The practice was part of the government’s efforts to facilitate school-to-work transition and to increase young workers’ participation in apprenticeships. Against the background of growing numbers of young unemployed workers without a secondary school diploma, ‘career entry supervision’ was designed as a specific programme aiming to reduce dropout rates in secondary school education and to facilitate the career planning and start of young people who are at risk of dropping out of school.

For this purpose, participating young people receive counselling and supervision from experienced professionals, typically social workers, during the last year of their secondary school education. The aims is to motivate, direct, and prepare them for their school-to-work transition.

The practice is advertised through teachers, who themselves receive information on the practice from the responsible regional governments. Priority is given to schools with a high number of students with a migration background and to special needs schools.

Before the start of the practice, participants’ individual problem-solving and social skills are assessed. Based on this assessment, appointed career entry supervisors identify the main skills gaps that need to be addressed, in close cooperation with participants’ teachers and parents.

Subsequently, career entry supervisors and participants develop a joint strategy for improving participants’ skills levels, for instance through work placements. This process is supposed to lead to the definition of a realistic career plan.

On behalf of the Federal Employment Agency, PES at the regional level communicate the amount of funding available to regional governments, which are the responsible bodies in educational matters such as curriculum development. Regional governments then select the participating schools.

The practice is then operated by cooperation partners; these are usually training providers operating under the aegis of regional governments.

Another key role in the initial phase of the practice (i.e. for as long as participants continue to attend secondary school) falls to participants’ head teachers. They must ensure close cooperation with other partners (supervisors, employment services) in order to exchange relevant information, and they must make available meeting rooms where career entry supervisors can meet their clients.
Source(s) of funding
- Regional budget (tax revenue)
- Social contributions
- European Social Fund (ESF)

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

People reached:
In the period 2009-2011, a total of 48,513 students participated in the practice.

Products:
N/A

What outcomes have been identified?
In the exploratory pilot period 2009–2011, no quantitative targets were set. Less than 5% left school without a certificate of successful graduation (which compares to an overall dropout rate of 5.6% for the same year). Even though the difference may seem minimal, it must be judged positively, since the practice targets pupils who are most at risk of leaving school without a certificate. Additionally, the evaluation report on the practice found that 25.7% of the 48,513 participants had been able to secure an apprenticeship contract 6 months after leaving school. Another 26.3% had signed up for vocational training, and 36.5% still attended secondary school, partly in order to achieve better qualification certificates. Roughly 6% of former participants were registered as not in employment, education or training (NEET).

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?
The period immediately after participants leave secondary school has been identified as the most critical phase of the practice. On the one hand, this is due to a stronger focus on successful secondary school graduation than on the actual transition into a subsequent occupation. On the other hand, this problem seems to be the result of a more complicated coordination process once the participant leaves the highly institutionalised environment of secondary school education. While the former problem seems to have been addressed by supplementing the ‘career entry supervision’ programme with the ‘Chains of education’ (Bildungsketten) initiative, there is no information on proposed remedies for the latter problem. According to the survey developed, the practice was generally positively assessed by participants. In 2011, more than two-thirds of participants (and their parents) questioned declared their satisfaction with the aims and the implementation of the practice. Though subjective and scarcely quantifiable, satisfaction considerations are important, as personal stabilisation and support in taking difficult personal decisions are defined as explicit targets of the practice.

More information on the practice

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