Youth employment measures

In Austria, due to a lack of employers willing to train young people as apprentices, public subsidies are being used to incentivise this educational form, although specific skills needs are not explicitly taken into account. The Austrian Economic Chamber processes subsidies for individual companies to promote apprenticeship training.

Ready for education and training (“AusbildungsFit”):  

The experiences from previous programs, in particular from Youth Coaching, show that many young people are lacking basic qualifications and social skills or are confronted with problems as e.g. health problems, financial distress or family problems, which detain them from starting a regular education or work. Thus, a comprehensive low-threshold offer is being developed targeted at disadvantaged young people. It will aim at (re-)integrating young people into the education system or the labour market by offering individual promotion. Cornerstones of AusbildungsFit are offers like traineeships in companies, coaching for those who need socio-pedagogical service, provision of basic knowledge and qualification in teaching through creativity as well as sports and pedagogical offers. In 2013, existing programs were selected, which serve as models for this program, and there will be a pilot of 17 projects in seven federal provinces. A nation-wide implementation is planned for 2015.
Against long-term unemployment: Campaign for the Future of Young People

In the case of young people, a period of six months without work is already considered to be long-term unemployment. Avoiding this situation is another important objective of labour market policy. With the Campaign for the Future of Young People, the federal government promises to provide all young unemployed persons between 19 and 24 years with a job offer, a targeted training course or a subsidised job within a period of six months.

By October 2015, this labour market policy priority had enabled around 48 800 young people previously registered as unemployed with the AMS to begin a training course. Around 78 700 young people were able to take on a job.

According to the youth guarantee implementation plan[2] “A wide range of supportive measures has been established. Stepping stones are the Training Guarantee that guarantees every young person an apprenticeship position as well as Future for the Youth. §38a AMSG ensures that every unemployed up to 25 is either offered an employment position or the possibility to pursue a further education or an integration programme (as e.g. subsidised employment). Other offers are low-threshold offers as e.g. production schools or ready for education and training as well as offers for catch-up education.

Supportive measures for labour market integration in the area of education, training and non-formal learning:

- Widen access to second-chance education and support the acquisition and/or development of skills and competencies that meet the needs of the labour market.
- Use the Erasmus + programme as a supportive instrument to acquire social and civic competencies and skills, and strengthening the mobility and employability of young people.
- Develop partnerships among public and private employment services, career guidance services, other specialized youth services (NGOs, youth centres and associations) that help to smooth the transition from unemployment, inactivity, education or training into work.

In addition to these measures aiming at integrating young people into the labour market as employees and supporting education and formation, there exists a business start-up programme for unemployed. The programme aims at supporting unemployed workers in their efforts to enter self-employment.

Taking up self-employment can help these workers create permanent jobs which ensure economic survival on the one hand, and increase the number of job openings on the other, as newly established businesses might expand and create jobs filled from the ranks of the unemployed. Approximately 5% of all participants are less than 25 years old.”

Key reforms and initiatives to enable labour market integration

The key objective of Fit for Education and Training (AusbildungsFit [1]) is giving young people a second chance to acquire previously missed basic qualifications and social skills. The target group are Young people lacking basic qualifications. The intended scale is to start with pilot projects followed by nation-wide implementation in 2015. The BMB and the BMASK are responsible for this measure. The planned budget for 2014 was 11m Euro.

The key objective of Integrated Vocational Training (Integrative Berufsausbildung [3]) is providing vocational education to all young people, also to those who are not able to complete a fully-fledged apprenticeship within a certain time frame. The target groups are individuals with special educational needs, individuals who have not finished their schooling at general lower secondary schools or have
finished schooling with too many negative marks; people with disabilities within the meaning of the Disability Employment Act (BeinstG) and/or the Federal Provinces’ disability legislation; or socially disadvantaged individuals. The responsible authorities for this initiative, in place since 2003, are the BMWFW, BMASK, AMS and the Federal Social Office (BSB, Bundessozialamt).

The key objective of Future for the Youth (Aktion Zukunft Jugend) is to provide an offer by the AMS to young people aged 19-24 within 3 months. The target group is youth registered at the AMS aged 19-24. The responsible authorities for this nation-wide initiative, in place since 2009, are the BMWFW and AMS.

The key objectives of Training Guarantee (Ausbildungsgarantie) are providing VET to all young people, offering additional apprenticeship positions, targeting helping them completing apprenticeships or changing to a company for continuing the training respectively. The target groups are registered apprenticeship-seekers who completed compulsory schooling and are unable to find suitable company-based training slots despite enhanced placement efforts, or who dropped out of an apprenticeship; young people up to the age of 18, socially disadvantaged youth, slow learners, and increasingly also education dropouts and young adults (19 to 24 years of age). The responsible authorities for this initiative, in place since 2008, are the AMS, BMASK, BMWFW and the provinces. The yearly allocated budget is 175 000 000 €.

The key objective of bonus for companies which take up apprentices from supra company training entities by introducing a lump-sum subsidy of 1 000 Euro that is paid to every employer taking on an apprentice of a supra-company training entity. This shall increase the possibility to change from supra-company apprenticeship to a regular apprenticeship position. The responsible authorities for this initiative, in place since 2013, are the BMWFW, BMASK, WKO and LST.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

The flexibility of the job market is an important aim. The wishes and needs of employees and employers have to be considered. A successful flexicurity strategy is based on a well-balanced relation between flexibility and protection against social risks.

Advancement of the early intervention

The consultation spectrum of should be further developed by early consultation of the enterprises, especially regarding prevention of unemployment. People should be activated to claim services of the AMS, prior to their forthcoming job loss. In reflects to the preventive labour market policy employees and employers are to be sensitised for the initiative and the use of the self-service offer of the AMS. Early jobless announcements have to be possible. Unemployed people have to be supported in their change readiness in reflects of a life-accompanying learning.

The youth needs chances and perspectives. Hence, a stable, future-proof, freely elective choice of career is important. The cooperation between employment department and education department together with schools has the aim, to extensively offer and develop the occupational orientation for youth informatively.

The young people and their parents have to be informed about occupational fields and the linked chances and possibilities. Special attention has to be paid to the specific support of young women and girls with a choice and graduation of promising professional training.
Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Apprentices are subject to special provisions (unfair dismissal protection, working hours, special youth protection provisions etc.). Apprentices are entitled to paid holiday amounting to thirty working days per annum.

Other labour market integration policies and programmes for this group include testing and analysing their skills, mentoring programmes, networking with and for girls, or women in crafts and engineering (Frauen in die Technik, FiT). Under the latter programme, young women and girls enter skills training in non-traditional occupations.

According to the Employment Act for Children and Youth (Kinder und Jugendlichen-Beschäftigungsgesetz [6]), special rules apply. Within this law persons at the age of 16 that have finished compulsory school or persons up to the age of 19 are defined as youth.

Working on Sundays

Young people have to get off every other Sunday. Special restrictions apply for apprentices.

Working week

Each week young people have to get 2 consecutive days off.

Maximum working hours

The regular working hours are 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week respectively. Extra hours are only allowed for young people older than 16 years in the frame of 30 minutes per day and only for final papers/works.

Breaks and daily rest

With working hours higher than 4.5 a break of at least 30 minutes is compulsory. The daily rest has to be at least 12 hours.

Night work

Young people younger than 16 years are not allowed to work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Young people above are allowed to work until 11 p.m., but only after a medical examination (each year).

Vocational school

- The time necessary for the vocational school is to be given, the apprentice's compensation must be paid.
- Time at vocational schools is to be regarded as working time.

Vacation

Young people can demand at least 2 weeks

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

In 2012, €430 000 000 were spent on active labour market policy for young people. Additional € 160m
were spent on subsidies for the apprenticeship system and €24 000 000 on measures for young people of the federal social office. Thus, in sum €610 000 000 are spent to integrate young people into the labour market. Defining the budget on implementing this comprehensive strategy is, however, difficult as it also concerns gradual reforms in the educational system, where no separately listed costs are available.

**The budget against long-term unemployment:** In 2015, the federal government had a budget of €796 000 000 available to spend on labour market policy for young people. Of this, a sum of €575 000 000 was used in the form of subsidies and benefits distributed via the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS). €169 000 000 was used to promote apprenticeships in companies. €52 000 000 was available for corresponding programmes run by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

**Main reforms and planned reforms**

Further development of the quality-focused subsidies and supporting-instruments within the apprenticeship system (including different measures): Employer funds: approx. € 170 000 000 per year. No. of beneficiaries planned: approximately 125 000 apprentices.

Future for the Youth (aktion zukunft jugend): National Funds, including co-funding: € 142 000 000 (for qualification and employment measures, 2013).

For employment of job seekers €20 109 397 are available in the period in 2014-2020 for the offers and measures from the ESF and national funds.

More than €284 000 000 Euro are available for e.g. NEBA-measures between 2014 and 2020 from the ESF.

**Quality assurance**

For the assessment of the initiative of further development of the quality-focused subsidies and supporting-instruments within the apprenticeship system (including different measures) statistics on apprenticeships from the AMS and on apprenticeship training-subsidies from data warehouse DHW are being evaluated.

Support measures at vocational schools for students at risk (Verminderung der Drop-Out-Rate an kaufmännischen Schulen) are monitored at school level.

The Austrian labour market policy is a forerunner and model for many decades for comprehensive and innovative work full of quality with the aim of full employment. Benchmarks and standards guarantee a high-class level and make achievements measurable and comparable.

The AMS has to make sure that a best practice exchange is realised in a transparent way. Duties are the further development of quality standards and to peruse the objectives of the Austrian labour market policy. The AMS has to adjust and further develop the observation indicators. Impact monitoring shows that reintegration is one of the major key facts for success. Due to different target groups, the reintegration quote will be diverse. Hence, the AMS has to fix integration quotes for the labour market-political measures in vote with the results of the evaluation research.

The available resources have to be invested in labour market sensible and high-quality measures. These measures have to be evaluated.