

NFHE Conference: Nordic model at times of crisis - what is at stake?
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Building bridges from VET to higher education - experiences from Denmark

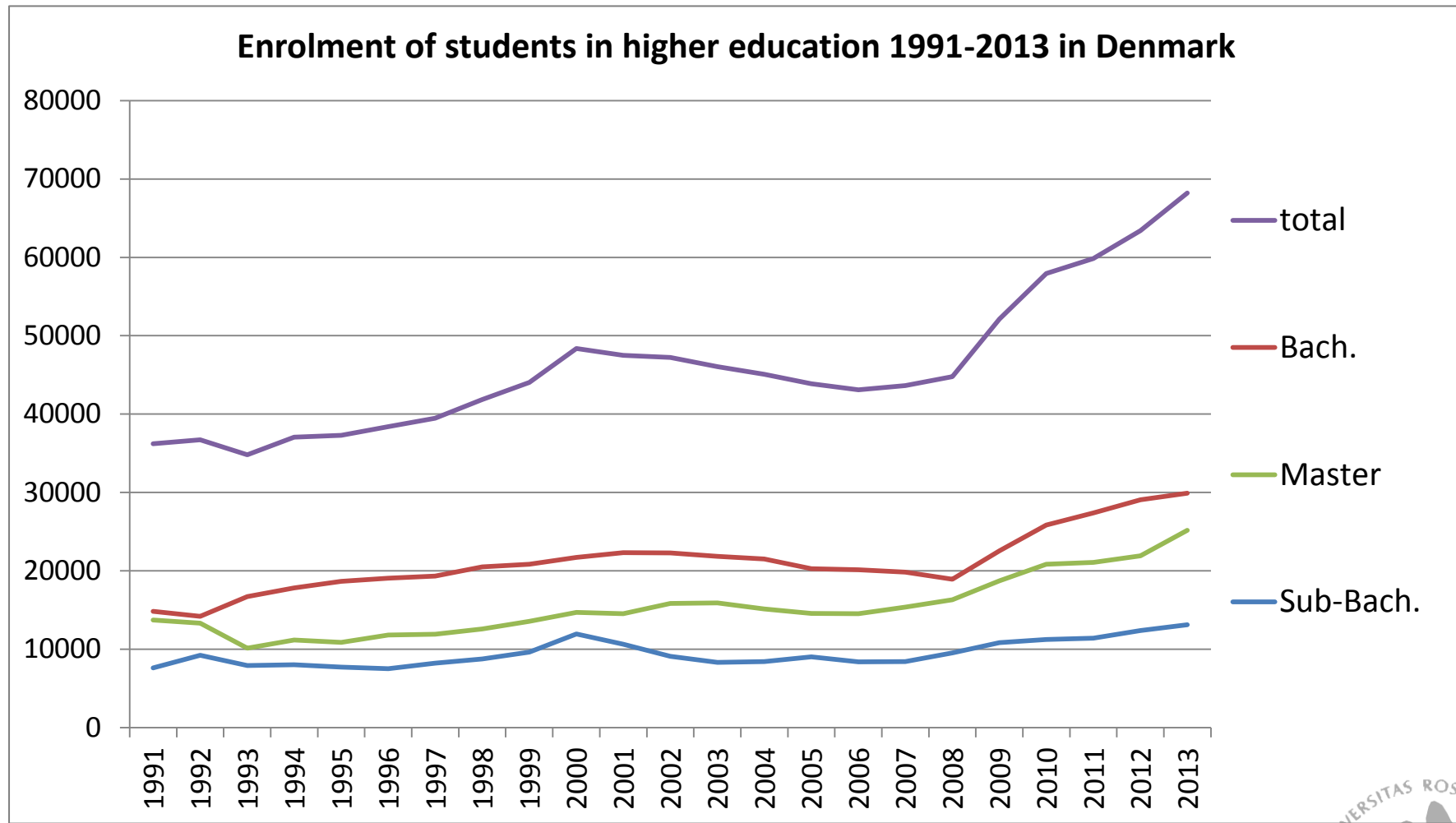
1. Introduction: transitions to HE in Denmark
2. What is the problem: *blind alleys and bridges?*
3. Why so difficult to improve progression from VET to higher education?

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The future of VET - Learning from the Nordic Countries. www.Nord-VET.dk



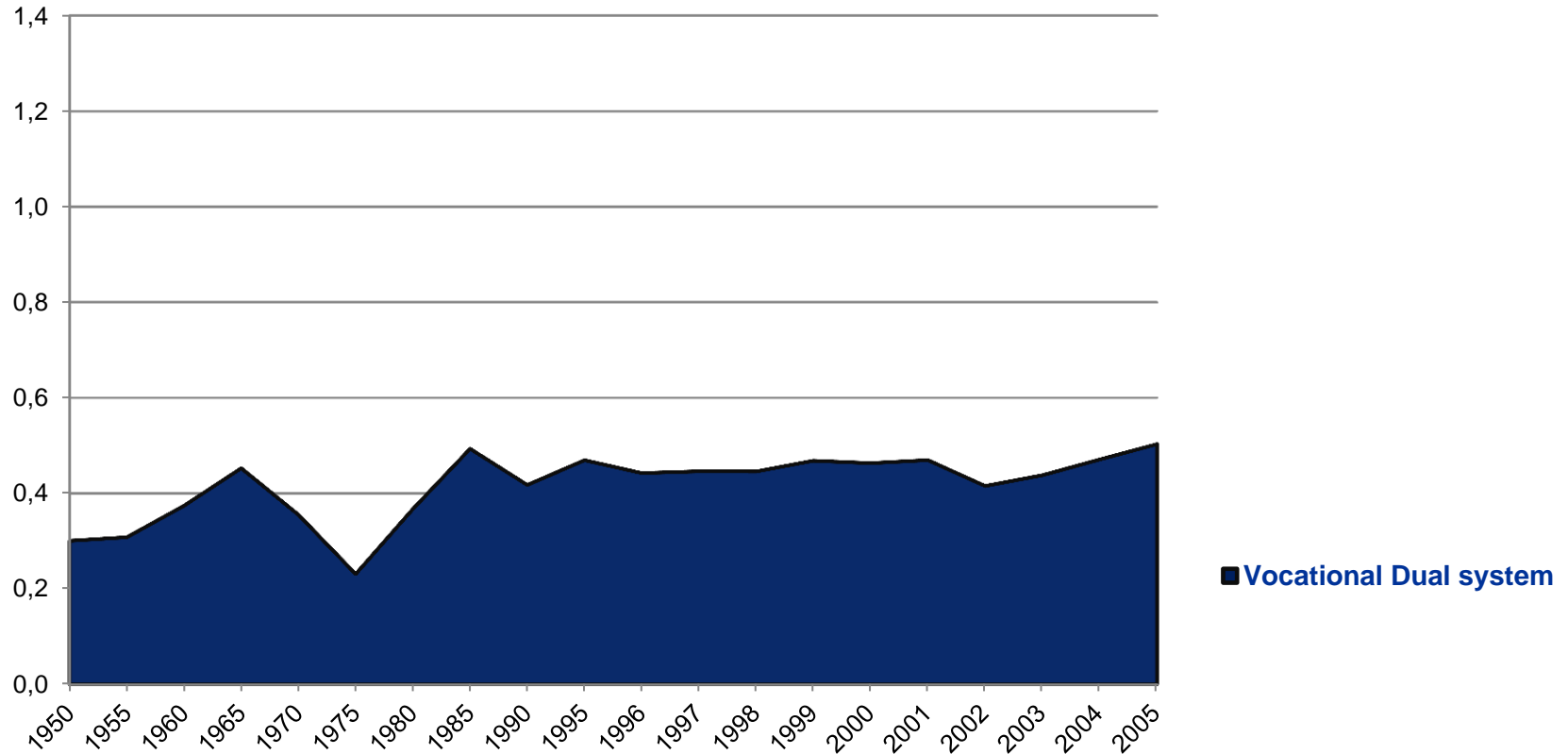
Enrolment in higher education in Denmark has doubled
- Has this also benefitted students from VET?



Source: <http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1366>



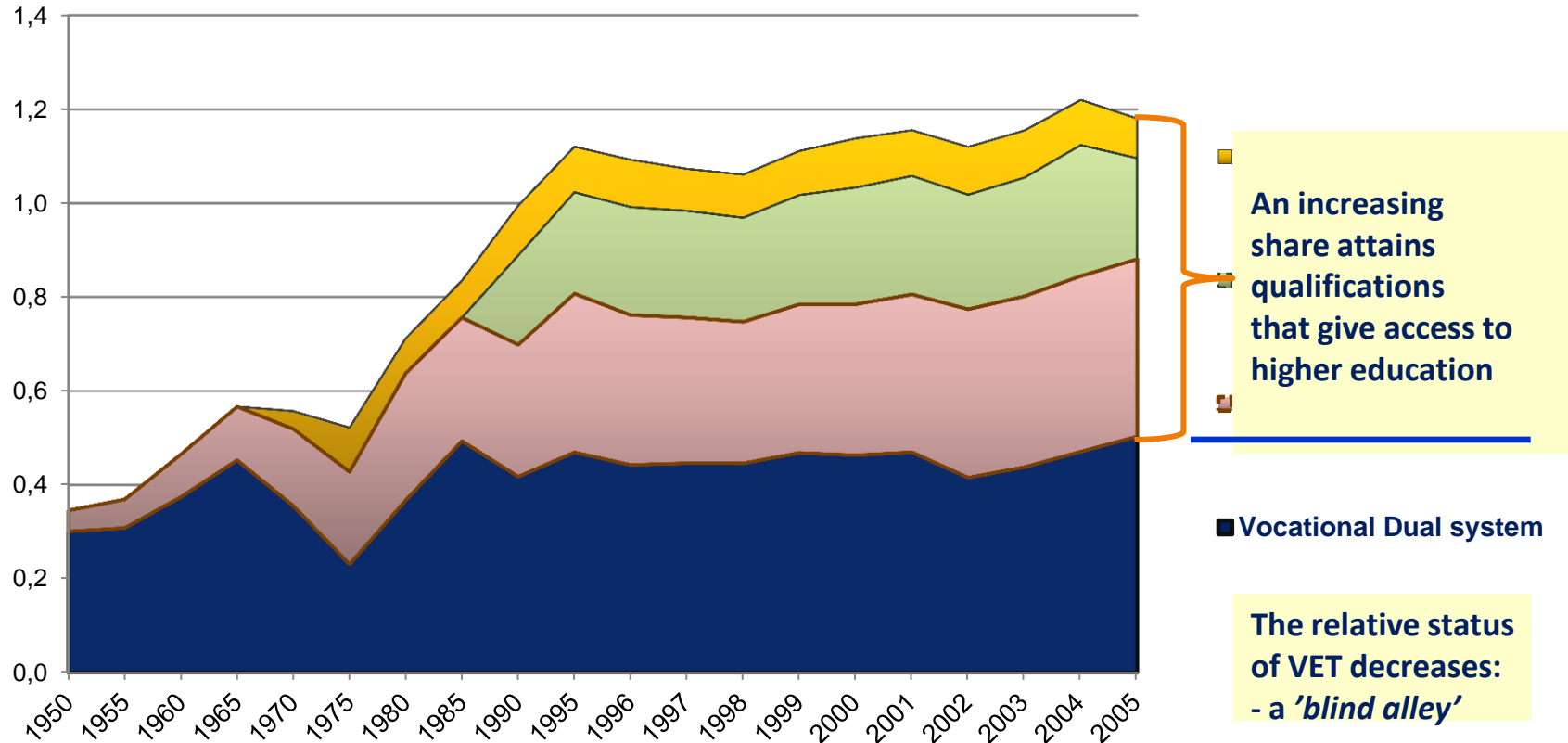
Share of a youth cohort entering the main programmes of higher secondary education 1950 - 2005



As some students shift program, they count twice and the numbers add up to more than one.
Data from Dk Statistics and Min.of Educ 1998

HQ project May 2011

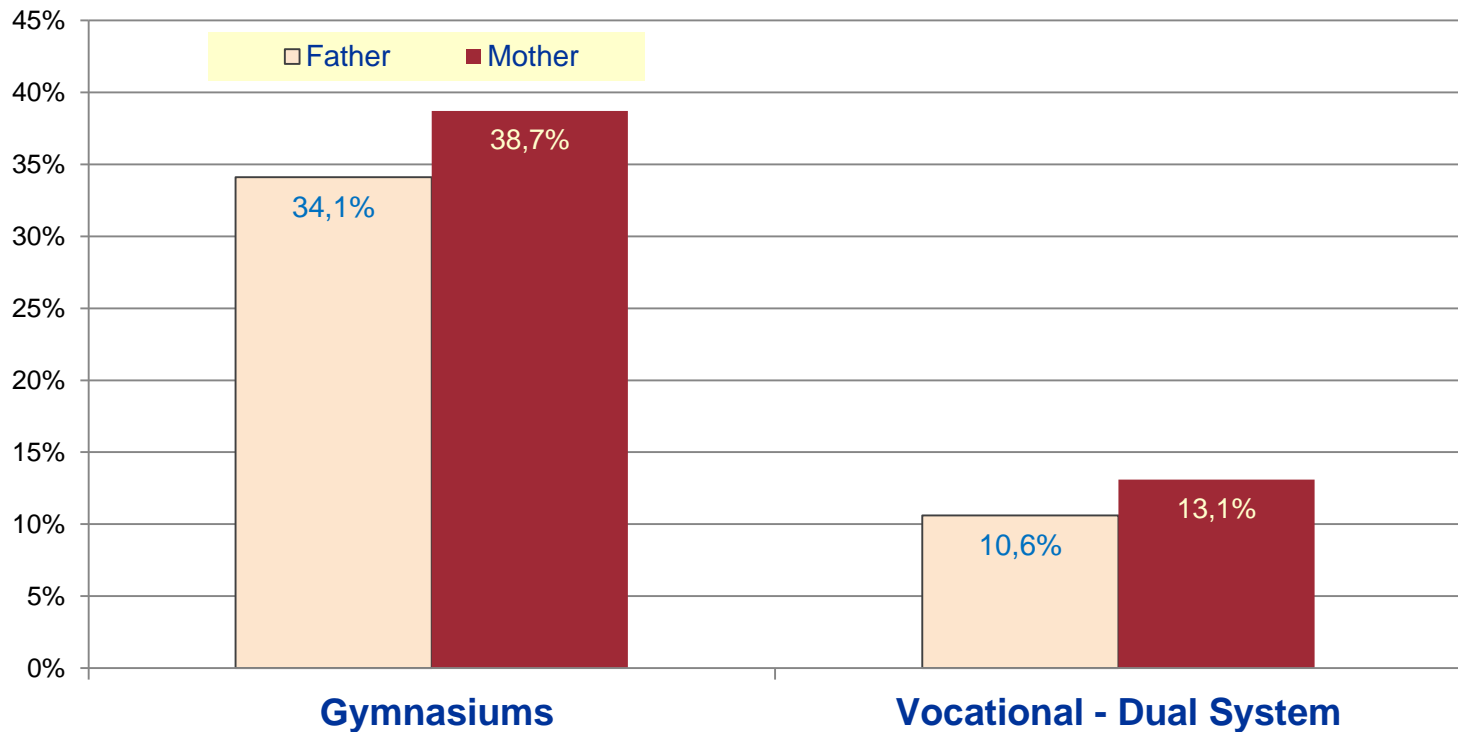
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Share of students whose parents have completed higher education - the two tracks compared



Tracking results in a social selection of students according to the educational background of their parents

Since the 1970ies attempts to build bridges from VET to higher education

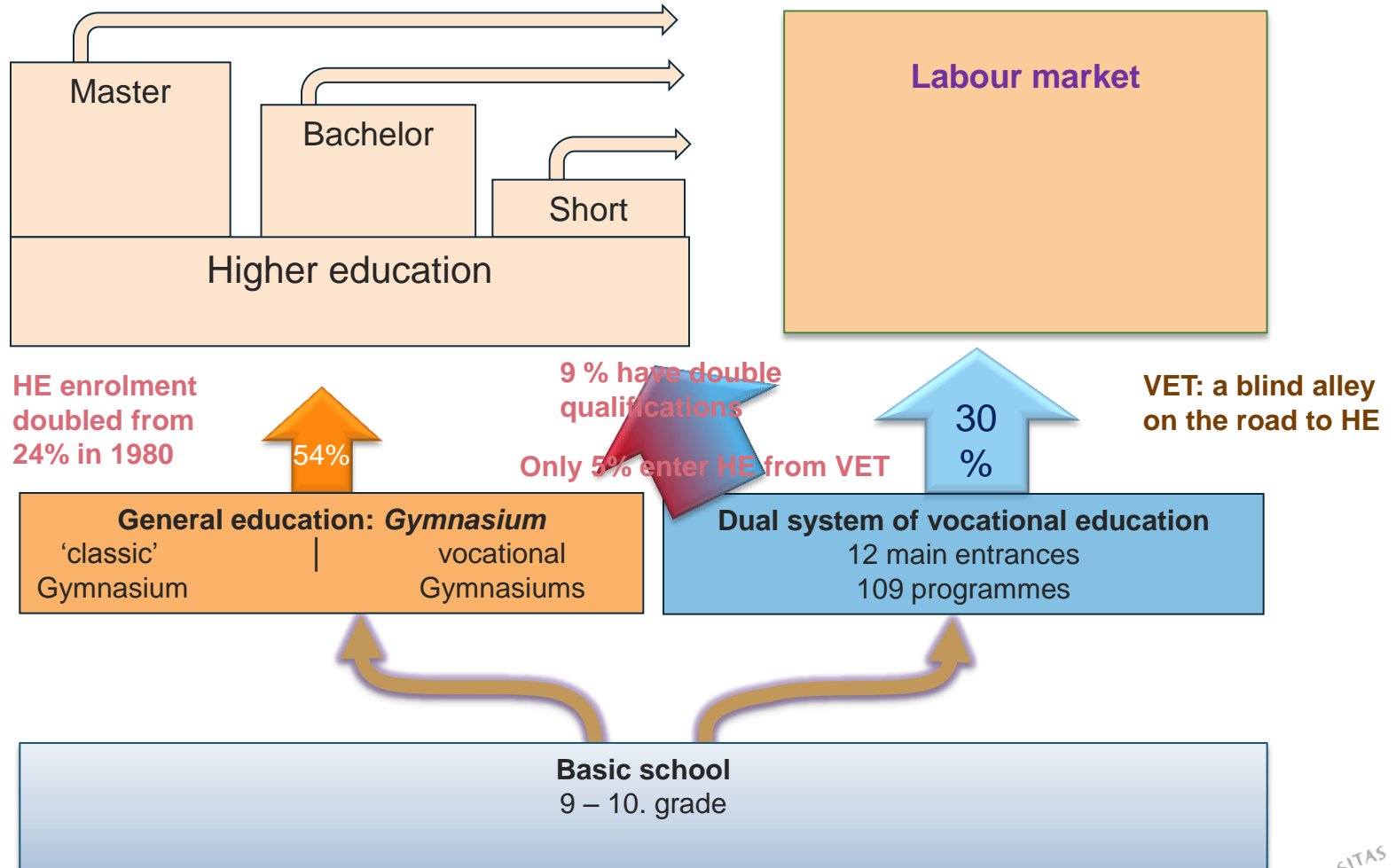
- Policies for integration of general and vocational tracks in 1970s failed.
- Employers and craft unions allied to preserve their control of dual system.
- Tracking was maintained - and linkage measures added
- Linkage policies from 1980s on not successful:
- 'Academization' of HE programs: increasing requirements for access to sub-Bachelor higher education
- The vocational gymnasiums from 1980ies have recruited the academically strong students who might have gone to the dual system of VET
- Very few have used the opportunities for taking additional study oriented subjects at higher levels in VET (an option from 2000).

- so what is the results?



Transitions in the Danish educational system

Percentages:
Shares of a youth cohort



Final rates of completion 25 years after leaving basic school
Percentages of a youth cohort in 2006 hybrid qualifications

Source UNI-C 2008



Rates of progression to HE until 5 years after graduation from VET

Industry	Cohort 1991	Cohort 1996	Cohort 2001	Cohort 2006
VET: Child care	(0)	(0)	12,6%	3,2%
VET: Business/Retail	4,5%	8,5%	11,0%	10,7%
VET: Building	9,0%	7,1%	4,8%	3,0%
VET: Metal & Mechanical	6,3%	4,5%	3,4%	1,9%
VET: Media & Grafic	2,9%	4,6%	2,4%	3,3%
VET: Technic & Manufacture	12,3%	7,5%	4,9%	4,7%
VET: Social services	2,7%	3,7%	2,7%	2,0%
VET: Food & Restaurant	4,5%	3,0%	2,6%	2,0%
VET: Transport	7,1%	3,8%	2,2%	4,8%
VET: Health	2,6%	2,7%	3,0%	3,8%
Total	2918	3259	3053	2104
Total progression rate	7,7%	7,9%	7,7%	6,4%

Growth

Decline

Why this low rate of progression from Dual VET to higher education?

- The dual system successfully transfers students out of the educational system and bring them into employment.
- When VET students enter into employment they acquire good earnings and establish family - and have financial responsibilities .
- Successful policies for vocational enhancement: Dual VET offer programmes at a high level (e.g. *data-technician* 5½ years)
- Compressed wage structure: same level for skilled workers and many graduates with Bachelor degree (nurses, teachers in basic school).
- Skilled workers have good opportunities for work based careers in the craft based production - supported by a comprehensive public system of vocational further training.



Strengths and weaknesses of the dual system

- The transition to employment is integrated in the work based training
- Low youth unemployment and inclusion of non-academic youth
- High rates of employment on relevant level of skills
- An alternative pathway besides not just below the academic.



These advantages are also weaknesses:

- Transfers students **out** of the educational system
- **Diverts** young people from higher education
- Appear as '**blind alley**' in the educational system
- The social partners prefer a **vocational enhancement** strategy to a **unification** or **hybridisation** strategy
- The social partners give priority to **employability** over opportunities for progression to higher education
- This result in **low permeability** from dual VET to higher education

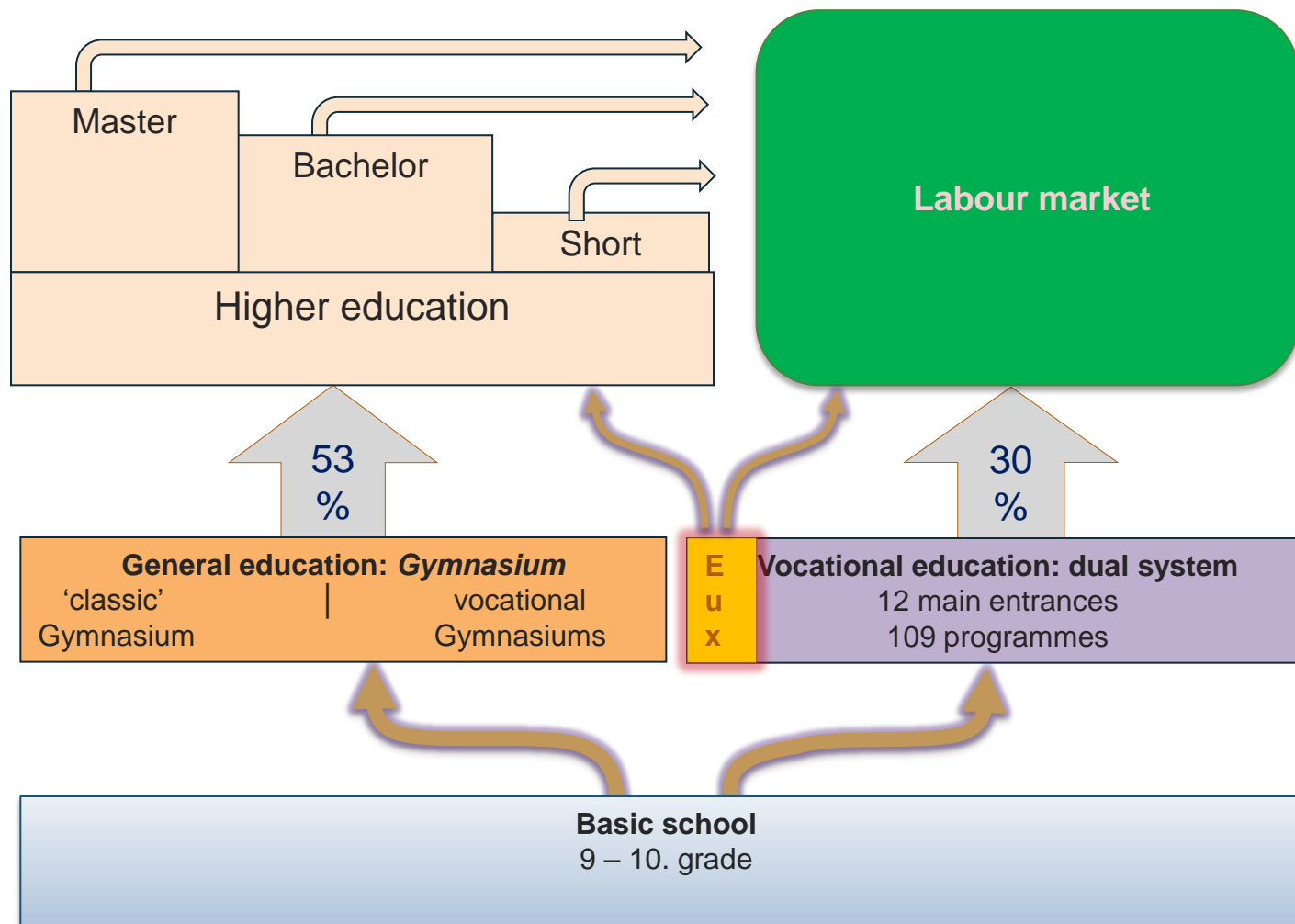


Political initiatives for improving access from VET to HE

- **Falling esteem of VET:** VET is by many young people considered a **blind alley** that doesn't give access to higher education.
- The educational choices of 16-17 years olds often have **life long** consequences:
- When choosing the dual system, they are **diverted** from higher education, and only 5% of a cohort progress from VET to higher education.
- The large companies consider higher education graduates with a background in the dual system **attractive employees**.



Position of the eux programme in the Danish educational system



Final rates of completion 25 years after leaving basic school
 Percentages of a youth cohort in 2006 hybrid qualifications

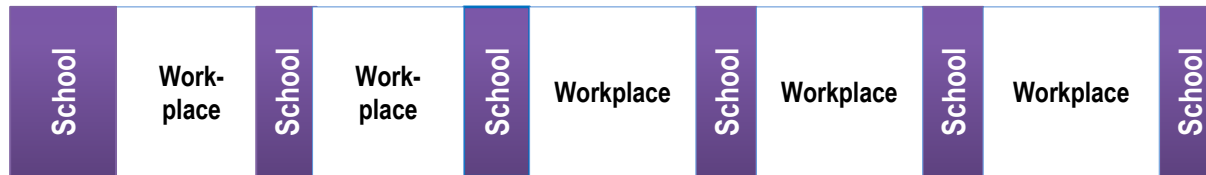
Source UNI-C 2008



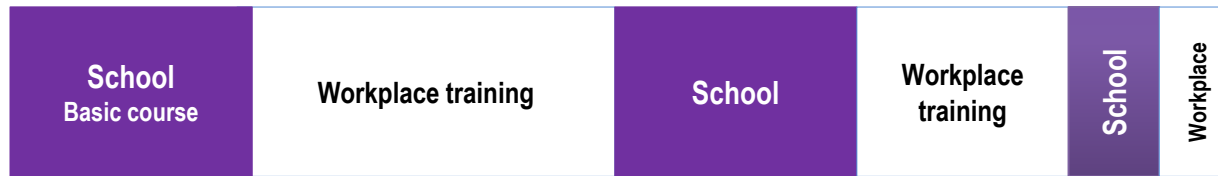
The new hybrid program eux in comparison with the existing programmes



The dual system

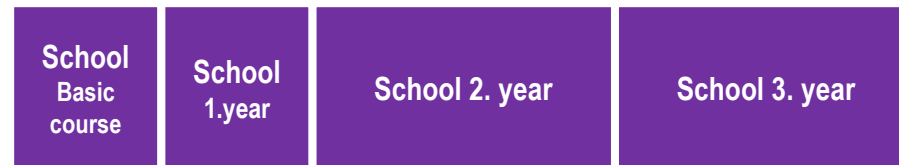


Eux - the new hybrid programme



The length of the school based and work based periods may vary between the programmes

The technical Gymnasium



Preliminary results of the new 'bridge' from VET to HE

- Has succeeded in obtaining high enrolment
- Very demanding programme: '*two in one*' - in the time of one
- Difficult to include long work based training placement in programme
- Might end up reducing the esteem of the ordinary VET programmes - contrary to the political intentions of increasing the esteem of VET.

Thank you for your attention !

