### Pre-apprenticeship training (also known as first integration qualification for young people)

Each year, thousands of dual-system students fail to secure a matching company placement. For instance, in 2003–2004 (just before the practice started), there were about 44,000 apprenticeship seekers and only approximately 13,000 apprenticeships available.

A successfully completed apprenticeship is considered essential if someone is to enter the non-academic German labour market. Within this context, the pre-apprenticeship training aims at improving the transition from education into employment for young people with particular difficulties in finding an apprenticeship. The practice consists of subsidised job placements in enterprises of between 6 and 12 months, complemented by vocational training.

### What was the practice aimed at?

The pre-apprenticeship training aims at improving the transition from education into employment for young people with particular difficulties in finding an apprenticeship. The measure is aimed at young people who have been unable to gain an apprenticeship contract in the dual system; young people under 25 years of age who do not fulfil the requirements for apprenticeship training and socially disadvantaged applicants.

### What activities were carried out?

Business associations and PES collate pre-apprenticeship vacancies in companies and enter them on a database. Potential beneficiaries (apprenticeship seekers) apply for the measure at PES. PES is responsible for matching the traineeship offer and demand. Companies host pre-apprentices for a period of between 6 and 12 months. They receive subsidies (as of 2012, EUR 216 per pre-apprentice per month, and a flat rate for social security contributions). Upon completion of the practice, the participants can apply for a ‘certificate of completion’ to be issued by the business associations. They can later apply for an official apprenticeship, in which case the pre-apprenticeship time will be discounted from the total duration of the official apprenticeship.

### What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Following the pilot, the practice has now been mainstreamed at PES. If necessary (on request of the enterprise), local PES can provide additional support, such as assigning social workers to facilitate the successful implementation of the practice for disadvantaged young people.

### Source(s) of funding

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

**People reached:**
The expected goal of the pilot practice (2004-2007) was to make 25,000 places a year available. This goal was constantly overachieved:
- In 2004/2005, 31,500 places were offered by participating companies.
- In 2005/2006, nearly 42,000 places were provided.
- In 2006/2007 companies provided 42,000 places.

Regarding the number of beneficiaries:
- In 2004/2005, 17,768 adolescents participated.
- In 2005/2006, the number of participants nearly doubled to 32,107.
- In 2006/2007, the number increased to 37,576 participants.

The number of companies participating:
- In 2004/2005, about 11,600 companies participated.
- In 2005/2006, the number increased to 13,350.
- In 2006/2007, the number more than doubled to 31,300.

When the practice was mainstreamed, the number of beneficiaries fluctuated: 26,888 in 2008/2009; 31,619 in 2009/2010; and 29,900 in 2010/2011. In the 2010-2014 period, the overarching objective of offering 30,000 apprenticeships per year was reached and most of the places could be filled.

**Products:**
- Internal database of participating enterprises
- Information material for participants and employers

What outcomes have been identified?

Regarding effectiveness of the practice (that is to say, how many participants transitioned into regular vocational training or apprenticeship on completion of the practice), a survey carried out as part of an evaluation in 2007 showed that the rate increased steadily. Among those surveyed, it was 56.5% (for apprenticeship within a company) and 65.6% (transition into any sort of vocational training) in 2004, rising to 62.4% and 69.7% in 2005, and to 65.5% and 74.7% in 2006. The rates were slightly lower for those who were disadvantaged, but were still in line with overall results (53.2%/63.3% in 2004, 59.4%/66.4% in 2005, and 63.4%/72.5% in 2006).

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The evaluation, carried out in 2012, identified various reasons for the fluctuation in the number of participants such as general changes in the training market (declining number of school leavers and of youngsters left out of the ‘traditional’ apprenticeship schemes); inadequate qualifications among candidates; and less interest from young people in applying to the practice. Several evaluations of the practice at different points in time found that:
- Participants are not misused as cheap labour, and nor do they end up working in a field that does not accord with their aspirations (GIB, 2008).
- 61% or more of placements are completed as planned. If the practice ends early, the initiative comes mainly from the participants (one of the main reasons being that they take up a regular apprenticeship in another enterprise).
- The request for complementary social work is only around 5%; the reasons might be that participation is dependent on the general economic situation rather than the individual characteristics of participants.
- Take up of complementary vocational schooling was relatively low (61% of participants claim to have visited complementary vocational schooling) this was thought to be due to different sectoral and regional regulations as well as lack of support in enterprises.
- The practice encouraged enterprises that either had never offered regular apprenticeships or had ceased to do so to start (or resume) offering them.

More information on the practice


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