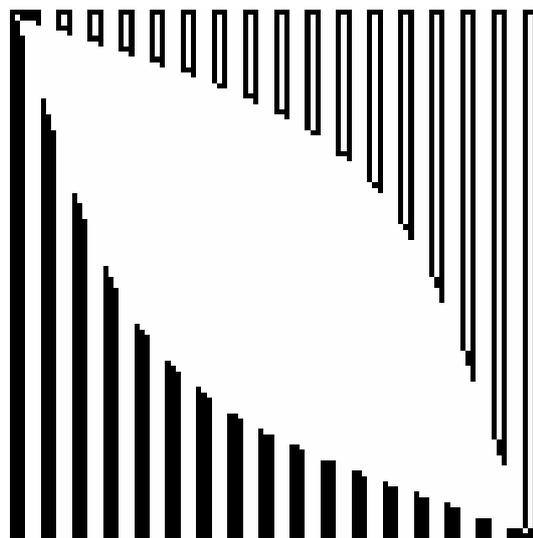


THEMATIC REVIEW ON ADULT LEARNING



GERMANY

BACKGROUND REPORT

OCTOBER 2003
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Adult learning of low-educated and low-skilled persons in Germany

Country Background Report
of the
OECD Thematic Review on Adult Learning

By commission of the
Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

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THE ASSIGNMENT

The Federal Republic of Germany is taking part in the sub-project entitled “Adult learning of the low-educated and low-skilled” within the framework of the OECD’s “Thematic review on adult learning (second round)”. The primary aim of the project is “to examine whether learning opportunities for adults are adequate and how adult education can respond to labour market training needs”.

In order to be able to clearly describe this group of persons in statistical terms, the following report concentrates on adult learning of persons who have not completed any general school and/or vocational training. This entails, first, examining labour market and adult learning policies targeting this group of people while providing a general overview of the adult learning programmes available to them, the extent to which people make use of these programmes, and an examination of good-practice measures.

The group of low-educated and low-skilled persons is not the same as the group often referred to in Germany as “disadvantaged” persons. The term “disadvantaged” (in German: *Benachteiligte*) also denotes, for example, single mothers, persons of non-German nationality or the handicapped. These groups of people also include, however, persons with a solid secondary school and/or vocational degree. The fact that they are “disadvantaged” is not primarily due to their lack of, or insufficient, formal education.

The OECD has proposed the focus of the review to be on the 25 to 64 year-old age group. For this reason, all educational policy activities which are aimed at persons who do not have secondary school or vocational qualifications, but which are primarily aimed at young people and young adults between 16 and 25 years of age, are not examined in any detail in this study.

The following background report limits itself to a presentation of policies and projects as well as statements of actors. It expressly refrains from making any direct assessments and evaluations. Its outline is for the most part based on OECD specifications.

A group consisting of representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (BMWA), the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB), the Federal Employment Services,¹ the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* (KMK) and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) provided the author consultative support. However, the author is entirely responsible for the content of this report.

1. From 1 January 2004: Federal Employment Agency. This report still uses the term Federal Employment Services.

1. FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

1.1 Organisation of adult learning/continuing education

This section briefly sketches those aspects which are important to an understanding of the special conditions which apply to the organisation and funding of continuing education for people who do not have any school or vocational qualification.²

According to a definition put forward by the German Council for Education (*Deutscher Bildungsrat*) in 1970, which was taken up and revised by the commission of experts on “Funding of Lifelong Learning” (*Expertenkommission “Finanzierung Lebenslangen Lernens”*), “adult learning/continuing education and training designates the continuation or resumption of formal, non-formal and/or informal learning of a general or vocational nature following the completion of widely differing periods of an initial phase of education” (Expertenkommission, 2002, p. 25).

Historical evolution

Continuing education and training evolved out of widely differing initiatives at the end of the 19th century: In addition to vocational training in commercial and business skills at “continuing education and training schools”, the organisations of the labour movement and the churches offered educational opportunities to adults both in the form of general education courses as well as to provide vocational qualification and to promote political and cultural education. The Constitution of the first German Republic of 1919 assigns the national government, the *Länder* and local communities with the task of promoting “general education, including adult education centres.” (Article 148 of the Constitution of the Weimar Republic).

After World War II, the *Länder* of the Federal Republic assumed responsibility for the educational system, including the obligation of promoting adult education, without, however, creating an adult learning structure comparable to that of the primary school or university education system. While adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen – VHS*) which are operated in the domain of local communities are the most common adult learning institutions, there is also a large variety of institutions sponsored by other agencies and organisations (*cf.* Table 1.).

In contrast to other areas of education in Germany, this “plurality of sponsoring agencies and organisations” is a characteristic feature of continuing education and training. It has not been created through government initiatives, but is rather the result of a process which has developed over a long period outside the pale of government attention. Even when the overwhelming majority of *Länder* passed continuing education laws in the 1960s, this was usually a reaction to what had already evolved and recognised the usefulness of educational work in practice and the need to promote it.

Structures

The following table provides a summary of organisations providing continuing education in Germany. Notably, the distinction between “general” and “vocational” continuing education plays an important role, as is explained in greater detail below.

2. A brief introduction to the situation in the area of continuing education and training in Germany is provided in Nuissl and Pehl, 2000.

Table 1. Participant shares in general and vocational continuing education and training among learning providers, 2000

<i>Providers</i>	<i>general continuing education</i>	<i>vocational continuing education</i>
Adult education centres (VHS)	27	2
Private institutes	11	9
Associations (not professional associations)	9	2
Employers/enterprises	9	53
Universities/ universities of applied sciences	6	3
Church-run agencies	5	less than 1
Non-denominational welfare associations	4	less than 1
Academies, scientific societies	3	3
Professional associations	2	5
Political parties, political foundations	2	0
Trade unions	2	1
Other	13	4
No information	7	6

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, pp. 231/241; author's estimates.

Domains of responsibility

While government usually intervenes in the school and university sector to establish structures, norms and regulations, it for the most part limits itself to supporting existing activities in the area of continuing education and training. This is, not the least, justified by the argument that the autonomy of the various continuing education and training institutions, funded by trade unions or churches, needs to be preserved.

Accordingly, the federal structure of the Federal Republic of Germany assigns the promotion of continuing education and training activities not only to the Federal government, but also to the *Länder*, and to not just one but several ministries at both levels. At the same time, the respective ministries only have limited domains of responsibility.

Put in extremely simplified terms, responsibilities are divided up as follows:

- Local communities sponsor adult education centres (VHS), which receive limited subsidies from the *Länder*. Local communities are also in charge of promoting continuing education and training of recipients of social assistance.
- The *Länder* ministries of education are responsible for all areas of continuing education and training which are related to the curricula and degrees in the area of general and vocational schools and of higher education. Politically-oriented continuing education is for the most part promoted through Federal and *Länder* offices for political education, which in some *Länder* are associated with the ministries of education; the responsibility for political education at the Federal government level is in the hands of the Central Federal Office for Political Education at the Ministry of the Interior.
- The Federal government is responsible for promotion of the non-school area of vocational training.

- The *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* (Federal Employment Service), based on Social Code III, promotes the continuing education and training of employed and, in particular, unemployed persons, with the objective of reintegrating them into the labour market.

The chambers of commerce – just like other chambers for the crafts, attorneys, tax consultants, etc. – are self-administrating economic entities with the right to issue their own continuing training regulations. These regulations only apply in the district of the respective chamber. While chambers generally do not fund continuing training programmes, most of them nevertheless do have their own continuing training facilities, whose work is funded with financial resources from the Federal Employment Services, enterprises or the participants themselves.

Funding

The majority of the big continuing education and training institutions are primarily funded through subsidies from these four funding agencies. The subsidies are paid either directly to the continuing education and training providers, or participants are reimbursed for the fees or tuition they pay by the said funding agencies. The fees which participants have to pay out of their own pockets generally only cover a part of the expenses – one-third with respect to the adult education centres.³ This means that most of the “private” continuing education and training providers today could not survive – at least not on the same scale – without the support of government-organised subsidies. On the other hand, however, this greatly reduces the importance of payments made by participants to educational facilities.

Promotion through EU programmes has gained increasing importance in recent years, particularly through the European Structural Funds.

In-company continuing education and training takes place largely independently of government promotional programmes. Under the German Works Constitution Act (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz* § 96), both the employer and the works council are responsible for the promotion of vocational training, *i.e.* the works council must be involved in organising continuing training and selecting those persons who are to undergo such training.

In addition, some collective bargaining partners (*e.g.* the metal-workers union’s collective agreement on continuing training for Baden-Württemberg and the chemical workers’ collective agreement package for 2003) have concluded detailed agreements setting out a right on the part of employees to continuing education and training with company support.⁴

The various responsibilities and players involved make it very difficult to ascertain *total expenditures on continuing education and training*. For this reason, estimates vary between EUR 25 and 60 billion.⁵ One reason for the different estimates is that the amount of expenditures is sometimes seen as a function of the right to regulate the area of continuing education and training. This leads to a certain “fuzziness” because what often appear to be the actors “paying” for the continuing education and training are frequently not the actual “actors bearing the costs”. For instance, the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* (Federal Employment Services) paid approximately EUR 6.7 billion for continuing vocational training in 2002. But half of this funding came from social security contributions by companies, and the other half from employees and, whenever

3. Thirty-eight percent on average in 2002, with considerable fluctuations between the German *Länder* or individual adult education centres (Pehl and Reitz, 2003).

4. For details, see Kruse, 2003.

5. For details, see. Ehmann, 2001; Expertenkommission, 2002.

these funds are insufficient, in the form of grants from the Federal Government. Thus, about half of this sum, respectively, should have been accounted for as costs of companies and employees.

The Federal government has assigned a commission of experts for the “funding of lifelong learning” to develop strategies for funding lifelong learning. The objective is to devise viable funding strategies taking into account opportunities for individuals, in particular for hard-to-reach groups, company and societal needs and distribution and redistribution requirements and constraints. The results will be available in the course of 2004.

1.2 The importance of secondary school degrees with regard to access to vocational training⁶

The system of secondary school and vocational degrees in Germany is set out in statutory regulations. For the most part, these are school regulations by the *Länder* and the Federal Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*). In addition to regulating access to school and vocational training programmes, these provisions also set out what successful achievement of degrees entitles their holders to. There are thus *generally* no admittance examinations for educational and training institutions. It is the successful completion of a studies programme, rather, which entitles the graduate to advance to the next educational level. Facilities providing general education thus determine what options are available to those persons who successfully graduate from them. At this point, it should be noted that responsibility for regulating secondary school and vocational studies programmes, and thus responsibility for regulations – and funding – concerning the achievement of such degrees later in life, lies in part in the domain of individual ministries of the Federal government, in part of the individual German *Länder*, and in part of local communities and their competent administrative departments. All project reports indeed emphasise the need to concentrate these various funding possibilities.

1.2.1 Secondary school degrees

The unique (with the exception of Switzerland) three-part school system in Germany is based on a tradition ranging back over more than two hundred years. It is generally defended nowadays with the argument that the talents and skills of young people can be identified at about 10 years of age and that phased promotion attuned to these skills beginning at this age conforms most closely to the needs of children and youth. There are also numerous possibilities after this age to improve on the degrees attained earlier.

The German educational system and the system of school degrees can be outlined as follows. The three traditional forms of secondary school take on pupils after they complete the first four years (the first six years in Berlin and Brandenburg) of primary or elementary school, where all pupils are together:

- The *Hauptschule* (secondary general school), which ends in the 9th grade (10th grade in some German *Länder*) with a “*Hauptschulabschluss*” (secondary general school diploma – a degree signifying completion of secondary level I). The latter entitles pupils, if they receive high enough marks in certain subjects, to attend a *Fachoberschule*, successful completion of which in turn entitles the pupil to study at a university of applied sciences, or a *Gymnasium* (upper-level secondary school). Completion of the *Gymnasium* via the *Abitur* entitles the graduate to study at a university or a university of applied sciences.
- The *Realschule* (intermediate school – middle-level secondary school), at which the “*mittlere Reife* (completion of secondary level I) can be awarded after the 10th grade. This degree allows the holder to attend a “*Fachoberschule*” and, if they receive high enough marks, a *Gymnasium*.

6. For a brief overview of the German qualification system, cf. Reuling and Hanf, 2002.

- The *Gymnasium*, where the *Abitur* is taken after altogether 12 or 13 years of schooling. Pupils who pass the *Abitur* are entitled to study at universities.

A diploma is awarded after a formal examination is passed in any of these three types of school.

1.2.2 Access to vocational training

The importance of secondary school degrees is mainly due to the fact that they often constitute the necessary prerequisites for attending study programmes which impart graduates with vocational qualifications. This applies only to those vocational qualifications which are provided in state educational facilities and educational facilities recognised by the state. Thus, for example, it is a binding requirement to have a secondary level I diploma to be able to attend (vocational) technical schools providing professional qualifications in the health sector, a *Fachoberschule* diploma to attend technical colleges, and the *Abitur* or a comparable degree to study at universities.

One important exception to this general set of rules is the arrangement allowing access to “in-company vocational training” (apprenticeship), *i.e.* training in the *dual system*.⁷ Here there are *no* formal school degrees stipulated by law. Access to in-company vocational training is thus – in principle – open to anyone who completes the school system without a degree.

Persons who do not have a *Hauptschulabschluss* (secondary general school diploma) receive this degree, however, when they successfully complete an “in-company training programme”, the reason being that this training, which can be achieved in different organisational models, usually lasts three years and is based on 480 hours of instruction per year, thus providing as many hours of instruction as a normal year at a general educational school. If at least average marks are received at the state vocational school and a final examination is passed, graduation from the vocational school places students at the same level as with the acquisition of a *Hauptschulabschluss*. If pupils have a *Hauptschulabschluss* before they begin their in-company training, they may also acquire the “*mittlere Reife*” at the end of the company training if in addition to at least satisfactory school marks they have also successfully taken a certain number of English classes.

Thus, it is possible to acquire degrees within the framework of the dual system which are usually only acquired in the general education system and which entitle the holder to attend higher-level general education schools. The possibility of acquiring a “secondary school degree” through apprenticeship is the reason why there are relatively few people “without a secondary school degree” among those persons who have a vocational degree. The generally open access to in-company training is limited in actual practice, however: Vacant training places are usually assigned solely by providers of in-company training places. This can lead to school degrees playing an important role here, depending upon the relationship between supply of and demand for training places at individual companies and the level of requirements in the particular occupation, as employers – for certain occupations – prefer young people who have passed the *Abitur* or who have the *mittlere Reife*. Thus, a simple *Hauptschulabschluss* only tends to provide access to some less coveted occupations.

Young people who do not have a *Hauptschulabschluss* and who have not been able to find a training place at a company are therefore increasingly forced to fall back on publicly funded vocational training programmes in the “second training market”. This training is structured along “dual” lines as well, which means that it combines two days of vocational school with practical vocational training at “non-company training facilities”. The quantitative importance of these facilities can be seen in the fact that the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* alone spent approximately EUR 0.83 billion in 2002 to finance a total of 155 000

7. For a more detailed look, cf. BMBF, 2000 a.

training positions, accounting for 11% of all company training positions (*cf.* Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2003). Some *Länder* offer additional programmes for this target group.

1.3 The economy, the labour market and demographic trends⁸

Like other highly developed industrialised countries, Germany is on the way to becoming a knowledge-based society. This implies that the scope and structure of qualification of the labour force is taking on a continuously growing importance. More concretely, it means that the need for workers with university and *Fachhochschule* (FHS, university of applied sciences) degrees is on the rise, while the demand for workers without vocational degrees is on the decline.

Table 2. Trends in the qualification structure of gainfully employed persons (not including trainees), in %

Degree	western Germany		eastern Germany		Germany	
	1991	2000	1991	2000	1991	2000
without vocational degree	18	16	6	5	16	14
with vocational degree	69	68	83	78	72	69
university and FHS	12	16	12	17	12	17

Source: Reinberg and Hummel, 2002, p. 581.

The percentage of employed persons with a degree from a university or *Fachhochschule* rose evenly from 12% to 16% and 17%, respectively, in western and eastern Germany between 1991 and 2000. Over the same period, the percentage of people without vocational degrees in western Germany declined from 18% to 16% and is now 14% for Germany as a whole, thanks to the high percentage of people who have undergone training in eastern Germany. These fundamental trends will most probably continue into the future as well. The two most recent projections of future qualification structures agree on this point.⁹

The question remains as to the expected employment trends in absolute terms. Here as well, the two projections are largely in agreement, forecasting a rise in demand for gainfully employed persons on a scale of one million and more up through 2015. This raises the question as to what extent the supply of labour with specific qualifications will be able to keep pace with this demand-side development.

Forecasts which seek to answer this question usually extrapolate the existing trends, *i.e.* major exogenous factors which could lead to changes in policies or attitudes of citizens are not taken into account. Against this background, forecasts relating to future trends tend to be rather sceptical, as there is a conjuncture of two unfavourable tendencies: first the demographic factor, and second a rather negative trend in qualifications – particularly at the bottom of the education structure – among the population over the last decade and a half (in contrast to the trend in the 1970s and early 80s) (*cf.* Table A.1).

1.3.1 Demographic trends: a quantitative constraint

The long-term trend first towards an ageing and then towards a significantly declining population in Germany is practically irreversible. Even a considerable rise in the birth rate – although there is no reason to expect such at present – or immigration on a scale which is economically and socially acceptable can at best slow this trend, but not stop it. For demographic reasons alone, a decline in demand for training is expected by the end of this decade.

8. The following observations are mostly based on the work of Reinberg and Hummel, 2002, pp. 580–599.

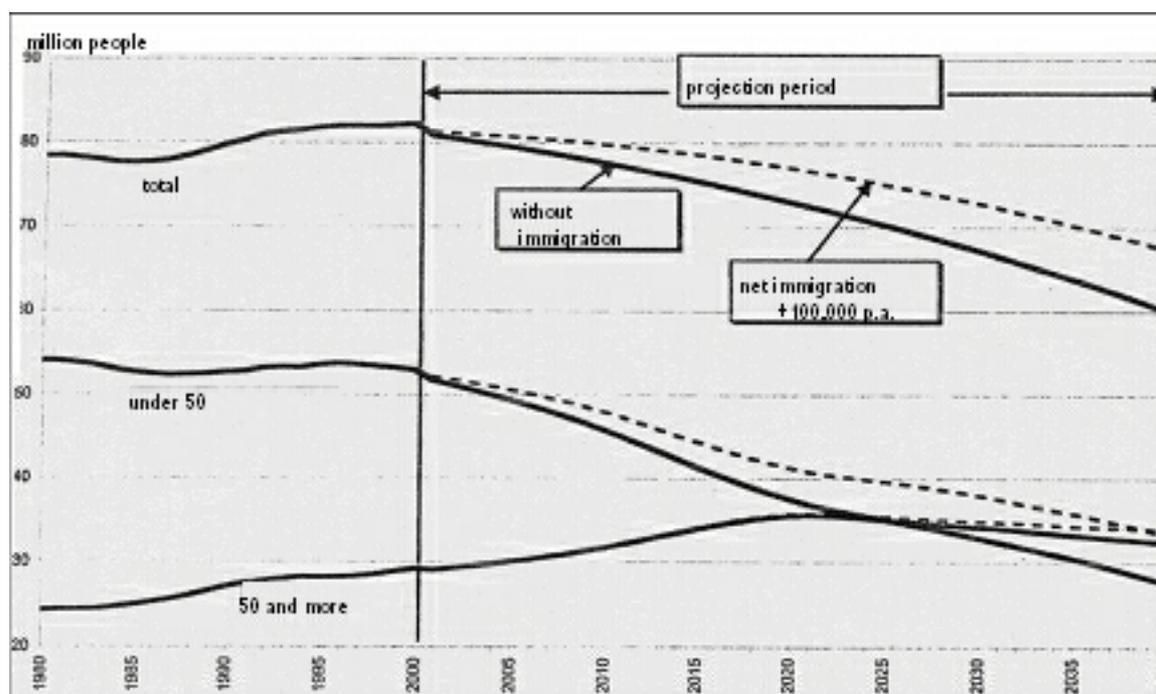
9. For details, see BMBF, 2000 b and BLK, 2002.

This only applies to Germany as a whole, however. There are in fact significantly different demographic trends in eastern and western Germany:

While there has been a slight increase in birth rates in western Germany since the mid-1980s, the birth rate in eastern Germany dropped by two-thirds between 1990 and 1995, and has only risen marginally since then.

Following unification, there was a considerable internal migration from eastern to western Germany, particularly among the 20 to 30 year old age group. For example, approximately one-third of this age group left Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in the period between 1990 and 1995.

Figure 1. Demographic trends by age group, 1980 – 2040



Source: Reinberg and Hummel, 2002, p. 586.

Demographic trends act as a constraint on the number of upcoming qualified workers. Within certain limits, however, declining age cohorts can be compensated for through greater qualification efforts. In fact, the expansion of education and training to produce more high-level school and vocational degrees has been supporting the structural change in the direction of increasingly demanding jobs for some time. This means for eastern Germany, however, that the migration trend will continue unabated at least as long as this part of the country is saddled with high unemployment, since better-qualified persons show significantly greater mobility.

1.3.2 Qualification trends in the population

The expansion in training and education which set in during the mid- and late 1980s subsequently gave way to *stagnation*. Evidence of this can be found both in the areas of general and vocational education. Improvements since 1990 have been almost exclusively attributable to the increased numbers of young women in higher education.

The data have been broken down according to the old and new German *Länder* because the two parts of Germany have differed fundamentally in terms of the qualification structure of the population, while aggregate figures would only obfuscate these differences and not shed any additional light on the situation.

Table 3. **Completion of general education by degree and gender, 1960 – 2000 (% of the typical average annual cohort)¹⁰**

Gender	Old Länder and West Berlin					New Länder and East Berlin	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1992	2000
<i>without general secondary school degree*</i>							
Women		15.8	8.1	6.9	6.7	3.4	7.9
Men		18.7	12.4	10.2	11.0	7.2	15.5
Total	17.3	17.3	10.3	8.6	8.9	5.2	11.8
<i>with higher education entrance qualifications**</i>							
Women	4.5	8.3	14.8	22.3	26.5	18.5	33.7
Men	7.7	12.2	15.2	20.8	21.2	11.7	20.8
Total	6.1	10.3	15.0	21.6	23.8	15.0	26.9

* In % of the average annual cohort of the 15 or 16 year old population.

** In % of the average annual cohort of the 18, 19 or 20 year old population.

Source: Reinberg and Hummel, 2002, p. 589f.

While the percentage of young people who did not achieve a *Hauptschulabschluss* in western Germany up to 1990 was halved in comparison to 1970, *i.e.* within twenty years, it has been on the rise since then, especially in eastern Germany. By contrast, the percentage of persons achieving the *Hochschulreife* in western Germany up to 1990 more than tripled – from 6.1% (in 1960) to 21.6% (in 1990). Since then, however, the increase has slowed down noticeably. The fact that there has still been a perceptible rise in the number of entrance qualifications for higher education since then is primarily due to the need for eastern Germany to catch up. Up to 1990, the percentage of an annual cohort going on to study at universities in this part of the country was not supposed to exceed 15% for political reasons.

Because vocational qualification trends, as described in section 1.2, are for the most part a function of prior events in the area of school education, the same trends can be identified in this area.

10. For more detail, see Annex Table A.1.

Table 4. People entering into different vocational training programmes by gender 1960 – 2000 (% of a typical average annual cohort)¹¹

Gender	Old Laender and West Berlin					New Laender and East Berlin	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1992	2000
<i>BVJ/BGJ/BVB*</i>							
Women			10.3	13.2	16.6	10.1	13.4
Men			17.6	18.1	23.2	16.5	23.6
Total			14.1	15.7	20.0	13.4	18.7
<i>Vocational schools **</i>							
Women			38.5	41.6	52.1	46.5	39.0
Men			28.3	34.4	39.2	17.2	19.5
Total			33.3	37.9	45.5	32.2	28.9
<i>Company apprenticeship ***</i>							
Women		48.4	48.2	67.4	60.8	72.3	57.8
Men		63.7	69.7	75.0	75.7	78.0	72.5
Total		56.2	59.3	71.3	68.4	75.3	65.4

* According to *Bildungsgesamtrechnung*; BVJ = Year for preliminary vocational training; BGJ = could be recognised as 1st year of vocational training; BVM= measures preparing people for vocational training.

** According to *Bildungsgesamtrechnung*; one and two-year *Berufsfachschulen*, including technical schools in the health sector; not including part-time vocational schools.

*** In % of the average annual cohort of the 16, 17 or 18 year old population.

Source: Reinberg and Hummel 2002, pp. 589 – 591.

There was a significant increase in the number of apprenticeship start-ups between 1970 (56.2%) and 1990 (71.3%), *i.e.* in the dual system of vocational training in western Germany. Subsequently, there was a decline both in western and eastern Germany. By contrast, the percentage of people who had to be “propped up” through alternative government programmes rose between 1990 and 2000. These support measures are the *schulische Berufsvorbereitungsjahr* (BVJ) and the *Berufsgrundbildungsjahr* (BG) paid for by the *Länder* because it involves a “school” setting, and the “*Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen*”, paid for by the labour administration because they take place in non-company training facilities. These training programmes are for the most part designed as a preliminary stage before vocational training. The vocational training system increasingly performs compensatory tasks to counteract deficits in the general educational system. Because these training programmes do not lead to independent degrees, large numbers of young people *de facto* go through the secondary level II several times, which ties up considerable financial resources and delays the transition to employment (Rothe, 2002, p. 297).

While vocational (technical) schools do not technically constitute “alternative measures”, they are in effect used as such at present on a large scale, especially in eastern Germany.

Following these qualification trends in the 1970s and 80s, which were supported both by school authorities and enterprises, the percentage of unskilled workers of employable age in the population declined up to the beginning of the 1990s, while the percentage of the population with a vocational qualification rose considerably. Since the early 1990s a certain stagnation is obvious – apart from the continued rise in the percentage of persons with a degree from higher learning. Since this time about thirty per cent of the population in western Germany (of employable age, not of gainfully employed persons) have not received a professional or vocational degree. This high percentage is not only due to recent waves

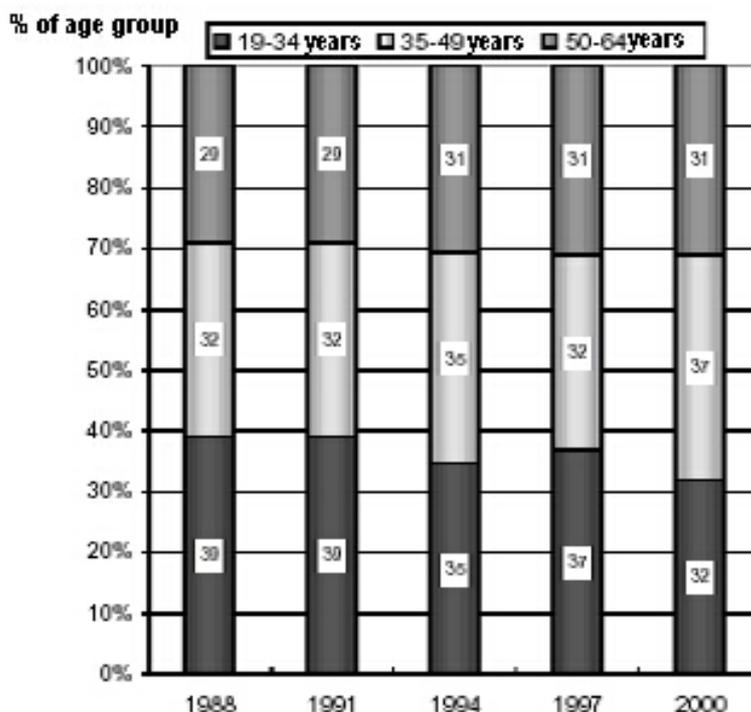
11. For more detail, see Annex Table A.2.

of immigration. Although the percentage of unskilled labour among persons whose mother tongue is not German is very high, well over three-fourths of the population without a vocational degree speak German as a native tongue.

These findings run counter to the long-term trend, according to which younger people were always better qualified than older segments of the population. In view of the relatively high qualification level of the older part of the population, it will hardly be possible for demographically weak age cohorts to replace them in sufficient numbers, when they retire from working life.

This reversal in the trend – whereby younger cohorts were always better qualified than the older generation – is also demonstrated by a glance at statistics on continuing education and training: While the share of 19 to 34 year-olds in the total population declined from 39% in 1988 to 32% in 2000, *i.e.* by one-sixth, the percentage of cases where persons from this age group participated in continuing education and training dropped by one-third, from 51% in 1988 to 34% in 2000 (Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, pp. 92-93). This drop is due neither to the decline in the percentage of persons in this age group participating in continuing education and training – this figure rose from 24% in 1991 to 30% in 2000 – nor a longer period of time spent by younger people undergoing their initial training. One possible reason for this trend is to be found in the increasing percentage of qualified workers among total unemployed persons since the late 1970s and early 80s. The correlation between completion of vocational education and a secure job, long believed to be a given, has been unravelling over the past two decades.

Figure 2. Demographic trends in age structure 1988 – 2000



Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 92.

Figure 3. Demographic trends in participation in continuing vocational training by age group 1988 – 2000



Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 93.

The combination of demographic trends, educational participation of the younger generation (up to 35 years of age) and the projected requirements of the labour market allow the following supply of demand for labour to be forecast for 2015 (BLK, 2002): The supply of persons of working age with a university degree and, to a lesser degree, of persons who have completed a vocational training programme, will be lower than demand. On the other hand, the supply of labour without any vocational or educational degree will continue to exceed demand.

The following five approaches have been proposed as a way to confront this projected shortage of skilled labour (Reinberg and Hummel, 2002):

- An improvement in employment prospects for older staff;
- Better employment opportunities and conditions for women;
- Controlled immigration of qualified skilled labour from foreign countries;
- Subsequent qualification of employed persons who have not completed a vocational training programme;
- Greater efforts to educate and train up-and-coming generations.

Attempts to provide more continuing education and training for the low-skilled must therefore be seen as a long-term programme aimed at confronting the looming shortage of skilled labour in various ways. The extent to which success has been achieved in this segment thus far is examined in chapters 3 and 4.

2. PERSONS WITHOUT A VOCATIONAL DEGREE IN THE LABOUR MARKET

This chapter provides an overview of persons without a vocational degree grouped according to level of schooling, nationality, gender and age. A special section looks at “illiterate” persons, since special educational and training programmes are needed for this group. Activities in policy and law-making which are aimed at the group of “non-formally qualified persons” (NFQ) are listed in the final section of this chapter.

Employment statistics indicate the following trends in the share of employed persons without a vocational degree as a percentage of, first, total employment and, second, the employed over 25 years of age:

Table 5. **Employees subject to mandatory social security coverage without vocational training, 1988 to 2002**

years	Total Employees	among them without vocational training*	in %	above 25 years of age	among them without vocational training	in %
1988	21,045,360	5,966,407	28.3	16,653,959	3,783,866	22.7
1990	22,386,087	5,824,371	26.0	18,008,025	3,878,706	21.0
1992	23,530,259	5,663,199	24.0	19,524,102	3,951,465	20.2
1994	28,238,193	5,529,086	19.6	24,269,815	3,860,247	15.9
1996	27,238,996	5,161,873	18.9	24,234,807	3,587,468	14.8
1998	27,207,804	5,018,531	18.4	23,827,070	3,379,708	14.2
2000	27,825,624	4,994,813	17.9	24,238,782	3,270,357	13.5
2002	27,571,147	4,732,700	17.1	24,040,001	3,092,165	12.8

*Including casually employed students and pupils.

Source: Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, 2003; special analysis carried out for this report.

The decline in the percentage of people without any vocational training, particularly between 1992 and 1994, is due to a change in data base: from 1994 onwards, the figures also include employees in eastern Germany. Although combining eastern and western Germany has raised the total number of persons subject to mandatory social security requirements in these statistics, this scarcely had any effect on the absolute number of persons without vocational training because in the GDR there were few people who did not complete vocational training programmes.

For a number of years, the share of persons without any vocational training has been much higher among the unemployed (between 35 and 40%) than among the employed; they currently account for 1.3 to 1.4 million persons.¹² Thus, between 5.0 and 5.5 million (employed and currently unemployed) persons without a vocational degree (after subtracting the number of people undergoing training who will eventually receive a degree) are competing for jobs on the German labour market.

12. These figures, which are based on statistics from the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit*, are slightly inflated because the Bundesanstalt counts employees according to their last employment (of longer duration) and counts employed persons working in occupations that do not correspond to their vocational degree as “without training”.

The detailed analysis below from the 1996 micro-census comes up with a similar estimate.¹³ Thus about 28% of the population in the 15-to-64 age group, or 15.4 million people, did not have any vocational degree. People who were undergoing training or performing military or alternative civilian service during this period must be subtracted from this number, as people undergoing training, usually younger people, are aiming to get a degree and for this reason cannot be counted as permanently or long-term “non-formally qualified” (NFQ). The same goes for people performing military or alternative civilian service who have not yet commenced training or education. If one subtracts these two groups, the number of persons without a vocational degree in the population in 1996 is reduced to 9.5 million, of which 5.3 million were employed. This corresponds to an employment rate of 56%. By comparison, the rate of employment among persons with vocational qualifications was 81.7% for the same age group (15 to 64).

Table 6. **Percentage of non-formally qualified persons by age within total population and population of working age, 1996**¹⁴

Age	Total population of working age without any vocational degree	Population of working age without a vocational degree, outside of education, training, and military or alternate civilian service		
		total	employed	
	In '000	in '000.	in '000	employment rate in %
15 – 24	6,219	934	607	65.0
25 – 34	2,378	1,812	1,227	67.7
35 – 44	1,835	1,800	1,290	71.7
45 – 54	1,914	1,906	1,254	65.8
55 – 64	3,097	3,094	955	30.9
Total	15,443	9,546	5,333	55.9

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 7.

2.1 Non-formally qualified persons according to general education degrees

Only 13% of all “unskilled” employed people (not undergoing education or training or performing military/alternative civilian service) do not have any general secondary school degree. 7% have even passed the *Abitur*, 13% the *Mittlere Reife* and 67% have a *Hauptschulabschluss*.

13. More recent analyses are not available in this detail. Because changes in training and educational behaviour and their impact on the labour market are only recognised over longer time periods, the absolute figures may need to be corrected slightly, although they tend to conform to trends discernible in newer data which have not yet been analysed in depth.

14. For more detail, see Annex Table A.3.

Table 7. Employed persons according to school degree, 1996

School degree	Without vocational degree in %	With vocational/university degree in %
Without school degree	13	<1
Hauptschulabschluss	67	40
Mittlere Reife	13	37
Abitur/FHS-Reife ¹⁵	7	23

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 12.

The low percentage of employed persons with a vocational qualification but without a secondary school degree is explained by the fact that, as mentioned in section 1.2, people completing apprenticeship training in the dual system can receive recognition commensurate with the *Hauptschulabschluss*.

The considerable differences in school degrees among non-formally qualified persons are also reflected in their occupational position. Thus 87% of all low-skilled people without a school degree are blue-collar wage-earners, usually employed in semi-skilled positions. Concerning persons with a *Hauptschulabschluss*, however, their positions in companies are spread out more widely. Although most of these are also employed as unskilled and semi-skilled workers (60%), 16% are white-collar (salaried) workers and about 7% are self-employed.

The group of people with higher-level school degrees shows a much different picture. These work primarily as salaried employees (45% of those with *Mittlere Reife*, 47% of those with *Abitur*) or civil servants (5 or 4%) and by no means only in undemanding positions. Especially among people with *Abitur* but without vocational degree, one finds many in upper-level salaried positions (28.7%), in part employed as managers (13.6%). In addition, NFQs with *Abitur* often earn their living as self-employed persons. These include of course university drop-outs, who often work in reputable, demanding positions.

The range of employment possibilities is thus considerably broader among NFQs with higher-level secondary school degrees, and their occupational flexibility is correspondingly higher. This reduces their vulnerability to recessions or structural changes in the labour market, which is reflected by considerable differences in unemployment rates of the various groups.

Table 8. Unemployment- and employment rates by school and vocational degree, 1996

Degrees	Unemployment rate in %		Employment rate in %	
	no vocational degree	vocationally qualified	no vocational degree	vocationally qualified
No school degree	26.8	21.3	51.1	77.9
Hauptschule	18.3	10.2	53.7	73.9
Mittlere Reife	18.5	9.6	69.6	87.2
Abitur/FHS-Reife ¹⁶	12.9	5.4	68.3	89.1
Total	19.1	8.9	55.9	81.7

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 10.

15. "FHS-Reife": Qualification entitling holder to study at a *Fachhochschule* (university of applied sciences). It may usually be obtained after 12 years of schooling at a *Fachoberschule* or – under certain conditions – at other vocational schools.

16. See footnote 15.

While employment rates for non-formally qualified people are usually below the level of the population who have completed vocational training, including college education, they also vary with the type of school degree. Participation in the labour force of NFQs without a secondary general school diploma (51.1%) and with such a diploma (53.7%) is thus much lower than for NFQs with higher-level educational and vocational degrees (69.9% or 68.3%).

A similar relationship is evident with respect to the risk of unemployment. At 19.1%, the unemployment rate for all NFQs in 1996 was more than twice as high as that for vocationally qualified persons (8.9%). And unemployment was especially likely in this group whenever persons had not completed secondary school (26.8%). The lowest employment opportunities and the highest labour market risks are thus borne by NFQs who have not completed secondary school. 92% of the population who have not completed secondary school do not have any vocational degree, either. This applies to all age groups, and is thus a phenomenon unrelated to the economic cycle. NFQs who have not completed secondary school thus constitute the “hard core” among NFQs.

2.2 Non-formally qualified persons according to nationality

At 29%, there are three times as many foreigners among the non-formally qualified labour force than among all economically active.

As far as the labour-market position of non-formally qualified persons is concerned, there are no fundamental differences between Germans and foreign nationals. The jobless rate in this group is significantly higher than among vocationally qualified persons irrespective of nationality. Thus, at 17.6%, Germans without any vocational degree are more likely to be unemployed than foreigners with vocational/university degrees. Hence, vocational education and training play a greater role than nationality when it comes to labour market opportunities.

Table 9. Unemployment rates by qualification and nationality, 1996

<i>School degree</i>	<i>No vocational degree</i>			<i>Vocationally qualified persons</i>		
	<i>Germans in %</i>	<i>foreigners in %</i>	<i>total in %</i>	<i>Germans in %</i>	<i>foreigners in %</i>	<i>total in %</i>
Without secondary school degree	24.4	28.6	26.8	19.6	25.4	21.3
Hauptschulabschluss	17.5	20.8	18.3	9.8	16.0	10.2
Mittlere Reife	17.9	22.2	18.5	9.5	13.7	9.6
Abitur/FHS-Reife	11.2	18.0	12.9	4.8	13.3	5.4
Total	17.6	22.7	19.1	8.6	14.9	8.9

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 11.

The various nationalities differ significantly in terms of their qualification structure in some cases, however. Although the share of employed foreigners of most nationalities without vocational or secondary school degrees is more or less significantly higher than in the comparable German group, this is particularly pronounced among employed Turkish nationals: Almost two-thirds of this group (63%) do not have any vocational degree and 20% do not have a secondary school degree.

Along with citizens from EU countries, Turks accounted for almost one-third of all employed foreigners in the German labour market (29%) in 1996, followed by persons from the territory of former Yugoslavia. Together these two nationalities account for almost half (47%) of the entire foreign labour supply (Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 12).

2.3 Non-formally qualified persons according to gender

Women and men each account for half of the labour supply of NFQs (51% women, 49 % men). The share of women is thus considerably higher than for employed persons who have completed vocational or university education (42% to 58%). Nevertheless, the employment rate is extremely low for non-formally qualified women. It is not only below the level of low-qualified men, but also significantly lower than for qualified women. This applies to all age groups, but especially for women above the age of 55.

Table 10. **Employment rates, 1996**

Age	No vocational degree			Vocationally qualified persons		
	men in %	women in %	total in %	men in %	women in %	total in %
15 – 24	77.7	53.1	65.0	97.2	91.7	94.5
25 – 34	88.9	51.4	67.7	98.4	81.8	90.3
35 – 44	90.0	59.5	71.7	97.8	80.9	89.8
45 – 54	85.1	56.3	65.8	94.7	77.3	86.7
55 – 64	46.7	24.4	30.9	58.5	40.6	50.9
Total	76.1	44.3	55.9	88.6	73.7	81.7

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 12.

2.4 Non-formally qualified persons according to age

Each of the three age groups between 25 and 54 represent about one-fourth of the labour supply of non-formally qualified persons. At 18%, the share of the age group 55 to 64 is significantly lower than this, as is the share accounted for by the 15-to-24 age group (11%).

Table 11. **Labour force (without apprentices) by age group, 1996**

age	No vocational degree in %	with vocational/university degree in %
15 – 24	11	7
25 – 34	23	28
35 – 44	24	29
45 – 54	24	23
55 – 64	18	13

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 19.

As far as age-specific employment rates are concerned, the basic pattern seen above is also prevalent. Employment rates for NFQs are below the level for vocationally qualified persons in all age groups. If one looks at the internal structure, the employment rates for NFQs who do not have a secondary school degree is once again lower than for those who have a secondary school degree.

Table 12. Employment rates of non-formally qualified persons, by age and school degree, 1996

Age	vocationally qualified persons in %	persons without vocational degree in %				
		total	no school degree	Hauptschulabschluss	Mittlere Reife	Abitur/FH-Reife
15 – 24	94.5	65.0	47.0	68.4	73.6	62.1
25 – 34	90.3	67.7	56.2	68.5	76.0	71.3
35 – 44	89.8	71.7	61.1	72.4	78.1	76.2
45 – 54	86.7	65.8	55.9	66.5	73.5	70.7
55 – 64	50.9	30.9	33.4	30.0	36.3	45.2
Total	81.7	55.9	51.1	53.7	69.6	68.3

Source Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 19.

Although not even one-third of all NFQs aged 55 to 64 are available in the labour market, more than 20% of them are unemployed. This could be related to the fact that a certain physical fitness is required of low-qualified persons, and these do not always possess this fitness after years of physically demanding work. Although labour-force participation among NFQs aged 15 to 24 is relatively high at 65%, almost one out of three (32.3%) are unemployed. If they do not have a secondary school degree, the jobless rate rises to almost 40%.

Table 13. Jobless rate of non-formally qualified persons by age and school degree, 1996

Age	vocationally qualified persons in %	persons without vocational degree in %				
		total	no school degree	Hauptschulabschluss	Mittlere Reife	Abitur/FH-Reife
15 – 24	10.4	32.3	39.5	34.1	31.4	20.4
25 – 34	7.9	18.7	24.8	18.4	18.5	12.7
35 – 44	7.4	15.3	22.1	15.0	13.4	9.4
45 – 54	8.1	15.6	24.3	14.4	15.7	9.7
55 – 64	15.5	20.7	33.9	19.9	12.9	8.5
Total	8.9	19.1	26.8	18.3	18.5	12.9

Source Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 20.

For 1996 Reinberg/Walwei report NFQ shares¹⁷ of 10.3% for youth and young adults aged 15 to 24 and 14.0% for 25 to 34 year olds. Although there are demarcation and categorisation problems, these statistics are confirmed by current studies. Thus, Klemm (2000) offers statistics from the 1998 micro-census for the age group 20 to 29 indicating a figure of 11.5% for NFQs. The BIBB/EMNID survey (Troltsch *et al.*, 1999) estimates the share of persons without a vocational degree at 11.6% for the 20 to 29 age group in 1998. At the same time, both studies agree that the tendency to not undergo vocational training is on the rise. For instance, more than one-third of young NFQs are not seeking training anymore.

17. In relation to the total population of the same age (Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 6).

2.5 The scope of illiteracy

In the Federal Republic of Germany it is almost exclusively so-called “*secondary illiteracy*” which applies to the German population. This means that the person affected has major difficulties reading and writing in spite of having attended school. (In some developing countries where it is not possible for many children to attend school, there is “*primary*” illiteracy.)

The term “*functional*” *illiteracy* is also frequently used. This refers to a condition in which the persons involved do not meet minimum societal standards (which are not directly defined) with respect to command of the written language and for this reason cannot take part in written communication in the various areas of work and life, or can only do so insufficiently. This impinges greatly on the quality of life of such persons as well as the exercise of their rights as citizens in a democratic state.

So far there are no *empirically verifiable statistics* on the number of illiterate persons in Germany (or other countries, either). A *clear definition of the term* “illiterate” is needed before statistics of this kind can be gathered, including exact criteria on language qualifications and skills which distinguish a literate person from an illiterate one.

There is at present no definition of functional illiteracy which applies internationally, and thus there are no statistics on this, either. It is difficult to come up with such a definition, as there are different minimum requirements which apply to the ability of people to communicate – requirements which depend on the economic and social development of countries. For this reason it is only possible to make cross-cultural comparisons on a limited scale. In addition, the (minimum) requirements for written-language competencies are subject to constant changes, which makes it necessary to constantly revise any definition.

It frequently occurs that people attend literacy courses who could successfully deal with written-language requirements applying to their jobs at the beginning of their career, but who are no longer able to meet today’s changing requirements.

UNESCO made several *estimates* in the 1980s which suggested an illiteracy rate of 0.75% to 3% of the adult German population over 15 (Döbert and Hubertus, 2000, p. 27). On the basis of the 2003 population, this would mean that there are approximately 0.5 to 2.1 million adults who are functional illiterates in Germany.

A range of other attempts have been made to determine the share of illiterates defined as such in the population of working age. The study which is cited most often at present is the International Adult Literacy Survey, which not only determines weaknesses in dealing with texts, but also figures and diagrams. The share of the employable population which show clear deficits is 6.7% (numeracy), 9.0% (schematic descriptions), 14.4% (text comprehension) (*cf.* OECD/Statistics Canada, 1995, p. 57).

The results of the PISA study can be viewed as confirming these figures. Thus 10% of youth aged 15 are among the group that does not meet the lowest competency level requirements (Deutsches PISA-Konsortium 2001, p. 120).

2.6 Promotion of non-formally qualified persons through policy and law-making

In the GDR virtually every young person received a vocational degree. In western Germany, it became the declared goal of all relevant social groups to provide each young person with a vocational degree at the beginning of the 1970s. In addition, provisions for supporting employees under the

Employment-Promotion Act (*Arbeitsförderungsgesetz*), passed in 1969, were meant to facilitate the acquisition of vocational degrees at a later stage in life, including by people who are already working.

Promotion of young people and young adults

The promotion of young people has priority in policy and law-making in Germany, in order to avoid having unskilled persons flood the labour market:

- 1) The most important objective is to expand the number of in-company training places (dual system). After expansion in the 1970s, a peak with over 700 000 in-company training places was reached in 1984. After a phase with numbers below 600 000 since 1989, this threshold was crossed again in 1998. More recent numbers since 2002 do not point to a steady increase (BMBF, 2000 a, p. 2; BMBF, 2003, p. 3).
- 2) Since the 1970s the Federal government established a system of vocational training outside of companies for “disadvantaged” persons – young people who do not find an in-company training place. This project, which was initially operated as a pilot project, was assigned to the Labour Administration by law in 1987. It took on special importance following reunification and the collapse of (training) companies in eastern Germany and has been continued down to the present day. In eastern Germany in particular, it has for some time now not only been the “disadvantaged” who have been included in this programme. The programme has, rather, in many cases served as an alternative measure to compensate for the lack of company training places.

This programme of the Federal government and the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* has been supplemented by a large number of *Länder* programmes since the mid-1980s. Generally companies receive a grant from the *Länder* of up to EUR 6 000 for each additional training place they establish.

- 3) The concentration on youth and young adults has received additional impetus from the decision of the heads of governments of the Member States of the European Union at the employment summit held on 21 November 1997, according to which it is to be ensured by 2003 that no young person should spend more than one-half year without either a job or training, which means that they are to receive a training place, a job or be included in a retraining programme after half a year of unemployment. In 1998 the newly elected Federal German government, in conformity with this European agreement, instituted a special programme to combat youth unemployment for 1999: “Jump”, which provided for additional support of training and employment for 100 000 youth and young adults and in the framework of which it was possible to promote attempts to obtain the *Hauptschulabschluss* and to acquire a vocational degree later in life.
- 4) The guidelines of the Council of the European Union dated 19 January 2001 strengthen this youth-oriented path. “The Member States shall design programmes aimed at cutting in half the number of 18 to 24 year olds who only have a secondary level I degree and have not attended any higher-level secondary school or vocational training by 2010.”
- 5) On the whole, about 9% of all “on-the-job” training in Germany is provided outside the company. This means training which is funded completely or almost completely through state programmes or Labour Administration programmes without any training contract with a company (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2003, p. 90; cf. also chapter 1.2).

In spite of these measures, some groups of persons are only reached to a lesser extent than average. It would appear that these persons include those whose participation in training has deteriorated in comparison to previous years. These groups include almost all young foreign nationals, with the largest

group being that of Turkish youth, in particular young women, as well as young ethnic Germans from the former Warsaw Pact countries (*cf.* Inbas, p. B. 8/9).

Target group of adults over 25

- 1) As only up-and-coming generations can be reached with youth programmes, the Federal government initiated a “pilot project series on vocational qualification of adults who have not received vocational training and who are subject to a special risk in the labour market” as far back as the 1980s to supplement the programme for disadvantaged young persons.
- 2) In 1996, the Standing Committee of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training, in which the Federal government, the *Länder*, employers and trade unions work together, once again took up the topic and issued several recommendations on the need for qualification by people over 25 years of age:
 - Recommendation on the elimination of long-term unemployment;
 - Recommendation on the qualification of persons without a vocational degree by focussing on obtaining degrees later in life in conjunction with employment;
 - Recommendation on the promotion of degrees in a recognised occupation through external examinations.
- 3) In 1999, a project on “New paths to vocational degrees – innovative measures for obtaining vocational qualifications for unskilled and semi-skilled young adults later in life” was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. It aimed at disseminating findings generated in pilot projects, expanding upon insights gained elsewhere and turning such vocational measures into permanent fixtures and was completed in 2002 (Inbas, 2003).
- 4) In 2000, the social partners, together with the Federal government in the Alliance for Jobs, Training and Competitiveness (“*Bündnis für Arbeit*“), issued a recommendation on “Innovation and learning – further development of vocational learning opportunities in working life”, which listed “additional continuing education and training ideas for low-qualified persons” as one of the most important fields of action.
- 5) The “Training and Education Forum”, in which the Federal government and *Länder* drafted recommendations on the reform of the training and education system together with representatives of societal groups, called for the “broad implementation of a qualification strategy of groups of persons with low qualifications” in its 2001 recommendation on “Avoiding and eliminating exclusion” (Forum Bildung, 2001, p. 32)
- 6) With the Job AQTIV Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2003, new support mechanisms were created in Social Code III in addition to the already-existing possibilities to directly promote employees without any vocational degree. The Act stipulates that “employers in charge of employees whose need for continuing vocational training is recognised due to their lack of a vocational degree ... (can be) supported by grants relating to their wage remuneration if the continuing training is carried out within the framework of an existing employment relationship” (§ 235 c). This provision supplements the general stipulation that continuing vocational training is considered necessary – and can be subsidised – if the employee does not have a vocational degree (§ 77, section 1 of Social Code III)

- 7) Furthermore, programmes have been initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, partly with the support of the European Union, which especially support “learning in the regions” and co-operation between training facilities in the regions. These are described in detail in the German contribution for the OECD project “Co-financing lifelong learning” (Kruse, 2003).
- 8) After criticism had been voiced regarding the quality of programmes in the area of continuing vocational training promoted under the Social Code, regulations and arrangements relating to continuing vocational training were reformed in the so-called Hartz laws. Greater competition between agencies and organisations which sponsor training and greater self-determination on the part of participants on the one hand, and the aforementioned launch of quality-management systems among training organisations and institutions on the other, are meant to bring about an improvement in quality. The switch in the procedure from assigning trainees to training institutions to a system in which the participants are able to freely choose a training institution, and where these have to actively compete to attract participants, has led to transitional problems. These have been exacerbated by the fact that the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* changed its business policy since the 1970s, tending away from continuing vocational training, and more towards other placement tools. These problems had less impact in the area of retraining (*Umschulung*), however, than in the area of continuing vocational training on the whole.

3. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PERSONS WITHOUT SECONDARY SCHOOL OR VOCATIONAL DEGREE

3.1 Participation by people without secondary school or vocational degrees in continuing education and training

The correlation between low levels of education and vocational qualification on the one hand, and limited involvement in continuing education and training programmes on the other, has been receiving attention for many years. The INFAS study on “non-participants” in continuing education and training which was commissioned by the Commission of Experts on the Funding of Lifelong Learning (*cf.* Schröder, Schiel and Aust, 2004) comes to the conclusion that the correlation between “non-participation” and lack of secondary school and vocational degrees is even more significant than that between participation and gainful employment. In other words, if people are not successfully brought through secondary school or led to a vocational training degree, it is hardly possible to motivate them to take part in continuing education and training using the financial resources which have been applied to date. Thus, about 13% of the labour force have never taken part in continuing education and training and do not intend to ever do so. This group is usually to be found in occupations which are insecure and receive below-average levels of remuneration. It is therefore logical that their financial latitude and freedom is more restricted than for other groups. However, their limited willingness to invest in continuing education and training is less a result of their lower income, but rather due to their rejection of continuing education and training, given the fact that for low-income groups there are a host of promotional opportunities coupled with the possibility to attend continuing education courses free of charge.

The following statistics are largely based on the “Continuing Education and Training Reporting System” (*Berichtssystem Weiterbildung* – BSW; Kuwan *et al.*, 2003), but do not take the aforementioned study into account, although they convey the same trends. They have been analysed with an eye to exposing those areas where this correlation is particularly pronounced, and in which areas it could be counteracted through deliberate measures.

3.1.1 Participation according to the Continuing Education and Training Reporting System (BSW)

The “Continuing Education and Training Reporting System (BSW)” is a representative random sampling of participation in continuing education and training among 19 to 64 year olds in Germany, published every three years since 1979. The last published data set was collected in 2000 (Kuwan *et al.*, 2003). The long time period during which these statistics have been produced allows, to a limited extent, to draw conclusions regarding “cycles in continuing education and training” and their possible causes. The surveys distinguish between participation in “general continuing education” and “continuing vocational training” (see Table 14 and 15). The data from these surveys are published in an “Overall Integrated Report” that includes comparisons with data from other statistics, hence providing the most comprehensive view at present of what is happening in the area of continuing education and training in Germany.

In the following, only those data are used which can provide insight into participation in continuing education and training by the particular target group – people who do not have any secondary school or vocational degree.

3.1.1.1 Completion of secondary school and continuing education and training

The BSW categories do not allow any inferences to be drawn with regard to participation in continuing education and training by people *without* any secondary school degree. A distinction is merely made between the following categories:

- “lower secondary school education” which, in addition to dropping out of the secondary school system *without a degree*, also denotes the *Hauptschulabschluss* and comparable degrees,
- a “mid-level” (*Realschule*) degree and
- the “*Abitur*”.

Table 14. Participation in continuing education and training, by type of secondary school, 1991-2000 (in %)

Type of secondary school	1991	1994	1997	2000
<i>Adult learning overall</i>				
Lower level secondary education	22	29	34	29
Mid-level secondary education	44	47	54	46
Abitur	57	60	65	59
<i>General continuing education</i>				
Lower level secondary education	14	19	22	17
Mid-level secondary education	25	27	33	27
Abitur	35	40	44	40
<i>Continuing vocational training</i>				
Lower level secondary education	12	14	19	18
Mid-level secondary education	26	30	37	33
Abitur	34	34	41	39

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 102.

While only 29% of people with lower-level secondary education took part in continuing education and training in 2000, the figure was twice as high among those who passed the *Abitur* (59%).

The below-average participation by low-skilled adults becomes even more apparent when comparing the percentage of cases of people participating in continuing education and training from the various groups with their shares in the overall random sample.

Table 15. Cases of participation by education level, 2000 (in %)¹⁸

Secondary school education	Cases of participation	Percentage of the population
<i>General continuing education</i>		
Lower level secondary education	23	36
Mid-level secondary education	36	37
Abitur	39	24
Total	98	97
<i>Continuing vocational training</i>		
Lower level secondary education	22	36
Mid-level secondary education	42	37
Abitur	35	24
Total	99	97

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 104.

18. For more detail see Annex Table A.4.

While only 23% of participation in general continuing education and 22% in continuing vocational training was accounted for by people with a lower-level secondary education, they accounted for 36% of the total number of people in the random sample.

3.1.1.2 Vocational training degrees and continuing education and training

There is a strong relationship in Germany between general education (secondary school) and vocational training degrees (*cf.* section 2.). For this reason, there are similar correlations between vocational training degrees and participation in continuing training as there are between secondary school education and participation in continuing education and training.

Table 16. **Participation in continuing education and training by vocational qualification, 1991 – 2000 (in %)**

Vocational qualification	1991	1994	1997	2000
<i>Adult learning overall</i>				
No vocational training	18	19	24	19
Apprenticeship/ <i>Berufsfachschule</i>	33	39	45	40
Schools for master craftsmen, other technical schools	48	52	58	54
University degree	59	64	69	63
<i>General continuing education</i>				
No vocational training	13	15	19	12
Apprenticeship/ <i>Berufsfachschule</i>	20	24	29	24
Schools for master craftsmen, other technical schools	25	27	34	31
University degree	36	40	45	41
<i>Continuing vocational training</i>				
No vocational training	7	5	9	9
Apprenticeship/ <i>Berufsfachschule</i>	18	21	28	27
Schools for master craftsmen, other technical schools	34	36	42	42
University degree	39	43	48	43

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 109.

For all qualification groups, participation in overall adult learning, and in general continuing education in particular, was significantly lower in 2000 than in 1997. By contrast, participation rates for the various vocational qualification groups in the area of continuing vocational training hardly changed, with the exception of people with a university degree. Changes in the working world, especially when there is sluggish economic growth, force people to maintain or improve their vocational qualification. By contrast, in economically difficult times people tend to not participate in general continuing education in Germany, as they have to finance a large part of it themselves.

While the figures in Table 16 already show that people without any vocational degree are under-represented, especially in the area of continuing vocational training, this is even more evident in a comparison of the intensity of their participation in continuing training and their percentage of the overall population.

Table 17. Cases of participation in continuing vocational training by vocational qualification, 2000 (in %)

Vocational qualification	Cases of participation	Percentage of the population
No vocational training	4	12
Apprenticeship/ <i>Berufsfachschule</i>	54	56
Schools for master craftsmen, other technical schools	14	8
University degree	24	15
Still undergoing training/other	5	6
Total	100	99

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 111.

3.1.1.3 Position in the company and continuing education and training

A similar picture emerges when looking at participation in continuing vocational training among the employed according to their position in companies:

Table 18. Cases of participation in continuing vocational training among the employed according to their position in companies, 2000 (in %)

Position in companies	Cases of participation	Share of occupational group in the labour force
Unskilled/semi-skilled labour	3	11
Skilled labour	10	16
Operative salaried workers	7	11
Qualified salaried workers	38	31
Executive employees	16	11
Lower, mid- or higher-level civil servants	9	5
Upper-level civil servants	3	2
Self-employed	12	10
Total	98	97

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 129.

While unskilled and semi-skilled workers make up 11% of the labour force, they only account for 3% of the cases of participation, whereas executive employees who also make up 11% of the labour force, account for 16% of the cases of participation.

The results of the IAB establishment panel for 1999 and 2001 show the same trends, although the figures differ due to the different survey period and the different scope. These surveys usually cover participation in continuing training at *companies* in the first six months of the year.

Table 19. Participation in continuing training at companies by selected qualification, 1999 and 2001 (in %)

Qualification groups	Western Germany		Eastern Germany	
	1999	2001	1999	2001
Unskilled/semi-skilled employees	7.6	4.9	14.4	6.3
Skilled labour	17.3	15.4	20.2	15.1
Lower-level salaried staff	16.9	13.1	19.5	14.3
Qualified salaried workers	32.1	28.1	37.1	31.6

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 131, based on results of IAB establishment panel.

3.1.1.4 Paid educational leave and continuing education and training

There are various laws and regulations governing paid educational leave from work in order to take part in continuing education and training. In 2000, 12% of all gainfully employed persons (in 2000 and in the past) used at least one of these opportunities. Table 20 shows the distribution among the individual arrangements providing for educational leave:

Table 20. Legal basis for educational leave and extent of participation, 2000

Legal foundations	participant shares
Company agreement	30
Laws of the <i>Länder</i> (Paid Educational Leave, etc.)	15
Collective bargaining arrangements	11
Other regulations	18
Industrial Relations Act, Federal Personnel Representation Act	8
Other Federal laws and regulations	6
No information	12

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 344.

Employees must take the initiative if they want to take advantage of educational leave. They are not “sent” or “assigned”. This is why the differences between levels of participation among various groups of employees, already evident from other surveys, are even greater here. Both individual education providers (see section 4.2.8) as well as some staff councils have attempted to counteract this tendency by offering targeted courses for under-represented groups. The following specific group-related differences in participation were evident in 2000 (Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 341). For comparison, the participation rates in overall adult learning in the year 2000 are added:

- Civil servants take leave to engage in continuing education and training much more often than wage-earners (33% as opposed to 10% – adult learning overall: 70 % versus 33 %).
- Employees who have passed the *Abitur* use educational leave more frequently than employees with a low secondary level education (24% compared to 12% – adult learning overall: 59% to 29%).
- Employees with college degrees took educational leave more often than those who have not completed a vocational training programme (25% compared to 5% – for adult learning overall: 63% to 19%).

3.1.2 Participation in continuing vocational training measures under the Employment Promotion Act, Social Code III

Since the Employment-Promotion Act was passed in 1969 – most of this text was incorporated in the Social Code III (SGB III) in 1997 – the promotion of participation in continuing education and training measures aimed at acquiring a vocational degree later in life has been a major element of the labour-market policy and promotional activity of public employment offices. One change which has taken place over the course of the last 25 years, however, is that the obligation to promote such activities has been made non-mandatory.

§ 77, section 1 of the Social Code III now states:

“Employees may be promoted in participating in continuing vocational education and training measures by providing subsidies for the costs of continuing education and training as well as a living allowance if.

1) Continuing education or training is necessary for unemployed people to be integrated into an occupation, to protect people from becoming unemployed, to be able to switch from part-time employment to full-time employment or when the need for continuing education or training has been recognised because people lack a vocational degree.”

In spite of this legal change, the percentage of people without a vocational degree participating in continuing education and training measures has risen continuously over the last 15 years, *i.e.* the financial support of the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* has increasingly focused on that group of people in need of special promotion. At the same time, however, shorter duration courses (of up to 12 months) for skill adaptation, not leading to a recognised vocational degree, have been promoted in large number.

Table 21 illustrates that the inclusion of eastern German participants in continuing vocational training sponsored by the *Bundesanstalt* initially led to a considerable decline in the percentage of people without a vocational degree who received support. The reason for this is the higher percentage of people who have undergone vocational training in the former GDR (*cf.* Table 2).

Table 21. **Participants in continuing vocational training measures 1991 to 2003, total and without completed vocational degree.**

(December of each year)

year	<i>Number of participants at the end of the month</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>no vocational degree</i>	
		<i>absolute number</i>	<i>percentage</i>
1991*	371,681	99,373	26.7
1992*	397,265	111,384	28.0
1993	624,109	107,494	17.2
1994	590,141	128,839	21.8
1995	542,564	148,698	27.4
1996	514,942	138,818	26.9
1997	375,213	107,752	28.7
1998	368,562	91,978	24.9
1999	324,041	90,871	28.0
2000	359,378	109,749	30.5
2001	319,367	99,715	31.2
2002	318,123	97,412	30.6
2003 (June)	240,948	77,764	32.2

*Without employees from Eastern Germany.

Source: Special analysis carried out for this report by Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, 2003.

3.1.3 *Participants in literacy courses*

Literacy courses have been on offer at adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) and non-statutory adult learning institutions since the mid-1980s. Over time, it was found more useful not to make “literacy” the sole course objective, but rather to offer “elementary education”, which is to say a step-by-step transition to courses with the aim of receiving a *Hauptschulabschluss*. According to statistics from the *Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung* (German Institute for Adult Learning), 2 885 courses were offered at adult education centres in 2002 alone (2 262 in 1998) in the area of literacy/elementary education, in which 26 176 people took part (19 092 in 1998). On top of this, a host of additional institutions also offer courses, making the total estimated number of annual participants at present more than 30 000. These courses generally last longer than a year.

Forms of measures

Three methods or types of courses have developed over the course of time:

- 1) Two lessons a week lasting one and a half hours each. This is the type of course which is above all practised at adult education schools. These also offer working people an opportunity to participate. In fact, up to 50% of the participants – primarily men – are employed. For this reason, fees are charged for these courses, with the current fee being around EUR 80 for a 14-week course. The fees are generally paid by local community social services for people who receive social assistance. In addition, this type of course is used by those institutions which are first of all interested in psychological support of people with low reading and writing skills and which see their primary task as helping people overcome the fear of failure. Frequently, support by such

education providers is necessary to allow people to venture to take a course at an adult education centre in the first place.

- 2) Full-time literacy. This type of course links learning and work and, according to the legislation governing public support programmes, is defined as a “programme preparing participants for an occupation”, which allows participants to be funded by the Employment Service. It is primarily aimed at people over 25 who already have occupational experience. This group of people have – in spite of this handicap – thus far managed to make a living from gainful employment and have lost their job for various reasons. The work element within a literacy course is aimed at providing orientation for a possible new occupation but, above all, at psychological stabilisation. Participants are able to show through working that they can indeed do something positive, while they tend to experience that they can do very little when it comes to mere learning – at least initially. Studies carried out back in the 1980s showed that this form of literacy promotion leads to success much more rapidly, and not only due to the larger number of teaching hours per week.
- 3) “Mothers’ courses”. Mothers of children who do not have German as a native language are provided the opportunity to learn German in connection with literacy courses, usually using rooms at primary schools or nursery schools, which their children also attend. Location is of special importance in this respect, as family structures do not always allow mothers the chance to go to other learning sites while, furthermore, a linkage is created in this manner to a school.

Funding

Literacy courses which are subsidised through funding by the Federal government, the *Länder* and local communities have, almost without exception, been spared budget-cutting measures over the last few years.

Courses providing a vocational orientation and preparation for an occupation which can be promoted by the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* may also have literacy components. The general rule of thumb is that the vocational-training part of such measures has to be at least 50%.

3.2. Career guidance and continuing education and training courses for persons without any secondary school or vocational degree

Counselling and information on continuing education and training is supplied by the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* both through regular job counselling and – particularly for young people – at special vocational information centres. In addition, there are a number of municipal continuing education counselling centres run by local communities as well as special counselling centres for women. On top of this, the system of electronic databases on continuing education and training has been expanded at the regional and national levels. In addition to providing faster access to information, these databases are also aimed at lowering information barriers. The low-skilled generally requires special promotion and counselling: “Characteristic of many hard-to-reach groups (is) the lack of goal-oriented perspectives and planning for career progression. When called upon to formulate plans for their future career or for obtaining a degree later in life, these people are unsure as to how to assess their own situation and the job market.” (Brüning and Kuwan, 2002, p. 162f)

An additional reason for intensive counselling on further training and education can be found in the new practice of offering “training vouchers” (since February 2003) for participation in continuing training and education courses, promoted under Social Code III.

The introduction of training vouchers for people willing to undergo continuing training (usually unemployed workers) within the framework of promotion under §§ 77 et seq. of Social Code III offers

these people the possibility to decide on their own what courses they want to take. The need for further education and training is discussed with the counsellor at the labour exchange office in terms of the topic and duration, and the training or educational objective is set. The vouchers which are then issued can be used for course participation at a training or education provider if the institution and the particular programme have been licensed under Social Code III. This added element of self-control in people's further education and training decisions requires, however, that people are capable of exerting such self-control.

Education providers which concentrate on programmes for the target group of low-skilled people, point out that the provision of training vouchers for this group of people remains without a negative effect only if counselling is expanded significantly and tools for the recognition of informally acquired skills are developed and broadly applied. This problem will possibly be alleviated by the portion of placement staff being expanded significantly in the course of restructuring the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit*, at the same time improving the counselling situation. Experience gained with the training-voucher system to date does not suffice to confirm or refute these fears.

In addition, profiling and assessment tools are being increasingly used. Such assessment centres for the performance of assessment processes, however, are still being tested and are thus far only available in a few cities (see also section 4.2).

Co-operation between *Arbeitsämter* (labour exchange offices) and *Sozialämter* (local community social offices), which was expressly urged in the revision of the Social Code III in 2002, can make operations more effective, especially in the area of education and vocational counselling, because the resources available are being pooled in a joint project, with all the synergy potential this portends. The "Hamburg Model" described in section 4 below is one such project.

4. PROGRAMMES AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The projects described in section 4.2 are not the only education and training programmes of this type in Germany, nor are they the only successful projects.¹⁹ The descriptions indicate what has been done in these projects and in what areas results have been achieved which promise to be of benefit for promoting continuing education and training of the low-skilled.

However, to be able to provide an overview of the overall situation, the description of best practice projects will be preceded by a brief presentation of programmes and providers addressing this target group as a whole.

4.1 Programmes and providers

Programmes

Continuing education and training programmes helping people go back to obtain a secondary school and/or vocational degree are developed in Germany especially for people who have recently met the full-time school obligation, but who do not have a secondary school degree or any prospect of an in-company training place. The goal is to avoid backsliding into a difficult social environment because it has been found that the subsequent acquisition of vocation prospects after suffering a decline in social standing is significantly more expensive and linked with greater financial and social costs than avoiding such developments before they occur. For this reason, the Federal and *Länder* governments, together with the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* and with the support of the social partners, are making every effort to ensure that everyone leaving secondary school is offered a training place.

Such offers are not accepted by all young people. In addition, many drop out of training programmes prematurely, before obtaining a degree.²⁰ This creates a group of people who at a more advanced age will have the opportunity to obtain a degree later in life after all.

Such offers for adults over 25 to obtain secondary school and vocational degrees later in life have generally declined over the past ten years, however, as has been emphasised in interviews of staff working at continuing education and training facilities and counselling offices. This applies both to the offer of courses to go back to obtain a *Hauptschulabschluss* and offers to go back to receive vocational degrees for unskilled and semi-skilled employees. By contrast, the *retraining* (Umschulung) measures sponsored by the *Bundesanstalt* – as a proportion of all support measures for continuing vocational training – have not been cut back. They have, however, concentrated more and more on support for the unemployed (beginning back in the 1980s).

The termination of the pilot project series organised by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB/INBAS, 2003*) to encourage adults to go back to obtain vocational degrees – which had begun in the 1980s – coincided roughly with German unification, which led to new priorities being set in the promotion of continuing vocational training by the labour administrations. The recommendation issued by the Board of the Federal Institute in 1996 pursuant to the “qualification of non-formally qualified people by helping them obtain recognised training degrees in connection with employment” was one result of the pilot project series, but remained without any discernible consequences,

19. They were selected because they lay on the road map planned for the OECD review team.

20. There are no reliable statistics on training drop-out rates at present. One indication of the situation, however, is provided by the statistic that approximately 10% of 25-year-olds (outside of universities) do not have any vocational degree (Klemm, 2000).

particularly with regard to the recommended increase in obtaining vocational qualifications at a later stage (based on § 40.2 of the Federal Education and Training Act).

The reason for the *de facto* lack of programmes at present – aside from pilot projects – is to be found in the fact that the potential participants in such programmes are not capable or are unwilling to finance their vocational training by paying fees, and that public or company funding is not available on a sufficient scale.

Education and training providers

In view of the financial situation of the clientele described above, the only sponsoring agencies and organisations are almost exclusively public agencies (adult education centres, government sponsors, etc.) or providers which receive fixed public subsidies from the labour offices or the government. Since the funding institutions for the most part set out the conditions for financial support, providers are only able to offer innovations emanating from their experience if additional funds can be made available, *e.g.* in the form of pilot projects.

The significantly greater emphasis placed over the last few years on the modularisation of vocational training programmes offers education providers new opportunities to position themselves in the market. The modules are shorter, their development does not cost so much and they can be offered on the market at a low price, which makes them attractive both to employees who want to obtain a vocational degree later in life and to the companies which finance their staff's use of such programmes. Moreover, some of these modules are also suited for being used by people who already have vocational qualifications.

4.2 Select projects

The project results summarised in Section 4.3 have in part been obtained in several of the projects presented below. The information is based exclusively on interviews with spokespersons for the projects, or has been taken from written descriptions of them.

4.2.1 BBJ SERVIS, Berlin

BBJ SERVIS is one of several Berlin institutions working in the field of initial and continuing vocational training. The projects of interest to this report are participating in the pilot project series “differentiated pathways to receiving vocational degrees” (funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Berlin Senate Administration for Labour, Social Affairs and Women and the European Social Fund), along with the “procedure for modular qualification taking into special account prior occupational experience” (*Verfahren modularer Qualifizierung – VmQ*) developed by the BBJ SERVIS.

The VmQ qualification procedure has been developed as a continuing training model which is oriented both towards the needs of unskilled and semi-skilled workers and the needs for continuing education and training at small and medium-sized enterprises. It facilitates access to continuing vocational training and allows tailor-made switchovers to new vocations along with needs-oriented solutions in attaining vocational degrees or recognised continuing training certificates.

The innovative approach adopted in the qualification procedure is that the informally acquired vocational knowledge and skills of the participants are: 1) systematically determined in an *assessment procedure*; 2) the ensuing *qualification* takes place in *modules*; and 3) the knowledge and skills established in the assessment procedure are certified and set out in a *qualification passport* until external examinations take place in a recognised training occupation in accordance with § 40.2 of the Federal Vocational Training Act and § 37.3 of the Crafts and Trade Code (*Handwerksordnung*).

Assessment procedure

The assessment procedure takes place at the beginning of the modular qualification process and decides on the time frame, sequence and structure of a planned qualification project. The participants' existing theoretical and practical skills along with their more general skills are determined and evaluated in this procedure. It is not an examination, but rather a detailed analysis of existing vocational and personal competencies with a view to the vocational degree which is being sought. The assessment procedure consists of a self-description of existing competencies, followed by tests and practical exercises and finally an evaluation phase which includes individual qualification planning and the certification of recognised modules – on the basis of the assessment procedure – in the qualification passport.

Qualification in modules

Qualification takes place in modules in accordance with the individual qualification plan. The basis for this is the module strategy co-ordinated with the competent bodies (chambers, school administrations and associations) and orientated towards the requirements set out in the training regulations. The design of the modules is adjusted to the requirements of companies, as this qualification is also part of the “dual training” system, which has both theoretical and practical components. The modules contain learning elements which support on-the-job learning and can be attended at an external training provider.

The modular approach makes it possible to structure efforts to obtain second-choice qualifications in a time and topic-related manner in such a way that it meets individual requirements and avoids unnecessary repetition, which would unduly lengthen training duration.

Because the assessment procedure cannot be carried out by the same institution which offers the modular qualification, BBJ has set up a “Network Modularisation – Co-operation and Transfer” to which at present approximately 40 Berlin continuing training institutions belong. All of these are able to qualify people on a modular basis.

Qualification passport

The qualification passport provides the opportunity to document and comprise vocational qualifications and experience which are gained within and outside the area of traditional initial and continuing education and training. The development of the qualification passport followed a testing phase of several years in Berlin, which included public and private training providers in several occupations and also involved the chambers. In the meantime, several education and training providers involved in a BiBB pilot project (“*Berufsbegleitende Nachqualifizierung*”) have agreed on standards to be followed in issuing a qualification passport.

4.2.2 Lesen und Schreiben e.V., Berlin

“*Lesen und Schreiben e.V.*” is a non-profit organisation established in 1983, which was spun off from another literacy teaching organisation. The reason for the spin-off is a special feature of the association: it seeks to combine literacy with work for its clientele. It does not address young adults, but people, usually over 25, who have become unemployed and have long years of occupational experience, but no formal vocational degree.

The concept of combining literacy and work is based on the following consideration: the people addressed have become unemployed as a result of economic developments or company restructuring. Until such point they were able to support themselves through their work in spite of their written language skills deficiencies. The possibility of getting another job position is impeded, however, by their low reading and

writing skills. Eliminating this deficiency is more likely to succeed if an autonomous contribution is made to self-sufficiency or supporting a family by working, since gainful employment is a crucial element in stabilising the motivation to learn.

According to the head of the association, of those who get in touch with “Lesen und Schreiben e.V.”, almost one-third are unable to read and write, while another third can write their own name and a bit more, and a third are able to read around 40 to 50 words if they really apply themselves.

A minority of the participants nevertheless have an attested secondary-school degree. In interviews the participants report that they did not become illiterate after they left school. Rather, they had received a secondary-school degree in spite of their lack of reading and writing skills as an “act of leniency”.

Because the lack of reading and writing skills is the main reason for continued unemployment, Berlin employment offices have promoted this project that combines learning with working as a “measure preparing people for employment” over a period of up to two years, while not enforcing the usual age limit of 25 for participants in this type of measure. The various changes in labour market policy over the last few months have led to fears on the part of the project that it may be discontinued.

One solution found is to use resources currently being offered to local administrative units, in this case the Berlin district of Neukölln, within the framework of an EU programme called “local social capital”, which currently covers a small part of the funding.

4.2.3 Grundbildungszentrum Hamburger Volkshochschule (Hamburg Elementary Education Centre)

The Hamburg Elementary Education Centre performs the central co-ordinating function in a project funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research within the framework of the “learning regions” programme. It is, furthermore, member of two European projects of which one addresses the qualification of personnel who work with the target group of illiterates, and the second promotes lifelong learning of senior citizens.

The Elementary Education Centre is not intended as a further centre offering courses in addition to other facilities, but should network with these other facilities. The aim is to jointly plan, co-ordinate and create inter-institutional courses and programmes. At the same time, the Centre is a coordination point for (continuing) education and training requirements and advises people with low skills in reading, writing and mathematics on individual opportunities. It thus enhances their employability in the long term.

Participants receive access to classical elementary education courses such as reading and writing on a PC, arithmetic, the acquisition of a *Hauptschulabschluss* and German for immigrants. In addition, the centre offers “mothers’ courses” (in schools) and “parents’ courses” (in nursery schools) in which foreign mothers and parents learn German where their children go to school, which implies that they can establish contact to the learning sites and teachers of their children. A third area of work is the elementary education courses at companies and in special institutions such as “employment companies”, correctional facilities and the *Land* Enterprise for Education and Vocational Training, a facility in the area of youth aid and support.

One focal point of the training courses for the facilities associated with the elementary centre are the approximately 40 literacy courses in which more than 600 people took part in 2002. At 50%, the portion of male persons taking part in these courses was surprisingly high. Around 50% of the participants in the literacy courses, which are offered for 2 x 2 hours or 1 x 3 hours during a week, were employed. Special aspects here are that one 5-day training leave per year and several week-ends for “creative writing” are offered to this target group.

4.2.4 *Stiftung Berufliche Bildung (SBB – Foundation for Vocational Training)*

The *Stiftung Berufliche Bildung* (SBB – Foundation for Vocational Training) was (re-)established in 1982 as an institution of the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg. It dates back to an institution with a similar assignment in the 1950s which bore the name “*Arbeitslosenbildungswerk*” (Educational Facility for the Unemployed”). The task of the SBB is to promote the vocational reintegration of groups with special job-placement problems in the labour market. These groups include, in particular:

- People lacking secondary school and/or vocational degrees;
- Those with health-related impairments;
- The long-term unemployed.

The Foundation is funded, first, by the labour administration in the form of promotion of recognised programmes, and second by the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg. The City of Hamburg pays all expenses which cannot be assumed by the labour administration as a result of statutory requirements, but which appear suitable to helping participants. The agreement recently concluded by the SBB and the City of Hamburg, effective as of 2004, aims in particular at general educational promotion going beyond the support provided by labour exchange offices). Specific target groups are:

- Long-term unemployed;
- Multiply disadvantaged people;
- Ethnic Germans from eastern Europe;
- Women with special job-placement problems;
- People with learning problems;
- Persons over 45 years of age;
- Recipients of social assistance;
- People with special social problems (debt, drugs, etc.).

The SBB has set up its programmes in continuing vocational training on a modular basis. In addition, it pursues an unusual educational strategy (for Germany, anyway) which it developed for this client group: “open learning”. This stands for “supported self-learning programmes”. The participants who, as a rule, have not taken part in any organised learning for a long time, are encouraged to obtain knowledge and look for solutions on their own, for example in computer-based learning programmes. They are supported here by learning counsellors, so this is not purely a self-learning programme.

In the initial phase the learners generally exhibit considerable opposition to the method which, however, leads to an enhancement of self-esteem over time in the sense that the people involved gain a feeling of self-assuredness, a belief in their own ability to produce something and an ability to increasingly organise their learning process on their own.

The didactic restructuring of the programme has had a considerable financial impact: It is much less staff-intensive than “classical” forms of instruction.

4.2.5 Fortbildungszentrum Hafen (FZH) (Centre for Continuing Education in the port of Hamburg)

The FZH was established as a further training and education facility for the port economy in 1975, when it employed primarily people without any formal vocational qualification. But the port economy has now also reached a level of complexity which requires staff with a well-grounded training. The FZH therefore primarily focuses on employees in the port, offering them possibilities to obtain technical qualifications (as stevedores or warehouse specialists). On top of this, there are training courses which lie below the level of a recognised vocational degree, which are of considerable importance to port operations such as, for example, container crane operator and forklift driver. The Centre also offers master craftsmen courses (master craftsman in the port economy), as well as brief courses and one-day seminars on special topics relating to the port economy.

The FZH is probably one of the oldest training facilities which, in collaboration with the port administration, has been doing what was made official labour-market policy in 2003 with the so-called *Job-Aktiv* Act: a joint effort on the part of the labour administration, companies, individuals and local governments to qualify unskilled adult employees with several years of occupational experience.

The FZH resolutely applies the possibilities offered by modularisation of learning programmes.

4.2.6 Koordinierungsstelle Weiterbildung (KWB)

The *Koordinierungsstelle Weiterbildung* (Coordination Office for Continuing Education and Training) was established in 1990 under the legal auspices of the Confederation of Hamburg Employer Associations). One of its primary tasks is to initiate courses leading to degrees for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The objective behind this approach in the area of preventive labour market policies is to reduce the percentage of unskilled and semi-skilled employees in Hamburg.

There are three types of returns for the qualifications that are obtained: first with a view to strengthening the technical and social competence of individual employees in their company environment, second with respect to companies and to the elimination of skilled worker shortages, which still plague some areas, and third with a view to the opportunities offered by vocational development for individual employees which lead out of the career dead-ends that characterise this target group.

Against the background of the unfavourable labour-market forecasts for the group of unskilled and semi-skilled employees, the KWB is attempting to find a solution to its most pressing problems with the project "*Gelernt ist gelernt*".

This project encompasses vocational qualification courses leading to degrees for employed unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Courses to prepare for external examinations in accordance with § 40, sections 2 and 3 of the Vocational Training Act and § 37, sections 2 and 3 of the Crafts and Trade Code have been initiated by the KWB on a continuous basis since 1991 in the following occupations:

- Young chemicals plant worker;
- Chemicals specialist;
- Warehousing staff;
- Business administrator for office communications.

The number of successful graduates up to mid-2003 was approximately 250.

4.2.7 The “Hamburg Model” for job promotion

The Hamburg Model for job promotion is one of the several so-called “*Kombilohn*” (combination of wage and subsidies) models in Germany. The target group consists of long-term unemployed persons, those in danger of becoming long-term unemployed and those who either do not have a vocational degree, or have a degree that is not demanded in the market. Receiving unemployment benefits, unemployment assistance or social assistance is thus a precondition for support. People employed in jobs subject to mandatory social security insurance with a weekly working time of at least 15 hours and a gross wage of between EUR 325 and EUR 1 400 can be supported. The amount of subsidies for a full-time employee is EUR 250 per month both for the employer and for the employee. Subsidies are tax-exempt both for the employee and for the employer – nor are they deducted from possible social assistance payments. In addition, the employer receives a qualification voucher worth EUR 2 000 for qualification measures which may be necessary for the newly hired employee. The grant of a qualification voucher aims at counteracting the dangers of a bad-job-low-skills-trap. The qualification vouchers are linked to the expectation that the employer will allow his employees to take part in company-specific or sectoral training measures in order to increase their productivity. This increases the probability that employment will also be maintained after the subsidies expire.

As of January 2003, 60.6% of the employees participating in the scheme did not have a vocational degree. 9 months after the start of the project, only 5% of the employers had used the qualification vouchers. However, an initial evaluation conducted in January 2003 attributes the limited use made of the voucher to a “poor information policy” (FHH/BA-AA 2003, p. 18).

4.2.8 *Arbeit und Leben Hamburg*

Arbeit und Leben Hamburg is an organisation of political education jointly founded by the Hamburg *Volkshochschule* and the Hamburg section of the German Trade Union Federation. The focal point of its work is in organisation of paid educational leave seminars.

Arbeit und Leben Hamburg achieves significantly higher shares of low-skilled participants in its courses than on national average (*cf.* section 3.1.1.4). Thus, there were almost as many participants in 2002 who had either no secondary school degree or a lower secondary school degree (30%) as those who had passed the *Abitur* (34%). The organisation attributes this to the fact that continuing education and training of low-skilled employees, who are usually underrepresented in continuing education and training, is at the heart of its activity.

Attracting participants

Participants are attracted by special messages targeted at companies and administrations. To this end *Arbeit und Leben* uses a network of trade union officers and/or works council members. The annual programme is not only publicised at enterprises – direct counselling is provided by multipliers as well. This allows people to be reached who would not participate in continuing training and education on their own initiative.

Methods

The programmes on offer are generally not subject to any stringent access requirements. They represent a form of teaching and learning which incorporates people with different prior stages of qualifications and from different social groups, and facilitates the exchange of views and experiences that extends beyond the period of direct learning. Learning in small groups and working with partners as a basic pedagogical strategy leads to active involvement, including with respect to people who do not usually

become involved in such learning programmes, and assigns each learner a function as teacher vis-à-vis the other group members as well. This kind of group dynamics also helps participants with lower level secondary school degrees attain a high level of group acceptance.

Arbeit und Leben Hamburg is, moreover, involved in European mobility programmes for young workers and integrated in municipal programmes.

4.2.9 Cologne Job Centre

The municipality of Cologne and the Cologne Labour Exchange Office signed an agreement “to improve the jobs situation” in January 2001. This was done against the background that three agencies had worked in parallel to each other thus far: The Labour Exchange Office supports people who get unemployment benefit, the social services office supports people, mostly unemployed, who get social assistance, and the youth office supports young people (under 25) who have no formal vocational qualification, most of them also unemployed and social assistance recipients.

Various laws passed by the Federal government over the last few years have made it possible to provide contractual footing for co-operation in this area. The city and the Cologne Labour Exchange Office were the first to take advantage of this offer and create a joint office, which changed at least three things in practice at the time:

First, co-ordination can now take place under one roof in deciding which particular office is the “right” one for job-seekers or counselling.

Second, those seeking counsel and jobs obtain information and if need be help at one office. Who should be in charge is examined very carefully, but when it is determined that another office or agency is in charge, this does not cause the person to be sent there, but rather brought there (“hand to hand transfer”).

Third, in placing people in jobs, it is not low-skilled jobseekers who are adapted to an existing job, for instance with the aid of continuing training measures. Rather, an attempt is made to find a job which corresponds to the qualifications of the jobseeker or to modify an existing job according to his/her qualifications.

The Job Centre itself is a central facility. In placing people in jobs, however, it works closely with 18 “job exchanges” in the various districts of the city of Cologne.

Apart from various counselling and placement facilities run by the labour exchange and the City of Cologne's social and youth services department, the Job-Centre also houses further facilities such as the debt counselling and housing office, career guidance services and an assessment centre. In some cases these are run by private social agencies.

According to information provided by the Job Centre, between 2001 and 2003 approximately 18 000 people have made use of it. The share of people without a secondary school degree was 30%. Not least thanks to the close co-operation between these institutions, which are usually separated, around 3 800 people, have been placed in jobs in the primary (i.e. unsubsidised) labour market. This is viewed by the parties involved as an extremely positive result in view of the clientele.

4.2.10 Tages- und Abendschule – tas (Adult Education Day and Evening School), Cologne

Programs helping people get a *Hauptschulabschluss* later in life have been offered by almost all German adult education centres since the 1980s. These courses generally take place 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

five days a week for youth and young adults, *i.e.* at times definitely comparable to “normal” school instruction. A considerable portion of practical instruction in workshops, including cooking, is also part of the programme at adult education centres. It has been found that this combination helps stabilise young people’s willingness to learn. Their living expenses are defrayed through the family or by means of social assistance.

The Cologne Adult Education Day School (part of the “tas” until 2003) also had programmes for adults over 25 who were previously jobless and wanted to go back to school to get their *Hauptschulabschluss* (class 10, but without the possibility of acquiring the *Fachhochschulreife*). The participants were offered an employment contract with the city of Cologne on the basis of a job-creation measure for a term of 18 months. Work was performed in the area of nursing care for older people or in workshops for the handicapped. Work and learning alternated from week to week, which means that there were 9 months of learning time available, which corresponds to a year of school.

Two to four hours per week during the classroom phase were dedicated to the topic of “selecting an occupation”. The participants were thus not committed to the area of “nursing care of older people”. Rather, they were supposed to be given the opportunity to find out about other possibilities of gainful activity as well.

The programme ended in December 2003 because of the necessity to cut city expenditures.

4.3 Project results

4.3.1 Motivation and counselling

About half of the target group shows some interest in going back to school to obtain a vocational degree. It appears however, that this interest is rarely linked with a realistic knowledge and understanding of continuing education and training requirements, the labour market situation, one’s own possibilities, etc. If, in addition, the desire to engage in continuing education and training arises after a lengthy period of unemployment, detailed individual counselling is essential and must, moreover, be continued during the training period.

The other half of the target group exhibits, in principle, a positive attitude towards learning and sees a general need for continuing education and training, but not in relation to their own personal situation. This group associates continuing education and training with the professional advancement which they are not, however, currently aiming for. The task here is to move these people’s focus from short-term career progression to a medium- and long-term adaptive function. As there is little sensitivity and understanding for this function, general advertising measures usually fail to reach this group. An outreach type of information and counselling promises more success in this case. That is why there must be a shift towards updating training. This should be the task of training advisers who visit the companies. This also allows a second objective to be pursued – namely to inform enterprises as to the need for continuing education and training of employees and about existing financial support possibilities. Client-friendly counselling programs close to places where people live have also proven helpful in this respect.

Counselling is also necessary to help relate the costs of continuing education and training to its potential benefits. It is understandable that people who – erroneously – see no benefits to participating in continuing education and training also consider any investment in such training to be “too expensive”. That fees for participation in literacy courses are taken for granted at *Volkshochschulen*, for example, indicates that people are willing to commit financial resources when they discern benefits.

4.3.2 Assessment procedures

Skills assessment is a measure where general counselling moves to a more concrete shape. A crucial didactic element in motivating people to continue to learn is to confirm that they have already learned something and can do something. The formalised assessment of existing competencies which has been developed within the framework of the pilot project “obtaining vocational qualifications later in life” fulfils this function. It also serves as the basis for individual planning of a training programme and helps design continuing education and training in a reasonable time-frame.

4.3.3 Integration of employment and qualification

Employment and qualification are linked together. Practical work experience is a fixed component of qualification, and the workplace is used as a learning site. The high status of work for the target group emanates first of all from the fact that it generates income. In our society, gainful employment is associated with the normal life of an adult and is therefore an essential prerequisite to the development of a feeling of self-worth.

Secondly, the target group is for the most part not used to learning or has lost touch with classic forms of organised learning. Staying close to the field of actual practice makes the learning process more transparent and effective, especially for hard-to-reach people. The orientation of learning towards the actual workplace increases the integration effect significantly.

4.3.4 Modularisation

The assessment of existing competencies, which can be useful for a particular training occupation, enables the development of modules with which skills found to be lacking can be conveyed. Pilot projects have shown that certifiable modules have to meet certain requirements: although they are supposed to be developed in collaboration with education providers and companies and adapted to meet respective needs, they must

- relate to recognised training professions,
- describe the results of a learning process, *i.e.* the competencies, knowledge and skills acquired,
- indicate existing qualifications,
- be broken down into components, and
- be comparable between different education and training providers as a result of reference to the occupational profile and the framework training programme.

4.3.5 Qualifications passport

The successful completion of modules is attested with a module certificate. Module certificates are then comprised with other qualifications and educational pathway-related documents in a qualification passport. This document also includes the result of the assessment procedure and certifications acquired earlier. Thus, it serves as a key element in the process of obtaining a vocational degree later in life and as an attestation to the competencies that have been acquired in order to be admitted to the (external) examination set out under § 40.2 of the Vocational Training Act and § 37.3 of the Crafts and Trade Code and to be able to shorten the employment period stipulated in the law.

4.3.6 Multiple funding

The effort to obtain a qualification later in life is only possible through multiple financing. Securing adequate financing of unemployed people and illiterate people in their efforts to obtain a degree later in life is particularly difficult. The difficulty lies both in assuring the required elements of qualification and in guaranteeing the livelihood of participants. Particularly the latter is hardly possible now without ESF support.

A greater commitment on the part of companies to use existing subsidy provisions (§ 235 c of Social Code III) would not only place financing on a more secure footing – it would also make it easier to reach the target group.

5. SUMMARY

There are at present between 5 and 5.5 million employees and registered unemployed in Germany without a vocational degree. In the 1970s and 80s work was focused on two areas in an effort to provide this group of people with qualifications:

First, an attempt was made to help all young people receive secondary school and vocational degrees. As a result of these measures, the percentage of people leaving school without a degree in western Germany was cut in half during the period 1970 to 1990, while the share of people moving to in-company apprenticeships and other vocational qualification programmes was also increased. The percentage of young people who leave the educational system without a secondary school and/or vocational degree has, however, been rising again since the early 1990s.

Second, up to the early 1990s, in addition to the programmes targeted at young people, programmes for adults to obtain secondary school and vocational degrees later in life were also expanded. This trend has also been on the decline since then.

In spite of the decreasing support for this target group, all possible instruments which appear suited to encouraging this group of people to obtain degrees later in life have been further developed and tested over the past decade. Efforts to diffuse knowledge about these instruments among education and training providers have been increasingly successful. It still appears to be difficult, however, to convince employers to step up their efforts to encourage their unskilled staff to obtain additional qualifications.

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ANNEX TABLES

Table A.1. **People completing general educational schools according to type of degree and gender, 1960-2000**
(% of the typical average annual cohort)

Gender	Old Laender and West Berlin					New Laender and East Berlin	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1992	2000
<i>Without Hauptschulabschluss (secondary general school diploma)*</i>							
Women		15.8	8.1	6.9	6.7	3.4	7.9
Men		18.7	12.4	10.2	11.0	7.2	15.5
Total	17.3	17.3	10.3	8.6	8.9	5.2	11.8
<i>with Hauptschulabschluss*</i>							
Women		43.5	32.9	26.0	25.0	6.2	12.6
Men		42.5	37.2	32.2	31.0	9.5	19.0
Total	53.7	43.0	35.1	29.2	28.1	7.9	15.9
<i>Mittlere Reife**</i>							
Women		19.3	33.5	38.8	41.4	51.6	49.5
Men		16.7	25.5	33.1	36.0	47.1	44.7
Total	13.2	17.9	29.4	35.9	38.6	49.3	47.0
<i>with higher education entrance qualifications</i>							
Women	4.5	8.3	14.8	22.3	26.5	18.5	33.7
Men	7.7	12.2	15.2	20.8	21.2	11.7	20.8
Total	6.1	10.3	15.0	21.6	23.8	15.0	26.9

* In % of the average annual cohort of the 15 or 16 year old population.

** In % of the average annual cohort of the 16 or 17 year old population.

*** In % of the average annual cohort of the 18, 19 or 20 year old population.

Source: Reinberg and Hummel 2002, pp. 589–590.

Table A.2. People entering into different vocational training programmes by gender, 1960-2000 (% of the typical average annual cohort)

Gender	Old Länder and West Berlin					New Länder and East Berlin	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1992	2000
<i>BVJ/BGJ/BVB*</i>							
Women			10.3	13.2	16.6	10.1	13.4
Men			17.6	18.1	23.2	16.5	23.6
Total			14.1	15.7	20.0	13.4	18.7
<i>Vocational schools **</i>							
Women			38.5	41.6	52.1	46.5	39.0
Men			28.3	34.4	39.2	17.2	19.5
Total			33.3	37.9	45.5	32.2	28.9
<i>In-company apprenticeship ***</i>							
Women		48.4	48.2	67.4	60.8	72.3	57.8
Men		63.7	69.7	75.0	75.7	78.0	72.5
Total		56.2	59.3	71.3	68.4	75.3	65.4
<i>Universities/universities of applied sciences ****</i>							
Women	3.9	10.1	15.8	26.1	33.9	24.5	25.2
Men	11.8	20.6	22.4	38.0	35.1	23.9	30.2
Total	8.0	15.4	19.2	32.2	34.5	24.0	27.6

* According to *Bildungsgesamtrechnung (BGR)*; BVJ = Year for preliminary vocational training; BGJ = could be recognised as 1st year of vocational training; BVM= measures preparing people for vocational training.

** According to *Bildungsgesamtrechnung (BGR)*; one and two-year *Berufsfachschulen*, including *technical schools in the health sector*; not including part-time vocational schools.

*** In % of the average annual cohort of the 16, 17 or 18 year old population.

**** In % of the average annual cohort of the 19 or 20 year old population.

Source: Reinberg and Hummel 2002, pp. 589–591.

Table A.3. Participation in gainful activity by non-formally qualified persons, 1996

Age	Population without any vocational degree			Outside training, military or alternate civil service		
	Total	Economically active persons, without trainees		total	employed and registered unemployed people	
	in '000	in '000	employment rate in %	in '000	in '000	employment rate in %
15 – 24	6,219	950	15.3	934	607	65.0
25 - 34	2,378	1,364	57.3	1,812	1,227	67.7
35 - 44	1,835	1,304	71.1	1,800	1,290	71.7
45 - 54	1,914	1,258	65.7	1,906	1,254	65.8
55 - 64	3,097	955	30.8	3,094	955	30.9
Total	15,443	5,830	37.8	9,546	5,333	55.9

Source: Reinberg and Walwei, 2000, p. 7.

Table A.4. Cases of participation by education level 1991 – 2000 and percentage of the population 2000

Secondary school education	Cases of participation				Percentage of the population
	1991	1994	1997	2000	2000
<i>General continuing education</i>					
Lower level secondary education	28	28	27	23	36
Mid-level secondary education	33	32	34	36	37
Abitur	38	39	37	39	24
Total	99	99	98	98	97
<i>Continuing vocational training</i>					
Lower level secondary education	24	25	24	22	36
Mid-level secondary education	37	39	39	42	37
Abitur	38	36	36	35	24
Total	99	100	99	99	97

Source: Kuwan *et al.*, 2003, p. 104.