

Handbook:

A model to promote
transnational
mobility in vocational
education and training

basic principles
practical experience
outlook



IMPRINT

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The support program “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” has many years of expertise in integration and labor market policy and in the development of quality criteria. In light of this expertise, the IQ specialist unit for immigration was commissioned to support quality assurance for the special program MobiPro-EU within the framework of which these guidelines were developed.

The sponsor of the specialist unit for immigration is



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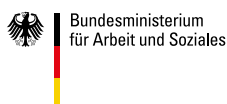
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In cooperation with:



GREETING AND OVERVIEW

“Transnational mobility in vocational education and training” – this is a cumbersome term for something that can be described very practically. A young man or woman travels to a country where they see future opportunities for themselves, and a foreign country recruits the young people it needs to boost its economy. Both sides benefit from these efforts. At the same time, mobility is not a one-way street where culture is concerned. We get to know other ways of seeing ourselves – and we have the chance to contribute our own ideas to other countries. The MobiPro-EU special program has made all of this possible.

And along the way we have learned the following: Some challenges that are part of vocational training are the same for all young people whether they are in their home country or come from abroad. Patience is needed to make it through three or four years. During this time, it is often the case that income is not enough to meet basic needs. And, in cases where the trainee has moved abroad, other factors come into play as well: departure from family, friends and a familiar environment, and the arrival in a completely new country. This is the case whether the move is temporary or forever.

For this reason, I can only praise everyone who has already taken or is considering taking this step. However, we are also offering something to young people. After all, the unbeatable advantages for EU citizens

completing vocational training in Germany are obvious. They learn German before and during their training. When these young graduates enter professional life, they already know how the labor market in Germany works. Employers trust the training they have received and are able to assess the skills acquired during the process. Furthermore, the sometimes complicated procedures for recognizing foreign professional qualifications are not necessary.

The special program “MobiPro-EU” is soon to be phased out – however its goal will remain. The law on the immigration of skilled workers sends a clear signal: We need qualified skilled workers, especially those with solid professional qualifications. That is why we want to facilitate vocational training in Germany for third-country nationals. We also want to create the opportunity to come to Germany in search of an apprenticeship. So, it may well be that young people from abroad will soon visit the counseling centers, the language and vocational schools or training companies directly as part of their search. How they are received there will largely depend on how many choose to continue this process. This is particularly important at a time when the debate about the need for immigration is being combined with negative prejudices.

I believe that we have set a good example with “MobiPro-EU” and will wholeheartedly continue to promote vocational training in Germany abroad. I also

hope that the German vocational training system will also benefit from experiences gained by having young people from abroad. Even though our standards enjoy a high international reputation, this does not mean that we cannot become even better.

When I look to the future, the really interesting question is: What path will the young men and women take once they have completed their training here? Will they stay in Germany? Or will they ensure that vocational training in Germany becomes even better known and thus more attractive in their home countries and even other countries as a result of their international career path? In order to see what happens, it is important for all participants to keep in touch and share information with each other. Looking ahead, these issues raise fundamental questions. Does vocational training have to be exclusively in German right from the start? Can we make better use of the potential of migrants already living and working here in order to facilitate the transition from a foreign language by new migrants – at companies, in vocational schools and institutions as well? How can we manage to give people

here an even better feeling that they have found a “new home”? And how can we succeed in establishing our successful vocational training system in other countries using returnees?



I hope that reading this Handbook proves to be a stimulating experience.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leonie Gebers', written in a cursive style.

Leonie Gebers

State Secretary at the Federal
Ministry for Labor and Social
Affairs

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA

Employment Agency

AGS

Employer Service of the Federal
Employment Agency of Germany

BA

Federal Employment Agency
of Germany

BIBB

Federal Institute for Vocational
Education and Training

BIZ

Vocational Information Center of
the Federal Employment Agency
of Germany

BMAS

Federal Ministry for Labor and
Social Affairs

DaF

German as a foreign language

DaZ

German as a second language

ECTS

European Credit Transfer System

ECVET

European Credit System for
Vocational Education and
Training

EQF

European Qualification
Framework

ESF

European Social Fund

EU

European Union

EURES

European Job Mobility Portal

FGQ

Quality Assurance Unit

GER

Common European Framework of
Reference for Languages

GPB

Best Practice Example

IAW

Institute for Applied Economic
Research

IPS

International Placement Services
of the Federal Employment Agency
of Germany

IQ

Support program "Integration
through Qualification"

ISG

Institute for Social Research
and Social Policy

KMU

Small and medium-sized
enterprises

LMS

Learning Management System

MobiPro-EU

Special Federal Government
program for the "Promotion
of Vocational Mobility of Young
People Interested in Vocational
Training" – social policy

SOKO

Institute for Social Research and
Communication

ZAV

International and Specialized
Services of the Federal
Employment Agency of
Germany

FOREWORD

Transnational mobility in vocational education and training is becoming increasingly important within the European Union (EU) and beyond. In this context, the Federal Government's Special Program for the Promotion of Vocational Mobility of Young People Interested in Vocational Training ("MobiPro-EU") is playing a pioneering role in the internationalization of vocational training. In cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency of Germany, the objective of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in promoting MobiPro-EU is to support young EU citizens in laying the foundation for their professional future by successfully completing dual vocational training in Germany.

As part of MobiPro-EU, several thousand young people from Europe have already come to all 16 federal states to live, learn and work there. Since 2013, the special program has thus not only contributed to international mobility, but also to combating youth unemployment in Europe and securing skilled labor in Germany.

The MobiPro-EU special program was designed as a pilot program from the outset and thus was intended for a limited period. The special program came to an end at the close of the 2016 training year. MobiPro-EU's task was to develop and test measures and instruments that could help to promote the integration of foreign students pursuing vocational training. Over the past several years, new methods and approaches have been developed, implemented, and reviewed by program participants. This enabled program participants to successfully overcome hurdles and complete their training.


Working closely together, all program participants were able to break new ground and gain valuable experience which has contributed to the success of the special program. The special program transitioned to securing results in 2016. The findings were actively evaluated and prepared for further use in conjunction with the project providers.

This Practice Handbook on Transnational Mobility in Vocational Education and Training bundles this practical knowledge in order to make it accessible to

interested parties dealing with issues of international mobility, immigration of skilled workers, and migration in vocational education and training. The Practice Handbook is primarily aimed at institutions that are committed to the integration of young people without an educational background in Germany. These institutions include training companies, language and vocational schools, and institutions providing support to trainees.

We would like to encourage you to use this Practice Handbook, along with its recommendations for action and its best practices, specifically to support trainees on their path to successful vocational training in Germany. This pioneering work has already been carried out by project providers involved in the MobiPro-EU special program. Their collective experiences are now available for you in this practice-oriented Handbook.

Kind regards,



Daniel Terzenbach

Director, Regions of the Federal
Employment



MOBIPRO-EU

**A MODEL FOR PROMOTING
TRANSNATIONAL
MOBILITY IN
VOCATIONAL TRAINING**



1.1

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment in some member states of the European Union reached dramatic proportions in 2008 and the following years in the wake of the economic and financial crisis. For example, the number of young unemployed EU citizens aged 15 to 24 rose from 4.1 million in 2007 to over 5.5 million in 2012 (Eurostat 2018a). Youth unemployment thus increased in the EU as a whole from 15.8% in 2007 to 23.2% in 2012 (Eurostat 2018b). The highest youth unemployment rates in 2012 were reported in Greece (55.3%), Spain (52.9%), Croatia (42.2%), Portugal (38.0%), and Italy (35.3%). By contrast, Germany (8.0%),

Highest youth unemployment rates 2012 in:

Greece, Spain, Croatia, Portugal and Italy

Norway (8.8%), and Austria (9.4%) had the lowest rates (ibid.).

Against this backdrop, the Federal Government decided in 2012 to make a contribution to international job mobility and to combating youth unemployment in the EU: The Special Program for the Promotion of Occupational Mobility of Young People from Europe Interested in Vocational Training (MobiPro-EU) was launched and implemented between 2013 and 2020 as part of a temporary pilot program financed from federal funds.

In cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency of Germany (BA), the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS) also pursued the goal of making a contribution to securing skilled labor in Germany as part of this special program. To this end, young EU citizens were to be given targeted support so that they could successfully complete company-sponsored vocational training in Germany. As early as the beginning of 2013, the first youth and young adults from other EU countries entitled to freedom of movement came to Germany to complete in-company vocational training or take up employment as a skilled worker – with the aid of individual support through the special program.

Project funding was introduced in 2014 to ensure better support and supervision of the participants. As part of this project support, some 7,500 young Europeans have taken part in MobiPro-EU since 2015. In this context, project providers representing 271 projects supported vocational training for MobiPro-EU participants at some 1,300 companies throughout Germany. The participants, who came mainly from Spain, Italy, Poland, Greece, and Bulgaria, began their training primarily in occupations marked by shortages, such as the hotel and restaurant trades, nursing care for the elderly, and technical trades.

A total of

276

vocational training programs received support

7.4 %

Average increase in youth unemployment in the EU

7,500

Participants in MobiPro-EU (from 2015)

1,300

Companies participating in MobiPro-EU throughout Germany

1.2

PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN EUROPE

International mobility in vocational education and training was intended to, and will in future, gain in importance. Support programs such as the European Social Fund's "Vocational Training without Borders" program or the EU's "Erasmus+" program are an expression of the fact that strengthening transnational mobility in the context of vocational education and training has been a Europe-wide concern for some years now (see also the chapter "Fundamental principles of transnational mobility in vocational education and training").

In many of these mobility programs, the main aim was, or is, to provide young people with international experience for a limited period of time. These are relatively short-term mobility projects that promote organized learning experiences in other European countries. These experiences include in particular vocational internships, international training sessions, and advanced education measures lasting from six weeks to a maximum of twelve months. Participants focus on gaining international experience, expanding their linguistic and professional knowledge, and acquiring social and intercultural skills. In addition, these mobility programs offer the opportunity to learn new work methods and techniques and to broaden one's horizon. In addition to trainees, potential participants also include technical and vocational school teachers and trainers.

MobiPro-EU was also developed as a program to promote cross-border vocational training. However, the special program of the Federal Republic of Germany differs from other programs in its broader, more structured and holistic approach as well as in its time horizon.

As a rule, learning-focused stays within Europe are designed to offer a taste of the world of work and to gain experience. MobiPro-EU starts where the majority of mobility projects end, namely with an international internship. A sophisticated recruiting and matching process, largely carried out as a joint task by project providers and the International Placement Services (IPS) of the Federal Employment Agency of Germany, was followed during the course of the program by a German language course in the country of origin and a six-week company internship, which gave young people from other European countries interested in vocational training an impression of in-company vocational training in Germany. Successful completion of the internship and the decision to pursue vocational education were followed by three or three and a half years of vocational training within the framework of the dual training system.

The comprehensive approach of MobiPro-EU was characterized by the systematic networking of all key players who support, and supported, young people in the successful completion of their training. Of central importance in this network are above all the training company, the project provider, with its assistance and support services, and the vocational schools. The IPS played a supporting role throughout the entire process.



1.3

ADDED VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

The economic conditions in Europe outlined above were a major contributing factor to the systematic and holistic approach pursued by MobiPro-EU. Whereas young people cannot find training places in many other European countries, companies in Germany are urgently looking for young skilled workers. The central goal of international mobility supported by MobiPro-EU was therefore both the recruitment of skilled workers for Germany and the creation of new career and social perspectives for young people from other parts of Europe.

First of all, young people from other European countries interested in training were to be given the opportunity to undergo and complete dual vocational training in Germany. This in turn opened up new perspectives for them in terms of involvement, work and

the future. Second, interested companies were able to fill their vacant training places and thus, in the long term, attract their own skilled workers to occupations in which there is a shortage of qualified personnel. In times characterized by economic crises, these efforts also made a contribution to the benefit of the home countries of the European trainees over the long term: The strain on the labor markets of EU states with high youth unemployment was reduced by international training opportunities. At the same time, skilled workers who received high-quality training in the German dual vocational training system have expertise and work experience that they can apply throughout Europe upon the successful completion of their vocational training. A win-win situation for everyone involved.

1.4

CONTENT AND

OBJECTIVE

OF THE PRACTICE HANDBOOK

International vocational training offers numerous opportunities, but also poses challenges. Vocational training in a foreign language and in a new environment is not easy for many young people. Integration and mastering everyday life without the support of the accustomed social environment, such as friends and family, requires additional effort and perseverance. For vocational schools and companies, too, integrating people with a different national educational background who may be confronted with different social habits and a new language at school and in the workplace poses numerous challenges.

Since its inception in 2013, MobiPro-EU has developed and tested measures and instruments that contribute to facilitating and implementing transnational mobility in vocational education and training. As a "learning program", MobiPro-EU has been adapted several times on the basis of experience and knowledge gained on an ongoing basis. The final year of training, which began in 2016, is based on findings resulting from two years of individual and project-based support.

The experience and findings gained from a total of four training years were prepared for communication and documented in this Practice Handbook. Of particular importance here are the successively developed general quality and technical standards and recommendations for action, as well as the building blocks and innovative measures from projects involved in MobiPro-EU which have been applied in the various phases of training preparation and training.

The following chapter deals with the fundamental principles of transnational mobility in vocational training. The chapter on the practice of transnational mobility in vocational training offers numerous recommendations for the successful implementation of cross-border vocational training projects. In addition to recommendations for action in various phases and areas of transnational vocational training, it also presents findings from the scientific monitoring of the special program MobiPro-EU as well as examples of best practices (BPE) from numerous participating project providers. The annex contains checklists to assist interested stakeholders in their work. In particular, it is directed at parties and institutions in vocational education and training such as coordinating providers, training companies, language schools, and vocational schools that are committed to the training and integration of young people without a German educational background and supporting them on their way to successfully completing in-company vocational training.

Below you will find recommendations for action, insights gained, and examples of best practices

**FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
OF TRANSNATIONAL
MOBILITY IN
VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

20

2.1

SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In many cases, transnational mobility projects pose a variety of challenges to those implementing them. International and European frameworks as well as challenges in practical implementation are of particular importance in this context. These must be kept in mind.

INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

As a matter of principle, transnational mobility in vocational education and training is not a new phenomenon in the European context. Journeymen from certain guilds went on the road to other regions as early as the Late Middle Ages. These travels, which often lasted several years far away from home, aided in learning new craft and technical practices and personal development. It was sometimes even a compulsory part of the training if one wanted to be admitted later to the master examination.

The fact that transnational mobility in vocational training contributes to the development of personal, professional, linguistic, and also intercultural skills is therefore a centuries-old insight. Even in an age of increasing globalization and networking, this has not lost any of its significance. On the contrary: Interna-

tional vocational skills are more important than ever in a common European economic area. The aim here is to provide support to customers from other countries, to cooperate with business partners in neighboring countries, and to cope with foreign-language bureaucracy. In addition, multilingualism is needed in the provision of information on country-specific legislation, norms, standards and business practices. (Hans Böckler Foundation 2016).

This makes it all the more astonishing that comparatively few trainees obtain learning and work experience abroad. In Germany, for example, only around 4.5% of trainees in initial vocational education and training completed a training-related stay abroad in 2016 (NA at BIBB 2017: 47). The declared goal of the Council of the European Union to increase the proportion of trainees who spend at least two weeks abroad for educational purposes to 6% by 2020 (Council of the European Union 2011: 8) is also relatively modest compared to trends in the higher education sector. In the field of higher education, foreign language skills are a matter of course for understanding international specialist discussions and exchanging technical knowledge.

Around a quarter
of all graduates spent
several months
abroad in 2013

It is also common to attend international conferences and study abroad. Around a quarter of all university graduates in Germany spent a study-related stay abroad in 2013, mostly lasting several months (DAAD/DZHW 2017: 11). The Bologna Process has also contributed to European higher education reform, which has been increasingly pursued since the 1990s, aimed not only at standardizing courses of study and degrees, but also increasing the transnational mobility of students. The two-stage system of Bachelor's and Master's degrees is now largely in place throughout Europe. The introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) also facilitates the recognition of credits earned abroad. The issue of quality assurance was also firmly anchored in the higher education sector by the Bologna Process.

However, vocational training in the EU is still a long way from the same level of Europeanization or harmonization that has taken place in recent years in the European higher education area. Despite the new challenges and changed demands in everyday professional life related to globalization and Europeanization, the transnational dimension has so far had relatively little significance in vocational education and training. There is no such thing as the modularization of learning materials as in the higher education sector, which facilitates the mutual recognition of achievements. In addition, training-related exchanges and experiences abroad as well as international acquisition of specialized skills in vocational education and training tend to be an exception. Trainees in the EU still complete not only fewer but also shorter training-related stays abroad than students, averaging only one month (European Commission 2016). Completing an entire vocational training program internationally is rather rare.

It is true that there have also been efforts in the field of vocational training policy in Europe and the member states for several years to regulate the comparability and recognition of skills, qualifications and diplomas acquired abroad. The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) form part of these efforts and are designed to contribute to increasing mobility. However, the European ministers responsible for vocational education, the European social partners and the European Commission, at their meeting in December 2010 on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training by 2020, noted that much work still lies ahead for European vocational education and training policy:

“Although a European area of education and training is in the process of being created, the original objective of removing obstacles to mobility has not yet been achieved. Mobility on the part of students in vocational education and training remains low. Better and more targeted information and guidance needs to be provided in order for our vocational education and training systems to attract more trainees from abroad. A key challenge for the future will be to sustainably increase the cross-border mobility of students and teachers in the field of vocational education and training and to recognize knowledge, skills and competences acquired abroad.”

(European Commission 2010: 4f)

The European trade union movement is also calling for more mobility in vocational training within Europe (see ETUC/Union learn 2016).

The need for transnational mobility in vocational education and training within the European area is not only increasing in view of cross-border cooperative relationships and interdependencies on the part of globally active corporations but also on the part of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well. The EU and its member states have prompted political action in recent years. Promoting mobility in vocational education and training is an issue of growing relevance

The creation of structures to promote transnational mobility in vocational training supports both economic objectives and the strengthening of a European identity and adaptability to social changes (Kaleja & Egetenmeyer 2017). In its strategy paper Europe 2020, the European Commission considered the promotion of transnational mobility of European trainees not only as an effective measure to strengthen the global competitiveness of the EU, but also to reduce youth unemployment in the individual member states (European Commission 2010a).

MobiPro-EU not only addressed this issue, but also initiated a unique pilot program to strengthen transnational mobility in vocational training. MobiPro-EU made a contribution to cross-border vocational training in Europe and, in the long term, beyond by developing a structure for carrying out vocational training for young Europeans within the framework of the German dual training system.

A key element in exploring new avenues in this area was the targeted and solution-oriented handling of challenges in the implementation of the program. This promoted the

continuous quality development and assurance work of the project partners involved.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

The European or transnational dimension in vocational education and training is more difficult in various areas than in higher education. One of the challenges is that vocational training “takes place in very different systems with different intensity and at different



– both at the national and at the EU level. European funding programs such as Leonardo da Vinci (2007 to 2013), Eraamus+ (2014 to 2020) and ErasmusPro (2017 to 2020) or the European Social Fund (ESF) program “Vocational Education and Training without Borders” (2009 to 2014, since 2015 continuation without ESF funding)¹ bear witness to this, as do changes in legislation. For example, the amendment of the German Vocational Training Act in the year 2005 opened up the possibility of having periods spent abroad credited towards the training within the framework of dual vocational training².

¹ For more information, see http://www.berufsbildung-ohne-grenzen.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Dateien/Neuaufgabe_BoG-Handbuch_-_Kopie.pdf.

² Up to a quarter of the total training time can be credited. See Vocational Training Act (BBiG) section 2 (3) BBiB.

learning venues. In addition, there are differences in occupational profiles and in the trainees themselves.” (Hans-Böckler-Stiftung 2016: 9). The Europeanization or internationalization of vocational training requires willingness on the part of the parties involved (including vocational schools and training companies and the trainees themselves) to make changes and to adapt. These changes include “new forms of teaching and learning intercultural and international skills [and] foreign language acquisition” (ibid.: 21f.), but also the will above all “to change the contents and forms of vocational learning processes and to adapt them methodically in training companies and vocational schools” (ibid.). In addition, in view of the increasingly international composition of the workforce, even at SMEs, it is important to prepare employees for the increasingly intercultural composition of all participants and to integrate them into the corresponding

Workforces that are becoming increasingly international

attitudes of the processes in order to promote good national cooperation between companies. (ibid.:10).

The successful integration of young Europeans into companies, vocational schools and society poses numerous other challenges. At the outset, they start with their own national vocational training system. In the German dual system, training takes place at two learning venues: While the practical knowledge and work experience is collected in the training company, the vocational school imparts the theoretical technical knowledge. With this very specific training system, Germany differs from many other European member states in which in-company training takes up less space and is less structurally anchored in vocational training (Kaleja & Egetenmeyer 2017: 72-74). A detailed explanation of this system is therefore essential from the outset during the recruitment and preparation of potential trainees in the country of origin in order to avoid misunderstandings and false expectations. Similarly, the additional preparation for possible vocational training in the form of several weeks of preparatory internships in Germany is central. This often shows whether potential trainees are suitable for the occupation they are looking for and whether there is

a good fit between the company and the trainees. In this way, it is possible to find out whether a three-year training course far away from the family in the country of origin is conceivable – and whether the potential trainees can cope with conditions in a new region. If all of this is the case, one of the biggest challenges is learning a new language in a relatively short time. The acquisition of German presents the greatest difficulty for trainees. Learning German (and sometimes its dialects) is the fundamental basis for the success of training and the integration into companies, vocational schools and society. It is the means of communication both at the training company, in which practical technical knowledge must be understood and implemented, and in the vocational school, in which mastery of (technical) vocabulary is a prerequisite, among other things, for successful completion of examinations. Finally, language skills are the key to social integration, which is particularly important for young people who may be far from their familiar social and family environment for the first time or for such a long time.

The greatest difficulty for trainees is learning the language

Challenges for the organization of the usual vocational school lessons, the support of young trainees from other European countries as well as the regional coordination of such training projects (e.g. under consideration of the regional infrastructure and cooperation between local project partners) were part of everyday life in MobiPro-EU. But the special program and the parties involved in it – especially the project providers for a total of 276 projects – were not merely confronted with a large number of these challenges.

They have also worked intensively to find solutions, actions, and instruments to overcome them. Quality standards, professional standards, and recommendations for action for central aspects of the vocational qualification of young people from other European countries were developed as part of this process. This has made an important contribution in the field of transnational mobility in vocational training in and for Europe.

2.2

QUALITY IN TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In order to successfully implement training-related mobility within the EU, quality standards and recommendations for action should be taken into account when looking for trainees and when integrating them into a new training system and social environment. Only if young Europeans are successful in their careers and social lives in Germany will this have a lasting positive impact on their contribution to the development of the European economy and society.

The process of quality development and quality assurance in the MobiPro-EU special program was largely shaped by the Quality Assurance Expert Group (FGQ), which started work with elected representatives from project providers from all over Germany in summer 2015. In addition to these experts from the MobiPro-EU project providers, the expert group consisted of experts from the BMAS, the "Integration through Qualification (IQ)" funding program, the BA and other persons with corresponding expertise in the field. On behalf of the BMAS, the expert group collected best practice approaches and successively developed recommendations for project providers and their partners within the framework of MobiPro-EU and beyond.

The development of quality assurance recommendations for action was continued in 2015 with introduction of the General Quality Standards MobiPro-EU in the areas of language, practical training, in-company vocational training, vocational school and educational support and continued successively in the years 2016

to 2018 looking at specific technical standards involving language and training companies as well as recommendations for action for vocational schools.

SUCCESSFULLY DESIGNING TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

The recommendations for action that have been drawn up are basically aimed at the successful completion of vocational training. They primarily serve to support vocational schools, training companies and training providers in coping with adaptation and flexibilization processes within the dual vocational training system, which inevitably involves the training of new and heterogeneous target groups. The present recommendations for action start with a holistic perspective at all critical points of supporting trainees who have educational experience in another country of origin. They thus make it possible to avoid risks at an early stage both before and during vocational training. It is also essential that not only vocational but also social integration is to be understood as an important component for the success of projects to promote national mobility in vocational education and training. Social integration is a common task for diverse practice in a region that requires the will to build regional partnerships and networks to support trainees through contacts in business, sports, culture and education. The aim is to strengthen the ties between trainees and the region and to make their vocational training a success.

This Practice Handbook is the primary result of the experience gained from quality assurance and development

Recommendations for action as a result of quality assurance and development work in MobiPro-EU

work in MobiPro-EU, which as a pilot program can also serve as a model in the medium term for other mobility contexts and

other target groups or projects. The regional and supraregional exchange and active collection of experience, methods, quality standards, recommendations for action and examples of best practice by the practice directly involved in the implementation of the special program comprise the source of the recommendations for action presented in the following chapter. Based on the most important processes and aspects for the training of young people from other EU countries, the following chapter is initially devoted to the phases that precede the actual vocational training: recruitment and information provision, (linguistic) preparation in the country of origin, and preparation in Germany (including internships in preparation for vocational training, and matching with the training companies). Central aspects that arise during vocational training are discussed next. This includes language acquisition as the most important basis for the success of the training and the integration of the trainees. In addition, the recommendations for action on cooperation with training companies and vocational schools



refer to the two key learning venues within the dual training system. Additional recommendations for action are concerned with social integration as a prerequisite for a positive personal life outside the vocational school and the training company. Reference is also made to regional coordination of training projects (including consideration of specific challenges such as local infrastructure with an influence over vocational training).

IN PRACTICE

TRANSNATIONAL

MOBILITY IN

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

3.

3.1

COMPONENTS AND TIME LINES

FOR TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY MEASURES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A project to enable foreign potential trainees to undergo vocational training in Germany involves more than just supporting vocational training for young people. It starts long before the actual vocational training begins and requires close cooperation with various partners at home and abroad as well as detailed knowledge of the vocational training system in Germany and in the partner countries. It is necessary to ensure that such projects provide support for potential trainees and trainees at various levels; the (technical) language should be taught and social integration on the part of students should be supported. Regional actors in vocational training should be involved in the process and solutions to challenges need to be found.

Using the system of dual vocational education and training in Germany and the prerequisites, phases and key topics to be considered when supporting potential trainees and trainees from abroad as a starting point, the following pages offer a brief introduction to the practice of transnational mobility in vocational education and training. Recommendations for action on the most important aspects of relevant training projects will be discussed in detail thereafter.

THE DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

Dual vocational training in Germany links work and learning over a training period of three to three and a half years. For this purpose, it takes place at two learning venues: the training company and the vocational school¹. The vocational training contract with a training company comprises the basis for commencing vocational training. On this basis, the company primarily provides trainees with practical vocational knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, the trainees acquire the necessary occupation-related theoretical knowledge in corresponding vocational schools. In-company training takes up about two-thirds of the training time, while learning at school takes up about one-third. Vocational training in schools and companies can also be supplemented by inter-company training, whereby elements of in-company training that the training company itself cannot provide in this form are studied at greater depth.

An intermediate examination is used to assess progress during vocational training. At the end of the

¹ The term "vocational school" is used throughout this Handbook as a substitute for all vocational schools and colleges and for other schools whose names may vary from country to country and which are responsible for the school-based part of vocational education and training.

vocational training, the practical vocational skills are tested in a final examination, which is administered by the respective competent authorities, e.g. chambers of industry and commerce or chambers of trades. In some areas, staggered examinations, where the results of the intermediate examination are included in the results of the final examination, are also increasingly gaining ground.

Administration of the examination by the respective chambers ensures quality assurance according to specified criteria and standards as well as the comparability of the acquired vocational qualifications. The intermeshing of parallel practical and theoretical vocational training within the framework of dual vocational training promotes the basic qualification of skilled workers.

However, the combination of theoretical and practical training in this form is not self-evident in international comparison and not an established practice in many countries. For this reason, knowledge of the vocational

training system in Germany cannot be assumed on the part of potential trainees abroad but must be communicated in order to avoid misunderstandings and to prevent unfounded expectations and ideas.

A combination of theoretical and practical training is not an established practice in many countries

Special challenges arise from the cooperation of different parties and institutions in vocational training. Regular consultations and cooperation are necessary

in order to achieve the desired success in vocational training. This applies all the more if, in the case of transnational mobility projects, the group of cooperation partners is extended to include those abroad and the potential trainees or trainees have neither completed their previous schooling in Germany nor are they familiar with the language, the training system, or working and living in Germany.

PHASES AND KEY THEMES OF TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Parties wishing to implement projects promoting transnational mobility in vocational education and training should be aware of their complexity. In addition to the actual vocational training, these projects include specific chronological steps as well as key topics that are relevant throughout the entire period of vocational training. The process shown in Figure 1 (pages 28-30) divided into four phases from the search for potential trainees abroad to the successful completion of vocational training in Germany is therefore intended to be explained below.

Figure 1: Phases and key themes of transnational mobility in vocational education and training

Ensuring success



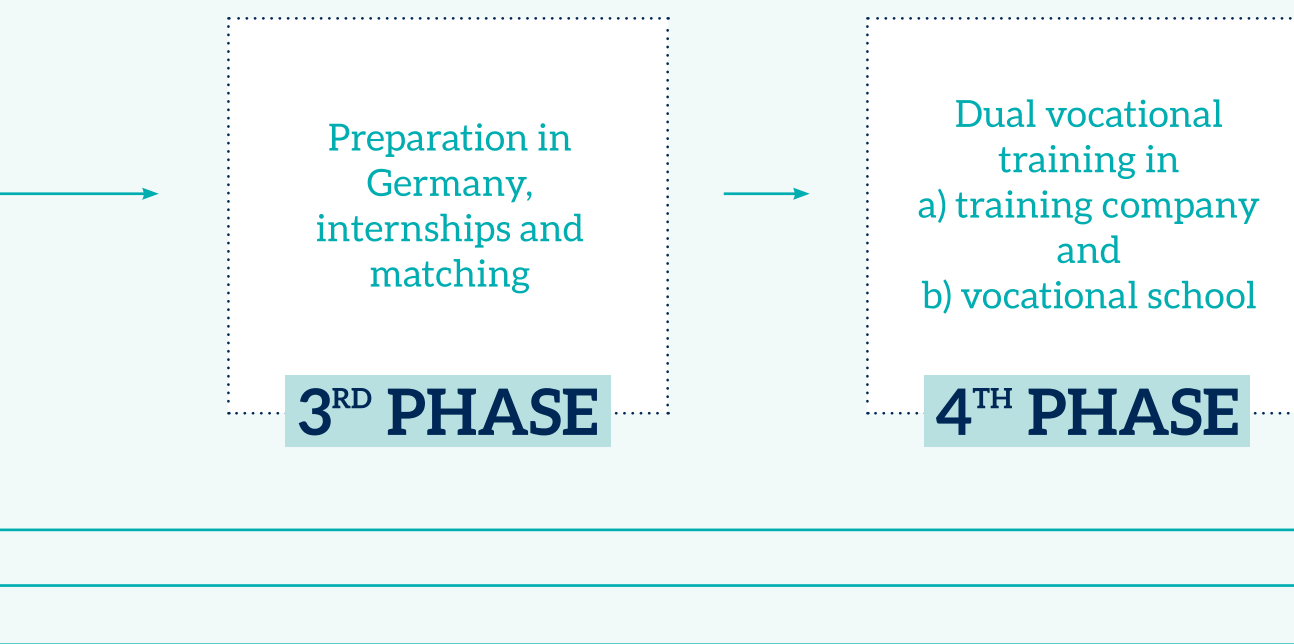
Regional coordination

Social integration

Language

Effectively recruiting potential trainees from abroad requires active and intensive recruitment efforts in the partner countries. This includes the provision of comprehensive information on, among other things, the dual training system, the training process and the respective destination region in Germany as well as an initial assessment of the vocational suitability of potential trainees. Close cooperation with the International and Specialized Services (ZAV) of the Federal Employment Agency of Germany (BA) and local partners, such as the regional Employment Agencies (AA) and the network supporting the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES), can support parties involved in vocational training during this phase. This first phase proved to be central to the vocational training process in the MobiPro-EU special program. Drawing a realistic picture of the vocational training process and the target region, pointing out possible challenges, and examining the actual interests, ideas and expectations of the potential trainees, were all considered essential in this context.

Preparing potential trainees for vocational training in Germany in their respective countries of origin followed the recruitment phase and the initial provision of information. Without limitation, this relates to learning German and additional preparation in the form of detailed information on further aspects of living and working in Germany. Relevant language courses and training sessions that focus on intercultural skills development are usually conducted by cooperation partners in the respective partner countries following close and regular consultation with project partners in Germany. Intercultural skills are developed, and awareness of language issues is raised, within the participating training companies and with other relevant partners.



The third phase is the continuation of preparation for vocational training through further language course units and an internship of several weeks in Germany. This latter phase enables potential trainees to discover whether the desired training occupation is in line with their interests and ideas. Conversely, the internship also provides the training companies the opportunity to check the fit of potential trainees with their occupation and company and to determine whether the training company and potential trainees are a good fit (matching).

In this phase, in which partners from vocational schools and socio-educational work are included in addition to cooperation with partners from language learning and vocational training, regular consultations between all participants, including the trainees, is required until the completion of vocational training along with ongoing support of the trainees.

During these four chronological phases, it is important to consider three further key topics that are decisive for successful vocational training: Language, social integration, and regional cooperation. Ensuring success is the overriding goal in this context.

Language

The continuous learning and increasing mastery of the language in which the vocational training as a whole and the final examination are completed, is indispensable both for work in the training company and communication with superiors and employees and for learning and understanding technical theory in the vocational school and finally for social integration. In the MobiPro-EU special program, language proved to be a central element for success or failure in vocational training and social integration in Germany.



Regional cooperation

Vocational training in a foreign country and in a foreign language poses numerous challenges over the course of the training program, both for the trainees themselves and for other parties involved in the training, such as vocational schools, training companies or socio-educational providers in the field of vocational training. Close cooperation at local level with counties, employment agencies, chambers of commerce, vocational schools, companies and other actors – commencing with the planning and implementation of the training program – can help to meet challenges quickly and effectively and to find joint solutions; for example, in finding housing for trainees at favorable rates or social integration into local clubs. Appropriate measures contribute to ensuring the success of the training by preventing dropouts.

Social integration

Promoting and supporting trainees in their social integration usually has a positive effect on improving their language skills. Both factors – learning of German and social integration into the host region – are closely linked. Promoting these factors makes a significant contribution to successful vocational training.



DROP OUT PREVENTION IN THE MOBIPRO-EU SPECIAL PROGRAM

Of all the young EU citizens who started training in Germany as part of MobiPro-EU, 50% dropped out by the end of their second year of training. The end of the first year of training proved to be a critical phase in particular. Dropping out of vocational training means the end of vocational training sponsored by MobiPro-EU in Germany and must be distinguished from terminating the contract with the training company. A comparison with all trainees in the dual training system shows that participants apparently have a much harder time in training than native German trainees. The circumstance that many participants in MobiPro-EU were training in occupations that show a high tendency to drop out among all trainees was taken into account in this context.

According to the results of the MobiPro-EU evaluation, the risk of training dropout can be influenced by the project providers. Project providers implemented a variety of measures to this end. Intensive and open communication proved to be important in order to discover difficult developments at an early

stage and work to counter them. This applies to communications both with the participants and with the other project participants, in particular with training companies and vocational schools. Some sponsors also offered mentoring and sponsorship models.

According to the results of evaluation, strong language preparation is essential for the prevention of training dropouts. According to the statistical analysis, the lack of German language proficiency proved to be a significant factor that increased the risk of dropping out of training. Gaps were identified that could hinder successful training, particularly with regard to vocational German language skills and vocational school instruction. Furthermore, social contacts in Germany helped to shore up commitment to training. Project providers and companies both supported the integration of participants by, among other things, organizing meetings with young people outside of the program. Dropout risks were reduced in areas where these types of meetings were offered.



3.2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION FOR TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY MEASURES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

This chapter presents recommendations for action drawn up within the framework of the MobiPro-EU special program that can also be applied to target groups other than potential trainees and trainees from the EU.

The individual sub-chapters are arranged chronologically according to the above-mentioned phases of transnational mobility measures as pursued in MobiPro-EU and include the key topics that are decisive for the success of vocational training (see Figure 1).

In addition to the general quality and technical standards developed in MobiPro-EU, the recommendations for action also include findings from the evaluation consortium, consisting of the SOKO Institut für Sozialforschung und Kommunikation GmbH, the Institut für Sozialforschung und Gesellschaftspolitik (ISG) and the Institut für Angewandte Wirtschaftsforschung e. V. (IAW), which provided scientific support for the special program during the project funding phase from February 2015 to December 2018. In addition, examples of best practice have been included which have proved their worth in the practical experience of MobiPro-EU project providers.

Using the experience and structure of the special program as a foundation, the recommendations for action presented are based on the following elements:

- Training members of the target group is embedded in a framework which includes the recruitment of potential trainees with the provision of appropriate detailed information, a preparatory language course for students in their country of origin and an internship in Germany prior to vocational training. Three preparatory phases therefore complement the vocational training phase.
- The students receive socio-educational support throughout all these phases. This function is performed by an institution which is responsible both for the (vocational and linguistic) training of students and for ensuring an interface between all other parties involved in training. This institution is referred to below as the “participating institution” (in Germany).
- All institutions involved in training (participating institutions, language schools in the country of origin and in Germany, training companies, vocational schools and, where appropriate, supporting institutions such as the BA, Welcome Centers, municipal institutions and other parties) cooperate closely with each other from an early stage. They familiarize themselves with prevailing conditions in advance and regularly exchange information about relevant approaches.

These recommendations for action can be adapted to other circumstances. However, implementation of the above-mentioned framework within the scope of MobiPro-EU and experience with training people from other countries of origin show that the success of vocational training can be strongly influenced by appropriate support measures.

The following discussion will refer to persons interested in vocational training in Germany as students, potential trainees or trainees depending on the phase or context of their involvement.



3.2.1 PHASE 1: RECRUITING POTENTIAL TRAINEES AND TRAINING COMPANIES

Intensive preparations are required in advance before participants can start a training program for young people from abroad in Germany. These preparations relate both to the potential trainees and their social environment and to the future partners in the training program (training companies, language schools, etc.). Persons interested in vocational training in Germany first need to be found and contacted, their motivation and their vocational desires and aptitudes must be carefully compared with what is on offer. At this point, detailed information about the level of knowledge of the potential trainees is of great importance. In this context, the focus should not only be on occupational fields and language acquisition, but also on the dual training system and its significance which will generally be unknown to potential trainees. It is also important to give potential trainees the opportunity to make a realistic assessment of the upcoming training phase. This includes highlighting and preparing for challenges in coping with work and everyday

life in Germany – including with regard to the differences to the country of origin. At the same time, participating institutions must be aware that the future trainees can only be prepared for the conditions they will encounter in Germany to a limited extent. Potential trainees are confronted with new, sometimes unexpected impressions, encounters and experiences, especially in the period immediately after their arrival. For participating institutions, this means that they must continuously and repeatedly prepare the future trainees for this reality and take measures to support this process¹. Families and other relatives should – assuming future trainees agree – be involved as far as possible and questions and concerns clarified. The ZAV also offers support in recruiting potential trainees and in providing information. Companies that are interested and well-prepared must also be found for the training phase. They will later be involved in selecting and informing the future trainees as far as possible.

¹ See also chapter "Preparation in Germany", "Internships and matching" and the chapter "Social integration".

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Recruit and inform potential trainees²

Recruit and contact potential trainees: Contacting and recruiting potential trainees in the countries of origin may be performed by the participating institutions themselves or in collaboration with the ZAV (if applicable with cooperation partners in the country of origin). Future training companies can be involved as well.

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS AS PART OF MOBIPRO-EU

According to the results of the evaluation of MobiPro-EU, the vast majority of MobiPro-EU projects used information events, various advertising measures and the Internet to raise awareness of the special program. Nearly four-fifths of the projects organized information events on vocational training in the context of a specific MobiPro-EU project. However, the majority of the projects did not rely exclusively on such indirect channels but approached potential trainees directly as well. Cooperation with the IPS at ZAV and project partners in the country of origin was the most common way to reach potential trainees.

Based on results of statistical analyses, it makes sense to use as many communication channels as possible. This makes it possible to create a sufficiently large pool of potential trainees who are appropriate for vocational training. Direct recruiting has proved to be particularly suitable. On average, trainees who came to start training in Germany in this way were considerably less likely to drop out of their training.

Prepare for career choice: Potential trainees should be informed extensively, realistically and in their native language (if possible) – both orally and in writing – about the following:

- How the dual vocational training system functions
- Potential recognition of existing skills and qualifications in Germany
- Advanced and additional education and training opportunities
- Labor market in the region and in Germany
- Value and usefulness of completion certificates in Germany
- Usefulness of completion certificates abroad
- Specific sectors and the vocational training slots available (e.g. from chambers of commerce)
- Educational content of the vocational training and the occupational profile of the respective occupation in Germany (e.g. of the chambers of commerce) including detailed occupation-specific information (e.g. working hours, earning opportunities)
- Transitional, networking and promotion opportunities during and after vocational training
- Rights and obligations as an employee (with reference to the vocational training contract)

Provide general information about living and working in Germany: Potential trainees should be offered organized information and advice on the following aspects:

- Health and social security insurance in Germany (including differences in gross and net salaries)
- Other insurance (e.g. car, personal and liability insurance)

² Regarding the information and selection processes for potential trainees, see also the chapter "Preparation in the country of origin".

- Authorities and areas of responsibility in Germany
- Social cohesion in Germany
- Characteristic features of the region
- Cultural, recreational and other leisure activities
- Organizations and associations
- Participating institutions
- Housing, tenancy law and associated obligations (e.g. small cosmetic repairs in rented apartments must be borne by the tenants)
- Other rights and obligations (e.g. TV license fee)
- A record of successfully completed training courses is available. For this purpose, the employer's service of the BA, the vocational schools, chambers and associations may be consulted in addition to potential companies.
- The final selection decision should be preceded by a discussion between the participating institution and the company. Where possible, this should not only be done with management but the parties responsible for the trainees as well

Set priorities: The recruitment and selection of training companies where trainees are to be placed should initially focus on vocational sectors and regions. Focus should be based on:

- Needs for (trained) personnel in the region, and
- The qualifications and professional interests of potential trainees and their career prospects

Determine authorization: The following aspects should first be considered when recruiting and selecting companies:

- The company is currently authorized to provide vocational training.
- Someone is available at the company who can provide written proof of the appropriate trainer authorization for the relevant vocations.
- The respective person is registered as a trainer with the competent authority (trade chamber).
- The company currently offers vocational training.
- Training rates for the last few years are available.
- **Organize substantive preparation:** The participating institutions notify the potential training companies in detail about the training program. This information should include the following points:
 - The training companies should be informed at an early stage about the training program, the objectives, the conditions (e.g. need for time-off for language courses) and documentation requirements.
 - The training companies should be made aware both of the opportunities (e.g. additional language skills by trainees and the associated possibility of opening up new markets) and of the challenges (potentially increased need for support due to initial language challenges, lack of educational experience in Germany, etc.) in hiring and integrating potential trainees and the associated fields of action. In addition, training companies should also be made aware of a desire for openness on the part of employees to undergo further training (including intercultural skills training).
 - The framework for cooperation between the participating institution and the training company should be defined in a written agreement.³

³For details see the chapter "Training company".

Define needs and offer: Training company needs and training opportunities should be collected at an early stage and considered when planning the training program.

The participating institution sends a checklist or questionnaire to the companies at the end of preliminary discussions with the help of which they prepare a detailed offer of training spots for future trainees. This checklist should, among other things, collect information on the following aspects :

- Company (e.g. company accessibility, vocational school and place of residence)
- Specific training slot profile
- Specific profile requirements for trainees (e.g. health questions, driving license, certificate of good conduct)⁴
- Training allowance (based on the level customary in the sector or at least in the locality; this can be obtained, for example, from the relevant chamber or the training allowance database of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)⁵

Recruit and inform other partners

Integrate regional institutions: Regional practice (among others from politics, administration, cultural institutions) who play a central role in vocational training and labor market integration should be informed about the objectives and contents of the training program (see also the chapter "Regional cooperation"). This can be done through press work, events, committee work, and informal contacts.

Recruit volunteer supporters: In addition, additional cooperation partners should be recruited as part of the training program to support the trainees in their everyday lives. These include (language) tandem partners (e.g. students, school children, former professionals from the chosen profession), host families as well as regional institutions such as sports clubs, other companies, the local police and public transport which all make it easier for the trainees to settle into the respective region. They should be contacted and recruited personally.

Parental involvement: Involving the parents of potential trainees and trainees from abroad is a particularly important factor for a successful vocational training program. Commitment on the part of future trainees and trainees often stands and falls with the attitude of their parents regarding the training program. For this reason, the importance of actively addressing parents and responding to the concerns, questions and worries of parents whose children intend or are completing vocational training in another country should not be underestimated when implementing a training program.⁶ Practice has shown that parents who have confidence in the project and its participants encourage their children to be committed and persevere even in times of crisis, whereas parents who cannot relate to the project and the education of their children in Germany often try to persuade their children to return. Parental involvement is therefore essential and should be considered and included as an aspect of successful vocational training.

⁴ For details see chapter "Preparation in Germany, internships and matching" (subchapter: "Matching in cooperation with training companies").

⁵ For further information see <https://www.bibb.de/de/12209.php>.

⁶ However, it must be noted that in the case of potential trainees or trainees who are adults, it is important that they themselves agree to the involvement of their parents.





BEST PRACTICE 1:

SHARING EXPERIENCES BETWEEN TRAINING COMPANIES

Implementing Institution:

The best practice example comes from the Deutsche Angestellten-Akademie GmbH (DAA), which implemented five projects as part of the MobiPro-EU special program and has continued to refine them on the basis of its experience.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2016:68ff., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Training companies that are interested and committed and willing to intensively prepare for the tasks ahead are needed to train young people from other countries of origin. First and foremost, this includes a realistic description of the processes and possible challenges that may arise in the course of this joint project. In many cases, theoretical reports cannot adequately replace practical experience. For this reason, the use of peer-to-peer approaches when describing experiences, not only for potential trainees, but also for companies and other cooperation partners, is advisable.



OBJECTIVE:

This best practice example based on networking serves to optimize company recruiting and – in a later phase of the training project – matching between training companies and potential trainees. In the long term, this will create conditions for successful vocational training.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

Partner companies that were already cooperation partners of the participating institution before the training project, and that successfully collaborate with it in the vocational training of young people from other countries of origin, play a central role. These long-standing partners support the participating institution by acting as multipliers for other companies interested in the training program. They agree to report their experiences with trainees to other companies in the form of a presentation and to persuade these companies to participate in the training program as well. Contacts to trade guilds and information events are used primarily for this purpose. At these events, relevant questions can be clarified, and challenges can be discussed and communicated authentically. The response from companies that have not been involved so far has been positive if the speakers are trusted representatives who can assess the opportunities and risks ably and have an overview of regional conditions.

The participating institution holds information events with companies at a variety of locations which are coordinated centrally by a cooperation partner (e.g. trade chamber). Training companies are specifically invited to these events which correspond to the career aspirations of potential trainees who have already been recruited. In this way, both companies interested in offering vocational training and potential trainees can be recruited and matched exactly.

The respective interests of the future trainees and training companies are compared during this process and are the focus of the recruitment of trainees. The vocational training wishes of potential trainees can be matched precisely to offers at the various training companies.

It is of central importance here that potential trainees are not recruited on the basis of the needs of companies alone, so that they do not run the risk of persuading potential trainees into pursuing a vocation with a shortage of trainees instead of reacting to their actual interests.

In addition, the fact that companies interested in the project receive information from companies with previous experience in this field makes it possible to convey a very authentic impression. In this context, an affinity for the subject matter shared by the companies involved in the project and potential training companies they are trying to recruit, and the equal standing enjoyed by colleagues from all of the companies who are advocating the program, are of particular importance. The standing enjoyed by companies already working with the target group grows along with the number of institutions that are aware of this work and the challenges associated with it. At the same time, the standing of the pioneering companies increases the desire on the part of companies that have not yet participated to take on the challenges of such a project and to gain valuable experience in the process. Enthusiastic trainees and companies, strong and long-term ties between all participants and their common experiences, strengthen the level of trust between all parties involved in implementation. This can also be the decisive factor in convincing those who have not been involved to take the plunge. It's possible to create a snowball effect.

CONCLUSION:

This best-practice example can be applied in different contexts. It explicitly addresses the interests of both companies and potential trainees and thus contributes to the satisfaction of everyone involved and to a successful training experience.

In this approach, the topic of attracting trainees from abroad, which tends to be a challenging one, appears simpler, more feasible and profitable to interested companies. At the same time, they can get a realistic idea of the opportunities and risks associated with the program by dealing openly with possible challenges. In this manner, they are not just being recruited but become believers over the long term.



BEST PRACTICE 2:

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Implementing Institution:

This best practice example comes from PractiGo GmbH, which implemented four projects as part of the MobiPro-EU special program and established an effective instrument for involving parents of potential trainees and trainees by basing its approach on working with parents.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2017: 84ff., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Separation from their families and the unfamiliar environment often present particular challenges to the trainees. Family members in the countries of origin also often suffer from the separation. In some cases, this leads parents to encourage their children to return home instead of supporting them as they seek training and education. They may exert a strong influence over the trainees which runs contrary to successful training.



OBJECTIVE:

The parental involvement approach is intended to convey the added value of vocational training and a training qualification in Germany to the parents of potential trainees and trainees throughout the entire training program and to help them to deal with, and provide support for, their concerns and worries about their children. This approach creates confidence in the vocational training of their children and the participating institution. Parents can thus provide support so that the trainees can successfully complete their program.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

Parental involvement has two main focal points. First, there are the parent evenings, at which parents are given information about vocational training and the care of their children in Germany in order to be able to appreciate and understand the added value of the training and the value of the entire program for the professional future of their children. Second, through ongoing contact maintenance, a bond and a close relationship between the parents and the accompanying institution can be created in order to ensure that parents encourage their children to continue their education even when they experience difficult times during vocational training in Germany.

All measures regarding the parents presupposes either the consent of trainees or potential trainees or that they are minors.



FOCAL POINT 1:

This is the parents' evening. They are held in the country of origin (usually even before the start of the language course) before the training phase and over a period of time in the country of origin or in Germany.

The **first parents' evening before or during the language course in the country of origin** provides information on the following aspects:

- Purpose, content, and scope of dual vocational training in Germany
- Information about the training companies
- Financial aspects, training salary (including information on net and gross salaries in Germany and the taxes required to be able to make a realistic assessment of the trainees' real financial resources)
- Relevance of language and the language acquisition process
- Support or care options
- Trips home, leisure activities, housing, destination region
- Future prospects in Germany and in the country of origin

The **second parents' evening after the first year of training** provides information about the following points:

- Recap of the purpose, content, and scope of dual vocational training in Germany and training wages
- Professional, linguistic, and social progress of the trainees (including challenges and achievements)
- Photos and reports of shared activities and any special events
- Opportunities for exchange (including guided exchanges) among the parents themselves
- Opportunity to clarify open questions

Parents' evenings are held twice (possibly more frequently) during the course of the training program. As a rule, the first parents' evening in the country of origin should be held at a location where the journey is as short as possible. The second parents' evening can be held in the country of origin (this is easier to plan and implement) but could also be held in Germany in the respective destination region of the trainees. In this case, this must be planned very far in advance. In addition, adequate and suitable alternatives must be offered for those parents who cannot attend the parents' evening in Germany.

FOCAL POINT 2:

Continuous contact with parents throughout the entire training period can support a successful training program, e.g. through:

- Tailored, personalized contacts between the participating institution and the parents (e.g. in the form of e-mails, Skype and telephone conversations, invitations to the parents to visit the participating institution during stays in Germany, possibly visits to the country of origin) and
- Regular information from the participating institution to all parents of supported trainees (e.g. by providing newsletters and digital exchange forums).

Organized parental involvement based on the two parallel and interlocking focal points described above can strengthen the perseverance of the trainees because the parents provide motivation and can provide answers to questions. Parents can support positive progress throughout the entire training program by posing leading questions, talking about the benefits for professional future as well as their own excitement, and by providing support should the trainees experience any doubts.

CONCLUSION:

Many trainees in Germany are still very young when they start training and were still living with their parents until they started their training program. Accordingly, parents play an important role in their lives and have a great influence on decisions about future planning. Involving parents in successfully implementing their children's vocational training has therefore proved to be very beneficial for the successful completion of training programs.

3.2.2 PHASE 2: PREPARATION IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The linguistic, cultural and training-related preparation of potential trainees in their country of origin is primarily carried out by partner language schools of the participating institutions. The following recommendations for action provide information on collaborating with language schools in the country of origin and on working with future trainees during this second phase.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Preparing potential trainees

Most of the preparation of potential trainees takes place in the respective countries of origin within the scope of language courses completed in the respective countries of origin. In this context, the focus is on three essential points:

- Language acquisition¹ (including technical vocabulary as applicable)
- Familiarization with the dual vocational training system in Germany and ideally the desired vocational field as well as legal and organizational questions
- Life in Germany and the region

An intensive language course is required in the country of origin if the future trainees do not have any knowledge of German. The participating institution ensures that such intensive language courses are available locally. If this is not feasible without great expenditure, especially in areas with weak infrastructure, blended learning, a combination of online and in-person learning, offers itself as an alternative language course concept (see Best Practice 3).

Practice shows that at least 600 teaching units are required to pass the B1 language test within the frame-

work of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages² (CEFR) and to start an internship in Germany ahead of vocational training. Accordingly, potential trainees take a certified B1 language examination at the end of the language course in their country of origin. In order to reach this objective, the participating institution monitors the progress of the students by means of intermediate examinations that apply different methodologies.

Following the internship and during the course of training, further language acquisition should be ensured ideally up to C1 level, but at least B2, in order to ensure successful vocational training.

Teaching units on the dual vocational training system in Germany should be offered in a variety of ways within the framework of the language course in the country of origin. This should also include information on attending vocational schools and on day-to-day work in the training company, as well as on the rights and obligations of trainees and training companies. It is also possible that the participating institution – potentially with representatives of training companies and/or other relevant parties – visits the language school in the students' country of origin and presents clear, practical units of vocational training to the students. Students gain a realistic impression at an early stage of what the desired training occupation offers and demands through the involvement of trainers and the use of descriptive (teaching) materials on training companies and occupations. In this way, any change in focus that might be necessary can be done at an early stage and time is available to look for a new, appropriate training company or occupation for the student.

In addition to lessons focused on learning and working, time should be spent learning about life in Germany and in the specific regions that are relevant. Potential trainees, especially those who are going from big cities to small towns or rural areas, often

¹ Further recommendations for action, some of which apply to all phases of language acquisition, are discussed in detail in the chapter "Language."

² See <http://www.europaecher-referenzrahmen.de/sprachniveau.php>.



lack an adequate understanding of the logistical and everyday challenges they can and will face. Raising awareness of these challenges, realistic preparation for everyday life, and information about social and cultural offers in the destination region can save potential trainees from disappointment and facilitate their integration in Germany. Nevertheless, challenges for students must be expected; for example, homesickness, loneliness, language difficulties, and feeling overwhelmed. The participating institutions and their partners can take appropriate actions to help trainees face these challenges.

Cooperation with language schools

The language schools in the country of origin should be appropriately capable of preparing potential trainees. If the partner language school has the necessary experience and skills regarding its teachers but has no specialist knowledge with regard to the thematic aspects mentioned, the alternative paths listed below must be developed for those interested in training to come to terms with Germany, the dual training system, and everyday life.

Cooperation with training companies

The relevant information (e.g. on dual training) can be provided by the participating institution itself or by cooperation partners from training companies

and other experts. In this case, they travel to the country of origin of potential trainees in order to familiarize the learners with the topics in intensive teaching units. This also helps them to get to know each other better. Alternatives such as webinars may be considered if this is not possible.

Since the training companies generally have a great interest in getting to know their future trainees at an early stage and gaining impressions of their motivation and background, the involvement of these cooperation partners through on-site visits can also prove to be useful in this respect. In order to introduce themselves to their future training companies, potential trainees can also use their language courses to create presentations or introductory videos, which serve both the language acquisition of those interested in training and offers a chance for a first acquaintance (see Best Practice 4).

Preparing for social integration in the country of origin

Social integration begins even before the future trainees arrive. A contact person from the participating institution – preferably with native language level skills in the language of the potential trainees' country of origin – who is available for questions and concerns is designated to them early on.



BEST PRACTICE 3:

BLENDED LEARNING IN LANGUAGE COURSES IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Implementing Institution:

The best practice example comes from the dialoge sprachinstitut, which has developed and implemented projects focusing on blended learning as part of the MobiPro-EU special program.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2016:52ff., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Potential trainees in rural areas are confronted with additional challenges in their countries of origin (and later in Germany as well). They have poor mobility options due to the sometimes limited or non-existent availability of public transport or the need to make very long journeys. However, mobility is key to participation in language courses. A blended learning method can largely compensate for this deficit – at least during the language course phase in the country of origin. Blended learning can also be used to save time and money even in areas where the infrastructure is good.



OBJECTIVE:

Potential trainees should receive language training in their country of origin which enables them to achieve at least a B1 of the CEFR language level. This level is the basis for a successful start and progress of vocational training in Germany. This permits potential trainees in regions where language courses are not offered, or anyone else facing mobility limitations for various reasons, to participate in a language course as preparation for their vocational training.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

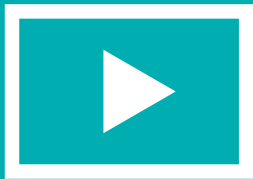
Using the blended learning method, future trainees are given the opportunity to take part in language lessons in their country of origin, for the most part independently of their location. Equipped with special learning software and equipment (e.g. headset, computer with stable Internet access), future trainees follow the lessons being taught by their language teacher in a virtual classroom. This is also referred to as “synchronous teaching”. They actively participate in the lessons, join in exercises and communicate with the teacher and fellow students from different countries. This permits groups to be grouped by language level and not necessarily by country of origin. This enables learners to use their German language skills in communication with fellow students from other countries of origin. They also have contact with other students before they arrive in Germany. These social contacts have a positive effect on the later progress of internships and vocational training.

Blended learning means combining online and face-to-face learning in a beneficial way. Every six weeks, for example, an in-person week is held at a location that is as central as possible, where the learners meet each other and the teacher. These weeks permit relationships to be established or deepened. Furthermore, the regular language level exams are taken during these weeks, so that students' learning progress can be continuously recorded and, if necessary, any needs may be quickly addressed. During the in-person weeks, contact may be established with future contact persons in Germany who may also inform students about questions of vocational training, place of residence, and other topics.

It is also possible to continue blended learning during the internship and vocational training phases. In light of the absence of travel times, this makes it easier to find time slots for language courses, especially in rural areas and in jobs that involve shiftwork.

CONCLUSION:

Assuming a language course provider experienced in online learning is available, this form of learning is a good alternative to traditional teaching formats and can be applied to almost any other conceivable language learning context in which students have a good Internet connection available to them.



BEST PRACTICE 4:

INTRODUCTION VIDEOS AS PART OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Implementing Institution:

In cooperation with its partners Confederaci3n Vallisoletana de Empresarios and Eurocultura srl, the bbw Akademie für Betriebswirtschaftliche Weiterbildung GmbH ("bbw Akademie") developed and implemented this best practice example as part of the MobiPro-EU special program.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2016:49ff., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Since training companies interested in recruiting trainees often do not have the time or financial resources to travel to potential trainees' country of origin, it is often not possible for them to meet personally before the start of the internship in Germany. This circumstance has several disadvantages: (a) the training companies cannot participate in the preselection of their potential trainees and cannot build up any ties; (b) if it turns out upon the arrival of the potential trainees that they do not fit into the company, the company has to find new trainees at short notice or new companies have to be found for the future trainees; (c) potential trainees cannot build up early ties and identification with the company, which increases the risk of abandoning their internship or vocational training. The following best practice example works to counter at least the first two disadvantages (a and b).



OBJECTIVE:

Introductory videos included in the application enable the participating companies to gain an impression of the future trainees. Professionally recorded introduction videos may be produced as part of the language course in the country of origin, with the help of which interested companies are provided with a brief, personal impression of the potential trainees. This permits a firmer decision to be made for or against the potential trainees. In addition, preparation for the videos offers students an in-depth opportunity to actively use their German language skills and learn about their chosen future training occupation.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

In addition to regular language acquisition during language courses, potential trainees participate in the creation of their introductory videos in their country of origin. It is essential that the resulting videos are professionally shot so that the students can present themselves credibly and in a good light. First of all, this requires extensive support from the language school during rehearsals. Second, preparation for the video shoot includes shared work on the content of the video presentation with the students and a detailed schedule which may vary by individual. Experience shows that students must receive extensive support for this task and that there must always be someone available to answer questions. Content preparation is based on ideas provided by the students. Once the sequence and content have been determined, they prepare their presentations individually. It is not a question of authentically representing the language level; students can memorize their texts which are presented in German (or other foreign languages). The focus is on giving students the opportunity to make a positive, personal, and meaningful impression of themselves.

If possible, a studio should be available for the shoot in order to guarantee adequate sound and picture quality. The resulting videos for presentation to the potential training companies are usually two to three minutes long. Potential trainees report on their school and vocational qualifications, their motivation for the desired training occupation, and on other skills and interests. Foreign language skills are also presented in short passages. If the potential

trainees agree (compliance with data protection rules), the name, age and place of origin of the person in the video will be displayed in writing. The most important sections of the videos (e.g. school and vocational training, family, hobbies, personal motto) can also be faded in for a better understanding and thus provide an organizational structure for the video.

The videos are professionally edited after the video is shot. The potential training companies receive the link to the introductory videos by e-mail together with the students' application documents. The companies then review all the materials provided to them and provide feedback to the participating institution on their assessment of the applicant and whether they are interested in an applicant for an internship and subsequent training. In the case of well-founded rejections, another application from a potential trainee can be provided to the company.

Matching is made easier by involving the companies in this process as they have a better basis for awarding an internship even without an in-person meeting. The process described above is cheaper than company staff traveling to the potential trainees' country of origin. For the trainees themselves, creating the videos is an important part of their language-related and personal preparation for the training period in Germany. As a result, they are examining the requirements of the respective company in-depth at an early stage and actively using their German skills. As a rule, potential trainees are very ambitious about obtaining particularly good results. The creation of such an introductory video is a real test of one's own language skills and impact, and thus an important experience that other future trainees often do not have until their arrival in Germany for the internship phase.

CONCLUSION:

Introductory videos are a good alternative if an in-person meeting is not possible before the start of the internship. They supplement the purely written application. The potential training companies can get a first impression of the language skills and especially the appearance of the applicant. Experience has shown that professionally recorded and edited videos in particular improve the applicant's chances. The matching processes are facilitated by the (virtual) inclusion of the companies in the selection process. Of course, the videos do not replace a personal meeting, but can have a very positive impact, nonetheless. The best practice example using introductory videos in the context of the application process can be implemented almost everywhere, regardless of the students' country of origin, the region or the potential training occupations.

3.2.3 PHASE 3: PREPARATION IN GERMANY, INTERNSHIPS AND MATCHING



Following the first two phases, which take place in the country of origin of potential trainees, the third phase of the training program takes place in Germany. First of all, focus is now placed on making the best

**Matching: Brings
training companies
and potential trainees
together**

possible match between potential trainees and training companies (if not already done in the countries of origin). Second, an internship of several weeks is completed during this period, during which potential training companies and trainees can get to know each other better with a view to a later training program.

After their arrival in Germany, future trainees must overcome organizational, bureaucratic and social hurdles as well as linguistic ones. Participating institutions, the language schools involved and the training companies in the target region can all support learners in a variety of ways in order to overcome these initial challenges in Germany.

At the same time, not only potential trainees, but also the partners, and above all internship companies and potential training companies, should be well-prepared for this phase and have been given instruction for their time together with their future trainees.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Arrival preparation and first steps in Germany

Preparing for arrival: In cooperation with the internship or training companies, the participating institution should ensure adequate preparation for the arrival of potential trainees in Germany. This includes the following aspects:

- The arrival of potential trainees must be prepared, organized, and a schedule for the first few days planned accordingly.
- Appropriate and sufficient accommodation should be available even prior to arrival of the potential trainee and the internship company.
- The training company needs to name a specific contact person, a mentor in the company, or responsible person at the company.
- The participating institutions must ensure that potential trainees are enrolled in statutory health insurance on time.
- If children are accompanying the trainee, childcare should be supported by the participating institution (in advance as appropriate).

Providing welcome packages: On arrival, the participating institutions should provide future trainees with welcome packages that contain a list of contact persons, their contact details and address as well as important aspects of living and working in Germany:

- Health and social security insurance in Germany (especially with regard to differences between gross and net salaries)
- Characteristic features of the region
- Cultural and other (leisure) options
- Housing, tenancy law and all resulting rights and obligations

Assistance in dealing with authorities and initial important information after arrival:

The participating institutions support potential trainees after their arrival when dealing with authorities and other formal requirements as well as with their initial orientation. This includes at a minimum:

- A contact person who is a native speaker
- Information on compulsory contributions (e.g. television license fees) and assistance with obligatory administrative procedures (e.g. registration of residence)
- Information on leisure and shopping facilities as well as access to medical facilities

Matching in cooperation with training companies

Selection process: An essential condition for matching that is successful over the long term is comprehensive participation of the respective companies in the selection process and their early involvement.

Timely comparison of expectations: The expectations of training companies and potential trainees should be compared in the run-up to internships and vocational training. To this end, information on the world of work at the training companies and in the workplace environment should be shared.

Skills and requirement profiles for potential trainees:

The participating institutions should compile profiles of potential trainees which should include the following:

- Complete application documents, including curriculum vitae (in Europass¹ format) and school report cards
- Information on school and work experience, career aspirations, health restrictions (only with regard to suitability for work) and, if applicable, legal admission requirements (e.g. certificates of good conduct)

¹ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/editors/de/cv/compose> (last checked on 09/18/2018).

All documents are to be translated into German if possible before being sent to the companies. In addition, trainees can develop alternative forms of introduction during the language courses (e.g. introduction videos²), which are sent to the companies during the matching process at the latest.

Perfect Matching: In order to match potential trainees and training companies as closely as possible, it is important not only to compare expectations at an early stage but also to compare the skills profiles of potential trainees with the requirement profiles of the companies.

Consideration of desires/expectations when selecting destination: A further criterion to be taken into account for successful matching is the comparison of characteristics of the region of origin and the target region (e.g. city/country, regional industries, regional migrant communities). For example, it should be discussed in advance whether a potential trainee from an urban area could imagine having their internship/training program in a rural region. Negative reactions on the part of potential trainees should be taken seriously as there is otherwise a risk of disappointment and/or dropouts.

Participation in interviews: The participating institutions should encourage the companies to participate personally in the selection process for potential trainees (e.g. in conversations via Skype (before arrival in Germany) or in conversations on site).

Skills development for staff and partners

Intercultural skills development among key actors:

The participating institutions should offer appropriate measures (e.g. training and counseling) to assist the following parties in the development of their intercultural skills during the preparation and implementation of the training program:

- Potential trainees and employees of the participating institutions
- Employees and management at training companies
- Teachers and administrators at vocational schools
- Specialists in socio-educational support
- Employees at other participating institutions (e.g. chambers, municipalities)

External training and counseling services such as the network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)" should also be used.

Clarification of duties between educational partners regarding of knowledge transfer:

In the run-up to the training program, partners who will be involved in the educational aspects of the training program (e.g. language schools and socio-pedagogical support providers) should coordinate their respective areas of responsibility and the content and scope of their respective knowledge transfer in detail. If, for example, language schools are also to provide information on living and working in Germany or the specific destination region as well as information about the personal, social, and vocational training requirements of training companies and vocational schools within the framework of German language courses, this should be discussed in detail at an early stage between the participating institution and the language schools.

² See Best Practice 5.



PROFILE

Tamara

"I completed the standard training with the final mark of 'good' and am now helping my trainer with the trainees [...] I want to complete my Higher Apprenticeship Training and then I will also work there as a trainer and pastry chef [...]."

Country of origin: Spain
Training profession: Pastry chef
Training program in the federal state of: Bavaria

Training program supported by MobiPro-EU project provider:
 BBZ Berufsbildungszentrum Augsburg der Lehmbaugruppe gGmbH

Motivation for seeking vocational training:

- Lack of career prospects in the country of origin
- Desire to make my hobby my profession

Career path (Germany):

- Vocational training completed early (September 2015 to August 2017)
- Hired by the training company Landbäckerei Ihle GmbH
- Now deputy training instructor for pastry chefs
- Attending technical mastery school since February 2018



BEST PRACTICE 5:

HOST FAMILIES

Implementing Institution:

This best practice example comes from the Caritasverband Hannover e. V., which has implemented numerous projects as part of the MobiPro-EU special program. It created a solid foundation for successful training outcomes using the host family approach.



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Before commencing vocational training, potential trainees should complete an internship of several weeks in the relevant occupational field in order to gain practical insights into their potential training occupation. Other forms of accommodation must be found if it is not possible to sign a lease for this relatively short period due to the tight housing market and high rents in many places. Cooperation with suitable host families is an alternative form of housing that also provides support to potential trainees in creating and expanding a social network. Suitable host families should be carefully selected and prepared.



OBJECTIVE:

Early contact with resource persons at the location of the internship can help potential trainees to find their way more quickly in their new environment, to learn the language better and to learn more about life in Germany and the region. Host families and their social network can also give potential trainees a feeling of security and support when faced with challenges during their internships. This can also promote good social integration and create a connection to the region in the medium and long term.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

During the internship phase, potential trainees usually do not have an income that would allow them to pay high rents or to furnish apartments. At the same time, it is hardly possible for them to find furnished living space or a room in a shared apartment for the short length of the internship. It is not until the internship has been completed that a decision is made regarding the training place and thus where the trainee should live. Acceptance of potential trainees by host families is therefore an alternative to living on their own, especially for the first few months in Germany, i.e. for the length of the internship and potentially for the subsequent training program. Compared with accommodation in a shared apartment with trainees of same language background, accommodation with a local host family can also be more effective in helping trainees acquire language skills and integrate into the region. It thus facilitates making a connection to the new environment. But for the host families as well, this can mean new points of view and a hitherto unknown exchange of ideas and experiences can also arise.

Nevertheless, host families and potential trainees should always have access to a point of contact at the participating institution in order to provide support and mediate in the event of communication difficulties, disagreements, or misunderstandings.

Making use of various channels is advisable for the acquisition of suitable host families. Potential host families may be informed of the need via local newspapers or articles in local newsletters. The public and, if necessary, media-driven support for the training program, e.g. in urban society or the municipalities, as well as information evenings sponsored by the participating institutions and, if necessary, their partners, as well as recommendations by host families who are already involved, make it possible to recruit additional interested and suitable host families.

Experience reports and training courses on intercultural competencies also make it easier for them to deal with possible challenges.

Regular discussions and/or surveys of host families and potential trainees should be held in order to continuously optimize work with the host families.

CONCLUSION:

In regions with a tight housing market, and in light of its benefits in the area of integration, the host family concept is particularly suitable for supporting potential trainees during the internship phase and the first months of training, as it facilitates "arriving" in Germany. The host family concept can thus create an important foundation for the integration of trainees and a successful training program.

3.2.4 KEY TOPIC: LANGUAGE

Language as a central topic for integration, coping with everyday life and vocational training

Learning German is a great challenge for young people from abroad who are completing their vocational training in Germany and at the same time represents one of the most important basic prerequisites for successful vocational training and a successful vocational qualification. Language is a central topic and also influences all fields of daily life beyond the actual vocational training. Social integration, coping with everyday life, including communication with authorities, insurance companies and health institutions, advancement in the workplace and in vocational schools as well as coping with temporary crises depend to a large extent on a command of the German language. Other factors that can have an inhibitory effect on the course of training – such as examination anxiety – are also often linked to language barriers. For this reason, the language competency of trainees and potential trainees must always be improved individually and in accordance with their needs at every stage of vocational training. It should be noted that the language level of the trainees at the start of their vocational training in Germany should at least correspond to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Strengthening German language skills should also be continuously supported by various measures during vocational training.

The following recommendations for action provide information on specific requirements and support measures that contribute to successful language development among trainees and potential trainees. These recommendations for action are presented here based on the individual phases of language acquisition and also refer to key topics. They address both the prerequisites and the requirements for language acquisition by trainees in their country of origin and during the internship and training phases in Germany. The recommendations for action refer to the relevant parties, how they can be involved in implementation, how cooperation between them can take place, which conditions the learning environment should fulfil and which learning methods are possible.

The chapter closes with an example of a best practice developed and applied in the context of the MobiPro-EU special program project.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

General recommendations for action – Language

The general recommendations for action related to language are relevant for all phases of language acquisition during training (language course in the country of origin, internship in Germany, vocational training) and should be applied during these phases as far as possible.

Language course length: Language support for (future) trainees should be provided during the entire preparation and training period and should be flexibly adapted to the individual level of the trainees in terms of methodology and didactics.

Language level: In order to ensure that a language level appropriate to the training requirements of the trainees and potential trainees is achieved, language level B1 should be reached at the beginning of the training and CEFR language level B2 should be reached by the intermediate examination or the end of the second year of training. Depending on job-specific requirements, language level C1 should ideally be aspired to by the time the final vocational examination is taken.

Parameters for language courses:

- The number of participants should not exceed 15 persons per language course group.
- Language courses must be held in suitably large rooms with daylight.
- The technical equipment must be appropriate to the learning objectives.
- A break room for the trainees should be immediately accessible.

- The professional qualification of the teachers for German as a Second Language (DaZ) or German as a Foreign Language (DaF) should be verified.
- Language teachers should be able to demonstrate that they regularly participate in professional training.
- Teaching is based on approved textbooks.
- Methodology and curriculum must be established before the start of the language course.
- All parties should keep themselves regularly informed about language levels and any problems on the part of trainees and intervene as quickly as possible if needed.

Digital offers: In addition to language courses, the use of (free) learning apps from textbook publishers or online language learning offers¹ is recommended.

Differentiated language promotion: Vocational language support can be provided, preferably in small groups (recommendation: fewer than ten participants) in order to enable trainees and potential trainees to receive additional language support. These groups should also be as differentiated as possible according to language level, regions and sectors.

Asynchronous exercises: In the case of online language courses, asynchronous (i.e. flexibly timed) exercises are recommended in addition to required in-person lessons. These exercises are made available for use by the tutor and then sent back to the students with corrections and comments.

¹ Recommended among others: www.goethe.de/de/spr/kup.html.

Promoting German language skills in the country of origin

Having potential trainees take an in-depth language course in German before they leave their country of origin in preparation is recommended (see chapter “Preparation in the country of origin”). The following criteria should be observed for ideal implementation of student preparation:

Suitability of the language school and language teachers:

At least one visit on site by participating institutions is desirable in order to check the suitability of the language school and the language teachers for language courses in the country of origin (see above “Parameters for language courses”).

Cooperation by participating parties: The respective responsibilities of the language school and the participating institution should be set out in a cooperation agreement in order to guarantee commitment and a clear division of tasks.

Feedback: In order to ensure that students can successfully complete the language course in their country of origin, the language school is obliged to give feedback to the participating institution in Germany every two weeks. Attendance lists signed by the students must be kept by the language school for this purpose.

Absences: Entering into an agreement with the language school according to which the participating institution in Germany is informed if students at a language school have absences of more than 20% during a period agreed with the school is advisable.

Proficiency level: The students’ proficiency level must be communicated by the language school to the participating institution at least every four weeks (e.g. in the form of test results or development reports).

Standardized test procedures: The participating institution should inform the language course providers in the country of origin of the necessity of using the test procedures from telc or the Goethe Institute as stand-

ardized procedures for evaluating the language skills of students. It is also possible to have the exams taken in Germany or accepted by the participating institution or an external language course provider. Additional specific training requirements should be taken into account (regulated professions, e.g. nursing).

Sharing information: In order to ensure that sufficient information about vocational training and social integration in Germany is available in the country of origin and that such information is correct, the participating institution should provide language course teachers with targeted and understandable informational materials.

Quality assurance: In order to control the quality of the language courses, having participating institutions visit the language schools during a language course and/or permit its own employees to attend examinations or observe lessons is advisable.

Curriculum: It is advisable for language schools to define their methodology and curriculum prior to the start of language courses in the country of origin and that they submit them to the participating institution in Germany. The curriculum should also include topics such as the dual vocational training system and the labor market in Germany, job descriptions, and general regional studies.

Active use: As part of the language courses, practical methods should be employed to encourage active use on the part of the students (e.g. learning partners, project lessons, small group work).²

Methodology: The participating institution in Germany should review the methodology and content of language courses proposed by the language school in the country of origin and modify them as necessary.

Language teaching materials: The participating institution in Germany can recommend standardized language teaching materials to the language schools in the country of origin. The list of textbooks for BAMF integration courses³ can be used for this purpose.

² Information about this can be found under the following link: <https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/unt/for/dll.html>.

³ See <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Lehrkraefte/liste-zugelassener-lehrwerke.html>.

Blended Learning: Course formats that are based on the principle of blended learning (cf. also Best Practices 3), i.e. switching between in-person and online phases, are recommended.

Personal meetings: Ideally, an online phase should be preceded by a face-to-face meeting, which serves as an organizational and content start, contains a technical introduction to the corresponding virtual instruments, promotes getting to know one another and facilitates social dynamics of the trainees among themselves.

Virtual classroom: The online phases must be designed as synchronous meetings (online live sessions in a virtual classroom) in which the language elements to be learned can be practiced, reinforced and applied in a cooperative and active manner.

Role of tutors: Constant supervision by a tutor is indispensable to the successful implementation of digital learning offers; students must be individually supported and motivated.

Recommendations for action for language acquisition during the internship and vocational training phases

Before the start of vocational training, potential trainees should complete an internship of up to eight weeks in the desired occupational field and, if possible, at the desired training company. This internship can provide information as to whether the choice of occupation or company was the right one and promote the transition to vocational training.

Commitment: It is generally recommended that all relevant project participants (including participating institutions, training companies, language schools and vocational schools) as well as chambers of commerce participate regularly and are committed to participating in meetings and agreements concerning language acquisition by the trainees from the start of their collaboration.

Fixed-point contact: The participating institution should work to ensure that there is a contact person at the vocational school who can contact trainees, language teachers, and the participating institutions with regard to language matters if necessary.

Enable participation in language courses: The companies should be persuaded to allow trainees to attend compulsory language courses. Giving trainees time-off during working hours is desirable.

Advance notice to companies and vocational schools: Companies and vocational schools, as well as their employees, must be prepared for the linguistic particularities of potential non-native-speaking trainees. Among other things, it is imperative for participating institutions to notify the respective company of language course hours.

Information about language competence: At the beginning of the internship or vocational training, companies should be given a realistic assessment of the language level of potential trainees or trainees.

Sorting students in language courses: The participating institutions should try, where possible, to sort students attending language course according to their level of proficiency, sectors, and regions.

Language learning in teaching blocks: Language teaching should be concentrated into teaching blocks in order to improve concentration on the part of trainees.

Language teaching qualification: Language teachers should be able to provide verification of either qualification as a German teacher or a comparable qualification with teaching experience. Language teachers should be required to participate regularly in professional training.

Advanced training: For the benefit of integrated language and vocational learning, teachers with relevant professional experience (e.g. former teachers from vocational schools, training staff, specialist teachers) should be trained and deployed as language teachers for the language requirements of vocational training and internships.

Native speakers in the profession: Including native speaking professionals from the trainees' country of origin in language classes for trainees is advisable.

Individual language coaching/Tandems: Tandems should be formed as an option for language promotion outside language courses, for example, between trainees and students, other vocational school students, or senior citizens with appropriate professional experience.

Early consideration of technical vocabulary: At the beginning of the internship or vocational training at the latest, the language teacher should visit the training company with the aim of aligning the content of the language course with the (technical) language requirements faced by trainees during their internships and vocational training.⁴

The following topics should be queried during these visits at a minimum:

- Language requirements at the company for the trainees (e.g. customer contact)
- Job- and company-specific topics.



Vocational language teaching: The internship phase should be accompanied by vocational language training.

Trial days: The participating institutions arrange trial days in the intended vocational schools before the start of training, especially for those interested in training, in order to give them an impression of the language requirements at the vocational schools.

Integrated vocational and language learning: Team teaching by language teachers and vocational lecturers should be used intermittently during the training phase (and optionally the internship phase) in order to ensure the link between vocational and language learning.

⁴ For details, see https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/IQ_Publications/Theme_Language_education/Broschuere_Sprachbedarfsermittlung_2012.pdf.



PROFILE

Daniel

“Language skills are essential in a foreign country. Especially during the first year of training, you need to learn very intensively including on your own of course [...].”

Country of origin: Spain
Training profession: Retail salesman
Training program in the federal state of: Saxony-Anhalt

Training program supported by MobiPro-EU project provider:
 IMA – Institut für Marktwirtschaft gGmbH

Motivation for seeking vocational training:

- Lack of career prospects in the country of origin
- Desire for a new start professionally

Career path (Germany):

- Vocational training certificate as the best graduate of his class and professional field
- Hired by the training company Karstadt Magdeburg
- Nomination for the European Training Alliance Award 2017 of the European Union, which recognizes trainees who have achieved very good and good marks in theory and practice during their vocational training abroad and who have also successfully integrated themselves in the host country during their stay, thus contributing to international understanding.



BEST PRACTICE 6:

ESTABLISHING A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Implementing Institution:

Liebenau Berufsbildungswerk gGmbH implemented and refined the learning management system as part of its MobiPro-EU projects.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2016:55ff., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Trainees who are new to Germany have to learn the language and integrate themselves socially in addition to learning their trade. As a result, the trainees and the participating institution are often faced with the challenge that the time available for learning the language and vocational training is actually limited. Long journeys to language courses or private tuition as well as to other additional courses (especially in rural areas) can be time-consuming and pose a financial burden to trainees.



OBJECTIVES:

Establishing the Learning Management System (LMS) will facilitate learning for trainees in Germany, especially in rural areas. In addition, travel costs and times for private lessons, language courses, etc. for the trainees can be reduced. As a result, this example is pursuing a similar objective to that of the example of blended learning presented on the subject of preparation in the country of origin¹: Facilitating the communication of educational content to trainees in rural regions. While the special learning software for blended learning is initially used primarily (but not exclusively) in the country of origin, the LMS is mainly used in the German training region.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

The LMS made available to the learners is based on the open source software ILIAS. This serves, among other things, to structure vocational school content, provide information on preparing for life and training in Germany, language course content as well as leisure information and to make this available to all trainees. In particular, it seeks to equalize opportunities available to trainees in rural regions with those in urban areas. It complements classroom teaching phases at vocational schools and language courses. Trainees and tutors save time and money by using the system asynchronously (when time is available) directly at home or at work.

The digital medium is equally accessible to all trainees and is divided into categories according to year of training, individual occupational groups, and language course content. Further categories can be created as needed. Furthermore, a common area is available to trainees in the LMS which is suitable for communication with all other trainees, educational staff, remedial teachers, language teachers, etc. Shared information, e.g. on the region and company profiles, is made available and archived here.

The same structure can be found in personal digital folders for trainees as is found in the general digital folders. These folders are used by trainees to store examination and other school materials, lesson plans, and report portfolios. The LMS is made available and used over the entire term of the program so that trainees have their complete educational and information materials available at all times and almost everywhere. Consistent use of (simple) written German within the LMS provides constant language learning opportunities.

¹ See chapter "Preparation in country of origin".

Providing an online dictionary also enables trainees to quickly translate anything they do not understand.

Individual exercises and content can be set up and completed tasks can be evaluated by teachers. Stronger learners also benefit from this, as they can be provided with additional and appropriate training materials and exercises corresponding to their performance; they can work on these exercises independently and as necessary. All materials and exercises are collected over the entire term of the training program and are available during the exam preparation phase.

Shared documentation is created for the full term of the training program within the LMS. It does not replace classroom teaching but may be used additionally. The LMS can also be introduced during the language course in the country of origin and adapted to its conditions.

Starting with language courses in the country of origin, trainees can communicate in the LMS with each other and other contact persons in Germany on a daily basis. This provides them with information about the program on an ongoing basis and it may be accessed anytime and anywhere. The contact persons are provided with log-in credentials for LMS for this purpose and use a portion of their workday to provide digital support to potential trainees.

The LMS provides a medium in which synchronous and asynchronous communication can take place and this can be used to facilitate the exchange of data. However, data protection must be ensured. Essential parts of the LMS can also be used on mobile devices (in most cases even areas with weak internet connection).

CONCLUSION:

LMS is an offer that can be used in all training programs. It offers trainees, most of whom are familiar with the Internet as a medium, an overview and easier access to educational materials and useful information related to the training program. Other parties such as training personnel, socio-educational support persons, mentors, remedial teachers and language teachers have the opportunity to follow the development of the trainees from a distance, to recognize learning successes and problems at an early stage and to provide individual support. Accordingly, the LMS creates transparency and makes work easier. The participating institutions can use it to react to current problems in the training program. LMS particularly benefits the target group of trainees in rural regions. It does not replace conventional teaching methods, but rather supplements them.



BEST PRACTICE 7:

LANGUAGE COURSE TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

Implementing Institution:

The Erfurt Chamber of Trades has carried out several projects as part of the MobiPro-EU special program and developed the language course "Technical vocabulary" to prepare its trainees for examinations.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2017:80f., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Many trainees learn the everyday language they need for their social life and for communication in the training company without major problems. The challenge is to learn the technical language, for which there is often little time in everyday training and working life, and for which the appropriate teachers are not always available. This poses great challenges for the trainees by the time of examinations at the latest.



OBJECTIVES:

During their vocational training, trainees should be optimally prepared for the intermediate and final examinations through in-depth practice and acquisition of the technical language relevant to their profession.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

Problems trainees have with regard to sufficient knowledge and use of technical language can be countered with a preparatory language course – “Technical vocabulary”. The trainees are taught by a teacher who is appropriately trained both technically and in terms of language teaching. This can specifically address the language and technical needs of the trainees as well as examination conditions and thus adequately prepare the students for the examinations.

The content of the language course “Technical vocabulary” is always planned in consultation with the vocational school teachers, the trainees, and teachers at inter-company training institutions. The vocabulary taught is appropriately coordinated and vocabulary relevant to the trainees is repeated and developed.

The following serve as a basis for teaching and deepening the technical vocabulary:

- Textbooks and workbooks of the trainees
- Trade journals for trainees
- Technical catalogues from the occupational groups
- Exercise books for exam preparation

CONCLUSION:

The language course “Technical vocabulary” enables the learning or deepening of technical language and comprehension. Questions left unanswered in class or in practice can be worked on within the framework of this form of learning and answered by experts. In addition, acquired knowledge is intensively applied.



3.2.5 KEY TOPIC: SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Social integration with the support of educational staff from the accompanying institutions or other socially committed persons is crucial for the success of foreign students. The challenges posed by the vocational school, the demands of the training company, and independently meeting the challenges of everyday life in a new environment are difficult for many trainees to master without the support of a social network. This ensures that the trainees receive support in integrating socially, that contacts are established, tips are given, and problems and concerns are listened to. The following recommendations for action on the topic of social integration concentrate on the internship and training phases in Germany.¹

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Support within the working and learning environment

Infrastructural requirements: Access to trainees', accommodation learning venues and workplaces by public transport should be taken into account when selecting training companies, places of residence, and vocational schools.

Establishment of a mentoring program: Participating institutions recommend that training companies set up a mentoring program to advise and support trainees, to ensure transparency about the content and scheduling of vocational training, and to explain the vocational training plan for internships and vocational training (see also the "Language" chapter).

Promoting networking and experience-sharing between institutions involved in vocational training: Participating institutions should encourage other participating institutions to continuously network and share information for the benefit of the trainees.²

Information about external support offers: Trainees should be provided with regularly updated information about offers from existing counseling and support structures in the region (e.g. offers from trade chambers, municipalities, migration counseling centers, the IQ support program, autonomous migrant organizations, cultural associations, etc.).

Shared leisure activities by employees: Shared activities on the part of employees at the company and the trainees may contribute to a positive and collaborative working environment.

Support outside the workplace and vocational school

Promoting community among trainees: The participating institutions should support community and experience sharing between trainees, including trainees in other training years (e.g. by holding regular meetings).

Shared leisure activities: The participating institutions should ensure that specific leisure activities are offered to the trainees (e.g. in cooperation with associations and organizations from their networks).

¹ See the chapter "Preparation in the country of origin" for recommendations on social integration in the country of origin.

² For details, see "Regular experience sharing by participants in the vocation training process" in the chapter "Regional cooperation".



PROFILE

Eleni

*“They took me by the hand and showed me everything.
Thank goodness everyone was so ready to help [...]”*

Country of origin:

Greece

Training profession:

Office administrator

Training program in the federal state of:

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Training program supported by MobiPro-EU project provider:

SBW - Aus- und Fortbildungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaft und Verwaltung mbH

Motivation for seeking vocational training:

- Lack of career prospects in the country of origin
- Professional handball player, with the desire to continue playing at club level (which was not possible due to lack of finances in the country of origin)

Career path (Germany):

- Successful completion of vocational training after initial challenges at the vocational school
- Hired by the training company SBW - Aus- und Fortbildungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaft und Verwaltung mbH
- Successful social integration by combining vocational training and her hobby (handball in a club)



BEST PRACTICE 8:

WELCOME TO OUR REGION!

Implementing Institution:

The Volkshochschule Göttingen Osterode (VHS) developed the "Welcome to our region" program and implemented and optimized this approach as part of its MobiPro-EU projects.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2016:59ff., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

Students who come to Germany for an internship and subsequent training usually still have few or no social ties in the region. These are, however, essential for a positive training experience. Even with support from the participating institution and its partners, settling in can be very challenging for students.



OBJECTIVES:

A foundation is laid for the trainees to be able to integrate themselves into their new home region through contacts to, exchanges with, and visits to various regional institutions and people. The social contacts that result from these efforts encourage the rapid development of a sense of belonging to their new home.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

Numerous measures are suitable for making it easier and faster for those trainees and potential to settle into their new environment and to achieve long-term social integration. The examples listed below are free offers or events that are conducted by the respective institutions offering them:

- The internship companies create a company profile with extensive information and photos for the trainees during the period in which the trainees are completing the language course in their country of origin. The trainees in turn create a profile of themselves. It is important to give a lot of personal and professional information and to illustrate this in photos in order to establish a personal connection between participants. In this way, both sides can participate in a further exchange of information after the interview, which is usually conducted via Skype. Afterwards, the company and trainees stay in touch until they arrive in Germany and get to know each other better by exchanging information via e-mail or other means.
- On arrival, the trainees are given a comprehensive handout with information about the city and its surroundings (including useful addresses), local and long-distance transportation, doctors who can speak their language, and leisure activities.
- The partner companies support participating institutions in the search for host families or apartments, furniture, and bicycles, among other things.
- The trainees are greeted by the host families at the train station at the start of the internship.
- The trainees are welcomed by the mayor of the city right at the beginning of the internship.
- The trainees go on a walking tour and a sightseeing tour before the start of the internship preceding their training program.

- In order to establish early and close contact between the trainees and the local institutions, interested trainees are invited to various activities put on by cooperation partners of the participating institution (e.g. in the political realm, local government administration, companies, cultural institutions) during the internship. For example, trainees may be invited by the city council to a sports match played by a local, well-known club, a concert in the opera house, a meeting of the Integration Council, or offered discounted membership in local sports clubs.
- Visits to and discussions with local institutions are an integral part of German lessons. These include:
 - Police officers on the subject of cycling and driving a car
 - Employees of health insurance providers on the subject of health insurance benefits in Germany
 - Employees at the training company on expectations, collaboration and communication there
 - Local mayors on the region, its towns and municipalities
 - Employees of banks on account maintenance conditions in Germany and possible benefits for trainees (e.g. no-fee accounts)
 - Employees of the BA on the Vocational Information Centre (BIZ)
 - Representatives of other institutions on topics related to education and training

A sense of belonging on the part of the trainees to the region is strengthened through these measures. In the event of problems, the trainees know to whom they can turn, depending on the problem, at an early stage. They have a social network within the company and at the vocational school that can support them in difficult times. A comprehensive social network means that problems can usually be solved and training dropouts can be prevented.

CONCLUSION:

The examples listed above are merely examples of potential measures. These can be adapted flexibly as appropriate. In order to implement the measures, the participating institution needs contact to certain key persons in its region or city, whom it can win over for the training project and the trainees. Experience has shown that if a key person (e.g. the mayor) gets involved, many other institutions will join in.

3.2.6 PHASE 4A: TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS

For many young people – including those who grew up in Germany – successfully participating in and completing dual vocational training in Germany is a challenge. Trainees faced with additional hurdles, such as limited language skills and lack of social networks, often find it even more difficult to meet the demands placed on them. There is a risk that training will be discontinued if the challenges do not appear to be manageable.

The following recommendations for action provide information on how to prevent dropouts during the internship phase and subsequent training phase by involving the training companies. In addition to recommendations for ensuring the successful completion of vocational training, the chapter also contains information on how to support trainees in their transition to work and how to arrange communication between all project partners involved in these processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Avoiding dropouts and mediation

Addressing challenges and solutions at an early stage:

Possible challenges should be defined and processes for dealing with them agreed on a preventive basis from the outset in the cooperation talks and agreements with the training companies.

Conflict moderation by the participating institution:

If there are conflicts between trainees and companies, or if there is even a threat of a dropout from training, the project provider should assume a role as moderator (if necessary, with the support of the relevant trade chamber).

Additional assistance: In the event of crises and risks of a trainee dropping out, the participating institution should arrange additional assistance (e.g. from counseling centers, doctors, psychologists, other network partners or additional educators).

Feedback meetings: Following each dropout, the participating institution offers training companies feedback meetings and, if necessary, provides support in the preparation of certificates for departing trainees.

Assistance to trainees if they drop out: If a vocational training relationship is terminated prematurely, the participating institution proactively supports the trainees in their search for other options in the region. Including the BA in this search is advisable.

If a vocational training relationship is terminated prematurely (and the trainees decide to return to their country of origin), the participating institution supports the trainees in clarifying all necessary administrative and professional questions (e.g. communication with the training company (regarding a job reference), termination of the apartment lease or telephone contract and, if necessary, arrangements for return to the country of origin).

Participating institutions inform trainees that it may be possible to retain potential social insurance benefits accrued in Germany under the statutory social insurance scheme (in particular pension and unemployment insurance) within the EU. Trainees should be expressly advised to contact the social insurance agencies personally on a timely basis, and if applicable apply for portability, and to save all supporting documents related to insurance and credit periods.

INTEGRATION AT TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS – EVALUATION RESULTS FOR MOBIPRO-EU

According to the results of case studies carried out within the framework of MobiPro-EU, for the most part participants successfully integrated themselves into the training company. Nevertheless, surveys showed that two out of five trainees who terminated their participation prematurely named problems with colleagues and superiors in the company providing training as one of several reasons for dropping out. Working conditions were also mentioned. The focus was on work requirements and working hours, but above all on subjectively unsatisfactory work activities, such as cleaning or ancillary work. The general feeling of being insufficiently compensated was also mentioned.

Many of these problems resulted from false expectations with which the participants had come to Germany. False expectations related to different situations:

The structure of vocational training with its strong formal school components, the position of the trainees in the internal hierarchy, the compensation, the subject matter of potentially unfamiliar training occupations or also support that could be provided by the project providers and training companies. In this context, ample preparation could counter many of these misconceptions.

If, in a specific individual case, problems arise between the trainee and the training company, arranging for a change of company could be an appropriate action to avoid a dropout from the program. The statistical analysis showed that the risk of a dropout from the program was significantly lower if the project providers regularly tried to place the participants in another training company in cases where training was about to be discontinued.

Successful completion and transition into employment

Preliminary interview on transition to employment:

At least half a year before the expected completion of vocational training, the participating institution should initiate a joint discussion between the training company and the trainee on the possible transition of the trainee to employment at the training company requiring the payment of social security contributions.

Support in finding adequate employment: If it is not possible to offer the trainee employment at the training company requiring the payment of social security

contributions following completion of training, the participating institution will support trainees in their search for adequate employment and inform them of placement offers and the obligation to register with the Employment Agency. The training company should also be included in this process.

Evaluation of the training process: At the end of vocational training, the participating institution arranges an evaluation of the training period with the company and the trainees.



BEST PRACTICE 9:

EMPLOYEE MEETINGS WITH PRACTICAL EXERCISES AND EXCHANGES

Implementing Institution:

This best practice example was developed by the restaurant Sausalitos, partner training enterprise for the adult education center Göttingen Osterode. The Volkshochschule Göttingen Osterode (VHS) has implemented several projects as part of the MobiPro-EU special program.

(Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 2017:76f., abridged and modified)



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

At the beginning of their training, trainees are often not yet familiar with the practical tasks involved and are additionally exposed to great stress in their training occupation (e.g. in gastronomy). If there is little room in the daily work routine for line managers and superiors to provide appropriate assistance, trainees often receive insufficient feedback and support in optimizing their task management skills during their daily work routine. The following example of employee meetings can be used in order to counter any resulting uncertainty and dissatisfaction. The example refers to the gastronomy sector but is transferable to many other professions.



OBJECTIVES:

The trainees should develop a feeling of belonging and security through the employee meetings. Information and discussions about everyday working life with other employees as well as simulations of difficult situations serve to deepen and apply the training contents.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

At the training company (e.g. restaurant), an employee meeting with practical exercises and opportunities to share experiences is held once a month in the evening during working hours. It is part of mandatory additional training for all employees (including trainees, interns and temporary staff). In a relaxed atmosphere, employees are first informed about current matters concerning the company and can ask questions.

The employees then practice how to deal with challenging situations from everyday working life. Working together, they use practical exercises in order to see whether their own approaches are appropriate or whether they need to be modified.

For example, they simulate everyday work through small work assignments (distributed over slips of paper) in role plays. Suggestions for such work assignments include: "You're a waitress. You talk a lot and loudly". "You're a waiter and are completely unmotivated". "You're a waitress and very helpful and patient". Or "You're a customer and are very pushy". "You're a customer, very taciturn, and obviously don't want to be disturbed". Then two employees are asked to

recreate a scene between waitress or waiter and a customer according to the work assignments. The other employees are instructed to observe the scene closely. Afterwards, the role players themselves and then the others are asked to analyze the role of the waitress or waiter with the help of the following questions: What did they do well? What could they have done differently? Have you ever experienced a situation like that? How did you handle it?

Employees exchange ideas, give each other tips and ask questions in a relaxed and open discussion. For the summary, feedback is then given by the instructor, who reinforces customer-oriented, but not submissive behavior, on the part of the employees. This approach makes it possible to learn from one's own mistakes and those of others.

First, the welcoming atmosphere and willingness to accept mistakes on the part of the employees gathered for the meeting make for an enjoyable evening that represents a supportive social experience for (new) trainees. Dialogue with colleagues makes it possible to strengthen contacts and deepen relationships. Second, this approach promotes success in training by giving the opportunity to practice work processes and to receive comprehensive feedback in this respect. In addition, this activity can increase motivation and – through its strong focus on communications – contribute to the development of language skills.

CONCLUSION:

Offers of this kind strengthen employee skills, group cohesiveness and a positive work environment. Trainees feel understood, valued, and taken seriously by their company. This increases identification with the company and willingness to support it and creates a win-win situation that can have a major influence on the motivation of the trainees and the success of the company in the long term.



BEST PRACTICE 10:

JOB COACHING – TRAINING ON THE JOB

Implementing Institution:

The best practice example was developed by IN VIA Cologne and implemented and adapted as part of the MobiPro-EU special program.



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

It is not always easy for the participating institution to meet the needs of both parties when advising companies and trainees. For example, it may be the case that the opinions of one party have priority and the interests of the other party are overlooked. This can lead to either the company or the trainees feeling that they are not being considered and understood and this may have a negative impact on the success of the training, which is of course in the interest of both sides.



OBJECTIVES:

JobCoaching – a training on the job method – aims to focus on trainees and training companies in everyday training situations in such a way that the needs of both sides are taken into account and responded to in the best possible way so that the training experience can be successful and satisfying for all participants.



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

JobCoaching is performed by specialist coaching staff from the participating institutions, who provide support to all participants in various situations and act as an interface between the institutions. For this purpose, a specialist staff member stays at the company for an entire training day, during which trainees are also present. Particular importance is attached to ensuring that the job coaches can make an appropriate contribution to the company, e.g. by joining in the work. In this way they gain an in-depth insight into the demands placed on trainees and experience the challenges that companies and trainees are confronted with in each case.

Accordingly, the central component of JobCoaching is the collaborative work of the educational staff working with the trainees at the company. The job coaches provide assistance when communicating and implementing training content and find solutions for challenging situations along with and for the trainees. The special aspect of this is that the job coaches not only consider the employees but the employers as well. Accordingly, the company is supported by the participating institution in considering more than the trainees' need for support. Instead, the participating institution pursues an approach based on independence, which demands more and more personal responsibility and initiative from the trainees as the project progresses. To this end, the participating institution offers support to the trainees, enabling them to acquire the skills needed to solve the problem at hand. For example, in cases where trainees do not understand tasks due to language barriers, the participating institution can work together with trainees in a very goal-oriented and problem-focused manner as part of the language course.

The job coaches then encourage the trainees to increasingly face the respective problem alone and using the methodology they have learned. If necessary, however, support can always be provided on a selective basis.

JobCoaching is already used in the internship phase in order to identify difficult situations at an early stage and to be able to react to them. Job coaches support the trainees in learning and optimizing the following skills.

- Social skills such as punctuality, concentration, conscientiousness, independent action, verbal communication, and team skills
- Professional skills such as working methods, pace of work, quality of work, perseverance, flexibility, and adaptation to existing conditions in the company

Job coaching also includes reflection rounds with other parties involved, such as vocational schools, but also support for trainees in applying for vocational training, as well as additional support during visits to the doctor or the authorities. Support measures are always provided in close coordination with the companies and the vocational school.

CONCLUSION:

JobCoaching gives the coaching staff a better overview of the overall situation so that problems and complaints of trainees and/or training companies can be better assessed through the direct experience of the working world. Job Coaches are thus able to react in a more targeted manner and initiate appropriate measures to improve the situation for the trainees and/or the company. Experience has shown that trainees feel that their interests are recognized and valued through the use of job coaches. Especially in large companies, JobCoaching is a good instrument to raise awareness of the training program and the needs of the trainees on the part of employees who work on the operational side. JobCoaching can be used in all three years of vocational training..



BEST PRACTICE 11:

CO-DETERMINATION BY TRAINEES

Implementing Institution:

The Akademie Überlingen N. Glasmeyer GmbH focuses on co-determination and respect for the autonomy of the trainees in its MobiPro-EU projects and other projects and is continuously developing and refining this approach.



STARTING POINT AND CHALLENGE:

New trainees, in particular, often miss the opportunity to participate and work independently in the training company. This can be highly demotivating and entails the risk of a drop-out from the program.



OBJECTIVES:

The approach of co-determination by trainees starts by regularly involving trainees in the decision-making processes with regard to their training contents and methods..



CONTENT, PROCESS, AND SUCCESS FACTORS:

Participating institutions that also offer inter-company training can involve their trainees in various decision-making processes from the start of their training. This will be illustrated below using an example from the restaurant sector. Thus, co-determination by the trainees can begin with the question of which meals are to be cooked within the framework of the curriculum and end with shared special projects.

Special projects can include year-end projects, for example: At the end of their first year of training, the trainees meet and decide as part of a study group how the trainees of the next year can be welcomed. The special project they plan is intended to directly incorporate newly learned methods from the cooking trade. After reaching their collaborative decision (e.g. welcome party for new trainees, cooking evenings with other trainees, menu development for the learning restaurant), the steps to be taken are planned as follows:

- Written collection of topic requests and suggestions from the trainees for the planned project
- Joint decision in determining the dish to be prepared (with regard to new skills, e.g. cooking techniques) and its presentation
- Creative implementation of new techniques and dishes within the framework of a self-developed project

This can lead to strong internalization and a sense of achievement, which are crucial for successful training, and all of these steps require that the trainees take on a lot of personal responsibility. The success of such a special project can inspire additional projects developed on the initiative of and implementation by the trainees themselves. This strengthens the independence and personal responsibility of the trainees. The participating institutions support the trainees in their special projects by creating the appropriate framework for the implementation of the projects and ensuring an open working atmosphere in which questions and follow-up questions are welcome.

CONCLUSION:

If the trainees are given personal responsibility for their actions in an open learning environment, this allows the interests and wishes of the trainees to be integrated into their daily work. At the same time, this type of project promotes motivation on the part of the trainees and helps them to remember what they have learned on a long-term basis. The additional effort for the participating institution can be kept relatively low over the long term, since the trainees quickly assume responsibility for the individual work processes.

3.2.7 PHASE 4B: VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS



Vocational schools play a crucial role in successful vocational training. If the institutions supporting young people before and during vocational training are aware of the (possible) challenges when working with vocational schools, they can overcome a large number of hurdles before and during vocational training and know which aspects should be taken into account.

Vocational schools are included in the training project from the planning phase onwards as relevant partners

Vocational schools are relevant partners who should be included in the training project from the planning phase onwards in the context of plans to integrate young people from abroad into the German vocational training system. In this context, it is beneficial for the schools to be able to contribute to the design and implementation of the project

and for them to examine the common components of the project based on their expertise in the school environment.

Data protection plays an overriding role in this area. Vocational schools and institutions providing support to the trainees are, as a rule, not entitled to pass on information concerning the trainees unless the respective trainee has provided their consent.

In the federal system of the Federal Republic of Germany, the requirements of the various educational authorities may differ. Accordingly, the respective recommendations for action can only be applied in those regions in which the applicable legal framework permits implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Agreements before the start of the training program

Notice to the educational authorities: In consultation with the relevant vocational schools, the educational authorities should be notified at an early stage of the training project and the expected number of trainees, as well as of their likely occupations and the relevant vocational schools.

Specialized schools: Depending on regional circumstances, defining specialized schools for participation in the project that are particularly suited for working with the trainees in advance of the project is advisable.

Cooperation and exchange of information with vocational schools: Discussions with the vocational schools concerning the intended project should be conducted in advance. The participating institutions should inform the vocational schools in detail about the project and inform themselves about the conditions and needs of the vocational schools, in advance. This information should include the following points:

- The participating vocational schools should be informed at an early stage about objectives and a project-specific framework and should be asked about needs, conditions and ideas.
- The contact persons at all partners (and their respective responsibilities) must be communicated openly to all participants. In this case, care must be taken to ensure that someone from the administrative side of the school is involved as well.
- The vocational schools must be informed about the (educational) background of the trainees and made aware of the opportunities and challenges of working with the trainees.

- In consultation with the vocational schools and training companies, the participating institution arranges attendance at language courses by the trainees as well as support and remedial teaching. The vocational schools and the participating institutions regularly exchange information on the content of the courses.
- Trial days especially designed for potential trainees can be organized at the intended vocational schools in order to give them the opportunity to get an impression of the general requirements at the vocational schools.
- The vocational schools and the participating institutions should jointly agree as to which learning conditions could be conducive to a successful training program.

Cooperation agreement: Obtaining a joint written agreement is advisable. Amongst other issues, it may address the following:

- All relevant parties at the vocational schools (including teachers and management) are to be informed about the training project and the associated tasks and be integrated into the processes or kept up to date on all steps. These parties should be consulted regularly in order to optimize the work of all participants and thus the entire training process.

- Intercultural openness is perceived and implemented as a joint objective of all participants. The institution involved advises the vocational schools on external training for teachers and others involved at the vocational schools who may contribute to intercultural competence development (e.g. offers from the IQ funding program). In this context, attention should be paid to the different training systems in Germany and in the country of origin.
- The process of vocational training within the framework of the training program should be outlined.
- The partners should agree to work together respectfully and as equals.
- The vocational schools, the institution involved, the training companies, the language schools, and any other relevant parties should regularly take part in personalized training plan discussions with the individual trainees.
- The institution involved should take on the task of enabling the trainees to participate actively in school life through appropriate measures (e.g. language teaching, tutoring, information on the school system, and examinations).
- The respective institution should inform the vocational schools about language course times.
- The trainees should be given time-off to the extent possible for relevant offers (corresponding to the training plan discussions).
- In the event of violations of the school regulations and (un)excused absences on the part of trainees, the vocational schools should inform the respective institutions and training companies concurrently and directly. This only applies to notice to the respective institution if the trainee has consented to the sharing of their data.

First year of training – arrangements and information regarding the start of training

Cooperation meetings: The relevant contact persons at the institution involved are informed of and invited to attend discussions concerning their trainees (e.g. with training companies, parents, other parties) by the vocational schools.

Training plan meetings: The regular individual training plan meetings agreed as part of the collaboration (see section “Cooperation agreement”) between the vocational school, training company, trainees, participating institution, as well as any other parties, are held once in the middle of each school half-year at a previously agreed time. At these meetings, the parties review whether commonly-set goals are obtainable by individual trainees under the agreed conditions and which points may need to be modified. This may relate to the following areas, among others:

- Training content
- Responsibilities
- Contact persons
- Education plan for the upcoming half-year
- Binding definition of support instruments for the next six months
- Planning for vocation-related lessons as well as content and methodology

Discussions of teaching methods: The parties at the participating institutions should exchange information about current or potential teaching methods as well as on target-group-specific teaching methods and regularly inform themselves and each other about potential innovations..

Information in case of decline in performance: Provided that consent has been provided, the vocational schools should inform the participating institutions about any decline in a trainee’s performance.

Language acquisition in cooperation with vocational school:

- At the beginning of the vocational training, the vocational schools are provided with a realistic assessment of the language level of the trainees.
- The participating institutions and vocational schools share the objective of promoting the acquisition of technical and written language by trainees throughout the course of their training.
- The vocational schools and participating institution and/or their partners support each other; for example, by providing informational materials and language acquisition training for teachers.
- The participating institutions should make the vocational schools aware of the positive effects that good language skills on the part of trainees can have on the vocational schools and should encourage them to make language promotion possible at the vocational schools as well (e.g. through language classes instead of covering subjects that are not relevant to examinations – in consultation with the educational authorities).
- The participating institutions may suggest that vocational schools use innovative forms of language acquisition within their schools (e.g. mentoring, sponsorships, tandems).
- The possibility of assistance for trainees during training should be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Target group-oriented education and other training and education offers:

- Vocational schools should strive for flexibility of between two and three years of training.
- Additional support services offered by the vocational schools or their partners need to be communicated to the participating institutions and made available to the trainees.
- The involvement of specialized staff at vocational schools with intercultural experience who are familiar with the education and training systems of the country of origin and Germany as well as the language spoken in the trainees' country of origin can have a beneficial effect. In this way, mutual understanding between the expectations of the trainees and the training companies can be pro-actively promoted and language-based misunderstandings can be clarified.

Organization of instruction:

- The vocational schools themselves – and in consultation with the participating institutions – decide on the composition of vocational education classes.
- Vocational schools are recommended to carry out an assessment procedure at the beginning of the training program in order to establish the basic principles of the training process with the trainees (or all trainees in a class). This can above all serve to identify existing knowledge in order to organize lessons appropriately and, if necessary, to proceed in a more tailored manner.
- Using as simple language as possible¹, i.e. language that may be understood easily, is advisable. Some textbooks are also available in simple language. The network provided by the support program IQ and, in particular, its specialist unit “occupational German” may also be consulted in this regard².

¹Simple language is a new strategy of barrier-free communication. It is a middle ground between easy language for people with cognitive disabilities and incomprehensible technical language. Unlike 'easy language', simple language does not violate the rules of grammar. The text remains lively, clear and comprehensible. Technical terms are explained, sentences are short and texts clear." (IQ Network Bremen (no year given)).

²<https://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/> (last checked on 09/18/2018).

- In order to ensure a smooth teaching process, involving supporting institutions from the very beginning (e.g. in the form of a mini conference) in conversations between vocational school teachers is advisable in order to be able to place and receive relevant information and to strengthen constructive cooperation.
- Vocational school teachers are encouraged to familiarize trainees with various learning methods at an early stage

Information for trainees:

- At the beginning, and repeatedly during the course of the training, trainees should receive comprehensive information (including in writing and, if possible, translated into their native language) about school framework curricula, learning objectives, training qualifications and possible additional qualifications.
- At the start of training, the vocational school should be transparent with trainees regarding the assessment of their performance level. This should also be done on an ongoing basis during the course of training.
- Before a new topic is introduced, trainees should be informed about the topic and the opportunity to familiarize themselves with it (e.g. by providing worksheets and web-based materials). Furthermore, the trainees should also have the opportunity to save what they have learned directly and as completely as possible for their later use (in the form of worksheets and permitting photos to be made of images on the board).
- The participating institution should support vocational schools in passing on relevant internal school information and encourage them to support the formation of carpools via suitable forums and channels.

Second /third /fourth year training years

- **Comprehensive information to trainees:** Comprehensive information (see section “Agreements and information at the beginning of training”) about school framework curricula, learning objectives, qualifications and any additional qualifications should be communicated to the trainees on a recurring basis (e.g. via an information portal, as accessible as possible for all participants).
- **Use of German-language media:** The participating institutions suggest that vocational schools encourage trainees to use German-language media (e.g. school library, subject-related digital media, radio, newspaper).
- **Teaching different learning methods:** Even in advanced years of vocational school, vocational school teachers should teach the trainees using different learning methods on a repeated basis. The participating institutions should ensure that a standardized textbook is used within the framework of the language courses and that it becomes the property of the language course participants.
- **Motivation:** Vocational schools should encourage trainees to take part in training competitions in order to increase their motivation to learn.

Exam Preparation/Examination – Preparation and support

- **Prior examinations:** The participating institutions should ask the vocational schools, training companies or chambers for old examination forms so that they can effectively prepare trainees for examinations.
- **Examination procedures:** The participating institutions should recommend to vocational school teachers who belong to the examination boards that they contribute their knowledge and experience regarding examinations to examination preparation on the part of the trainees.

- **Information in case of decline in performance:** Provided that consent has been provided, the vocational schools should inform the institutions involved about any decline in a trainee's performance during this phase as well.
- **Practicing examination questions:** During examination preparation, vocational school teachers should prepare trainees for how examination questions are worded and practice both understanding the questions and time management. In addition, informing the trade chambers repeatedly of the fact that the use of simple language in examinations contributes to better understanding on the part of trainees is advisable.
- **Postponing examinations:** Trainees should be informed in advance that intermediate and final examinations can be postponed on legitimate grounds. For this purpose, the trainees themselves or the training company must contact the chamber and the examination board in due time and submit an application. Clear rules should be followed in such cases.
- **Request for use of dictionaries/additional time:** The vocational schools and accompanying institutions should inform and support the trainees on a timely basis in submitting a request to their responsible trade chamber for the use of a dictionary during examinations or, if necessary, for additional time for an examination. In such cases, it must be noted that there is no legal right to these accommodations and that the decision is made at the discretion of the respective trade chamber.

Information to trainees

- **Examination formats:** The participating institution should work to ensure that the vocational schools inform trainees at an early stage about potential examination formats and provide information about intermediate examinations and the effects of these on the trainees' final grades.
- **Raising awareness for dealing with exams:** The partners (vocational schools, accompanying institutions, training companies, etc.) should sensitize the trainees about how to approach examinations (e.g. weighting of examination parts, typical questions, examination language (e.g. operators), question formulations).
- **Exam simulations:** If possible, the vocational schools should offer simulated examinations based on the standards of the respective trade chamber in conjunction with the participating institution or relevant trade chamber if possible. In this way, the need for support can be determined and a realistic assessment of the existing level of knowledge can be obtained.
- **Early start of examination preparation:** The institutions and vocational schools involved should point out the need for an early start and support the trainees in starting to prepare for the examination at least six months in advance. Staggered examinations (intermediate examinations) should be noted as well.

3.2.8 KEY TOPIC: REGIONAL COOPERATION

A common goal for all parties involved is fundamental to the smooth and successful completion of a training program for foreign students. This requires not only regular and binding agreements, along with joint planning, but also close and solution-oriented cooperation and communication between all participants before trainees are even recruited. The most important common goal of the partners is avoiding dropouts from training. Existing structures can be used for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

When planning and implementing a training project with international students, local partners such as chambers of commerce, language schools, dedicated individuals, established regional networks as well as the regional AA and the ZAV as cooperation partners, should be taken into account in addition to the participating institutions, training companies and vocational schools. Due to its expertise in cross-border job placement and counseling, the latter can make a tailor-made contribution to attracting people interested in training from different countries of origin as well as to meeting challenges in the course of training (in particular in the event of an imminent dropout).

The following additional measures are recommended in cooperation with the above-mentioned cooperation partners in order to achieve the goal of successfully completing vocational training:

Collaboration with other partners

- Using existing counseling and support structures (offers from trade chambers, municipalities, migration counseling centers, IQ, culture, etc.) is advisable. To this end, the participating institution should seek and maintain contact with these parties.
- Other parties such as senior expert services, universities, voluntary and migrant organizations, leisure facilities, etc. can provide support for organizations and students and promote successful training.

Cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency of Germany

- If necessary, the participating institution should seek coordination with the regional AA's, in particular with the employer service (AGS), both during the preparation period and the implementation phase of the training program.
- In order to prevent or avoid a dropout, the institution or vocational school involved may call upon the International Placement Service (IPS) at the Employment Agency which will then offer advice and assistance in preventing a dropout.

Networking and exchange of experience with other institutions with similar projects

- The participating institutions should actively network among themselves in order to exchange experiences on (best) practices. Self-organized regional networking meetings offer a platform for the exchange of experience and results, for the transfer of refined and tested instruments and for strengthening regional cooperation. Existing regional structures covering relevant topics can be used for support.
- If trainees may be intending to drop out of training (e.g. due to personal crises, problems at vocational school, homesickness, language problems or dissatisfaction with the chosen training vocation) and this is recognized at an early stage, solutions can be found through good partner networks and shared knowledge in order to find solutions for the trainees and provide them with support based on their particular needs.





BEST PRACTICE:

RAPID ACTION

ZAV developed the Rapid Action concept as part of the MobiPro-EU special program which is now being used in various projects. Transferability to other, similar contexts is desirable and should be requested from the BA as appropriate.

THE INTERVENTION PROJECT “RAPID ACTION” DEVELOPED BY THE INTERNATIONAL AND SPECIALIZED SERVICES

As part of the MobiPro-EU special program, ZAV implemented a concept (“Rapid Action”) in the summer of 2015 to support the work of project providers in supporting their trainees across the various project phases. The aim was to learn about difficulties at an early stage through regular communication with project managers and thus to be able to offer immediate advice and additional support to the trainees. The BA’s proximity to the labor market and its neutrality represented further added value.

The Rapid Action team was staffed in such a way that the vocational counselors assigned regionally to the MobiPro-EU special program took on a number of projects for which they acted as the first point of contact. The project providers were clustered according to defined criteria (e.g. first-time participation in MobiPro-EU). This determined first of all the expected degree of advisory support and, second, the preferred forms of contact (in person, by telephone, in writing).

Initial contact with all project providers was made before the start of the project. Services offered by the ZAV were presented and further fundamental questions were discussed at an in-person meeting as part of this initial contact. Standard contact was made with project providers at four points in the early project phase as agreed with the ZAV: At the start and two weeks before the end of the language courses, at the beginning of the internship, and at the beginning of vocational training.

Subjects of these meetings could include, for example, the filling of project vacancies or even recruiting to fill additional training openings.

Depending on the individual agreement with the project providers, contact intervals of four to six weeks should be maintained during the further course of the program.

This does not conflict with ad hoc contacts that came about because participants intended to drop out of training or because other serious problems needed to be resolved that could not be solved by the contact persons from the projects.

Even though the possible reasons for dropping out are always very individual, it was possible to divide them into categories which then made it possible to derive potential measures. These high-level categories were:

- Personal reasons relate to the participant (e.g. homesickness, health problems, family, conflicts)
- Language-related reasons (e.g. difficulties with language acquisition and/or language needs for everyday training)
- Job-related reasons (e.g. false expectations regarding the occupation, the company or the training system; difficulties specific to the vocational school)
- Company-related reasons (e.g. training offer withdrawn by the company or dismissal)

At the request of the project providers, MobiPro-EU consultants sprang into action in order to develop solutions with participants, project managers, companies, vocational schools and with the participation of the employer services of the local employment agencies to some extent.

Rapid Action was also responsible for assessments of the suitability, motivation and German language skills of the participants when it came to changing training vocations, repeating training components and examinations.

Starting with the systematic recording of support measures in July 2017 through editorial deadline for this Handbook, MobiPro-EU advisors were called in to help with problems in over 400 cases and were able to prevent a large number of drop outs as a result.

ANNEX 1:

CHECKLIST (EXAMPLE)

ADVISORY CHECKLIST: TRAINING AT A COMPANY, AT A VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AND IN THE REGION

Objective: Trainees should get as good an idea as possible of the company, the country and the people.

What does the training program look like?

.....

.....

What kind of occupation could I have in the future (various options)?

.....

.....

What is the average salary?

.....

.....

What are the working hours (start in the morning, weekend work, etc.)?

.....

.....

How many vacation days are there? Are there any other requirements regarding the use of vacation days?

.....

.....

Is there a canteen or other food services on-site?

.....

.....

What information can be provided about training staff, supervisors, other employees, administration and other relevant persons?

.....

.....

Who is responsible for my training?

.....

.....

Are training courses/further education offered beyond the training?

.....

.....

Where am I going to live?

.....

.....

At which vocational schools does the school-based part of the training program take place?

.....

.....

Which forms of public transport are available?

.....

.....

What leisure activities are possible? What is the countryside and weather like in the region?

.....

.....

Implementing Institution:

The Reutlingen Chamber of Trades developed and used the in-company training checklist as part of the MobiPro-EU special program. It was modified for this Practice Handbook.

ANNEX 2:

FIELD REPORT FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S SPECIAL PROGRAM MOBIPRO-EU

THE "RAPID ACTION" CONCEPT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SPECIAL PROGRAM MOBIPRO-EU

An interview with members of the Rapid Action Team:

1. What does Rapid Action mean?

"The term 'Rapid Action' stands for a customer contact concept. It was introduced in August 2015 because the MobiPro-EU drop-out rate for 445 participants was relatively high even before the start of vocational training in June 2015." (Christian Spelter)

2. Does the concept apply a preventative or reactive approach?

"Regular contact with project providers is intended to ensure that any need for action to support the project can be identified at an early stage and that specific measures can be agreed and implemented in good time. The objective of this type of close contact with project providers is to minimize the dropout rates of young people who receive support via MobiPro-EU during the entire process by means of continuous and high-quality counseling." (Christian Spelter)

3. Who is the target group?

"In particular, the project providers who provide continuous and in-depth support to trainees from the start of the project until the end of their vocational training. Via the project providers, we establish contact with the trainees and training companies, including vocational schools if necessary, in order to solve any problems that may arise and that might otherwise lead to the early termination of training." (Ina Rosenow)

4. In which phases of training does Rapid Action Consulting become active?

"Continuously in all phases of a project. Starting with the language course in the country of origin, continuing with the internship before the start of scheduled training until the end of the training program. Our goal is to continuously develop a close collaborative relationship through high contact density with project sponsors, trainees and training companies up to the vocational schools involved during current projects. The aim is not only to identify the trainees' problems, but also, if necessary, to offer early help for successful project implementation" (Ina Rosenow)

5. Is this addressed to individuals or groups?

“The scenarios involving Rapid Action are just as individual as the trainees themselves:

An individual may need help during a project for a variety of reasons. These may involve family difficulties, problems or communication difficulties with colleagues at work, superiors and/or classmates, teachers at vocational school or in the remedial teaching setting. Trainees can easily find themselves in emotionally stressful situations due to the pressure they feel to perform at school and in the workplace and the need to fulfil their expectations of themselves (‘Anything but failure’).

In these situations, Rapid Action measures in the form of one-on-one confidential meetings with MobiPro-EU consultants – if necessary, together with ‘support personnel’ at the project provider – are the best options.

Practice has shown that many trainees have similar problems in certain training phases:

In some cases, personal motivation to successfully complete the training program begins to sink. If some students do not come to training assistance classes on several occasions, a large part of the group may also suddenly stop coming – ‘why do I have to go if the others don’t?’ Even after holidays with family and friends in the country of origin, there are often relapses of homesickness, associated absenteeism and drops in performance.

In this case, group workshops and joint events at which the dynamics of the group can be positively influenced have proved to be effective. Young people realize that they are not alone with their problems and are able to support each other.” (Hauke Neidhardt)

6. Who actually approaches whom to involve Rapid Action?

“That depends entirely on the circumstances: We MobiPro-EU advisers are in regular contact with the project providers in order to identify impending problems and then work out solutions. This approach allows us to make a current and realistic assessment of the situation.

Sometimes problems that could not have been foreseen occur very spontaneously and the project providers or the trainees themselves take the initiative to contact us.

In most cases, the companies and vocational schools inform the project providers about current situations and they then consult with us. Depending on the problem, we then hold discussions with all parties involved and communicate possible solutions.

In other cases, the project providers are in very close contact with the staff of the Operational Service in Cologne, who then inform us about upcoming assignments.” (Hauke Neidhardt)

7. Which institutions can make use of Rapid Action? Who are the contact persons for these institutions?

“Since several parties are usually involved in the case of problems during training, and not just the trainees themselves, in a majority of cases MobiPro-EU advisers also have contact with other participants during any Rapid Action measures. This is the case both in the group and individually.

Institutions with which we have already worked include, for example, the local

Employment Agencies, Chambers of Trades and Chambers of Industry and Commerce as well as language course providers and providers of inter-company instruction and vocational schools.

In general, any of the institutions involved along the path to successfully obtaining vocational training can take advantage of Rapid Action and contact us.” (Jacqueline Meyer)

8. What are the steps involved in a Rapid Action process?

“MobiPro-EU advisers are in regular and close contact with the project providers so that we can ideally learn about problems early on. However, this is not the rule, as the trainees often contact support staff late and they in turn notify us. We can also be informed about a problem via the Operational Service in Cologne.

In any case, the project provider’s support staff will first be asked about the situation. In some cases, the project provider’s perspective is different so that it’s important to get their opinion as well.

Ideally, the meeting with the trainees should then be held in person and by Skype or telephone as an alternative.

In order to find a solution for all parties involved, the company is usually contacted and the vocational school as well in exceptional cases.

Depending on the problem, a case like this may take several months or MobiPro-EU advisers may be successful after one or more meetings, sometimes acting as a mediator.

After conclusion, we write a memo about the problems involved and this is sent to the Operational Service in Cologne.

The important thing is to ask regularly whether the problem (with the school, with the company, with the German course) was able to be solved or whether a new intervention is necessary.” (Jacqueline Meyer)

Jacqueline Meyer, International Personnel Service North Rhine-Westphalia

Ina Rosenow, International Personnel Service Berlin-Brandenburg

Hauke Neidhardt, International Personnel Service Hesse

Christian Spelter, International Personnel Service Bavaria

Institution surveyed:

The Rapid Action concept was developed by the International and Specialized Services of the Federal Employment Agency of Germany as part of the MobiPro-EU special program and is used to prevent training dropouts. Current Rapid Action employees were surveyed about the concept.

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