

Cooperation among stakeholders to facilitate transition from school to work

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline



ID number 28131

Background

Disadvantaged young people, school leavers without a graduation certificate and young people from difficult social backgrounds usually have great difficulties in entering training and employment. They often lack not only the necessary knowledge, skills and motivation, but also the social skills needed to meet the requirements of an apprenticeship or job. For their social and vocational integration, they therefore usually require intensive educational and vocational counselling as well as socio-pedagogical support.

A number of federal, state and municipal programmes, as well as numerous initiatives and projects, address these special needs. The standard support instruments are anchored in the Social Code (SGB). Despite a broad and increasingly differentiated range of instruments of employment promotion (SGB III), integration services (SGB II) and socio-educational aids for socially disadvantaged and individually disabled young people (SGB VIII), the NEET rate shows that a significant group of young people are not always reached by the offers of the social benefits system.

Objectives

In view of the diversity of potential issues arising at the transition from school to work, it is all the more important that the various service providers (e.g. youth social work; VET guidance) coordinate their services with each other and provide joint support to the individual young person. This can prevent young people from being overwhelmed in dealing with the separate services or even getting lost on the way from one contact person to another. The two following initiatives are based on the cooperation between youth social work and VET and labour market integration services:

- (a) the aim of the Youth employment agencies (*Jugendberufsagentur*, JBA) is to provide a local one-stop-shop for young people, bundling all youth support services at the transition between school and work, including vocational guidance and individual social support, also during training.
- (b) for those not reached by these measures, the aim of the project RESPEKT is to reach

out and provide services that build personal, long-term relationships with the young, creating trust and security and paving the way for a continuous and sustainable path to education and work. Support may also be needed for housing, homelessness, the family situation and care, the financial situation and regional mobility.

Description

To provide young people with the best possible one-stop support in the transition from school to work, local alliances known as JBA have been established in many places since 2011 (first in Hamburg but ten years later widespread in Germany with more than 350 agencies). This is where the various players responsible for vocational guidance and social support coordinate their efforts at the regional and local level. The alliances that have been established vary greatly. It takes time to work out the best approach for one's own alliance and to coordinate the various players (including for example schools, chambers, youth migration services, employer organisations).

Although the legal responsibilities remain with the individual legal entities (employment agency, job centre and youth welfare office), they can coordinate with each other more easily and jointly find the best support options for the young people. The question of responsibility no longer has to be clarified by the young people themselves. The key actors of the Youth employment agencies are the Federal ministry of labour and social affairs (BMAS), the Federal youth ministry (BMFSFJ), the Federal employment agency (BA), the German county association, the Association of German cities, and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), which hosts the JBA service point since 2019.

For those not reached by these measures, the RESPEKT pilot programme (2015-18) and the anchoring of such an approach in the Social Code in 2019 (§ 16h SGB II) has expanded the range of services provided by the Social Code SGB II with additional service components and methods. The Cooperation association for youth social work, the Welfare umbrella organisation, the Association of German Cities and the German County Association are partner organisations in these projects. The pilot programme RESPEKT focused on disadvantaged young people (aged 15-25) who needed low-threshold social support to manage reintegration into school or VET, particularly young people who were not or no longer reached by regular education/social/employment services. The project funded 18 projects from November 2015 to December 2017. The BMAS extended the funding of the projects until 31 December 2018.

2015 Implementation

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

Under the leadership of the BMFSFJ, the Federal Government has developed a youth strategy together with all ministries in 2019. This explicitly mentions the further development of youth employment agencies as an important measure to be able to support young people at the transition from school to work in a more targeted and holistic way.

In 2019, about 6 000 young people took part in a measure pursuant to § 16h of the Social Code II (SGB II; support to disconnected youth, based on the pilot programme RESPEKT) according to statistics of the Federal Employment Agency.

2020 Implementation

From 2020, the formation and work of youth employment agencies is to be supported by a national service point, which has been set up by the BMAS and is based at the BIBB. Its central task is to establish a nationwide support structure for cross-

jurisdictional cooperation in the transition from school to work. In this way, it shall promote the formation of youth employment agencies as well as support their qualitative development.

The article *Regional transition management: establishing youth employment agencies in rural and urban districts - experiences in Saxony-Anhalt* illustrates how this type of cooperation across legal entities can also be effectively established across an entire federal state and not only in major cities. It presents the latest status of implementation and the conditions necessary for success. Local institutions must be integrated and due consideration must be accorded to specific regional circumstances (BIBB journal BWP 04/2020).

The Rehadat database offers a list of addresses and websites of youth employment agencies, sorted by federal states. The database is an information service of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW Köln).

In 2020, according to the statistics of the BA, about 7 100 young people took part in a measure pursuant to § 16h of the Social Code II (SGB II; support to disconnected youth, based on the pilot programme RESPEKT) according to statistics of the BA.

In October 2020, the research institute of the Federal Employment Agency (IAB) published a study on *Integrating hard-to-reach young people in basic benefits - a success story?* (German only). The authors conclude that the measures pursuant to § 16h of the Social Code II (SGB II), which offer low-threshold social work via direct contacts to reach young people, who previously slipped through the welfare State cracks, are a viable approach. It is thus an important addition to the traditional range of measures in the area of basic welfare. With the waning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the corresponding measures should be promoted again.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the national service point at BIBB expanded its online offer: an information portal, a communication platform, publications and a calendar of events with a selection of dates related to the topics of the youth employment agencies.

Joint working within youth employment agencies also requires a joint IT system. Such a system was developed by the Federal Employment Agency in close coordination with the BMAS, the Association of German cities and the German county association. YouConnect can now support the exchange of information with the consent of young people.

Further, in 2021 a self-assessment procedure was developed for the youth employment agencies. Through self-assessment, the cooperation partners of a youth employment agency can determine where they are already well positioned and where they see development prospects. In addition to the Employment Agency, the Job Centre and the local public youth welfare agency, other stakeholders, such as general and vocational schools, can participate in the self-assessment if they are involved as cooperation partners in the youth employment agency.

Regarding the support for disconnected youth, the article *The support of hard-to-reach young people according to the §16h of the Social Code II (SGB II) - First experiences from Saxony-Anhalt* was published (f-bb-Working Paper 01/21). Further, the Cooperation association for youth social work published a position paper: *Reaching (almost) 'lost' youth! What the new federal government can do! Necessary offers for young people to overcome the consequences of the Corona pandemic at the transition from school to work* (11/2021).

2022 Implementation

In 2022, with the results of the *Survey on cross-jurisdictional cooperation alliances in the transition from school to work*, the national service point at BIBB for youth employment agencies presents an overview of the state of development regarding the introduction of youth employment agencies in a total of 400 counties and cities

nationwide. The survey was conducted in summer 2021 and its results were published in 2022.

In 2022, the cooperation association for youth social work published its specialised journal DREIZEHN in May and November. The journal provides a forum for the concerns of young people with difficult framework conditions in society. The focus is on increasing public awareness and improving social and vocational integration. Current topics of youth social work and youth welfare are taken up in the journal and their social, political as well as pedagogical relevance for practice is shown. The aim is to promote discourse with political decision-makers and to present successful examples of a coordinated support system.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the service point at BIBB continued to support JBA by organising events and networking, sharing information and publishing articles on its website, e.g. an article on the role the JBA could play to design and implement the new training guarantee (coming into force in April 2024) on a regional basis (see Enggruber / Neises, BIBBreport, November 2023).

According to the BA statistics, around 10 000 participants entered a measure under Section 16h of the Social Code II (SGB II) in 2023.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the service point at BIBB continued to support JBA by organising events and networking, sharing information and publishing articles on its website. For example, the JBA team in BIBB published in July 2024 an online article on the fundamental aspects of cross-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary cooperation of JBAs. Another example of publication in April 2024 is the final evaluation report of the Berlin JBA which summarises the results of the evaluation period from March 2021 to December 2023 and provides an overview of the aspects for which there is a need for action. For example, the feedback surveys among JBA users and staff need to be implemented as evaluation tools throughout Berlin. Further, an agreement on standardised quality criteria for joint case consultations is necessary from the perspective of the stakeholders and the external evaluation.

The service point organised in Berlin on 26-27 November 2024 a nationwide symposium (around 350 participants) with the aim of providing a forum for stakeholders in and around youth employment agencies to exchange ideas and meet in person. Lectures, interviews, themed forums and practical reports will shed light on various aspects of cross-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary cooperation. Federal Labour Minister Hubertus Heil will open the event.

The new BMBF *Startchancen* programme provides targeted support to schools with a high proportion of socially disadvantaged learners, including vocational schools - especially those providing pre-VET programmes. The federal and state governments are jointly investing around EUR 20 billion over ten years in this programme. With the *Startchancen* programme, the federal and state governments want to decouple educational success from social background and ensure greater equality of opportunity. It is not just about financial support, but also about systemic changes and strengthening the performance of the education system. The first *Startchancen* schools have been selected in all 16 federal states. A total of 2 125 schools have started on 1 August 2024, which is more than twice as many as originally planned. By the 2026/27 school year, it is foreseen to have around 4 000 *Startchancen* schools throughout Germany.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
- Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

- Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)
- Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)
- Federal Employment Agency (BA)
- Association of German Cities (Deutscher Städtetag)
- German County Association (Deutscher Landkreistag, DLT)
- Cooperation association for youth social work
- Welfare umbrella organisation

Target group

Learners

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

Entities providing VET

Companies

VET providers (all kinds)

Other

Young people (age up to 25 years)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Service point for Youth Employment Agencies \(BIBB\)](#)

Startchancen programme for schools with many disadvantaged learners (2024)

Portal of cooperation network for youth social work: Support to disconnected young people (§ 16h SGB II)

IAB study Integrating hard-to-reach young people in basic benefits - a success story? (10/2020)

Pilot programme RESPEKT (Evaluation report)

Brochure (2019) with practice examples of support to disconnected youth (§ 16h SGB II)

Legal text (§ 16h SGB II)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Municipalities education programme

With the ESF Plus education municipalities programme, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports districts and independent cities in the further development of their education landscape.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Future Starters programme for young adults without initial vocational qualification (Zukunftsstarter)

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) joint initiative to provide initial vocational training for young adults *Training will be something - late starters wanted (AusBILDUNG wird was - Spätstarter gesucht)* started in 2013

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2024 Implementation

Integrating migrants and refugees in VET and work

Since 2015, in line with the federal ESF integration guideline, the IvAF integration programme (Integration of asylum seekers and refugees) has contributed to the sustainable integration of asylum seekers, asylum applicants and refugees in training and employment through comprehensive counselling

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Expanding vocational guidance and support from school until completion of training

Nationwide standard support measures anchored in the Social Code (e.g. SGB III) cover the transition from school to work, for example with various forms of vocational preparation and continuous support during training.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

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