

# VerA - Prevention of Training Dropout

## Date of creation

2009

## Description

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Retired trained professionals volunteer their time and experience to support apprentices as part of a mentors scheme in Germany.

## Beneficiaries

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**Learners at risk of early leaving from education and training**



**Migrants / refugees**

Those at-risk of dropping out from their apprenticeships. While it is open to persons of all backgrounds, in reality many of the participants are facing challenges within their families, or are refugees/unaccompanied minors.

## Countries

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 **Germany**

## Education level and sector

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**Secondary education**



**Upper secondary education**



**Upper secondary vocational education and training (school-based)**



**Upper secondary vocational education and training (work-based learning)**

Upper secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) (apprenticeship and school-based)

## Type of policy/initiative

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**Intervention**

Intervention

## Level of implementation / Scope

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**National level**

National [1]

[1] Scope: national (basic information, national evaluation report), interviews focus on region of Bavaria (especially Munich)

## Stage of implementation

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 **On-going**

Ongoing/Mainstream [2], first implemented in 2009 [3]

[2] Part of “Bildungsketten” <http://www.bildungsketten.de/de/235.php>, previously part of the ‘Jobstarter’ initiative.

[3] The measure was officially granted on 1 December 2008; the first coaching activity started in spring 2009.

## Aims of policy/initiative

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The measure is a coaching initiative to guide those at risk of early leaving through their vocational training.

## Features and types of activities implemented

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The measure is led by SES (Senior Experts Service) Bonn, who coordinate the measure in cooperation with regional coordinators and chambers.

The measure connects those at risk of early leaving (mentees) with senior experts (mentors) for coaching on **a 1:1 basis**. The coaching focuses on learning and on any issues they may be facing outside of the apprenticeship, such as:

- personal problems
- disputes with colleagues/bosses
- reflecting on their choices
- preparation for exams

The coaching between mentees and senior experts can last a few months or continue for several years throughout the apprenticeship, depending on the demand and motivation of the mentor and the mentee.

## Resources

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The initiative has secured funding from the Ministry of Education and Research until the year 2018 and the budget is available for up to 3,000 mentees per year. These funds are used to cover organisational expenses and overheads. Human resources are provided by volunteer retirees, who work for free (they receive ‘pocket money’ of €50 per month, to cover travel and other expenses).

## Evaluation of the measure

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The initiative receives funding from the Ministry of Education and Research until 2018, budget is available for up to 3,000 mentees per year. These funds are used for covering organisational expenses and overheads. Human resources are provided by volunteer retirees, who work for free.

## Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

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31.5% of respondents to the evaluation report stated that they have successfully completed their education or training and 41.4 % stated that they are continuing their education or training.

A majority of respondents (> 75%) who were thinking of dropping out of education stated that their mentor had an influence on their decision not to drop out.

In general, almost 90% of mentees questioned for the evaluation report would recommend the initiative to friends. This is also confirmed by the interviewees.

In the evaluation report, a majority of mentees (around 80%) responded that the measure helped improve their vocational school results.

According to the evaluation report, 70% of mentees also state that without their mentor, they would not have made it through “this difficult time”.

## Success factors

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The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. Continuous 1:1 support: 1:1 mentoring proved to be effective in personally motivating at risk participants to keep pursuing their goals and assist in reaching them. Coaching is not limited time-wise and can continue throughout the education or training.
2. Human resources: SES has almost 12,000 volunteer ‘senior experts’ registered. This helps to find a good match, depending on the needs of the mentees (according to a regional coordinator, in 80% of cases the problems do not lie in the respective industry/trade, but are more personal).
3. Age of mentors: ‘grandparents’ generation, experts (with many years of experience in the fields) – respected by mentees.
4. Flexibility: thanks to the wide choice of mentors, there is a high flexibility in finding the right match for a mentee, depending on their specific challenges. Furthermore, there is no strict limitation on the type of problem to be addressed, making a very individual and flexible mentoring possible.

## Contact details for further information

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### Contact telephone

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### Contact website

<http://vera.ses-bonn.de/>

### Contact email

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## Related intervention approaches

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**Community involvement**



**One-to-one support through  
coaching or mentoring**

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