



National Report: Local Mapping Germany

Analysis on the existing coaching programmes on soft skills in social competence in Germany

Y.U.S.S. – Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes

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I. Introduction

Although the rate of youth unemployment – young people aged 15-24 – “only” amounts to 7.9% in Germany (June 2012) and is one of the lowest in the EU, the German labour market is currently facing another serious problem: More and more businesses complain about the shortage of skilled young recruits and unfilled apprenticeship positions. The reason for this is not that the number of youths seeking a trainee position is decreasing but rather the fact that many youths simply lack the necessary skills and competences required for a vocational training. In many cases the young people affected by unemployment and a lack of perspective did not finish school or left school without school-leaving qualification which means they do not possess the necessary maturity for training and employment and are not able to master the transition to vocational education and training on their own. This transition from school education to the labour market currently seems to be the biggest challenge for young people in Germany. After all young people are confronted with an ever-changing society and constantly changing demands of the labour market, the courses of education are less standardized and young people are required early on to actively shape their journey through life. An essential prerequisite for a successful choice of career is that young people deal with their own strengths, interests and various abilities and become aware of them in due course. Furthermore, they need information about the world of work and assistance in structuring the process of choosing a profession. Schools and other educational institutions prepare the young people for their future career and the challenges of the labour market for which a variety of instruments and methods of vocational guidance is available. But to effectively support youths in the transition to the labour market and to promote in particular the development of personal and social competences, which are often neglected during formal education, the coordination and interlocking of existing vocational preparation schemes is essential.

This national report will analyse three existing coaching programmes on soft skills in social competence in Germany which have been chosen as good practice due to their high quality standard, sustained success and good reputation. The programmes and instruments are usually offered, funded and monitored by a network of experts including e.g. the German Federal Employment Agency, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the German Institute for Adult Education as well as the federal states, certified educational providers and selected schools. The three measures are not only applied on local or regional level but nationwide which means they are part of a structured and coherent support policy of Federal and State governments in the transition area. The chosen programmes positively influence young people including those with special needs, with disabilities and with a migratory background regarding their personal development, school education, choice of career and transition to vocational training or employment. Young people who do not fulfil the necessary qualifications in order to begin vocational training or cannot find a trainee position for other reasons are given the opportunity to increase their individual chances to enter the labour market with the assistance of professional guidance. In order to boost the placement of young people in vocational education and training and their lasting integration into the labour market it is indispensable to tap the previously unused potential of adolescents. As outlined in the good practices, this is typically done by means of individual assistance, suitable analyses of strengths and abilities, and flexible structures.

II. Presentation of the coaching programmes

2.1 Pre-vocational education programme (BvB)

With the pre-vocational education programme which is often abbreviated as BvB, the German Federal Employment Agency funds an important qualification element to support youths and young adults in gaining access to the training and labour market. On behalf of the Federal Employment Agency, BvB are carried out on a permanent basis by suitable providers that have the required staff, space and technical equipment at their disposal. In order to implement the wide range of services, cooperation as well as regionally coordinated action is needed. The educational institutions which are responsible for the implementation of the programme are obliged to integrate closely into the existing regional network structures which include companies, vocational schools, chambers and guilds, offices for youth welfare, social security offices, providers of basic benefits and other institutions such as regional contact points, migration-specific networks and other providers of training opportunities. The offers of support e.g. from schools and youth service organizations should be involved if possible and if they are useful in the promotion of the individual sequence of training. The participants should be primarily prepared for the inclusion in training. While maintaining this objective of prime importance, a parallel goal of the pre-vocational education programme might be the preparation for taking up employment. The pre-vocational education programme is funded by the Federal Employment Agency which means that no costs arise for the participants as the programme is paid for by the local jobcentre. While participating in a pre-vocational education programme, the young people are entitled to vocational training grants or training allowance. The travelling expenses are also covered.

The development and promotion of key skills in terms of cross-vocational competences is very important for young people as they have to be prepared for the growing demands in the world of work e.g. in the field of self-organization and problem-solving. Among others the following soft skills should be promoted:

- Personal skills: e.g. motivation, efficiency, but also self-image, self-assessment, self-confidence, openness, values.
- Social skills: e.g. communication skills and language proficiency, cooperation/teamwork, conflict management, empathy.
- Methodical skills: e.g. problem-solving, work organization, learning techniques, classification and evaluation of knowledge.
- Practical life skills: e.g. dealing with authorities, dealing with money, hygiene, daily structure, use of public transportation, shopping, self-sufficiency, appearance, leisure activities.
- Intercultural skills: sympathy for and tolerance towards as well as dealing with other cultures, traditions and religions.
- IT and media literacy: independent application and targeted use of information and communication technologies as well as print media.

The promotion and development of skills in the context of a holistic personal development is a cross-cutting task.

The target group of BvB includes – regardless of the achieved formal education – young people if they are without initial vocational training, have fulfilled their compulsory education and have not yet completed their 25th year of age. The programme targets particularly youths

- who do not yet have the required training maturity or professional aptitude or
- whose taking up of an apprenticeship was not successful due to inconsistencies between the requirements of the training market and the personal profile of the applicant and whose training and employment opportunities should be increased by further promotion of their vocational ability to act (increase in employability).

This also includes young people with complex needs

- whose personal basic conditions and family situation have to be taken into consideration to a greater extent and/or
- where no clear positive prognosis for the attainment of training maturity was made prior to the commencement of the programme, but where the taking up of an apprenticeship is not completely impossible and
- when the youths are sufficiently motivated and stabilized prior to the programme to ensure regular participation.

Apart from these formal requirements, the participation in a pre-vocational education programme has to be required due to the personal situation of the adolescent. Interested youths should ask the person in charge at the jobcentre prior to the commencement of the programme whether the requirements for support are met or not.

To enable a qualification which is tailored to the needs of the youths who are to be supported, the support structure includes the following elements:

- *Individualization and internal differentiation*: Within a qualification level a wide range of services is offered which is oriented towards the individual skills and abilities, the current performance level of the participants and the needs of the regional labour market.
- *Socio-educational assistance*: BvB are complex occupational-related and pre-vocational education schemes which are socio-educationally supported. Practical experience, theoretical instruction as well as socio-educational assistance are equally to be provided. Socio-educational specialists are the first point of contact on-site and provide crisis intervention as well as everyday life assistance. The socio-educational assistance aims at the perception and removal of individual competitive disadvantages as well as the settling and stabilization of the family situation. Significant socio-educational processes are initiated, accompanied and reflected by the educational guidance.
- *Flexibility and permeability*: The offers should facilitate flexible accesses to and timely transitions into other educational opportunities fitting perfectly and have to be available throughout the year.
- *Participation and transparency*: A presentation of the offer suited to young people and the target group serves as a basis for the participation of the youths. Before entering the support structure the adolescents are informed and advised in a simple, comprehensible and target-group related way about the training opportunities by vocational guidance specialists working for a jobcentre in cooperation with the educational institutions.
- *Sequences of support and qualification*: Sequences of support and qualification represent training sections which have to be completed individually with respect to time and content. They serve as a basis for individual qualification processes and are therefore an instrument of internal differentiation. The different qualification levels tailored to the individual case are:
 - ❖ A suitability analysis
 - ❖ Elementary level (core element “Career guidance/choice of career”)

- ❖ Career advancement level (core element “Vocational skills”)
- ❖ Transitional training (core element “Professional and business-oriented training”)

They should include cross-vocational basic qualification or parts of vocational training and prepare specifically for vocational training. This requires qualification offers relevant to the training and labour market.

- *Continuous educational guidance:* The implementation of the individual qualification/assistance plan is decided on in consultation with the vocational guidance specialist of the jobcentre and is the responsibility of the educational advisor during the entire qualification programme. Individualization, flexibility and permeability in a system of pre-vocational education programmes which are designed according to uniform standards are taken as a yardstick.
- *Interconnection:* The contents of the qualification offers are based on existing training regulations as well as training schemes for young people with disabilities and convey realistic professional experience.
- *Promotion of the vocational ability to act:* Tailored to the different target groups, existing skills are promoted and deficits reduced in order to achieve a sustainable integration into training or employment as quickly as possible. Therefore the support is also extended to the development of key skills.

A suitability analysis captures the technical, methodological, social and personal skills and abilities as well as the individual motivation and is the basis for the individual qualification/assistance plan. The aim of the resource-oriented suitability analysis is to create a profile of strengths and weaknesses in consideration of occupational requirements. Different methods of aptitude assessment should be involved in the analysis. Mandatory are among others simulation- and action-oriented processes, occupational-related processes or samples of work, and biography-oriented processes. For the completion of the before mentioned processes optional tests or questionnaires might be additionally used to gather basic school skills and occupational-related interests and leanings.

The individual qualification/assistance plan is based on the results of the suitability analysis and/or a previous diagnosis, drawn up by the educational advisor together with the participant and then regularly updated (process and counselling diagnosis). The qualification plan is structured as follows:

- Personal data
- Results of the suitability analysis/Assessment of skills (Presentation of the individual starting situation)
- Goal of integration and target agreements
- Tasks/steps (of all participants)
- Differentiated offers
- Monitoring of the process and success
- Update of the qualification and assistance plan
- Achievement of objectives (Resignation/continuation)

In the further course of training, the increase in competences of the participants is periodically reviewed and documented. The planned offers for qualification and support should be reviewed and, if necessary, adapted by the educational advisor.

BvB usually start in September, but access is possible at any time throughout the year. The duration of the support in the relevant qualification level depends on the individual needs and the integration

prospects/possibilities of the participant. The decision is made by the vocational guidance specialist of the jobcentre. Normally the participation in a pre-vocational education programme lasts up to 10 months, in exceptional cases up to 18 months. A premature termination of the participation in order to begin training or to take up work is possible at any time. The number of hours per week including vocational school instruction amounts to 39 hours. During the internship/vocational qualification the negotiated or common operational working hours of the company apply.

After successfully completing the pre-vocational education programme, the participants receive a certificate from the educational institution which lists the acquired basics of vocational proficiency in a detailed and comprehensible way. If a placement in training or employment was not successful until the individual end of the programme, the vocational guidance specialist makes a statement for which occupations vocational aptitude exists or at least if the general training maturity was attained. In addition to that, the educational institution reports about the employability of the participant and makes recommendations regarding further need for action and/or support.

BvB offer a wide range of services which are angled at the individual abilities and needs of the participants and are organized in a flexible manner. The programme includes theoretical knowledge, personal development, vocational basic skills, vocational training, basic qualifications in IT and media literacy, language training and application training. By working closely together with companies, educational providers give the opportunity to get to know additional professional fields to which access cannot be provided. The aim is to make the broadest possible offer of professions geared to the regional training and labour market as well as practical training available for the participants. An internship in an enterprise as required by the BvB helps to promote the skills of young people even more effectively. By means of the results of the suitability analysis each participant receives the opportunity to orient him- or herself in the multitude of possible professions and to make a personal choice of career. The programme gives adolescents without a school-leaving qualification the opportunity to prepare for the completion of compulsory basic secondary schooling or the acquisition of an equally matched school-leaving qualification. A high transition rate into training and work will contribute to an increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of pre-vocational education programmes.

The most important objectives of the programme are among others

- to give young people the opportunity to examine and assess their skills and competences with regard to a possible choice of occupation, to orient themselves in view of the multitude of professions and to make a choice of career
- to equip the young people with the necessary skills and competences to embark on an initial vocational training or – if this is not yet possible – to take up employment and
- to integrate the youths as sustainable as possible into the training and/or labour market.

Results are

- avoidance or quick termination of lack of training and unemployment
- the improvement of the vocational ability to act
- an increase in the level of qualification
- the opening and reactivation of operational qualification offers
- an increase in the provision of training and employment opportunities
- a high customer satisfaction.

Internet links for additional information:

http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_26268/zentraler-Content/A05-Beruf-Qualifizierung/A051-Jugendliche/Allgemein/Berufsvorbereitende-Bildungsmassnahmen.html

<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/Veroeffentlichungen/Berufsorientierung/Flyer-BvB.pdf>

<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/HEGA-Internet/A05-Beruf-Qualifizierung/Publikation/HEGA-11-2009-VA-Erg-BvB-Fachkonzept-Anlage-2.pdf>

2.2 The ProfilPASS for young people

The ProfilPASS system is the result of a feasibility study from the “Weiterbildungspass mit Zertifizierung informellen Lernens” project (“Continuing Education Certificate Attesting to Informal Learning”) which was collectively conducted by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE), the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) and the Institute for Development Planning and Structural Research (IES). The project ended in 2003 and was financed with funds from the Federal Ministry for Education and Research and the European Social Fund. The current project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and is accompanied by the Federation and the German States under the auspices of the Saarland. The ProfilPASS for young people has existed since 2007; it is evaluated regularly and used to ascertain and document the abilities and competences of young people in a systematic way. Areas of application include schools, student consultation or qualification courses. The ProfilPASS is often used as instrument during programs at schools (financed by parents, government agencies, employment offices) or foundations. This means that costs depend on the context in which the ProfilPASS is used, but as part of an educational programme, the youths definitely have no extra costs. The cost of the ProfilPASS for young people outside the framework of a programme is €19.90 for each individual copy. The goal of the ProfilPASS for young people is to expand the career guidance which is already established in many schools by an individual skills assessment monitored by a ProfilPASS advisor. The results are scientifically analysed by the German Institute for Adult Education and the Institute for Development Planning and Structural Research. The coordinating service centre for the advising and training of ProfilPASS advisors (located at the German Institute for Adult Education) works with the dialogue centres, of which there are currently 45, to raise awareness locally of the visualisation and documentation of informal learning. Since May 2007, the ProfilPASS folder is provided on a permanent basis and can be ordered by young people throughout Germany.

The ProfilPASS for young people aims to enhance participants' self-awareness through self-reflection. Coming to terms with one's own history promotes independent learning and the ability to articulate, and it boosts the motivation for lifelong learning. Furthermore, the process is designed to improve the ability of adolescents to engage in dialogue, the willingness to take on responsibility and the individual determination where they are in life. Based on this approach, individual reflection and assessment can contribute to an effective further development of one's personal and professional history. The ProfilPASS helps young people to navigate the confusing diversity of options of modern life and professional world by making personal abilities, skills and competences more visible. In short, it helps to get to know the individual interests better.

The ProfilPASS for young people is tailored to the needs of youths from the age of 13/14 up and represents a tool for identifying personal strengths which is adapted to this target group. The

ProfilPASS for young people stands out due to its multiple target group approach: All target groups and levels of education can be addressed appropriately. The language is clear and simple, easy to understand, but not trivial.

The ProfilPASS system comprises the ProfilPASS tool and a guidance concept geared to it. The aim of the ProfilPASS is to visualise and document the individual's capabilities and competences: It takes the current life into account and considers all possible forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal) and learning venues. The ProfilPASS is thus primarily an instrument of self-reflection on skills, abilities and competences. The focus is not only on technical, but also social and personal skills. The method has a procedural character and stands for the sustainable personal development of young people. Deployment scenarios for the ProfilPASS for young people and the accompanying guidance are exceptionally diverse: e.g. as a tool during vocational preparation and orientation initiatives, as strength analysis, during project weeks, afternoon activities at all-day schools, as part of programmes for people under the age of 25, and as part of volunteering activities in sports clubs, church associations or the Voluntary Year of Social Service. The process is open-ended regarding the outcome which means that no lists of competencies have been predefined. Instead young people learn to identify their personal strengths and put them into words. That way they discover their individual strengths and interests on their own. The use of the ProfilPASS requires supervision by a certified ProfilPASS advisor. The professional guidance accompanies this open-ended process and puts great emphasis on the development of the self-reflection. The advisers are trained in guidance work in dialogue centres that have been certified by the ProfilPASS service centre. The range of the counseling process is determined by the users and collectively agreed at the outset.

At the heart of the step-by-step process is the detailed analysis of activities. To do this, the individual's own activities are scrutinised and described in detail. Using various methods, key biographical elements are collected and, for the beginning, merely named. The ProfilPASS folder is divided into five areas:

- My life: First of all, the youths should have a look at their own life. The focus is on family, leisure time and school as well as on internships, apprenticeship and employment.
- My strengths: The centre of attention are activities in the leisure time, at school or during training. What exactly do I do? Do I do it regularly and do I like to do it? Which personal qualities characterise me? How do others see me? Self-assessment and external assessment help young people to develop a realistic view of their own strengths.
- My interests: This section deals with special interests and talents. What are you interested to do in your free time? What do you like to do most? Is there a favourite topic on which you inform yourself regularly? What are you proud of?
- My goals: Finally it is about dreams and personal goals. What would I like to know and to be able to do? What will change in my life? What do I want to change?
- Collection of proofs: Here is space for certificates, documents and other evidence.

At the next stage of the process, the capabilities, skills and competences which are going to be used are derived from the recorded activities. Following the steps "name", "describe", "summarise" and "evaluate" the activities, a competences record is created that can be used as a basis for presenting the person and to further develop competences. In addition to the individual competences record, personal goals are formulated and an action plan is drawn up to ensure continuity of the life biography. The professional guidance is a key part of the ProfilPASS system as qualified and certified

advisors play a supporting role. Through specific questions they encourage the reflection process and the specification of individual skills, abilities and competences. Such monitoring can take place as individual consultation or in a group as part of special ProfilPASS courses.

As the ProfilPASS for young people is not a programme itself, but rather represents a tool which can be used e.g. during an educational programme and as it is also possible to use only parts of the folder, the duration of the initiative cannot be specified. The youths have to prepare themselves for the individual or group coaching and to involve their environment in the reflection process which can take some time depending on the person. The ProfilPASS for young people has been developed, tested and is regularly evaluated by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and the Institute for Development Planning and Structural Research (IES).

Participants in the ProfilPASS process receive a ProfilPASS competencies certificate as proof that they have successfully used the tool. This includes the participants' key data and documents their participation in the process, including the integrated consultation. The identified competencies are not mentioned. It also includes the explanation that "the young person has thus reflected on his/her own life, identified individual competencies, highlighted strengths and formulated personal interests."

The ProfilPASS for young people is the first "passport" which is applied throughout Germany and includes academic qualifications as well as informal learning. The method is a long-term process of self-reflection which, depending on individual needs, can be further pursued at specific intervals to produce a biographically-oriented process. All areas of life are integrated into the process: Skills are identified and documented which were acquired e.g. during training, volunteer work and leisure time or through family activities. The ProfilPASS folder offers comprehensive and methodical materials and presents an effective tool for self-reflection. The tool strives to make young people aware that there are many possibilities for learning and self-development, not just in school. The integrated consultation provides flexibility with regard to the extent and focus of the process. Furthermore, the ProfilPASS system is process-oriented instead of result-oriented which means that the learning process is the centre of attention and not the things that a young person did or reached in a specific activity.

The ProfilPASS seeks to accompany young people in their personal development and encourage motivation, increased responsibility, self-reflection and self-confidence. This guided process results – depending on the individual biographical situation – in long-range planning which can unfold its benefits regarding professional development, the preparation of entry into the labour market, professional and personal orientation and future educational plans. Young people learn how to make a realistic assessment of their own skills and competences; they can develop an increased willingness to take on responsibility, improve their communication skills and use the process to identify their choice of career.

Internet links for additional information:

http://www.profilpass-fuer-junge-menschen.de/index.php?article_id=3

<http://du-kannst-mehr.net/>

2.3 Mentoring system for the transition to the labour market

The programme “Abschluss und Anschluss – Bildungsketten bis zum Ausbildungsabschluss” (“Graduation and afterwards – Education chains until training qualification”) is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and pools new funding instruments with existing support programmes on federal and state level to link them together. The mentoring system for the transition to the labour market was implemented as an element of this initiative. Participants in the special programme which is carried out every year are youths attending their penultimate school year at selected secondary modern schools or similar schools which lead to the certificate of completion of compulsory basic secondary schooling or an equally matched school-leaving qualification as well as youths attending special schools. 2.000 schools have been selected through state proposals by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in accordance with the Federal Employment Agency on condition that the schools agree to collaborate closely and trustingly with the mentors for the transition to the labour market and to allow educational providers to carry out potential analyses if they do not do it themselves. When the programme first started in February 2009, mentoring began in the second half of the 2008/2009 school year in the penultimate grades. The last cohort of young people will start receiving mentoring until 31st December 2014. The Federal Employment Agency is responsible for the implementation of the mentoring system while the BMBF has allocated the budget of the programme (until 2014) to approximately € 460 million.

The main soft skills to be promoted by personal mentors match the ones which are outlined in the description of the pre-vocational education programme (cf. 2.1).

This tool is designed to support those young people in a targeted and timely fashion who will probably have difficulties in earning a lower secondary school-leaving certificate or equally matched qualification and/or in coping with the transition to vocational education and training. The skills need to be such that the aim of the programme can be expected to be achieved. Young people seeking to earn a school-leaving certificate from a special-needs school may also be included if they aim at vocational training which is expected to be attained with support from the mentoring system. A decisive factor in choosing the participants are the individual’s specific promotional requirements. The use of the mentoring for the transition to the labour market is voluntary.

The mentoring for the transition to the labour market includes in particular the socio-educational individual support of young people as well as the development and coordination of customised support services. Each mentor permanently employed by a training provider will individually support and assist about 20 pupils and a special bond of trust will be created by pairing off mentors and pupils/trainees. For each participant an individual assistance plan based on a potential analysis at the beginning of the mentoring process is to be drawn up and updated regularly. The mentors support the youths in safeguarding their interests against third parties and realizing the necessary steps to achieve their goals. Attention has to be paid particularly to specific characteristics like a migratory background and special social conditions. The mentors’ main goal is the support of young people in

- Personal development and attainment of training maturity
- Earning a diploma from a school providing general education
- Career orientation and choice of career
- Seeking a trainee position
- Mastering the transition period and

- Stabilizing the apprenticeship.

This scheme is modelled on the numerous voluntary VET sponsoring projects run by associations, clubs, churches, trade unions or other organisations. There should be close co-operation between the participants, their parents/guardians, teachers, vocational advisors of the Employment Agency, mentors, regional employers and other players in the field of career orientation and choice of career.

A potential analysis in the 7th or 8th grade is the basis for the selection of young people and the individual mentoring. Only those youths whose analysis proves special needs will be mentored for up to three years. The analysis refers among other to skills and talents acquired in the non-formal system and identifies the individual strengths, weaknesses and interests. In addition to that, the biographical background, the individual situation of the young person and the career plans are examined. The analysis implies in particular:

- Methodical skills: job and learning behaviour, such as work planning, creativity or problem-solving abilities.
- Personal skills: personal behaviour like motivational ability, reliability or self-confidence.
- Social skills: social behaviour, e.g. ability to work in a team, communication skills or ability to deal with conflicts.

The analysis consists of external and self-assessment: The mentor assesses the participant and the young person judges him- or herself. Then the mentor discusses both perspectives with the participant and documents the results. This way the parents get a good impression of the skills of their child. The action-oriented methods of experiential education should encourage young people to deal with their own abilities and desires at an early stage, to reflect on them and to put them into action. In assessment centres, work samples or other practical exercises the ability to solve specific tasks can be observed. If the implementation of the analysis is not guaranteed by the States, a potential analysis among the respective classes or levels is carried out at the instance of the mentors for the transition to the labour market or the respective provider in accordance with the school. The provider is paid for the implementation with a lump sum of €200 per participant. The analysis must be based on the minimum quality standards for the implementation of potential analyses set by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The individual mentoring usually starts at the beginning of the penultimate school year. If appropriate capacities are available and if the mentoring seems to be promising regarding the support of integration, young people from senior years or levels might be included later. The support by an individual mentor normally ends one year after the commencement of vocational (in-company, external or educational) training and principally one year after graduation from a school providing general education – if no vocational training has been commenced during this period. This means a duration of normally 3 years. The transfer to further mentoring (assistance during training, voluntary mentoring) can be arranged if necessary. If the mentor for the transition to the labour market notices in accordance with the responsible employee of the Employment Agency that individual mentoring is no longer necessary, the participant has to leave the programme. An extension of the mentoring in individual cases with a relevant need for support is possible upon consultation with the Employment Agency until 24 months after graduation from a school providing general education. An extension will not be granted if

- Vocational training was begun and training assistance is simultaneously provided,
- The aim of beginning training is no longer pursued or

- Another (also voluntary) mentoring can be sufficiently guaranteed.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research coordinates the programme together with a federal-state advisory group. The “Service point Education chains” located at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) was set up for the scientific monitoring of the “Graduation and afterwards – Education chains until completion of training” programme and is responsible for public relations. The service point coordinates the exchange of experience among the stakeholders and transfers best practice.

By introducing professional mentoring for the transition to the labour market, the possibility was created to provide individual support and assistance to low-achievers at general schools over an extended period during their transition to vocational education and training or employment. The mentors support young people who are in danger of failing to earn a school-leaving certificate in the attempt to successfully complete their general education, in orientation for their future professional life, in seeking a trainee position and in stabilizing their apprenticeship. The personal mentors are permanent employees of training providers who are particularly suited to the support of young people with special needs due to their work and life experience. The mentoring system prevents school dropouts, avoids queues in the transition system and secures the skilled manpower development through vocational training. The central idea of the mentoring system is the long-term and individual support of young people which does not only cover individual sections – like traditional support programmes – , but the whole integration process. Strong embedment and networking implies in particular the intensive collaboration with schools providing general education, local providers of vocational guidance for young people, local businesses, local associations, vocational schools and other institutions relevant to the integration process. The mentoring for the transition to the labour market represents individual and constant support of each participant, which is aligned to the specific situation and the particular needs, and is not meant to be group coaching.

The individual mentoring can significantly improve the chances of young people to master the transition to vocational training and stabilize their apprenticeship. The mentoring system encourages the participants to gain positive experience and in this way, it strengthens their self-confidence. Key competences in terms of cross-vocational competences are developed and promoted to prepare the adolescents for the growing demands in the world of work, e.g. in the field of self-organisation and problem-solving. The mentors can at best achieve the following:

- The participants earn a school-leaving certificate from a school providing general education.
- For each participant a vocational prospect which is geared to the individual skills is developed and strengthened.
- The young people actively seek a trainee position. Furthermore, they are able to apply independently for an apprenticeship in the general training market and to present their strengths, competences and skills accordingly.
- After leaving school the participants succeed in the integration into vocational training.
- The youths are sustainably stabilised in their apprenticeship and the long-term integration is successful.

Internet links for additional information:

http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/richtlinien_einstiegsbegleiter.pdf

<http://www.bildungsketten.de/de/252.php>

<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/A04-Vermittlung/A042-Vermittlung/Publikation/pdf/Fachkonzept-Berufseinstiegsbegleitung-im-Auftrag-der-BA.pdf>

III. Conclusions

According to recent statistics, 1.44 million young people aged between 20 and 29 have not finished an apprenticeship or learned a profession in Germany and the number of unskilled workers up to the age of 34 even amounts to 2.2 million. Among the latter group, only 1.2 million persons have a job, usually in rather low-paid sectors such as catering and hospitality, healthcare, retail or construction. A study referring to these figures indicates “serious problems in the transition from school to work”. However, in order to tackle the impending lack of qualified personnel in the German labour market, also those young people who do not immediately succeed in the transition phase are needed. This is the reason why the German government asked certain institutions and organisations with substantial expertise in the field of career guidance and vocational education and training to carry out educational programmes and develop tools that aim at young people who are not able to master the transition to the labour market on their own. The aims of these measures – this report presented the pre-vocational education programme, the ProfilPASS for young people and the mentoring system for the transition to the labour market – are to prepare the participants as early as possible for their choice of career and to offer individual vocational guidance. That means above all to improve the training maturity of young people graduating from secondary modern schools early on, to support weak pupils more intensive, to open real qualification offers with the perspective of gaining professional qualifications to young people in the transition phase and to promote the integration of youths into vocational training. In the framework of educational offers, particular attention has to be paid to previously unsuccessful applicants, youths with a migratory background as well as socially disadvantaged or disabled adolescents and young people with learning difficulties. The two programmes and the ProfilPASS tool chosen as good practice for Germany have been developed to aim either at one of the processes of orientation, preparation and training or at the combination of all stages: BvB support young people to orient themselves in the view of the multitude of professions and to acquire the necessary skills and qualifications in order to begin training; the ProfilPASS for young people can be primarily used in the orientation phase to get to know one’s strengths, interests and abilities; and the mentors for the transition to the labour market work individually with adolescents for up to three years and monitor their professional orientation, preparation and inclusion into training. Although differing slightly in target groups, methodology and duration, the good practices all have an assessment tool in common – BvB: suitability analysis, ProfilPASS: biographical analysis of activities, mentoring for the transition to the labour market: potential analysis – which helps to evaluate the individual strengths, personal and social competences and interests. Once the young people are aware of their own abilities and talents, it is much easier to make a choice of career and to earn the required qualifications on the one hand and to guide the participants in their transition phase on the other hand. As the beginning of training usually depends on the question whether a person possesses the necessary training maturity or not, it is crucial to find out by means of action-oriented processes and/or psychological tests which competences the young person lacks or which need to be further promoted. Considering the fact that the three good practices have been developed and are adjusted on the basis of the current labour market needs, those skills are particularly fostered that are needed to master the transition to vocational training in a society with changing demands. While the ProfilPASS aims above all at personal skills like self-awareness, self-reflection and the willingness to take on responsibility, the pre-vocational education programme and the mentoring system promote personal, social, methodical, practical life and intercultural skills as well as IT and media literacy of the participants. As it is almost impossible to

draw up an exhaustive list of soft skills covered by each programme or tool, the most important ones have been highlighted in the relevant description.

In the following, the three good practices are evaluated regarding their mutual strengths and weaknesses in order to underline which parts of the concepts work out well and which ones need to be revised.

Strengths

- Each good practice contains an individual skills assessment which casts light on personal strengths, weaknesses, interests, competences and abilities (including those acquired through non-formal learning). The results are needed to determine the current needs of the young person and to draw up an individual assistance plan or to make the right choice of career. Furthermore, the young people get to know themselves better, their abilities of self-assessment and self-reflection are promoted and their self-confidence is improved as they realize what they are capable of.
- The good practices are based on the principle of individuality. The concept of each measure is geared towards a specific target group and takes its characteristics and needs into account. In addition to that, the educational providers, ProfilPASS advisors or personal mentors pay close attention to the development of each adolescent which can vary significantly among the participants and adjust their support to achieve the best possible result for every young person. Although the overall measures are the same for the users, the awareness that every young person is different with regard to talents, interests and skills plays a predominant role.
- The pre-vocational education programme and the mentoring for the transition to the labour market are both carried out in cooperation with (qualified) key players (advisors, vocational guidance specialists, teachers, parents, employers, etc.) and institutions (Federal Employment Agency, BMBF, educational providers, vocational schools, etc.) and is embedded in regional networking. This network of contacts ensures the extensive support of the participants, secures the quality of the programme, accelerates decision-making processes and increases the chances of a successful transition to the labour market.
- The educational programmes are carried out by suitable certified providers and the ProfilPASS is meant to be used under the supervision of a trained ProfilPASS advisor. This way the constant quality of the measure can be guaranteed. In addition to that, the evaluation by a federal institution or organisation is made easier as the providers and advisors usually have to report regularly on the success of the participants. The funding can also be arranged easily.
- The three selected measures are all supported by public funds which means that no extra costs arise for participants. In the case of BvB, participants are even entitled to vocational training grants or training allowances. Costs are thus no impediment to the participation and also young people from socially disadvantaged families have the chance to take part in the measures. As the ProfilPASS is usually used as a tool in educational programmes, the young people do not have to pay for it.

Weaknesses

- The ratio of staff to young people/participants is often said to be inappropriate. Considering the fact that the advisors and social education workers have to look after about 20 to 30 young persons, some of them with learning difficulties, special needs or a migratory background, it might be the case the not every young person receives the required attention

or assistance that he or she probably needs. As a support ratio of 1:1 can hardly be implemented, the current ratio of staff should at least be improved to ensure effective individual guidance.

- Career guidance, vocational counselling and professional support of young people is fragmented and in the hands of different actors like schools, companies, job centres, local actors, educational providers and government-funded pilot schemes. Real networking and stringent cooperation of the relevant actors at the local level is the exception up until now. There is a need for clear responsibilities of each state actor involved in youth work, for a reduction in unnecessary administrative interfaces and a form of institutionalized cooperation between labour administration and organizations offering support and various services to young people (particularly youth careers aid).
- The company as learning venue has to be placed at the centre of vocational preparation. This requires a close cooperation between businesses and other educational institutions. Cooperation agreements between providers and enterprises might promote the dualization of vocational preparation. This is also a field of action for gender-inclusive work: Young men and women should have a real opportunity to give themselves and their abilities a try in different, also “untypical” professional fields.
- It would be a major step forward if young people who have not had a chance to begin vocational training up until now could rely on support as a standard offer during and after the entrance into training. Each trainee whose learning objective seems to be endangered has to receive individually targeted support. If necessary technical and socio-pedagogical assistance should be available. Training assistance should be a standard offer of vocational training in order to support young people.
- The Federal and State governments and the Federal Employment Agency invest substantial funds into the transition system and into the training of disadvantaged young people. However, we know very little about the effectiveness of these programmes because there is no overarching evaluation. This complicates structural reforms of the transition system that are meant to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the funding measures. This is why the funding approaches and programmes of the Federal Government and the Employment Agency in the fields of vocational education and training, training preparation and the promotion of the disadvantaged should undergo comprehensive scientific evaluation and analysis.