

**MUTUAL LEARNING PROGRAMME:  
PEER COUNTRY COMMENTS PAPER - GERMANY**

Pathways to vocational training and sustained labour market  
integration: New opportunities for learning impaired and socially  
disadvantaged young people?

Peer Review on “Project Learning for Young Adults: A social integration programme  
helping young people back into work and education”

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# 1 LABOUR MARKET SITUATION IN THE PEER COUNTRY

*This paper has been prepared for a Peer Review within the framework of the Mutual Learning Programme. It provides information on Germany's comments on the policy example of the Host Country for the Peer Review. For information on the policy example, please refer to the Host Country Discussion Paper.*

Germany is still faring comparatively well with regard to the economic crisis in terms of a decrease of employment and an increase of unemployment rates. In July 2009, the unemployment rate was 7.7% (compared to 9.0% in the EU-27). Since November 2008, the turning point of unemployment rates, the rate increased from 7.1% by 0.6 percentage points. Men are more affected by the increase in unemployment than women. The rate for men was 8.3 % and for women 7.0 %<sup>1</sup>.

The youth unemployment rate was 11.2 % in July 2009 compared to 19.8 % in the EU-27. The rate for young men was 12.9 % and for young women 9.3 %<sup>2</sup>.

According to data from the Federal Employment Agency for September 2009, the unemployment rate among 15 to 25 year olds was slightly higher than the unemployment rate for all age groups at 8%. The increase in the unemployment rate of young people compared to the previous year was stronger than the increase seen for all age groups. It is interesting to note that 50.1 % of unemployed people aged under 25 years did not have a vocational training degree<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1: Unemployment rates according to age groups, September 2009**

Age groups	15 - >20	20 - > 24	15 - > 24	All
Unemployment rate in %	5.1	9.7	8.2	8.0
Change to September 2008 in percent points	+0.0	+1.3	+0.9	+0.6

Source: Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Analyse des Arbeits- und Ausbildungsstellenmarktes für unter 25-jährige, September 2009

In 2007, the rate of early school-leavers in Germany was 12.7 %, which is the EU-27 average of 15.2 %. Since 2000 the rate has decreased by 2.2 percentage points compared with the 2.4 percentage point reduction in the EU-27. In Germany, the rate of women in this category decreased considerably from 15.2 % to 11.9 % while the rate for men only decreased from 14.6 % to 13.4 %.

**Table 2: Early school leavers by gender in 2000 and 2007, %**

	Total		Women		Men	
	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007
EU	17.6	15.2	15.6	13.2	19.7	17.2
DE	14.9	12.7	15.2	11.9	14.6	13.4

Source: Eurostat, Structural indicators

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat, Harmonised Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat, Harmonised Youth unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

<sup>3</sup> Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Analyse des Arbeits- und Ausbildungsstellenmarktes für unter 25-jährige, September 2009

In 2008, the share of young people who have completed at least upper secondary education (74.1%) was below the EU-27 average (78.5%). The rate for young women (76.4%) was significantly higher than that for young men (71.9 %) <sup>4</sup>.

Recent data <sup>5</sup> from the Federal Employment Agency on apprenticeships show – due to demographic developments – that there was a stronger reduction in the number of applicants (-14%) than in the number of registered offers of apprenticeships (-7.1%).

The data from the Federal Employment Agency on particular ALMP measures for young people shows a decrease in the number of participants. This is partly the result of demographic trends with cohorts with low birth rates entering the labour market. In September 2009, 106 900 young people participated in vocational training for disadvantaged young people. This implies a decrease of 13 % in comparison to September 2008. Since January 2009, 82 400 young people have entered this measure. The number of participants decreased by 9 % <sup>6</sup>. Since the beginning of 2009, 14 800 young people enrolled in an entry qualification programme, which indicates a decrease of 9 % <sup>7</sup>. In addition, in 2009 more than 8 800 young people enrolled in an apprenticeship promoted by the 'training bonus', which was introduced in the second half of 2008. In September 2009, 19 100 apprentices were supported by this measure <sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Eurostat, Structural indicators.

<sup>5</sup> Press Info 073 of 13.10.2009. Internet: [http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn\\_27030/zentraler-Content/Pressemeldungen/2009/Presse-09-073.html](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_27030/zentraler-Content/Pressemeldungen/2009/Presse-09-073.html)

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

## 2 ASSESSMENT OF THE POLICY MEASURE

In Germany, a number of measures are targeted at young people without school-leaving certificates or who have difficulties in accessing vocational training. The most important measures, which relate to the objectives of the Slovenian project 'Learning for young adults', are outlined below.

### ***Prevocational training programme (BvB)***

The Prevocational training programme aims at promoting learning impaired and socially disadvantaged youth. The regulation is laid down in the Social Code<sup>9</sup> (§ 61 SGB III). The objective is to prepare participants to take up vocational training and to integrate them into the labour market. Key targets are to provide careers guidance and to improve knowledge and skills. It is a full-time measure and normally takes between 10-11 months. It provides insights into various occupational fields. The general rules and the contents of the programme are fixed in the '[Fachkonzept für berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen](#)'<sup>10</sup> (Specialised programme for prevocational training measures), which was revised in March 2009. Key principles and elements of the programme are: consideration of the individual situation of participants; aptitude analysis as a basis for the qualification and advancement programme; flexibility and transition to suitable training measures during the entire year; transparency and target-group oriented information; continuous educational guidance; combination of general and occupational education aimed at preparing access to vocational training; development and promotion of key competences; social-pedagogical attendance; and gender mainstreaming.

No minimum or maximum length is fixed and the individual needs or problems of each participant can be considered. A fundamental element is the comprehensive aptitude analysis to assess existing knowledge, skills and competences as well as educational, theoretical and practical deficits. An individual advancement plan fixes steps to a take up of vocational training. The participants attend a vocational school or promotional courses provided by the institution responsible for the measure. Educational guides support participants by continuously regarding all problems relating to occupational integration. Systematic social-pedagogical support fosters social competences and provides help in the case of personal difficulties<sup>11</sup>.

A legal entitlement<sup>12</sup> to a lower secondary school-leaving certificate was introduced in Germany on 1 January 2009. For young people affected, the prevocational training programme integrates specific measures to enable them to achieve this general school-leaving certificate. The subjects of advancement are targeted flexibly depending on the individual needs of the young people. It includes occupational and general qualifications supported by internships and aims at fostering personal and social competences. Systematic social-pedagogical attendance and continuous educational guidance are embedded in the specific measure which normally takes 12 months.

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<sup>9</sup> Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) Drittes Buch (III) - Arbeitsförderung - (Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 24. März 1997, BGBl. I S. 594). Internet: [http://bundesrecht.juris.de/sgb\\_3/index.html](http://bundesrecht.juris.de/sgb_3/index.html)

<sup>10</sup> Agentur für Arbeit, *Fachkonzept für berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen nach §§ 61, 61a SGBIII*, 2009. Internet: <http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/HEGA-Internet/A05-Beruf-Qualifizierung/Publikation/HEGA-03-2009-Fachkonzept-BvB-Anlage-Konzept.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> For more information see internet: [http://www.bmas.de/portal/10740/foerderung\\_\\_jugendliche.html](http://www.bmas.de/portal/10740/foerderung__jugendliche.html)

<sup>12</sup> Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) Drittes Buch (III) - Arbeitsförderung - (Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 24. März 1997, BGBl. I S. 594). Internet: [http://bundesrecht.juris.de/sgb\\_3/index.html](http://bundesrecht.juris.de/sgb_3/index.html)

The measures are provided by various institutions entrusted by the Federal Employment Agency based on tendering procedures. This is a clear difference to the Slovenian programme. The programme is financed the Federal Employment Agency.

### **Vocational training for the disadvantaged**

This policy measure provides vocational training to disadvantaged young people in training facilities external to companies. It is targeted at adolescents who could not be integrated into any company's internal vocational training despite prevocational training programmes or other supportive measures. The primary objective is to integrate the young people into company internal training<sup>13</sup>.

### **Entry qualification programme (EQJ)**

The Entry qualification programme was introduced in 2004 (when there was a similar lack of offers for apprenticeship places) and aims to support young people with individual difficulties in accessing an apprenticeship, as well as job training applicants who could not be placed in an apprenticeship<sup>14</sup>.

In the [Apprenticeship Qualification Pact](#)<sup>15</sup> the German employers' associations and the business federations committed themselves to provide annually 30 000 new apprenticeship places and 25 000 places for entry qualifications internships. This pact was renewed in 2007<sup>16</sup>. Annually, 30 000 new apprenticeship places and 40 000 places for the entry qualification internships were promised until 2010.

[Guidelines](#)<sup>17</sup> for the implementation of the EQJ programme<sup>18</sup> describe the measures as a 'bridge' into occupational training. An entry qualification prepares young people for an apprenticeship. The internship lasts between 6 and 12 months and can be validated by a certificate from the chambers. The certificates can then be counted towards a later apprenticeship. The government supports entry qualification training by refunding the trainee's wage (up to EUR 212 per month) and by financing the lump-sum share of the monthly social security contributions. As a result of the positive results of the research into the measure, the EQJ programme was incorporated into the law on employment promotion in October 2007. Young people with learning difficulties or socially disadvantaged young people were added as an additional target group and employers with up to 500 employees were entitled to additional support for the group. In addition to support for social-pedagogical attendance, accompanying support measures have also been possible since August 2009.

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<sup>13</sup> For more information see internet: [http://www.bmas.de/portal/37080/2009\\_\\_09\\_\\_03\\_\\_hauptschule.html](http://www.bmas.de/portal/37080/2009__09__03__hauptschule.html)

<sup>14</sup> Association for Innovation Research and Consultancy (GIB), *Accompanying Research for the Special Programme of the Federal Government for the Introductory Qualification of Adolescents – EQJ Programme* -, Commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Final Report, Berlin, July 2008. Internet: [http://www.bmas.de/portal/26914/property=pdf/2008\\_\\_07\\_\\_15\\_\\_eqj\\_\\_abschlussbericht\\_\\_englisch.pdf](http://www.bmas.de/portal/26914/property=pdf/2008__07__15__eqj__abschlussbericht__englisch.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> *Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung und Fachkräftenachwuchs in Deutschland*. Internet: <http://www.dihk.de/inhalt/download/ausbildungspakt.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> *Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung und Fachkräftenachwuchs in Deutschland 2007 – 2010*. Internet: <http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/A04-Vermittlung/A041-Erschliessung/Publikation/pdf/Nationaler-Ausbildungspakt-.pdf.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Richtlinie zur Durchführung des Sonderprogramms Einstiegsqualifizierung Jugendlicher (EQJ-Programm-Richtlinie - EQJR), Vom 28. Juli 2004 (Bundesanzeiger Nr. 145 vom 5. August 2004 S. 17385) in der Fassung vom 12. Januar 2007 (Bundesanzeiger Nr. 13 vom 19. Januar 2007 S. 637). Internet: <http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zentraler-Content/A04-Vermittlung/A041-Erschliessung/Publikation/pdf/Richtlinie-EQJ-zweite-Richtlinienanderung.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Internet: <http://www.bmas.de/portal/13148/einstiegsqualifizierung.htm>

For more information see internet: <http://www.bmas.de/portal/13148/ausbildungspakt.html>). The [research](#)<sup>19</sup> in support of the EQJ programme revealed a higher transition rate of participants into vocational training than in a respective control group.

### Training bonus

The so-called '[Training bonus](#)'<sup>20</sup> is an instrument which provides incentives to offer an apprenticeship specifically to young people with learning difficulties and/or who are socially disadvantaged. The programme also offers support for specific social-pedagogic attendance or other additional training measures in addition to the normal training programme. The 'Training bonus' was extended in the light of the economic crisis; an employer can now receive support for giving a place to an apprentice from a company that is in liquidation or is closing in order to enable the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship.

### Company example: 'Starthilfe' (Jump start) at Bayer AG

A company example provides an approach which also emphasises some of the key aims of the Slovenian programme. In 1998, Bayer AG set up a training programme to assist young people who are disadvantaged in terms of their learning opportunities and social background<sup>21</sup>. It received several awards. The programme 'Starthilfe' (Jump start) creates opportunities for young people at a high risk of exclusion from the labour market. It offers the opportunity for young people to attain qualifications and acquire professionally relevant knowledge during a one-year preparatory training programme. The programme does not focus on a particular occupation. Participants receive an entry-level qualification for an apprenticeship in various occupations. They are paid according to the sectoral collective agreement.

The programme focuses particularly on tackling traumatic school experiences and aims strongly at improving the self-esteem of young people based on good experiences during the training. One technique to foster personal development is cultural education in the 'Art approach' method. The programme combines basic educational skills with elements of practical and theoretical vocational training, training in social skills such as teamwork, communication techniques and self-discipline. Careful selection procedures and the intensive coaching of the participants during the entire programme are key factors of success. The programme has now been running for 21 years and has shown that a targeted preparatory programme can help socially disadvantaged young people to get access to apprenticeships and employment as a skilled worker. In 2009, 156 young people were taken into the programme and around 1 500 young people have participated over the entire period<sup>22</sup>. Almost 90 % of the participants succeeded in getting an apprenticeship contract at Bayer or with other companies following their participation in the measure.

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<sup>19</sup> Association for Innovation Research and Consultancy (GIB), *Accompanying Research for the Special Programme of the Federal Government for the Introductory Qualification of Adolescents – EQJ Programme* -, internet: [http://www.bmas.de/portal/26914/property=pdf/2008\\_07\\_15\\_ej\\_abschlussbericht\\_englisch.pdf](http://www.bmas.de/portal/26914/property=pdf/2008_07_15_ej_abschlussbericht_englisch.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Internet: <http://www.ausbildungsbonus.bmas.de/sites/generator/27554/>

<sup>21</sup> Weiler, Anni, *Bayer, Germany: Integration into the labour market of people at risk of exclusion – early school-leavers*, Attractive workplace for all: company cases, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, 2007. Internet: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/qualityofwork/betterjobs/cases/de03bayer.htm>

<sup>22</sup> see Press releases of Bayer AG of 7 August 2009 and 6 November 2009. Internet: <http://www.presse.bayer.de/baynews/baynews.nsf/id/942E2CC59C1E57ACC125760B002C0E1C?Open> and <http://www.presse.bayer.de/baynews/baynews.nsf/id/97A8BAE19C4336FEC12574F9003AE762?Open>

### **Alternative learning methods and enhancing self-esteem of young people in German programmes**

In Germany, several ALMP measures by the Federal Employment Agency are targeted specifically at young people with learning difficulties and/or those who are socially disadvantaged. However, none of these programmes is similar to the Slovenian project 'Learning for young adults'. The measures explicitly include social-pedagogical and individual attendance of the participants or provide support for employers offering vocational training to young people with learning difficulties and/or those who are socially disadvantaged. All ALMP measures, as well as the specific programmes of several ministries, are directed towards the labour market integration of the target groups. Youth welfare service measures – which appear to be also a central element in the Slovenian programme – are the objective of other policy areas.

The specific aspects of the project 'Learning for young adults', which are designed to address the shortcomings of 'ordinary' methods of working with unemployed people, are not emphasised in the policies by the German Federal Employment Agency to same extent as in the Slovenian example. The German state measures do not explicitly take into account the impact of negative previous experiences of young people with schools and learning and their potential lack of self-esteem. Although all programmes include social-pedagogical attendance and/or individual coaching as an element, these issues are formulated in a very general manner.

The German vocational training system is characterised by the so-called dual system which combines practical learning in a company with education in vocational schools. ALMP measures for young people with learning difficulties and/or those who are socially disadvantaged are oriented towards this dual system.

The programme that is the closest to the Slovenian programme is the prevocational training programme. The target group is similar, as is the fact that participants lack both sufficient formal qualification and work experiences and both programmes aim to assist with access to a vocational career. Returning to school education is not the objective of the German measures described; rather they are related to labour market integration. A fundamental difference is that in the prevocational training programme, a comprehensive aptitude analysis takes place. The method of the Slovenian programme, which is designed as project work in four different forms such as selected project work, production project work, individual leaning projects and free activities, differs from the German policy examples.

A further fundamental difference is that in Germany, the measures are implemented by various institutions selected in public procurement procedures. In these tenders, qualifications of teachers, counsellors or mentors are laid down. The financial measures are part of the employment promotion and are not subject to local authorities.

### 3 ASSESSMENT OF THE SUCCESS FACTORS AND TRANSFERABILITY

From the description of the Slovenian programme it is not completely clear if the central focus is on labour market integration of socially disadvantaged young people or on social work targeted at young people without school-leaving degrees or vocational training. Therefore it is somewhat difficult to give an assessment of the success factors or of the transferability. Regarding the assessment of success factors in the Slovenian example, the measuring of success of the programme is not specific enough for conclusions.

The problem of the interface of the responsibilities of ministries respectively or policy areas as described for Slovenia also applies in Germany. The description of German policy endeavours only includes programmes and efforts for labour market integration of young people. This issue is important regarding the responsibility and funding of the measures. In Germany, labour market integration programmes are the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and the Federal Employment Agency. Youth welfare services are the responsibility of local authorities. The Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Federal Ministry for Families, Senior citizens, Women and Youth) also has programmes for young people. The initiative 'Jugend stärken' (Encourage youth) is targeted at young people refusing to attend school education (particularly disadvantaged youth) and young people with a migration background who require specific attention and counselling. The initiative is not a training programme. The third ministry involved is the Federal Ministry of Education and Research which deals with questions of education and training.

The primary aim of the Slovenian programme to develop motivation and enhance self-esteem of vulnerable young people at risk of social exclusion is not the main focus point of the German measures. As the Bayer AG company example illustrated, intensive individual coaching and an emphasis on the motivational aspect and on promoting self-esteem can be a successful approach. But also here labour market integration is the key objective of this company programme. Moreover, it might be more difficult to apply these principles to a nation-wide policy programme. The advantage of the different German programmes is that these enable different measures for different groups of young people.

The aspect of voluntary joining and leaving the programme seems not to be transferable and would not be practical in the German programmes. However, the prevocational training programme in particular, is flexible in regard to entering vocational internal company training or other measures for integration into vocational training. Nevertheless this is not simply a decision by the young person. In addition, the emphasis on a non-traditional school situation, self-assessment and improvement of basic skills in coping with every day life situation are not an explicit part of the German AMLP measures. Particularly, the initial key intention of the EQJ programme was to tackle the lack of a sufficient number of apprenticeship places by supporting wage and social security contributions.

## 4 QUESTIONS

- What are criteria for measuring the success of the Slovenian policy? It is not clear from the description if the participants return to school to achieve a degree or if they manage to get access to occupational apprenticeships/training. Is there any information on the development of participants of the policy measure? Do the participants manage to achieve school degrees or occupational degrees? Is there any data? Is the programme monitored?
- Who decides on the participation in the programme? How do the institutions providing the programme deal with the voluntary entry and exit of participants in the programme? What is the impact of the status of voluntary measure that young people can enter and leave on their own discretion? Is there any data on the number of participants who complete the entire programme and those who leave the programme early?
- What is the concrete content of the programme? Are any practical insights into occupations included in the programme, such as short internships? Is there any support/counselling to help young people find a career or a job?
- How does the group of young people addressed by the programme gain information on the programme? Have any campaigns and information strategies been set up?
- What is the impact of the self-assessment by the participants on the recognition of the programme in the public? How is the programme perceived by the targeted young people? What is the social status of the programme with regard to access of further school education? What is the profile of the programme in views of employers providing occupational training?
- Do the participants receive any payments or social benefits during the period they participate in the programme?
- How is the programme embedded in the policy set up for young people's transition from school to work and policies to tackle the social exclusion of young people in Slovenia?

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARY TABLE

<b>Labour market situation in the Peer Country</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth unemployment rates are lower than in the EU-27.</li> <li>• The unemployment rates for young men are higher than those for young women.</li> <li>• Young women show lower rates of early-school leaving and higher rates of educational attainment.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment of the policy measure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Germany, several AMLP measures are targeted specifically at young people with learning difficulties and/or who are socially disadvantaged. The programme which comes closest to the Slovenian project is the Prevocational training programme.</li> <li>• The key policy objective is integration into vocational training and the labour market.</li> <li>• Vocational training in Germany is characterised by the so-called dual system which combines practical occupational learning with theoretical education in vocational schools. Measures for socially disadvantaged young people and those with learning difficulties are shaped by this specific feature of vocational training.</li> <li>• Youth welfare measures and return to school programmes are subject to other policy fields.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment of success factors and transferability</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the motivation and enhancing the self-esteem of vulnerable young people with difficulties to access company internal vocational training is a very important aspect, which is not considered in the German policy programme to the extent that is in the Slovenian programme. These factors could be integrated into the programme and support the success of measures.</li> <li>• The German AMLP measures for socially disadvantaged young people and those with learning difficulties are strongly focussed on effective integration into company internal apprenticeships. Although the consideration of individual preconditions and deficits are fundamental for the qualification and integration programme fixed for the participants, the orientation of the measures is more strongly oriented towards traditional (vocational) school learning or apprenticeships programmes.</li> <li>• Although the described company example gives evidence of the importance of promoting motivation, learning social skills and enhancing self-esteem it is a question if these important aspects can be realised in the state measures and programme to this extent.</li> <li>• The aspects of coaching and social-pedagogical attendance of the participants are elements of the German programmes. These could be extended by more explicitly considering the negative experiences of vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• In the case of the EQJ programme the key intention is to provide additional chances to enter vocational training for those young people who did not manage to get an apprenticeship contract.</li> </ul>
<b>Questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does project learning mean in the Slovenian example?</li> <li>• What is the content of the programme regarding access to vocational training?</li> <li>• How is the success of the Slovenian programme measured? What are the key factors?</li> <li>• What is the key aim of the programme: return to school or access to vocational training?</li> </ul>