

NEW SKILLS AT WORK

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



EUROPEAN CASE STUDY

School-to-work transitions in Germany: the role of civil society organisations



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1. Introduction

Various different types of organisation are involved in supporting young people's transition to professional life in Germany. Civil society organisations - charitable associations, non-profits and gGmbHs¹ - act as service providers to design and implement support programs, working directly with participants at local level. As such, they frequently provide the interface for joint projects between companies, schools, municipalities, and civil society. Their programmes focus on concrete local needs, supporting young people at critical moments in their development.

Civil society organisations also run vocational training institutions in the dual (pre)vocational system and supplement the work of schools, particularly in the vocational guidance and occupational orientation phase.

This case study describes non-profit approaches to tackling the challenges of school to work transition in Germany, focusing on three critical points along the educational pathway:

- during and towards the end of secondary school (Section),
- within the so-called transition system (Section 2.2),
- during VET with a view to the transition to the job market (Section 2.3).²

In conclusion it draws broader lessons about the institutionalisation of effective non-profit approaches (Section 5).

2. School to work transition in Germany

Seen from an international perspective, Germany is a model country as far as youth unemployment is concerned. In 2014, the country had by far the lowest youth

¹ gGmbH are limited liability companies (= GmbH) with a nonprofit tax status (=g). In Germany, charitable or nonprofit status is a tax status, not a legal form. Thus any type of company can be "gemeinnützig", depending on the mission (as defined in the German fiscal code, Abgabenordnung §§ 51-68). Another main requirement: any payout of profits or dividends is forbidden.

² This case study is based on larger study by PHINEO (Ed.): Paths to working life. Effective civil society approaches to support women and people from immigrant backgrounds, forthcoming.

unemployment rate in the European Union (7.7%, EU-average 22%).³ Germany's success is largely attributed to its vocational education and training (VET) system, in particular the dual system of apprenticeships in companies and vocational schools.⁴ Successful completion of such apprenticeship training qualifies the apprentice for employment as a skilled worker and provides for a smooth transition to the labour market. In 2012, 67% of graduates from apprenticeship programs continued to be employed by the firm that provided the training.⁵

Challenges in school to work transition

However, not everyone achieves entry into this system, as Box 1 shows. In 2014, more than 255,000 young people (equivalent to 26% of those newly enrolled in the VET system) did not achieve entry into qualifying apprenticeship contracts or vocational school based programmes, and enrolled instead in publicly funded pre-vocational programmes in the so-called "transitional sector" (Übergangsbereich). These programmes prepare for vocational training but do not lead to full vocational qualifications.

The gap is partly because of problems of apprenticeship supply: only about 25% of German firms participate in VET, a number which has been falling for several years.

³ Statistisches Bundesamt, Deutschland hat die niedrigste Jugendarbeitslosigkeit in der EU, Pressemitteilung Nr. 288 vom 11.08.2015. The youth unemployment rate is, however, statistically positively biased in Germany, because young people in apprenticeships and participants in prevocational transition programs are not counted among the unemployed. See Solga / Protsch / Ebner / Brzinsky-Fay (WZB – Discussion Paper SP I 2014 -502: The German vocational education and training system: Its institutional configurations, strengths and challenges, 2015, pp. 23-24). The NEET rate (young people not in employment, education or training) is more comparable and shows less variation across Europe. In the first quarter 2012 it was close to 10% in Germany (lowest rate 4% in the Netherlands, highest rate 19% in Italy).

⁴ The case study "The dual system in German vocation training: a case of education employers cooperation" by the Bertelsmann Foundation will focus on this pillar of the VET system.

⁵ See European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop): Spotlight on VET Germany 2013/14, 2014 www.cedefop.europa.eu

Box 1: Young people and training in 2014⁶		
Category	Number	Percentage
Young people starting fully vocational training, of whom:	712,853	72%
- enrolled in dual VET apprenticeships	- 484,195	49%
- enrolled in vocational schools	- 228,658	23%
Young people enrolled in pre-vocational transition programmes	256,110	26%
- of whom, looking for apprenticeships	- 60,300	6%
Young people who failed to enroll in any type of vocational training	20,900	3%

Although in theory, no formal entrance qualifications are needed for apprenticeships,⁷ in practice the market is highly competitive and segmented. A candidate's inability to find a vocational training position usually correlates with his or her educational qualifications⁸; the lower the educational level, the lower the likelihood of achieving a formal vocational qualification. This situation leaves over two million people between the ages of 20-35 without formal professional qualifications (in 2012)⁹ and at high risk of becoming, or staying, unemployed (the unemployment rate for those with professional qualifications is five percent and for those without is twenty percent).¹⁰

⁶ According to the Integrated Reporting System on Vocational Training, in 2014 a total of 712,853 young people started fully qualifying vocational training, among these 484,195 apprenticeships in the dual system (50%) and 228,658 in vocational schools (24%). However, another 256,110 enrolled in prevocational transition programs (26%). Integrated Reporting System on Vocation Training in BMBF (Ed.), Berufsbildungsbericht (Report on Vocational Education and Training) 2015, pp. 59-61). The numbers of the integrated reporting deviate from other statistics published in the same report, because it is based on school statistics. The number of newly signed apprenticeships (between 01.10.2013 and 30.09.2014) was 522,232, see BMBF (ed.) Berufsbildungsbericht 2015, p. 10f

⁷ (Federal Vocational Training Act, training regulations enacted by the Joint Committee of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training, see WZB 2014, p 8)

⁸ 63 percent of those who have no diploma at all lack a vocational qualification, while the figure for Hauptschule graduates is 32 percent.

⁹ In 2012, there were 2,042,000 people between the ages of 20 and 35 without formal qualifications; see BIBB (Ed.), Data Report to accompany the Report on Vocational Education and Training, 2015, pp. 294 et seq.; also see Protsch, Probleme auf dem Arbeitsmarkt, WZBrief Bildung, Feb. 2014, p. 2.

¹⁰ From there, they go back onto the training market in subsequent years – as “older applicants.” Thus, in 2008, of all the applicants for an apprenticeship position, more than half are older applicants who have gone through

At the same time, employers have difficulties finding suitable candidates for apprenticeship positions – in 2014, 37,100 positions remained unfilled.¹¹ This is attributed to mixture of a “brain drain” of the better qualified towards university-based tertiary education and a lack of competences, skills and maturity of those who are less qualified. Experts speak of a growing mismatch between demand and supply in the apprenticeship market.

Vulnerable groups

Groups that struggle to achieve an effective school to work transition include: low achieving youth and young people with disabilities; young people from immigrant backgrounds; and young single mothers. In the highly stratified German school and vocational education systems, the chances of inclusion of people from such groups are low from the outset.¹² For example:

- Teens and young adults from immigrant backgrounds, whether naturalised or not – currently 28 % of German residents aged 15 to 20¹³ – are more likely to drop out of school and have disproportionately lower educational attainment levels than their German peers.¹⁴ They then fare poorly in the transition from school to formal vocational training.¹⁵ The ratio of people from immigrant backgrounds starting an apprenticeship is 29 %, compared with 44 % for German young people seeking vocational education.¹⁶
- Young parents, and especially single mothers and fathers, face particular disadvantages in the vocational education system.¹⁷ In 2013, almost 46 % of all young mothers (102,000) and 33 % of all young fathers (20,000) between the age

the transitional system. see Christine Henry-Huthmacher in: Henry-Huthmacher / Hoffmann (Ed.), *Der erfolgreiche Weg zum Berufsabschluss*, 2011, p. 11 f.

¹¹ See BMBF (Ed.), *Report on Vocational Education and Training*, 2015, pp. 48-50; BIBB (Ed.), *Data Report to accompany the Report on Vocational Education and Training*, 2015, p. 19; Manual trades and crafts accounted for the largest share of unfilled apprenticeship positions.

¹² In Germany, the likelihood that a child will go to university is strongly determined by his or her parents' level of education. Parents with higher levels of education are much more likely to want their children to attend college – and more likely to provide the necessary encouragement and support during school. A clear majority of parents with lower levels of education are in favor of vocational training. However, a large majority of students (81%) want to take a different career path than their parents. Study by Vodafone Stiftung “Schule, und dann?“, 2014, BIBB report dated 11/27/14. This is where support measures can start, by informing, motivating and supporting the students.

¹³ German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), *Erwerbsperspektiven für Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund*, 2013, p. 5.

¹⁴ See BIBB (Ed.), *Data Report to accompany the Report on Vocational Education and Training*, 2015, pp. 85, 97.

¹⁵ See Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration, *Diskriminierung am Ausbildungsmarkt*, 2014, p. 6.

¹⁶ See BIBB (Ed.), *Data Report to accompany the Report on Vocational Education and Training*, 2015, pp. 85–86.

¹⁷ More than one in six children in Germany is now being raised by a single parent. It is the norm for 2.2 million children. See Lenze, *Alleinerziehende unter Druck*, 2014.

of 16 to 24 neither held a formal vocational certificate nor were in education or training.¹⁸

Failed transitions to the vocational training and labour market can have far-reaching consequences. Not only are the direct costs of the transitional system and the many vocational preparation programmes very high (according to various estimates, between 4.3 billion Euros¹⁹ and 6-7 billion Euros each year²⁰), but the indirect costs of youth unemployment are also great (welfare costs, the provision of state-subsidised employment and costs relating to a higher susceptibility to social and health problems, including drug abuse and criminal activity). On a personal level, failed transitions have a long –term impact on people’s lives. Failing close to graduation, dropping out of an apprenticeship, or losing a job after starting in the workforce can seriously damage future career prospects and carry the risk of stigmatisation.²¹

Pre-vocational training as an alternative

Pre-vocational training measures aim to provide young people with the necessary information, basic competences and skills to choose, apply for and find a suitable vocation.²² The content and range of programmes available varies across Länder but most last up to a year and are publicly funded as part of employment promotion (Social Security Code, SGB III).

Companies, vocational schools and non-profit organisations are all involved in the delivery of these programmes. For example:

- Companies can receive support from federal employment agencies to provide long-term internships in **entry qualification** programs EQ and EQ plus.²³
- Individual support is provided to young people by non-profit service agencies or **vocational entry assistants**²⁴ as part of a programme of **assistance**

¹⁸ BMBF (Ed.), Report on Vocational Education and Training, 2015, p. 57.

¹⁹ Klaus Klemm, Was kostet eine Ausbildungsgarantie in Deutschland?, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2012.

²⁰ At a realistic estimate, the costs incurred in the area of “transition” every year at every level should be between six and seven billion euros: Michael Krüger-Charlé (IAT Institut Arbeit und Technik), Forschung aktuell: Übergänge zwischen Schule, Ausbildung und Beruf, 2010.

²¹ See Solga / Protsch / Ebner / Brzinsky-Fay (WZB – Discussion Paper SP I 2014 -502): The German vocational education and training system. Its institutional configurations, strengths and challenges, 2015, pp. 17-19

²² For an overview, see <http://www.bildungsketten.de/de/1569.php>

²³ Einstiegsqualifizierung, § 54 a SGB III

²⁴ Berufseinstiegsbegleitung, § 49 SGB III; The programme is financed by the European Social Fund as part of the Education Chain Initiative. <http://www.bildungsketten.de/de/1544.php>

during apprenticeships.²⁵ The aim is to ease the transition from school to the first year of VET through prevocational training.

- **School-based pre-vocational measures** (both public and non-profit) combine occupation-specific knowledge with practical training, including introductions to companies. Through such measures, young people often have the opportunity to pass their lower secondary school certificate (Hauptschulabschluss).²⁶
- Disadvantaged young people with learning disabilities can attend **preparatory vocational education measures**²⁷ at non-profit educational institutions with individual support provided by educational assistants.²⁸ The main focus is occupational orientation and guidance based on individual competencies. Participants have an opportunity to attain a lower secondary school certificate.
- **Vocational training in non-company institutions**²⁹ provides training qualifications for young people who are otherwise unable to succeed in company-based apprenticeship programmes even with **assistance during apprenticeships** (disadvantaged youth/ youth with learning disabilities). Such programmes are provided by non-profit institutions with close contacts to companies (either internships or integrated training in cooperation with companies).

3. Transition one: the end of secondary school

Support measures provided during the last years of school aim to help students transition smoothly into apprenticeships or upper secondary education. Non-profit approaches in this area include:

1. **Vocational orientation and guidance** (general and specific, geared at students as well as schools) that aims to provide: (i) a more realistic understanding of one's competences, skills and interests; (ii) deeper knowledge about career options, apprenticeship positions and formal

²⁵ Ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen, § 75 SGB III

²⁶ Guiding principles for school based prevocational programs are connectivity to regular apprenticeship programs and a duality of learning venues. Kultusministerkonferenz – Grundsätze zur Optimierung schulischer Angebote im Übergangsbereich Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2013): Empfehlung zur Optimierung und Vereinheitlichung der schulischen Angebote im Übergangssystem „Lebenschancen eröffnen - Qualifikationspotenziale ausschöpfen - Übergänge gestalten“ (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 10.10.2013)

²⁷ Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen, § 51 SGB III

²⁸ Bildungsbegleiter/innen, §§ 61, 61 a SGB III

²⁹ Berufsausbildung in außerbetrieblichen Einrichtungen, §§ 240, 242, 244, 245 and 246

entrance qualifications; (iii) more information about particular career options – e.g STEM and fields such as healthcare – in which there is a (projected) shortage of skilled workers

2. **Learning support at regular schools** to improve educational opportunities for the disadvantaged and raise their chances of graduating with formal qualifications, which will increase their access to the formal VET system.
3. **Hands-on instruction** targeted at specific groups, such as low achieving youth, children from immigrant backgrounds or young people with disabilities.
4. **Mentoring programmes** that increase individuals' chances of success and help them break out from entrenched family patterns of low achievement.
5. **Scholarship-programmes** that provide financial and educational support to enable talented individuals from immigrant backgrounds to get to university.

Orientation and guidance

Vocational guidance for students

Extensive vocational orientation and individual career advice at school is a key success factor for a successful choice of vocation and training.³⁰ This is why it is important for regular schools to integrate practical learning elements into their curricula during the last few years of schooling. Box 1 provides such an example.

Box 2: The **Berufsparcours** projekt (Technikzentrum Minden-Lübbecke e.V.) This is an efficient and fun way of providing young people with practical vocational guidance. They are given the opportunity to try out career-related tasks from various professions in a school setting, with the help of instructors and parents. The exercise features practical tasks from up to 20 different occupations in one morning. It addresses students from all school types (lower, intermediate and upper secondary schools, grades 8–13, ages 13 to 19), about 400 of whom perform the job-related task at different stations. Tasks, materials and tools are usually provided by regional companies and the technology centre. The exercise provides participating companies with an opportunity to observe potential recruits much more effectively than is possible at trade fairs (between 35 and 80 direct contacts between young people and a company are made in a morning compared to 5 to 10 contacts at a trade fair). This integrated approach has reached 780,000 young people and 3,800 companies to date, in eleven German states.
→ www.berufsparcours.de

Vocational guidance for schools

Vocational orientation programmes are especially effective when they are individually tailored to the needs of each school and its students. Therefore, civil society actors also engage in consulting for schools, as illustrated by Box 2.

³⁰ Holger Bonin in: Henry-Huthmacher / Hoffmann (Ed.), *Der erfolgreiche Weg zum Berufsabschluss*, 2011, p. 35

Box 3: The Fachstelle Übergang Schule – Beruf (CJD Rhein-Pfalz / Nordbaden)

This is a specialised department of a large non-profit that is active in the field of school to work transition. It advises schools on putting together a tailor-made range of measures for vocational orientation and dovetailing it in a meaningful way with academic programmes. It also helps them to implement the individual measures. Existing programmes are analysed systematically, and specific needs are clarified, thereby ensuring that schools' existing resources are effectively utilized and integrated with extracurricular activities. To this end, the department can build on innovative activities from various CJD sites.³¹

→ www.cjd-rhein-pfalz-nordbaden.de/angebote/fachstelle-uebergang-schule-beruf/

Encouraging (gender-)atypical job choices in specific career fields

There is a particular shortage of skilled employees in so-called STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).³² At the same time, women are still clearly underrepresented in technical majors at university level, such as electrical and computer engineering.³³ Although change is taking place – in 2010, according to the German Federal Statistical Office, one in five first-semester engineering students was female (22 %) – progress is slow and there is therefore considerable scope for targeted vocational orientation measures such as those outlined in Box 3.

Box 4: The Junior-Ingenieur-Akademie (Deutsche Telekom foundation)

This aims to spark 8th and 9th graders' interest in technical vocations and engineering careers early on – as a two-year elective course that is firmly anchored in the school's curriculum. Students gain a theoretical foundation and practical experience in technical areas such as electrical and environmental engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science, medical engineering and food technology. The concept includes a high proportion of extracurricular learning, and measures for developing the students' personal skills (such as team training). Any comprehensive or upper secondary school can set up a junior engineering academy and receive funding for it. It has been established in 75 schools to date. Partnerships with universities, scientific institutions and companies allow students to apply the skills they have learned in class. One of the aims of the programme is to significantly raise the share of girls in STEM.

↗ www.telekom-stiftung.de/dts-cms/de/junior-ingenieur-akademie

At **Handwerkerinnenhaus Köln e.V.**, professional craftswomen teach girls and women to work with various tools and materials. The gender-specific

³¹ The CJD is a German-wide a Christian youth nonprofit service organization. In the region of Berlin and Brandenburg, it operates 37 local institutions, in Berlin there are 11 programmes in the field of VET - the Fachstelle can build on their experience.

³² The ten fields with the greatest shortages include five STEM professions. But the healthcare sector is also missing skilled workers at all qualification levels, Bußmann / Seyda (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft), Fachkräfteengpässe in Unternehmen, 2014.

³³ According to OECD, about one in ten fifteen-year-old boys in Germany (9.9 percent) plans to pursue a career in engineering, while this figure is only 1.1 percent for girls.

program aims to promote interest and talent primarily in skilled craft and trades fields. The groups are small (five to six girls and teenagers from all school types, grade 5 and above) allowing for individual support and attention. The intensive programme takes place in the afternoons, in addition to the regular school curriculum, as well as on some weekends and during school holidays. The main focus is on individual career and life planning.

➤ www.handwerkinnenhaus.org

Learning support at regular schools

Success in finding an apprenticeship position is closely linked to a young person's school qualifications: the better they are, the higher ones chances of identifying a suitable position. Thus targeted help for weaker students during the last few years of school, can be particularly effective.

Box 5: The Teach First Deutschland programme (Teach First Deutschland gGmbH)

This programme finds, hires, and certifies outstanding college graduates from all majors for a two-year full-time assignment at schools in disadvantaged areas and areas with a high proportion of people from immigrant backgrounds. The aim of the assignment is to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged students, and ultimately their social inclusion. There are currently 134 fellows working in six different states in Germany. A three-month certification program provides them with specific preparation for the assignment, and they receive constant support and further trainings during the two-year programme duration. In the classroom, Teach First teachers may take sole responsibility or work as team teachers to provide group and one-on-one support, or provide additional courses such as application training, career selection, art or technical working groups, sports classes and homework assistance.

→ www.teachfirst.de

Hands-on instruction targeted at specific groups

The regular schooling model increasingly fails to reach many young people. The key is to offer a different type of learning and study experience that increases access to the system.³⁴

Box 6: Modelled on a Danish approach, the nonprofit **Produktionsschule Altona** gGmbH (PSA) operates an all-day school for 60 young people, in which they design, produce, and market goods and services in five different workshops. More than two thirds of the participants come from an immigrant background. Young people are offered a mixture of practical vocational work, hands-on school training, and supplementary socio-educational activities. In

³⁴ See Stefan Sell in: Henry-Huthmacher / Hoffmann (Ed.), Der erfolgreiche Weg zum Berufsabschluss, 2011, p. 53.

addition to learning skills and practical qualifications in the workshops, there is also general instruction that is tied into the production context and which prepares students for an external examination for the first (lower) secondary school certificate. The program is rounded out by comprehensive support and coaching for the young people. In specific cases, this can include creating additional VET positions at companies in collaboration with social benefit providers. At the end of the school year 2013/2014, nearly 70 percent of the participants left the PSA with reasonable prospects. More than one-third of the participants continued directly with a fully qualifying vocational training position – a good result considering the background of PSA students.
➔ <http://psa-hamburg.de>

Mentoring programmes

The goal of mentoring relationships is to help students develop their individual potential. Longitudinal studies have shown that young people need structured, open-ended, readily available support, for instance through ongoing personal contact with training sponsors and mentors.³⁵ Mentoring can be specifically adapted to reach different target groups at different stages on their educational paths (as will be seen in the following sections).

Box 7: ROCK YOUR LIFE! gGmbH is a mentoring project for the transition from school to vocational training. Socially disadvantaged students from deprived areas – usually lower secondary school students, many of them from immigrant backgrounds – are mentored during their last two years of school by a specially trained university student. The goal is to improve the students' chances of finding a trainee position or attending intermediate secondary school after they graduate. To this end, university students organise themselves in local associations at universities (currently more than 45 sites in Germany and Switzerland). The aim is to meet the needs of young people, helping them without patronising them, and providing both a role model and a support. College students are especially well suited to this role because they are further ahead on the academic path but are themselves considering the same questions (choice of vocation, exercising independence, etc.). Company partnerships are a key element of the programme.
➔ <https://rockyourlife.de/>

Scholarship-programmes

Stipend-based support can give students from immigrant backgrounds the opportunity to pursue their own interests. In addition, good stipend programmes create a network in which scholarship-holders motivate and inspire one another.

³⁵ DJI longitudinal study “Die Bewältigung des Übergangs Schule – Berufsausbildung bei Migrantinnen und Migranten im Vergleich zu autochthonen Jugendlichen”, 2015

Box 8: A START scholarship (START foundation gGmbH) gives talented and dedicated students from immigrant backgrounds support on their educational path to a technical college qualification or university entrance qualification (financially, but also through seminars, excursions, networking, consulting and in close cooperation with their parents). While the stipend project focuses on the immigrants' academic paths, it also supports their future career paths and social involvement.
→ www.start-stiftung.de/stipendium.html

4. Transition two: the passage from school to the dual vocational system

One-third of all school graduates without a certificate of qualification for higher education do not go directly to vocational training, but enroll in the transitional system.³⁶ This provides pre-vocational programmes, below the level of fully qualifying VET, that prepare those enrolled for further training and apprenticeships.

Effective non-profit approaches include:

1. **mentoring programmes** that facilitate transition;
2. programmes that enhance **competencies and skills**;
3. **on-the-job learning** in cooperation **with firms**; and
4. **flextime training models** targeted at young mothers.

Mentoring programmes

Young people from immigrant backgrounds receive less concrete help when looking for an apprenticeship position than young Germans.³⁷ For them, one-to-one support from mentors is particularly helpful (provided certain quality standards are met³⁸). Mentoring must go beyond periodic advising and occasional contact, it should be long-term, and should, as far as possible, form part of the regional transition management system – thus ensuring that the young people's background is no longer an obstacle in the transition to vocational training.³⁹

³⁶ Beicht / Granato, Prekäre Übergänge vermeiden – Potenziale nutzen – Junge Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund an der Schwelle von der Schule zur Ausbildung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011, p. 7.

³⁷ They do receive emotional support from their families and friends; see Beicht / Granato, Prekäre Übergänge vermeiden – Potenziale nutzen – Junge Frauen und Männer mit Migrationshintergrund an der Schwelle von der Schule zur Ausbildung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2011, p. 7.

³⁸ Guidelines have been published by the BMBF, see BMBF (Ed.), Qualitätssicherung für Patenschaftsprojekte, 2014 available online <https://www.aktion-zusammen-wachsen.de/archiv/publikationsverzeichnis/bestellformular.html>

³⁹ Krekel / Ulrich, Jugendliche ohne Berufsabschluss, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2009, p. 8.

Box 9: Der Pate is a project from Ceno e.V., a center for post-vocational orientation. It is designed for young people (especially disadvantaged young people and those from immigrant backgrounds) who are looking for support on their path to a vocation, as well as for retired people who want to share their experience with the younger generation. During the two-year programme, mentors work with Hauptschule students aged 16 to 18 to achieve the goal of finding an apprenticeship or trainee position. They advise and encourage young people in vocational orientation and in their application process, help them with difficulties at school and at home, help them look for internships and trainee positions, and mentor them during the first year of vocational training. The project's success rate is 80 %: 30 % attend further schooling and nearly 50 % have signed an apprenticeship or traineeship contract during the mentorship.

➤ www.ceno-koeln.de/patenprojekt.html

Programmes that enhance competencies and social skills

When companies state that young people are not adequately prepared for vocational training and apprenticeship programmes, they are really talking about two issues: first, a lack of cognitive skills and competences, and second, deficits in personality, social skills and conduct. Thus, support approaches should (also) focus on young people's conduct and motivation.⁴⁰

Box 10: The Work for you project (RheinFlanke gGmbH) supports young people with the transition from school to vocation. The programme combines sports pedagogy with extracurricular advising and educational programmes. The goal is to help young people look for and take on apprenticeship positions – and develop and cultivate key social skills along the way – through social interaction and rules on the soccer field. RheinFlanke employees directly seek out young people – especially from non-EU countries – with easy-to-access measures in their own social environments. Initial trusting contacts are made through sports. Corresponding sports-pedagogy programs stabilise and develop these contacts to create reliable relationships between the young people and RheinFlanke employees. These close relationships are a key success factor.

➤ <http://rheinflanke.com/fit-for-job/nrwork-for-you>

JobAct (Projectfabrik gGmbH) combines educational methods from drama/theatre instruction and biographic work with creative and traditional methods of application management. Under professional guidance, young (under 25) unemployed people without formal vocational qualifications work with local companies to develop a play. In the process, they learn persistence, independence, develop their self-esteem and learn how to give their imagination free rein. The public performance of the play is the grand finale to the first stage of the two-stage programme, which also includes intensive job application training. Internships at the participating companies and individual coaching form the second stage of the approach.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Stefan Sell in: Henry-Huthmacher / Hoffmann (Ed.), *Der erfolgreiche Weg zum Berufsabschluss*, 2011, p. 16, see also: Solga 7 Baas / Kohlrausch, *WZBrief Bildung*, Feb. 2012, p. 5

⁴¹ JobAct has been successful, 32 % of participants found placements on the regular job market, and 65 % went on to a next step on the educational ladder (further education at an employer site or in school).

On-the-job learning in cooperation with firms

Projects that aim to help young people transition to a vocation should ideally work closely with local companies and training enterprises. The following projects, based upon a high level of cooperation with companies and other stakeholders, can offer lessons for other programmes.

Box 11: The **Joblinge** project is implemented in local non-profit companies (gAGs) with enterprises, municipalities, foundations and private individuals participating as shareholders. The young people supported by this project were unable to manage the shift to full vocational training. Due to multiple barriers, they are viewed as difficult or even impossible to place.⁴² The average age is over 20 years, and most have been in transition programmes for two to three years. Joblinge helps these young people break free from the holding pattern to reach their real goal: a company training position or job that corresponds to their interests and skills. In the six-month programme, they gain important key qualifications “on the job,” develop their social skills, and prepare for their training position or job. To ensure lasting benefits, a contact person remains available to both sides. The programme has high placement rates and has achieved lasting results.⁴³ The franchise model is currently active in 14 cities and regions throughout Germany.

↗ www.joblinge.de

Perspektiva gGmbH focuses on youth from special needs schools or with a weak Hauptschule diploma who are not able to find a position on the regular job and apprenticeship market on their own. The three-phase model provides the young participants with step-by-step support according to their skills and interests. It involves orientation and guidance, hands-on practical instruction, internships in local firms and vocational as well as general instruction, in a class setting. A key focus is placed on individual resources. Perspektiva instructors endeavour to identify skills that can be of use in the working world and convince employers to give young people a chance to develop their competencies. Beyond vocational training, the programme provides support on a personal level, including help to manage one’s own household independent of parental support. It works in tandem with local businesses to create lasting job prospects in a regular, unsubsidised positions. More than 90 companies in the region of Fulda are involved in Perspektiva, 70 of them as shareholders.

→ www.perspektiva-fulda.de

⁴² Of the more than 2,900 participants to date, more than 60% come from immigrant backgrounds, over 70% live in households receiving public assistance (Hartz IV), and just under 60% either have only the first lower secondary school diploma (Hauptschule) or non at all.

⁴³ 68 % of the participants are able to secure a regular apprenticeship position or unsubsidized job. And about 80 % still pursue their training six months on.

Flextime training models that support young mothers

Young and single mothers clearly fall within the risk groups in the transitional system.⁴⁴ They face a double barrier: first, childcare is still largely a maternal responsibility, making it difficult for them to balance children and a career; second, early motherhood and socioeconomic disadvantage are closely correlated in Germany, implying that many young mothers endure poor starting conditions.⁴⁵ Flextime training models can offer them practical options, thus opening up a path out of the transitional system and into the regular job market.

Box 12:

Fachberatung Teilzeitausbildung (IN VIA Katholische Mädchenarbeit Bezirk Paderborn e.V.) provides practical assistance with vocational training and education for young mothers. IN VIA helps them identify appropriate part-time training positions with reduced weekly working hours so they can balance paid employment with family-related work and secure their own livelihoods. Support is personalised and takes into account a woman's overall life situation into, including helping to resolve childcare issues. Extensive partnerships with regional businesses are critical to IN VIA's success over the past 60 years.

↗ www.invia-paderborn.de/?page_id=214

The **Teilzeitausbildung für junge Mütter** project (Verein zur beruflichen Förderung von Frauen e.V., VbFF) has been in place since 1998, helping young women balance training and childcare. Training takes place at a training enterprise, at vocational school and at the VbFF with the VbFF being responsible for organising the entire process (finding a training enterprise, organising childcare and offering socio-educational support and personalised practical instruction). Almost all those women who register for an external vocational certificate succeed in passing it. After graduation, 65% find work on the regular job market, 19% are job seekers, 9% are back on parental leave and 5% attend further schooling (2% unknown).

→ <https://www.vbff-ffm.de/angebote/angebote-fuer-16-bis-27-jaehrige/test.html>

5. Transition three: from vocational training to permanent employment

It is not only difficult to find a trainee position, it is also hard to complete training and to transition into regular employment. Non-profit organisations are also active in this space; mentoring programs play a decisive role.

⁴⁴ Friese, Junge Mütter als Risikogruppe im Übergangssystem, in bwp@Spezial 5 – Hochschultage Berufliche Bildung 2011 (www.bwpat.de/ht2011/ws15/friese_ws15-ht2011.pdf).

⁴⁵ Marginalised families of origin, a lack of role models, interrupted educational paths, and lacking or low educational qualifications are all significant factors that shape early motherhood.

Non-profit approaches include:

1. **mentoring programmes** that provide help in **critical training situations**;
2. **targeted support** for young people from **immigrant backgrounds**; and
3. **trainee positions** for **young women from immigrant backgrounds**.

Mentoring programmes

In 2013, about 150,000 training contracts in Germany were terminated prematurely.⁴⁶ Early termination on this scale negatively impacts individuals as well as the job market. With the average economic loss for a company due to a contract termination being about 16,000 Euros,⁴⁷ companies can be deterred from offering apprenticeship positions in the first place if they fear this outcome. Individual support by mentors can help identify self-help strategies for those in crisis situations or prevent crisis situations before they occur.

Box 13: The **Plus 1** project from Jugendausbildungszentrum JAZ gGmbH (youth training center) provides essential support tools for young people and enterprises. A socio-educational expert helps the young people solve their problems constructively, points out self-help strategies, and helps build conflict and communication skills in order to keep them from leaving programmes prematurely in the event of a crisis. The socio-educational supporter often stands in for a parent, and provides a bridge to external aid providers. In addition, JAZ acts as a contact partner for the training enterprises throughout the entire training phase.

➤ www.jaz-muenster.de/Projekt-Plus1.156.0.html

Targeted support for young people from immigrant backgrounds

Young people from immigrant backgrounds are less likely to find a trainee position, they often complete training for less challenging vocations, and they are more likely than the average trainee to leave the training programme prematurely.⁴⁸ Not surprisingly, then, a majority of companies that train young people from immigrant backgrounds (58 %) have expressed a desire for more support for the trainees and the enterprise during the process.⁴⁹ Approaches that provide personal support for young people with qualified volunteers offer tailor-made solutions.

⁴⁶ According to DIHK Newsletter 16 dated 4/16/2015. On the state of research, see also BMBF (Ed.), *Ausbildungsabbrüche vermeiden – neue Ansätze und Lösungsstrategien*, Volume 6 of the series *Berufsbildungsforschung*, 2009. According to this, the average termination rate between 2004 and 2006 was 20%.

⁴⁷ See DIHK Newsletter 16 dated 4/16/2015.

⁴⁸ See Jasper / Richter / Haber / Vogel *Ausbildungsabbrüche vermeiden – neue Ansätze und Lösungsstrategien*, Volume 6 of the series *Berufsbildungsforschung*, 2009, p. 11.

⁴⁹ Enggruber / Rützel, *Berufsausbildung junger Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund*, Studie im Auftrag der Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014, p. 9.

Box 14: In the **Ausbildungspatenschaften** project (Paten für Arbeit in Essen e.V.), volunteer mentors accompany young people on their path from choosing a vocation to the application process and the end of training. They help young people further develop core competencies, defuse conflicts during training, and strengthen their self-confidence and responsibility. 9th and 10th grade Hauptschule and Gesamtschule students are nominated for a mentorship by their teachers. The mentors build a trusting relationship with their mentees, and stay in contact with their parents and the training enterprise; they help resolve conflicts and promote motivation. They also help students develop important skills such as punctuality, commitment to the work, and responsibility.

➤ www.paten-fuer-arbeit-in-essen.de/pages/patenschaft.html

Trainee positions for young women from immigrant backgrounds

The vocational training situation is especially difficult for young women from immigrant backgrounds. They are disadvantaged due to both sex and origin. Some (though not all) face additional challenges due to their cultural or religious backgrounds. For example, gender segregation can be an important prerequisite for some parents to let their daughters embark upon a training programme.⁵⁰

Box 15: Atelier La Silhouette (Verein Junge Frauen und Beruf e.V.) is a training enterprise for young female immigrants, focusing on women (with individual histories of persecution and refuge) who would not have a chance anywhere else. It is designed to give young women highly individualised support and to help build their potential, both in terms of specialised trade and craft skills and personal character. The programme sets high standards for the quality of participants' work in the tailoring trade. As the trainees meet these requirements they gain not only skills in their trade, but also self confidence, and they receive respect and admiration from others. Socio-educational support is geared towards individual needs and requirements (advising, therapeutic discussions, work with parents, group activities). Since the programme was founded, 94 % of participants have completed their vocational training, an impressive figure given the precarious situations on which these young women live.⁵¹

➤ www.la-silhouette.de

6. Conclusion

This case study has focused on non-profit approaches in Germany that aim to level the playing field in school to work transition for disadvantaged young people (including early school leavers, low achieving youth, the socially deprived, young

⁵⁰ DJI longitudinal study 2015; There are reports for young women from Muslim families who are unable to realize their desired educational path because of a parental prohibition, while other women of the same ethnic background to fulfil opposite aspirations.

⁵¹ Almost all participants pass the external examination by the chambers and many find employment directly after. Many leave the program excellent psychosocial condition, having learned to manage their own households and live according to their own ideas and wishes.

people from immigrant backgrounds, young people with learning disabilities and specific risk groups such as young mothers or young women from immigrant backgrounds). Non-profits provide active support at all relevant stages and transition points and fulfill multiple functions, including:

- providing guidance and vocational orientation in close cooperation with schools and companies,
- developing individual competences and skills through hands-on practical learning and training methods,
- coordinating one-to-one coaching in mentoring programs,
- networking for job opportunities,
- building an interface for joint programs with companies and municipalities,
- and lobbying for structural and societal change.

Lessons that can be learned from the various examples profiled above are that:

- Vocational orientation should start early on and should be integral to a school's curriculum, especially for lower secondary schools, comprehensive schools and special needs schools. The more hands-on, vocation related and practical, the better.
- Early contact with companies is helpful for both sides. Young people thereby develop a more realistic picture of daily work routines, of their own skills and of what else might be needed to qualify for a desired vocation. Companies get to know prospective job seekers on a personal level.
- Support measures have to meet the needs of both future employees and the labour market. Ideally projects work in close collaboration with local or regional employers.
- Mentoring programmes can facilitate transition, if they are long-term and provide reliable support and trusting relations.
- All measures should be tailored to the individual case, encompass an analysis of existing resources and potential, the development and cultivation of skills and competencies as well as the achievement of formal qualifications.
- For some groups, structures have to be changed to provide for equal opportunities, for example with regard to working time arrangements.

A number of federal initiatives have drawn on the experience of civil society actors, thereby institutionalising successful non-profit support:

- Initiated by the Federal Ministries of Education and Research (BMBF) and for

Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment agencies, the **Education Chain Initiative** (Bildungsketten) has worked since 2010 with the Länder to establish a coherent support system for students at risk instead of isolated transition measures. Early vocational guidance and orientation are complemented with individual support by coaches in the transition to vocational training.⁵² As part of the Education Chain Initiative, a new funding period for **vocational entry assistants** (Berufseinstiegsbegleitung) started in March 2015. So far it has reached 115,000 students at 3,000 schools with early vocational orientation. A next step is to implement binding federal state agreements to provide support in this area.

- The recently launched **VerA** (Verhinderung von Ausbildungsabbrüchen) initiative aims to prevent training dropouts through one-on-one mentoring. The BMBF (Federal Ministries of Education and Research) is funding the initiative, which is implemented through the non-profit Senior Experten Service (Bonn), with about 11.5 million Euros allocated through 2018. Up to 3,000 young people every year will receive personal mentoring from volunteer training mentors located near the young person's place of residence. In joint meetings, mentor and mentee agree on prospects and objectives for the training mentorship, including improving learning motivation, developing social skills, and addressing day-to-day problems.⁵³
- For young people who need extra help, personalised support from a pedagogical expert (assisted vocational training or **Assistierte Ausbildung**) is now an official part of Social Security Code (§ 130 SGB III) thus eligible for funding. The law, which took effect on May 1, 2015, is intended to help bridge the gap between companies' requirements and young people's qualifications. Regular company-based vocational training is accompanied by comprehensive preparatory and support measures by charitable agencies.⁵⁴ Assistierte Ausbildung is not a separate path, but rather a regular company training programme; enterprises are still responsible for the training.
- Tested by nonprofits such as VfBB or IN VIA since the 1990s (see above, sections), part-time vocational training was provided with a legal basis through the 2005 amendment to the German Vocational Training Act. This

⁵² <http://www.bildungsketten.de/de/235.php>; for more information see the interview with Andr  Grabinski, Research Associate at the Education Chain Service Office at the BIBB, in PHINEO (Ed.): Paths to working life. Effective civil society approaches to support women and people from immigrant backgrounds, forthcoming, pp. 32-33

⁵³ Press release dated 1/27/2015, <http://bmbf.de/press/3731.php>

⁵⁴ For more information, see <http://www.bibb.de/de/1301.php>

created important preconditions for balancing qualified training and childcare, including funding of individual positions as part of the **Jobstarter** initiative of BMBF.⁵⁵ However, there is still room for improvement: employers state that they have a growing interest in part-time training opportunities⁵⁶, but in 2013 a mere 0.3 percent (1.638) of all new apprenticeship contracts were part-time.⁵⁷

There is currently a great debate about additional need for support measures for successful transition into the labour market of the large number of refugees arriving from conflict zones. Individual needs vary widely, depending on educational and vocational background, German language skills, residency status – and the strength of the local job market in their host area. Given that 50 percent of the total of 800,000 refugees expected to arrive in 2015 are estimated to be aged between 18 and 35, the Institute for the German Economy (IW) calculates that around 2.6 billion Euro needs to be spent on pre-vocational education measures alone (for 340,000 people) to lay the ground for the skills and competencies required to succeed in the German vocational education and training market.⁵⁸

This will clearly stretch the system to its limit (bearing in mind that there were only 255,000 people enrolled in the transitional system in 2014). Different, more flexible and shorter vocational education and training opportunities are needed. That said, given that the unemployment rate in Germany fell to its lowest rate for 24 years in August 2015, the influx of skills and resources of these often highly motivated young people represents a huge opportunity for a dynamic economy with an ageing population and a skills shortage. Certainly, though, heavy up-front investment is required to tap the long-run potential of the new arrivals – both financial investment and investment in reducing the barriers in companies' recruitment practices.

⁵⁵ Friese, Junge Mütter als Risikogruppe im Übergangssystem, in bwp@Spezial 5 – Hochschultage Berufliche Bildung 2011 (www.bwpat.de/ht2011/ws15/friese_ws15-ht2011.pdf).

⁵⁶ According to the 2012 IHK "Unternehmensbarometer", there is a growing interest of employers in part-time training opportunities: 30 % of companies in every industry state that they offer part-time training opportunities, or can imagine to do so in the future.

⁵⁷ <http://www.jobstarter.de/ausbildung-in-teilzeit>; In 2009, 796 new part-time contracts were concluded, or 0.14% of all new training contracts. BMBF (Ed.), *Teilzeitberufsausbildung: Inanspruchnahme, Potenziale, Strukturen 2011*.

⁵⁸ As quoted in Elfering / Zacharakis, Was kostet die Integration, 21.10.2015 (<http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2015-10/kosten-integration-sprachkurse-fluechtlinge/seite-2>); For the current debate on refugees, see also Buhse, Der Arbeitsmarkt schafft das, 22.10.2015 (<http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2015-10/arbeitsmarkt-fluechtlinge-zuwanderung-arbeitslosigkeit-hartz-iv>); and Institute für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung (IAB), Asyl- und Flüchtlingsmigration in die EU und nach Deutschland, 8/2015, http://doku.iab.de/aktuell/2015/aktueller_bericht_1508.pdf;

