adults who are the furthest away from the upskilling services and / or employment (and who are sometimes off the radar of the institutions) that lead towards forms of comprehensive support throughout individualized and seamless pathways. The cross-cutting dimensions of governance and (non-)financial support of UP are the common threads running through the Review.

After drawing up a state of play (in 2020-2021) on the UP situation in France, based on the available data, 3 phases of field research are carried out at ‘micro’ (in 2021-2022), ‘meso’ (in 2022-2023), and ‘macro’ (in 2023) levels.

Key findings of the first phase of fieldwork are available.

More information:

<https://www.cereq.fr/en/thematic-country-review-upskilling-pathways-low-skilled-adults> ; <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/5594> >>>



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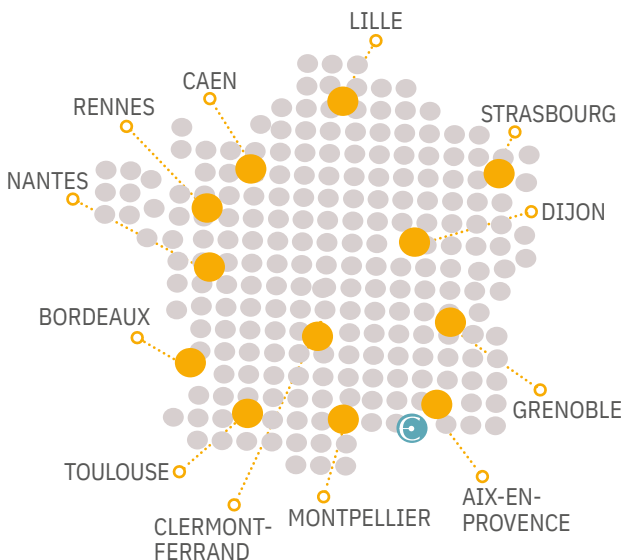
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