OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training

Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany

Benedicte Bergseng, Eva Degler and Samuel Lüthi

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Foreword

The German vocational education and training (VET) system is known and admired around the world for its ability to prepare young people for high skilled employment. In Germany, VET smooths transitions into work and is closely aligned with labour market demand. This report focuses on an unprecedented test of the German VET system: how to respond to the significant increase in migrants who arrived in the country in 2015-16.

When delivered effectively, VET is well-placed to enable integration. It delivers knowledge and skills in demonstrable employer demand enabling new relationships between people in workplaces. This study looks at the capacity of the German VET system to unlock the potential of migrants, focusing particularly on refugees and other individuals who are protected from deportation. It recognises that migrants present both opportunities and challenges for host countries. For a country with a rapidly ageing population and who is experiences skills shortages, Germany cannot ignore the opportunity presented by hundreds of thousands newly arrived young people. It cannot be taken for granted, however, that access to vocational education, and through it to skilled employment, will be easy. Young migrants face a number of barriers which prevent easy access to VET. They commonly lack familiarity and useful social networks linked to VET. They also often require additional support to build up the knowledge and skills, not least in language competency, to benefit from vocational education and ensure ultimate attractiveness to employers. By following learners through their journeys into, and through VET, it is possible to identify where targeted interventions are needed to enable progression.

The study is set in the context of a country which undertook remarkable efforts to scale up existing approaches and develop new initiatives aimed at enabling integration. VET has been fundamental to German integration policy, and many measures have made use of work-based learning. The integration of migrants is, however, as long-term project. Significant challenges remain. This report assesses the strength and challenges faced by Germany and suggests policy responses for how these challenges can be addressed. A particular focus is on recent migrants seeking humanitarian protection aged 16 to 35, but insights and implications for the integration of other migrant youth and native-born youth with migrant parents are drawn. The report complements a cross-national OECD study of how other countries, notably Switzerland, Sweden and Italy, have responded to similar challenges.

Chapter 1 introduces the study and sets out the challenges and opportunities presented by new migrants to German society. The chapter provides a snapshot of the German VET system and describes the key characteristics of immigrant youth in the VET system. The chapter lastly summarises the key strengths and challenges that the report has identified.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 export the challenges that migrants can anticipate as they follow VET pathways in pursuit of a VET qualification and access to skilled work. Chapter 2 focuses on migrants getting ready for VET. Given the low status of VET in many origin countries, it is unsurprising that many perceive VET as undesirable. Proactive career guidance, informing migrants about VET opportunities, is an essential first step in bringing migrant learners into vocational education. Second, the chapter looks at how migrants build the necessary skills to enter VET. Most recent arrivals are in need of substantial support in order to get ready to benefit from upper secondary VET provision.

Chapter 3 looks at the growing difficulties faced by both native and foreign-born youth with migrant parents in securing an apprenticeship. Challenges include the weakness of social networks, getting employers on board and tackling discrimination in the apprenticeship market. Chapter 4 considers the need that many migrants have for additional support during training to enable them to complete VET qualifications. For many migrants, a major issue is weak language skills, which can have implications for their ability to follow the theoretical curriculum in VET schools.

Chapter 5 takes on system-wide topics related to how the VET system is governed. The entry of so many migrants into the country within such short time period represents an exceptional situation. The report looks into the system's ability to ensure policy coherence across a complex and largely devolved policy field, as well as how to enable peer learning and co-operation across the country. Chapter 6 explores opportunity for increased flexibility in the German VET system for all youth at risk of not being admitted into, or succeeding in, VET.

This report was drafted by Benedicte Bergseng from the OECD Centre for Skills and Eva Degler from the International Migration Division within the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs with Samuel Lüthi within the OECD Centre for Skills. Shinyoung Jeon engaged with important inputs throughout the work. The project benefited considerably from the support of Rosa Neri. Jennifer Cannon, Elisa Larrakoetxea, and Charity Kome provided valuable administrative support. Lauren Thwaites provided valuable support in the editorial and production process.

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Within the OECD, Anthony Mann oversaw the preparation of this report as Head of the VET and Adult Learning team within the OECD Centre for Skills. Pauline Musset, Viktoria Kis and Malgorzata Kuzcera within the VET and Adult Learning team gave inputs. Thomas Liebig from the International Migration Division within the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs gave valuable input and advice. Support throughout the project was received from Montserrat Gomendio as Head of the OECD Centre for Skills, Dirk van Damme as Head of the Skills beyond School division in the Directorate for Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher as Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, Stefano Scarpetta as Director of the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs and Ludger Schuknecht, Deputy Secretary-General at the OECD.

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Table of contents

Foreword 3

Executive summary 8

1 Overview: Unlocking the potential of migrants through vocational education and training in Germany 10

About the project: Unlocking the potential of migrants through vocational education and training 11
The German upper secondary VET system and the apprenticeship market 14
Immigrant youth in the German apprenticeship market 18
Summary strengths, challenges and policy pointers 24
References 28
Notes 31

2 Getting migrants ready for vocational education and training in Germany 32

Getting informed: Supporting young people with limited networks and knowledge about the apprenticeship system 33
Building the necessary skills to enter VET 39
References 51
Notes 55

3 Getting into vocational education and training in Germany 56

The issue and challenges 57
Policy message 63
Policy arguments 64
References 66
Notes 69

4 Support during vocational education and training in Germany 70

Issues and challenges in supporting apprentices, schools and employers 71
Policy message 76
Policy arguments 76
References 78
Notes 80

5 Governing the vocational education and training system in Germany 81

The complexity in the governance of VET 82
Ensuring policy coherence 84
Secure evidence needed to make informed policy decisions 89

Ensuring policy co-operation and peer-learning 92
References 94

6 Exploring increased flexibility in the vocational education and training system in Germany 98
Issues and challenges 99
Policy message 102
Policy arguments 103
References 107
Notes 109

Glossary 110
References 111

FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Percentage of population aged 65+ 14
Figure 1.2. Share of new entrants in VET in recent years 16
Figure 1.3. Population shares according to migration background among 15-35 year-olds, 2016 23
Figure 2.1. Survey on refugees' need of support when doing or searching an apprenticeship 36
Figure 2.2. Percentage of students not attending baseline literacy skills, by immigrant background 44
Figure 3.1. Migrants participate substantially less in VET 57

TABLES

Table 1.1. Age structure of 16-35 year-olds who received protection, 2015-2017 13
Table 1.2. Trends in the German apprenticeship market 17
Table 1.3. Decisions on asylum claims, by main countries of origin, 2015-17 19
Table 1.4. Educational background of asylum seekers, 2015 20
Table 1.5. Access to VET, preparatory traineeships and internships for asylum seekers and persons with toleration status 21
Table 1.6. Access to VET-related support measures for asylum seekers and persons with a toleration status 22
Table 1.7. Educational attainment of native-born young people with and without migrant a background, 2016 24
Table 2.1. Programmes in the transition system 40
Table 2.2. New participants in VET-related support measures offered by the PES, 2017 41
Table 2.3. Foreign nationals in preparatory programmes, in VET schools 47
Table 3.1. Differences in searching for apprenticeships between native-born applicants with and native and immigrant parents, 2016 59

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Executive summary

This study explores how vocational education and training (VET) systems can best respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by migration. The focus is on Germany and how it is responding to the 1.5 million migrants arriving in search of humanitarian protection during 2015-16. The arrival of this disproportionately young group of people represents a significant opportunity. Germany is an ageing society experiencing skills shortages. It cannot be taken for granted, however, that new arrivals will succeed in VET. The barriers they face are considerable: familiarity with, or interest in, VET is commonly limited; relevant social networks are routinely weak; and the knowledge and skills required to enter and benefit from VET, notably in terms of language capability, is often insufficient. Targeted interventions can address such challenges, helping to improve provision for all learners at risk of poor outcomes. In responding to migrant needs, German VET can become more inclusive without reducing quality. Germany has already devoted significant attention to VET as a mechanism to enable integration - and for good reason. Work-based learning enables integration because it demonstrably gives learners skills that employers want in real-world settings.

This study considers the barriers faced by learners in their journeys into and through VET, exploring how such challenges can be addressed. The focus is on new migrants seeking humanitarian protection aged 16-35 engaging in upper secondary VET, but insights are identified for the wider migrant population. The study complements a sister publication, *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants: Cross-country Analysis,* which highlights practice across the OECD.

Getting the migrants ready for VET

Getting the migrants informed about VET and then getting them ready to benefit from an upper secondary VET programme presents clear challenges. It cannot be assumed that migrants seeking humanitarian protection, in particular, will possess a positive view of VET. In many origin countries, vocational education does not enjoy a high reputation. Familiarity with VET needs to be built up. Germany already has a strong career guidance system that makes use of work-based learning and close connections with employers. The report argues for building on this system to provide pro-active, personalised and co-ordinated support for migrants from an early stage.

The admirable quality of the German VET system is based on high standards, linked to the effective preparation of learners to benefit from upper secondary VET qualifications. For refugees and other migrants in receipt of some protection in particular, while backgrounds vary, many have interrupted or insufficient educational preparation. German language skills are often lacking. Consequently, risks are high of long-term economic marginalisation within low-skilled employment in sectors vulnerable to automation. A number of opportunities exist to build on Germany's strong transition system to help migrants become ready to enter apprenticeships. The report argues for the importance of recent arrivals having access to high quality language learning throughout their training and that the most effective preparatory programmes are made consistently available across *Länder*. Consideration should be given, moreover, to increasing access to successful preparatory programmes to students over the age of 18. Such

programmes are essential in enabling access to apprenticeships, as they reduce the risks to employers of apprenticeship costs ultimately outweighing benefits.

Getting into VET

Compared to native-born Germans with native-born parents, both recent arrivals and natives with migrant parents face greater difficulties in finding an apprenticeship. While employers may be responding to perceived risks in taking on potentially vulnerable apprentices, as is common in many OECD countries evidence exists of discrimination within the labour market. Direct contact between migrants and employers has proven effective in improving access to apprenticeships. The 3+2 initiative which guarantees that migrants with tolerated status can work for two years after the completion of a three-year apprenticeship has given confidence to employers, but needs to be consistently implemented. In response to evidence of discrimination in the apprenticeship market, the report recommends consideration be given to making diversity training more widely available, particularly to smaller enterprises, and that measures are taken to address unconscious stereotyping of migrants.

Supporting during VET

Experience shows that natives with migrant parents are more likely to need additional support during apprenticeship training. Dropout rates are high for refugees and other migrants. Germany has a strong structure on which to build when it comes to supporting apprentices to complete apprenticeships. Opportunity exists to strengthen the availability of support measures during VET to provide migrants, like any learner at risk of poor outcomes, with targeted help so that they can complete upper secondary VET. Important here is the need to ensure effective communication is in place between VET schools, employers, learners and social services.

Governing the system

As the integration agenda cuts across different policy fields, governing the VET system, particularly in a federal country like Germany, can be challenging. Germany has, however, great opportunity to build upon its strong tradition of close collaboration with social partners. Ongoing efforts to update the Federal Action Plan on integration are welcome here and opportunity should be taken to include a specific focus on VET, with measurable goals, as a mechanism for integrating migrants. Further, there is potential to improve data and evaluations about how the measures implemented are working in general terms and in relation to individual learners. Greater emphasis should be put on facilitating peer-learning and co-ordination across the federal government and *Länder* to help expand effective practice and to take advantage of economies of scale.

Exploring increased flexibility

As some learners are struggling to achieve formal qualifications through the VET system, opportunity exists to discuss alternative pathways for particular groups of students. Where there is clear labour market demand, increased flexibility can be a more effective pathway for struggling learners who are less likely to succeed on a standard VET track. Learning from both local and international experiences, more flexible approaches might include part qualifications as stepping stones towards full qualifications, prolonging the duration of training for specific learners, as well as modularised approaches. In such a way, access to VET can be increased for all youth at risk of poor outcomes, while high standards and the labour market relevance of provision is retained.

1 Overview: Unlocking the potential of migrants through vocational education and training in Germany

This chapter gives an overview of the study, and highlights how the recent inflow of migrants can represent both challenges and opportunities for Germany. The chapter further outlines the situation of the apprenticeship market in Germany, discussing supply and demand issues, regional and occupational mismatches and future labour market needs for vocational education and training (VET) occupations. It then provides a short overview of the asylum system in Germany and describes the educational background and aspirations of both recently arrived asylum seekers and refugees, as well as natives with immigrant parents, and their entry into the VET system. Further, the chapter sums up key strengths and challenges that Germany is facing in using VET to integrate migrants, and concludes with listing the policy pointers that are identified in the report.

About the project: Unlocking the potential of migrants through vocational education and training[1]

The recent inflow of migrants represent a significant challenge for German society, but also major opportunities

Many European countries experienced a high influx of people seeking protection within a short time period in 2015 and 2016. Within these two years, Germany received 1.5 million asylum seekers. Although the arrival of asylum seekers was especially high in 2015 and early 2016 many asylum requests were only filed at a later stage. In 2017, Germany had the second highest number of asylum applications within the OECD area (OECD, 2018[1]). Many of these recent arrivals are young, have weak basic skills, limited professional skills and lack language skills, as well as formal qualifications valued by the German labour market. One of the key challenges that the German authorities are now addressing and will need to address over the coming years is how to integrate those asylum seekers who obtain international protection or otherwise change their status so that they can remain in Germany effectively into society and secure a strong connection to the labour market.

International evidence shows that vocational education and training (VET) and especially work-based learning through apprenticeships can represent a particularly effective pathway towards stable and high quality employment for vulnerable youths (Kis, 2016[2]). Germany has a strong VET system based on apprenticeship. The system has been generally highly regarded with VET graduates enjoying high employability rates. Previous research has shown, moreover, that the added value of VET in finding employment is particularly strong for natives with immigrant parents in Germany (OECD, 2007[3]). In this regard, VET can be a means of upskilling migrants, many of whom currently are limited to low skilled positions in the labour market. Education and training to access skilled employment can serve to both unlock the potential of migrants and address significant skills shortages within the German labour market. Indeed, by helping migrants to develop social relations while developing skills of demonstrable demand within the labour market, VET offers an attractive means of facilitating the integration of migrants within German society and economy.

There are, however, significant obstacles that stand in the way of achieving a VET qualification. For humanitarian migrants, these obstacles are routinely substantial. Evidence suggests that at every step along the journey from first awareness to successful entry into employment after completion of VET qualifications, migrants struggle to maintain the same progression rates as natives, even when enjoying the same level of academic proficiency. This report analyses these challenges and produces new insights about how VET systems can better help integrate migrants, with a focus on refugees. Drawing on German and international experience, the report sets out policy options that can help vocational education and training systems play a stronger and more effective role in the integration of migrants.

This review of Germany is part of a broader OECD study that focuses on how VET systems can effectively integrate migrants. The overall study composes cross-country analytical work presented in a separate report, as well as a deep dive into German specific challenges in this report (Box 1.1). The work focuses on two prime target groups that could benefit strongly from better access to vocational education and training: humanitarian migrants as well as young natives with immigrant parents. For both groups, this study focusses on the age group of 16-35 year-olds. The study focuses primarily on upper secondary VET provision and most notably the dual apprenticeship system.

Box 1.1. OECD study: Unlocking the potential of migrants through VET

The project Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through VET explores the challenges and opportunities presented to VET systems by migrants, and in particular humanitarian migrants who arrived in OECD countries in recent years. It provides insights into how VET systems can adapt to more successfully integrate migrants into their host countries, so as to achieve better outcomes for both migrants and for societies as a whole. The project is divided in two parts: a review of VET in Germany and a cross-country review (Jeon, 2019[4]).

The review of Germany draws on international and national data alongside consideration of research literature, and three field visits to Germany, where an OECD team met with key representatives from authorities and stakeholders. Visits took place in North Rhine Westphalia in November and December 2017, Berlin and Brandenburg in May 2018 and Bavaria in September 2018. In addition, the OECD organised an international workshop in Bremen in March 2018 focusing on German experiences. The work is sponsored by the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF).

A cross-country study (Jeon, 2019[4]) draws on national experiences across OECD countries with focuses particularly on Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. Many other OECD countries provided responses through a questionnaire that the OECD review team circulated in 2018 through the OECD Group of National Experts on Vocational Education and Training. Governments shared information on policy challenges, solutions and innovative approaches regarding migrant integration through VET. The European Commission and Switzerland sponsored this cross-country project.

This study intends to serve as a useful tool for policy makers in the countries affected by the recent and long-term increases in migrants.

Source: Jeon, S. (2019[4]), *Unlocking the Potential of Migrants: Cross-country Analysis*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, https://doi.org/10.1787/045be9b0-en.

The youth cohort is getting more diverse

Migration to Germany is far from being a new phenomenon. It has been on the rise for a number of years, and while this mirrors an overall trend across OECD countries, the increase has been particularly steep for Germany. In 2016, Germany registered around 1 million new permanent migrant entries, which constituted a 50% increase compared to 2015. The increase was largely due to the high number of asylum seekers who entered Germany in 2015 and who received international protection in 2016.

Between 2015 and 2017, close to 1.4 million people applied for asylum in Germany, and in the same time period around 840 000 people received some form of humanitarian protection, (see Glossary). The inflow of asylum seekers decreased strongly in 2017 to around 187 000 persons entering Germany with the intent of claiming asylum. For 2018, this number further decreased to 162 000. Over half of all the asylum seekers who arrived in this time period were between 16 and 34 years old (Table 1.1), with many more less than 16 years old.

Table 1.1. Age structure of 16-35 year-olds who received protection, 2015-2017

	2015	2016	2017
16-18 years old	11 120	42 393	20 471
18-25 years old	37 385	169 853	109 672
25-30 years old	22 525	101 560	67 258
30-35 years old	17 105	69 449	46 698

Source: Adapted from BAMF (2017[5]), *Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl*, http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-dezember-2017.pdf?__blob=publicationFile;
BAMF (2016[6]), *Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl*, http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-dezember-2016.pdf?__blob=publicationFile;
BAMF (2015[7]), *Bundesamt in Zahlen,* http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998329

The share of people in Germany with a migration background, i.e. having at least one foreign-born parent, has increased steadily: in 2016, this was the case for 23% of the population, compared to 19% in 2011. Among children aged 5 or younger, this share increases to 38%. The classrooms of Germany have become increasingly diverse. The trend is seen across the OECD. Analysis of OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data show that in 2015, almost one in four 15-year-old students in OECD and European Union (EU) countries reported that they were either foreign-born or had at least one foreign-born parent. The share of students with a migrant background in PISA has increased between 2006 and 2015 by 6.44 percentage points (OECD average). The youth cohort is expected to become still more diverse (OECD, 2018[8]). Evidence to date, however, suggests that young people from migrant backgrounds face difficulties in Germany to enter into upper secondary VET.

As the proportion of young people with migrant backgrounds has grown in Germany, so too has concern over the efficacy of the German education system in enabling smooth access to the labour market. PISA data show that natives with one or both parents who are foreign-born, for example, have consistently performed worse than young people with native-born parents on literacy and numeracy tests (OECD, 2018[8]). Evidence to date, moreover, suggests that young people with migrant parents have struggled to progress into upper secondary VET, notably apprenticeship, given the additional barriers commonly faced by migrant youth in terms of human capital accumulation (academic and language proficiencies), social networks linked to, and country-specific knowledge of German's VET system. The migrant population is, however, highly heterogeneous, with recent arrivals, for instance, possessing different skills, as well as professional and educational backgrounds. This diversity makes it challenging for countries to effectively devise policy which is able to respond to individual needs and capabilities. A "one-size-fits-all" approach is unlikely to succeed (OECD, 2016[9]). This poses new challenges to the VET system on how to accommodate different needs, to address barriers preventing participation and to ensure equality of opportunity for new arrivals as well as natives with immigrant parents.

Germany's population is ageing rapidly

The population of many OECD countries is expected to age rapidly in coming decades. The share of the population above 65 years is expected to double from 1990 to 2050, and the trend is especially visible in Germany (Figure 1.1) (Colombo et al., 2011[10]; OECD, 2017[11]).

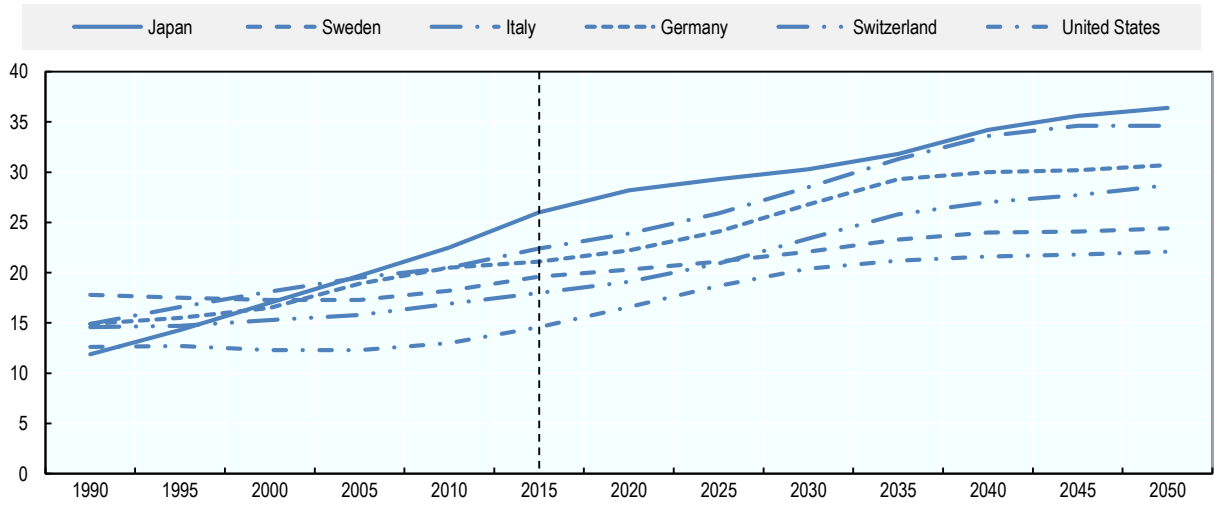
One result is a shrinking working-age population. Not only will this lead to higher age-related costs in the future, but with it comes implications for continuing economic growth (Colombo et al., 2011[10]). Especially in countries like Germany, where the pace of ageing is high and ageing is setting in earlier than in most other OECD economies, it is anticipated that population ageing will lead to a substantial decline in the number of people in employment, affecting GDP per capita and a rise in demand for health-related public

services. If current trends persist, OECD projections show that the total population of Germany will decline by 14.9 million (18%) by 2060 and the working age population will contract by 28%. These projections assume net immigration to be 200 000 by 2021, which is above the historic average (OECD, 2016[12]). By 2040, a shortage of 3.9 million workers is expected, split between demand for 2.7 million workers with VET qualifications and 1.2 million university graduates (vbw, 2016[13]). One survey of German employers has indicated that shortages in demand are already commonplace with a third of apprenticeships being unfilled (2017: 34%) (DIHK, 2018[14]).

Population ageing may also exacerbate skill shortages that could limit the scope to which Germany can exploit new technologies, thereby constraining productivity growth. Skill shortages can also widen income inequality, given that skilled-biased technological changes are a major driver of the polarisation of household incomes (OECD, 2016[12]).

Immigration, however, can delay the impact of demographic ageing on labour supply by changing the age structure of the population. Because migrants, on average, are younger than the native population[2] and emigrants are older than immigrants, the proportion of young people will increase and a so-called "rejuvenating effect" can be expected. Immigration will boost the working-age population, increase the supply of skills and fill important niches in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy underpinning economic growth (OECD, 2019[15]). In this way, the many migrants arriving in Germany in recent years represent a significant opportunity. Such an opportunity, however, can only be realised if migrants possess or develop the skills demanded within the labour market.

Figure 1.1. Percentage of population aged 65+



Note: The data post-2015 are forecasts.
Source: Adapted from United Nations (2017[16]), *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division https://population.un.org/wpp/.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998215

The German upper secondary VET system and the apprenticeship market

The German upper secondary VET system

Education policy in Germany lies within the competences of the governments of the federal states (*Länder*). VET represents a very important element of secondary education. The main part of upper secondary VET follows a dual apprenticeship model, characterised by the combination of two learning venues: school-based and work-based learning with an employer. The training usually lasts three years. Employers

are make their own decisions in recruiting apprentices. Whilst there are no formal entry requirements, employers set certain standards of German language and academic qualification as prerequisites for entry. In addition, school-based provision exists which can differ in duration, type of qualification and access. The system is based on a close co-operation between the authorities, employers and VET schools. The federal government is responsible for the work-based training, while the regional authorities (the *Länder*) are responsible for the school-based training (Cedefop, 2016[17]). While access to apprenticeships in Germany does not require any school certification and also does not have an age limit, in practice those without formal qualifications face difficulties in finding apprenticeships as most employers expect educational qualifications and often prefer candidates with an intermediary educational level (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) rather than lower secondary diploma (*Hauptschulabschluss*).

Each year, about a million teenagers leave lower-secondary education to start a VET programme at age 15 or 16, including transitional programmes (Box 1.2). Roughly half of them start a dual apprenticeship, while a quarter attend a school-based programme (Figure 1.2). Within school-based VET, about four out of five students are trained for a health, education or social occupations. Moreover, about half a million school-leavers enrol in school programme that leads to a university entrance qualification, mainly general education (usually Abitur or Fachabitur), but also vocational programmes (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2018[18]).

For the 13.6%[3] of young people in 2018 who did not continue with upper secondary schooling or do not manage to find an apprenticeship, the German education system makes available measures designed explicitly to prepare students for entering VET. This is known as the transition system (*Übergangsbereich*). The German transition system can be characterised as an intermediary period between general education and VET or employment. In 2018, around 200 000 students entered the transition system of which 34% were foreign nationals, compared to only 14% in 2005 (Figure 1.2). The transition system is thus an integral component of the German education system; as a comparison, in the same year around 716 000 started dual or school-based VET. Box 1.2 provides a snapshot of Germany`s VET system.

After decreasing during the nineties, both the total number and share of foreign nationals in VET has increased during past years: In 2014, 37 575 or 7.8% of new dual apprentices were foreign nationals; by 2018 this figure had grown to about 12% (Figure 1.2). At the same time, foreign nationals are strongly overrepresented within the transition system. The actual share in 2017 is even larger than that given above (34%), since many new arrivals attend newly created preparatory programmes which are not captured in the statistics set out at Table 1.1 (BMBF, 2018[19]). The large number of foreign nationals in the transitional system thus drives up the overall share of foreign nationals in the VET system to 18%, while amongst students pursuing a university entrance qualification, only 6% are foreign nationals. Among foreign nationals within the VET system, 36% are females. Young women are overrepresented in the school-based system.

Box 1.2. A snapshot of Germany`s VET system

Compulsory education starts at the age of six in Germany. Depending on the regional authorities (*Länder*) it lasts for nine or ten years. After the first four or six years in primary school, the lower secondary level is divided into educational paths according to the ultimate qualification provided. Schools can either provide one type of qualification or more (up to three). Three types of school have been historically available: *Gymnasium*, *Realschule* and *Hauptschule*, but many *Länder* have abolished the *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*, which provided students with less demanding and more vocationally oriented content [read more on the lower secondary structure in (KMK, 2015[20])].

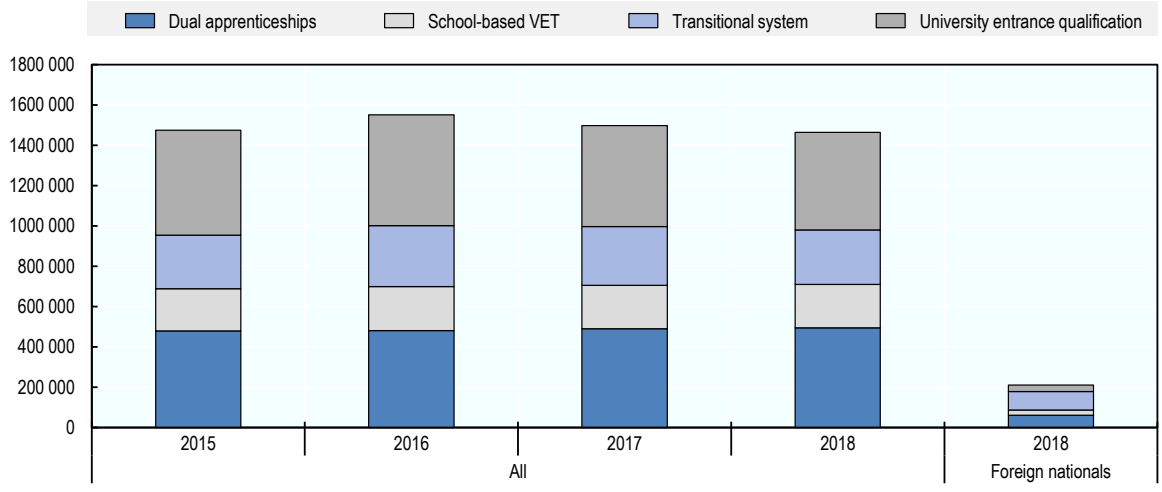
Graduates from the lower secondary level generally enrol in a vocational pathway (including the transition system) at age 15 or 16. However, with a certain qualification they may attend a general school to obtain the *Abitur* (general higher education entrance qualification).

Students in vocational pathways enrol either in the dual system or in a full-time VET school which might offer an internship within a programme lasting for two to three years. As well vocational qualifications, some VET schools offer students the option of achieving a school leaving certificate. *Fachschulen* (trade and technical schools) offer tertiary-B level programmes that last for two years (full-time) to four years (part-time) while *Fachhochschulen* provide tertiary-A level vocationally orientated programmes. Additionally, some Länder offer VET programmes at tertiary-A level which combine teaching in schools and training in companies. For those who have difficulties, Germany has various programmes designed to facilitate transition into VET (Übergangsbereich). During a basic vocational or pre-vocational year (Berufsgrundbildungsjahr or Berufsvorbereitungsjahr) students receive career guidance and acquire basic vocational skills designed to help them either obtain an apprenticeship, or to enter a full-time school-based VET programme or to start working but without receiving a full qualification. Institutionally diverse, these transition courses can be taught in vocational schools (Berufsschule or Berufsfachschule) or in private institutions and firms.

Source: Hoeckel, K. and R. Schwartz (2010[21]), *OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training: A Learning for Jobs Review of Germany 2010*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264113800-en; KMK (2015[20]), *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2015/2016. A Description of the Responsibilities, Structures and Developments in Education Policy for the Exchange of Information in Europe*, https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Eurydice/Bildungswesen-engl-pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf.

Figure 1.2. Share of new entrants in VET in recent years

New entrants by programme orientation and type, 2015-18



Note: School-based VET includes both, federal- and state-law qualifications. University entrance qualifications include general education and vocational baccalaureates (*Fachoberschulen, Fachgymnasien, Berufsfachschulen, allgemeinbildende Schulen*).

Source: Adapted from DESTATIS (2019[22]), *Die integrierte Ausbildungsberichterstattung (iABE)* (database), https://www.bibb.de/de/11563.php.

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Dual apprenticeships

In contrast to school-based education, dual VET is market-based. School-leavers interested in attending dual VET first look for a suitable employer offering apprenticeship places in the desired occupation, and then apply for the apprenticeship. Employers evaluate all applications and choose – as in typical recruitment processes within the labour market – the most promising candidate. Therefore, skills and formal qualifications, including school grades, play a crucial role in whether applicants are accepted. Popular occupations and employers attract higher performing students, whereas those with lower skills have to settle for less popular positions. As a consequence, which candidates will find what type of apprenticeship depends strongly on supply and demand. At the same time, the market-based approach makes sure that students are not trained in occupations where there is no demand for labour.

Demand and supply for apprenticeships

The Federal Institute for VET (BIBB, 2018[23]) provides yearly statistics on supply and demand in the dual apprenticeship market. Contrary to the common notation in labour economics, supply (of VET) denotes in German statistics the numbers of apprenticeship places offered by employers, whereas the demand (for VET) denotes school-leavers who want to attend an apprenticeship. Table 1.2 shows these figures for apprenticeships.

Table 1.2. Trends in the German apprenticeship market

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New apprenticeship contracts	559 960	569 390	551 258	529 542	523 201	522 161	520 272	523 290	531 413
Unfilled placements	19 898	30 487	34 075	34 720	38 449	41 678	43 561	48 984	57 656
Unsuccessful applicants	12 033	11 366	15 673	21 087	20 932	20 781	20 550	23 712	24 540
Supply of apprenticeship placements	579 858	599 867	585 333	564 262	561 650	563 839	563 833	572 274	589 069
Demand of apprenticeship placements	571 993	580 746	566 931	544 133	544 133	542 943	540 822	547 002	555 953
Supply/demand ratio	101.4	103.3	103.2	103.2	103.2	103.8	104.3	104.6	106

Note: Supply is the number of new apprenticeships at the 30 September 2018 census date plus those who remain vacant. Demand is the number of new apprenticeships on 30th September plus *unsuccessful applicants* who keep searching an apprenticeship. VET-interested school-leavers are those who either signed an apprenticeships-contract or are at least registered as VET applicants at the PES.
Source*:* Adapted from BIBB (2018[23]), *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2018,* Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung. https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/bibb_datenreport_2018.pdf.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998348

The supply of apprenticeships has remained fairly stable in recent years. There are two types of dual apprenticeships: firm-based VET (*betrieblich*), and non-firm apprenticeships at publicly funded training centres (*außerbetrieblich*). The latter is funded by the *Länder*. Both share and number of non-firm apprenticeships declined from around 40 000 (or 7%) in 2010 to less than 15 000 (or 2.5%) in 2018 while demand from firms has grown.

The demand for apprenticeship places is larger than the supply, but decreased in recent years, mainly due to decreasing youth cohort sizes, but also due to a shift of the preferences towards general education programmes. Reflecting growing migration inflows, however, the demand increased in 2017 for the first time since 2011.

Matching demand (apprentices) and supply (employers)

While decreasing demand has relaxed the situation for some school-leavers who could not find a suitable apprenticeship place, many still struggle to do so. The number of unsuccessful applicants has remained

stable at around roughly 80 000. Furthermore, about 270 000 students are in the transitional system, largely because they could not find an apprenticeship. There is a mismatch between supply and demand observable in Germany (BIBB, 2019[24]). Data show that the reasons for this mismatch are at least threefold:

- Mismatch in terms of regions: Both the share of unsuccessful applicants and the share of vacant positions differ considerably between regions. For instance, less than 5% of all applicants are unsuccessful in Eastern Bavaria, while this share is over 20% in some central and northern regions.
- Mismatch in terms of occupations: For some occupations, such as designers, animal keepers, or computer specialists, there are far more interested school-leavers than available employers. On the other hand, firms in other occupations often have severe difficulties in finding skilled and motivated candidates.
- Mismatch in terms of skills: An increasing number of apprentices have a university entrance qualification [in 2010: 21%, in 2016 28.7%, (BIBB, 2018[23])]. Consequently, it is increasingly difficult for graduates of the basic track at the lower secondary level (*Hauptschulabschluss*) to find apprenticeships.

Immigrant youth in the German apprenticeship market

This section looks into the characteristics of immigrant youth in the German apprenticeship market.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Between 2015 and 2017, around half of all asylum seekers were between 16 and 34 years old, lodging some 715 000 first-time applications. Around three-quarters of this age group were men. Overall in this time period, around one in three asylum seekers (all ages) came from the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter 'Syria'), followed by applicants from Afghanistan (13%) and Iraq (11%). Asylum seekers from Syria, Eritrea and Iraq have had the highest recognition rate among the main countries of origin (Table 1.3). For Afghan applicants, however, who constituted the second largest group, recognition rates are considerably lower, with around half receiving some form of humanitarian protection. While applicants from Kosovo and Albania constituted large groups in 2015, numbers declined considerably in 2016 and fell below 4 000 for Albanian applicants and 1 500 for applicants from Kosovo in 2017.

In 2016, the average length of an asylum application was seven months from lodging an application to receiving a decision. When the waiting time between arrival and having an appointment with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is added, on average it takes around 13 months.

In 2017, the BAMF needed around 11 months on average to determine asylum. This partly reflects that with a lower number of new asylum requests in 2017, the office is increasingly working on more complex cases where status determination takes more time. On average, receiving a first appointment took four months, which brings the total waiting time between arrival in the country and asylum decision to 15 months (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2018[25]).

Table 1.3. Decisions on asylum claims, by main countries of origin, 2015-17

	Number of decisions	Recognition rate	According to legal status:			Not admissible	Rejection
			Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Non-refoulement		
Syria	500 200	96%	60%	35%	0.3%	4%	0.1%
Eritrea	54 200	88%	66%	21%	2%	10%	1%
Iraq	157 100	66%	48%	16%	1%	11%	23%
Somalia	27 700	62%	26%	21%	15%	27%	11%
Islamic Republic of Iran	44 900	50%	47%	2%	1%	15%	35%
Afghanistan	189 700	49%	18%	7%	24%	8%	43%
Nigeria	28 200	16%	6%	1%	9%	32%	52%
Russian Federation	35 100	8%	4%	2%	2%	46%	47%
Pakistan	35 500	4%	3%	0.4%	1%	28%	68%
Kosovo*	53 700	1%	0.04%	0.1%	1%	17%	82%
Albania	83 200	0.5%	0.04%	0.2%	0.3%	19%	81%

Note: Cases are categorised as not admissible if another country is responsible for handling the asylum claim or if cases have been withdrawn by the applicant. Decisions include both first-time and repeated applications. Around 75% of the asylum seekers were younger than 30 years old.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's declaration of independence.

Source: Adapted from BAMF (2017[5]), *Zahlen zu Asyl,* http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-dezember-2017.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998367

Dispersal and settlement policies for asylum seekers and refugees in Germany

Germany uses a distribution "key" that disperses asylum seekers across its different regional states (*Länder*), taking into account the population size and tax revenue of each region. In 2017, most asylum seekers were hosted in North-Rhine Westphalia, followed by Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. Together, these three states hosted around 50% of all asylum seekers in 2017.

On a regional level, it is up to the regional government how to disperse asylum seekers across municipalities. These regional dispersal mechanisms mostly consider municipalities' population size. Thus, usually local labour market conditions, such as unemployment rates or specific skills needs, are not considered.

Once asylum seekers receive refugee status they are required to live in the region to which they were allocated for three years. This is a recent policy change in 2016 with the aim of reducing secondary migration to regions that are (perceived as) more attractive and to facilitate planning for municipalities. This policy change leaves it up to the regional government to decide whether they want to restrict freedom of settlement within the region even further, e.g. requiring refugees to remain in the municipality or county to which they were allocated. As of June 2018, seven states out of 16 have implemented further restrictions, including North-Rhine Westphalia, Bavaria, Baden-Wurttemberg and Hessen.

Settlement restrictions can be lifted when refugees have found a job or apprenticeship elsewhere or when they are accepted into university. In addition, a move can be granted for joining family members and exceptions can be made in particular cases of hardship. Refugees have to request a permission to move from the local Foreigners' Office, which decides whether one of the exceptional conditions applies. Where permission to move is granted the immigration authorities in the receiving municipality also have to agree.

However, given the decentralised nature of decision making in local immigration authorities, there is no data available on how often permissions are actually granted. Thus, there is currently no way of assessing to what extent mobility for work and education-related purposes is occurring in practice. Anecdotal evidence, however, shows that practices of local Immigration Authorities can differ widely, depending on the state and how widely local officials used their margin of discretion when deciding on individual cases.

The educational background of young asylum seekers and refugees

Much of the public debate and policy attention has focused on the educational background of new arrivals as an indication of their chances of ultimately succeeding in the German labour market and education system. Particularly for young refugee adults, continuing education or participating in upskilling measures that build on previous educational achievement and work experience is critical to facilitate their transition into stable employment.

Data from asylum seekers who arrived in 2015 indicate that the 18-34 age group has somewhat higher educational backgrounds than older asylum seekers, but data also show that educational attainment is highly varied, with a high proportion of asylum seekers possessing only primary education or no formal education at all (Table 1.4).

To arrive at an estimate of the educational background of prospective refugees, data was weighted according to the recognition rate of asylum seekers' country of origin. Weighted averages indicate that close to 50% have attended upper secondary school or university in the 18-24 age group. At the same time, around 20% have had no formal education at all or had only attended primary school.

However, these data should be interpreted with caution, as categories are broad and refer to attendance rather than completion of qualifications. Furthermore, the quality of education obtained is unlikely to be comparable to the German system. Measuring migrants' skills levels can therefore be necessary to get a clearer picture of the asylum seekers actual educational background.

Table 1.4. Educational background of asylum seekers, 2015

Averages and weighted averages according to recognition rates, in percentages

	Average			"Weighted average" according to recognition rates		
	18-24	25-34	35-64	18-24	25-34	35-64
No formal education or primary school	26	30	36	21	26	30
Lower secondary school	31	29	32	28	24	29
Upper secondary school or university	39	37	29	49	48	39

Note: Weighted averages take into account differences in recognition rates per country and therefore present an estimate of the educational background of persons based on their likelihood to receive refugee status.
Source: Adapted from Brücker (2016[26]), *Typisierung von Flüchtlingsgruppen nach Alter und Bildungsstand,* http://doku.iab.de/aktuell/2016/aktueller_bericht_1606.pdf.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998386

Educational aspirations

Educational aspirations among asylum seekers and refugees vary by age and gender. Survey data show that young asylum seekers and refugees generally have high educational aspirations (Romiti et al., 2016[27]).[4] Among the 18-25 year-olds, 84% indicate that they probably or certainly want to continue their education in order to receive a vocational qualification. Of these, around 40% would like to obtain a university degree. With increasing age, the wish to continue education declines; among 26-35 year-olds, the share decreases to 69% and further drops to 41% among those 36 and older.

Women's educational aspirations are slightly lower. Around 60% of all female respondents declared that they would want to obtain a professional qualification, compared to 69% of all male respondents. Lower educational aspirations compared to men are correlated with having children (Romiti et al., 2016[27]).

While educational aspiration among young asylum seekers and refugees is high, this should not be equated with actual educational decisions; starting VET is an effective financial investment that many asylum seeker and refugees may not be willing or able to make, particularly if they have to support family members.

Different scenarios were developed that take into account the recognition rates for 12-25 year-old asylum applicants, their educational aspirations, and different estimates for the preparatory time needed before entering VET [see (Winnige, Maier and Steeg, 2017[28]) for a description of the methodology]. Demand for VET is estimated to grow steadily. Between 2017 and 2018, the number of asylum seekers and refugees applying for apprenticeships increased by almost 45% from around 26 500 to 38 300. (Matthes et al., 2019[29]).

Legal frameworks for accessing VET and VET-related support measures

For refugees, there are no legal barriers preventing participation in vocational education (whether school-based or apprenticeships), internships or VET-specific support measures. However, restrictions apply for asylum seekers and persons with a toleration status. With the exception of school-based VET, local immigration authorities have to give permission on a case-by-case basis. In general, asylum seekers from so-called "safe countries of origin" (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Kosovo, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Senegal and Serbia) are not allowed to start VET or an internship as they are less likely to be granted asylum. All other asylum seekers can start VET and internships after having been in the country for three months. For persons who have received a toleration status there is no waiting period. Persons with a toleration status may not be permitted to pursue an economic activity like apprenticeship under certain circumstances related to the veracity of personal information supplied to the German authorities. The Public Employment Service (PES), which would have to grant permission for taking up employment, does not have to be consulted for VET or for internships that do not last longer than three months (Table 1.5).

Table 1.5. Access to VET, preparatory traineeships and internships for asylum seekers and persons with toleration status

	Immigration authorities	Employment agency
Dual VET	Has to give permission	Not involved
School-based VET	*Not involved*	Not involved
Introductory training (*Einstiegsqualifizierung*, EQ), 6-12 months	Has to give permission	Financed and granted by employment agency
Internships with a maximum duration of 3 months	Has to give permission	Not involved
Internships with a duration of more than 3 months	Has to give permission	As a rule: has to give permission

Note: As of June 2018.

There is a range of VET-specific measures that seek to prepare students who need additional support before starting VET as well as programmes that support students during their apprenticeships. While this provision is generally accessible for refugee VET students, for asylum seekers it depends on their country of origin. In addition, waiting periods apply (Table 1.7).

Table 1.6. Access to VET-related support measures for asylum seekers and persons with a toleration status

	Asylum seekers from Eritrea, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Somalia and Syria	Asylum seekers from other origin countries	Persons with toleration status
bH (*ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen*) – training related assistance	yes, after 3 months	no	yes, after 12 months
AsA (*Assistierte Ausbildung*) – assisted vocational training	yes, after 3 months	no	yes, after 12 months
BAB (*Berufsausbildungsbeihilfe*) - financial support during VET or VET-related support measures	yes, after 15 months	no	yes, after 15 months
BerEb (*Berufseinstiegsbegleitung*) - career entry support By mentoring programme (+ first 6 months during VET)	yes	yes	yes
BvB (*Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen*) - pre-vocational training measures	yes, after 3 months	no	yes, after 6 years

Note: As of June 2018.

Box 1.3. Compulsory education and access to mainstream education programmes

Education policy in Germany is the responsibility of the *Länder*. Compulsory education starts at the age of 5 or 6 and usually lasts for 12 years until pupils turn 18. For young people who do not continue with upper secondary school or do not manage to find an apprenticeship, the German education system offers transition years that seek to prepare students for entering VET.

As a reaction to the high numbers of recently arrived refugees, most German Länder have developed specific preparatory VET classes for young migrants that last one to two years and usually combine language courses and skills training with vocational orientation and possibilities for internships (Braun and Lex, 2016[30]). However, at the age of 18, education is no longer compulsory, regardless of whether students have obtained a school-leaving certificate or not.

Some *Länder* have extended compulsory education, while others have opened their educational programmes up to people who are no longer subject to compulsory education. In Bavaria, for instance, vocational schools offer specific classes for refugees up to the age of 21, and in exceptional cases up until 25. Generally, however, those aged 18 and above have access provision through adult education centres, offering for instance evening classes, to obtain a school leaving certificate. To what extent such adult education programmes are used by adult refugees who want to continue their education and whether these courses can cater to specific needs, for instance by offering additional language support, remains an open question.

Source: Braun, F. and T. Lex (2016[30]), *Berufliche Qualifizierung von jungen Flüchtlingen in Deutschland. Eine Expertise.*

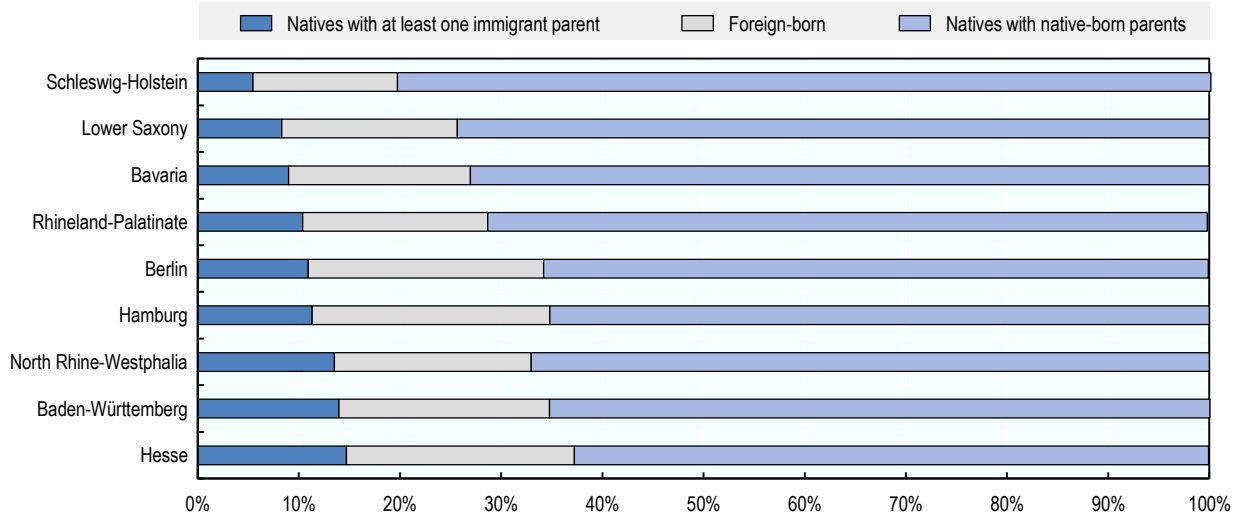
Young natives with immigrant parents

In 2016, around 1 in 10 people in the age group 15-35 are born in Germany and have at least one immigrant parent (1.96 million).

Shares of natives with immigrant parents are slightly higher in Hesse, Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia, ranging between 13% and 15% within this age group (Figure 1.3). This group – natives with immigrant parents – is set to grow considerably; among the 10-15 year-olds the share is already 27% (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017[31]).

Overall, close to 70% among 15-35 year-olds have parents who were born in lower-income countries (European Union and OECD, 2015[32]). In addition, the share of immigrant parents who are low educated is high. Among 10-20 year-old natives with a migration background, close to 30% have parents who only obtained an elementary school or lower secondary school diploma, compared to 5% among those with native-born parents (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2016[33]).

Figure 1.3. Population shares according to migration background among 15-35 year-olds, 2016



Note: Percentage of total population aged 15-35 years-old, by region with available data.
Source: Own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt (2017[31]) *Bildung und Kultur - Berufliche Bildung 2016. Fachserie 11 Reihe 3*, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Berufliche-Bildung/_inhalt.html.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998253

The educational background of young natives with immigrant parents

Despite having grown up in Germany, this group faces considerable obstacles both in the school and then in the labour market. For the most part, weaker educational and labour market outcomes than among young people with native parents reflect that young people from migrant backgrounds disproportionally grew up in families of low socio-economic status, which has a considerable impact of children's educational trajectories in Germany.

Among the 15-35 year-olds who are not in education anymore, differences among natives with immigrant parents and those with native-born parents are most pronounced at the upper and lower end of the educational spectrum (Table 1.7). Whereas shares of those with a *Realschule* certificate are the same, native students with immigrant parents more often only have a *Hauptschule* certificate and graduate less frequently from upper secondary education. Among young natives with a migration background, close to one in four leave the education system with a lower secondary qualification.

Table 1.7. Educational attainment of native-born young people with and without migrant a background, 2016

15-35 year-olds who are not in education

	Native students with immigrant parents	Native students without migrant background
No school leaving certificate	5%	2%
Lower secondary (Hauptschule)	24%	15%
Lower secondary (Realschule)	33%	33%
Upper secondary (Fachabitur and Abitur)	37%	49%

Source: Own calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt (2017[31]) *Bildung und Kultur - Berufliche Bildung 2016. Fachserie 11 Reihe 3* https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Berufliche-Bildung/_inhalt.html.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998405

In addition, natives with immigrant parents perform less well than those without a migrant background when assessing their reading literacy. In 2015, natives with immigrant parents scored around 50 points lower in OECD PISA testing at age 15; a difference that translates to more than a year of schooling. This gap is twice as high as the EU-average. In addition, close to one-quarter lacked basic reading skills at age 15, compared to one in ten students with native-born parents[5] (OECD, 2018[8]).

Educational aspirations

Despite generally lower educational outcomes, there is a large literature showing that parents and students with a migrant background have high educational aspirations. Among low-income immigrant families, educational aspirations as tested in PISA data are often found to be higher than among native families of comparable socio-economic background (OECD, 2017[11]). This is also the case in Germany, where immigrant parents are more likely than German-born parents to expect that their children will attend university, and this likelihood further increases when controlling for the parents' socio-economic background (OECD, 2015[34]).

Research on students in Germany indicates that students with an immigrant background who hold a school-leaving certificate of a lower or intermediary secondary school (*Hauptschule* or *Realschule)* are less likely to be interested in pursuing VET than their peers with German-born parents. However, the opposite holds for students in upper secondary education.[6] Students with a migration background who could also access tertiary education are significantly more likely to be interested in VET (32%) than those with German-born parents (25%) (Beicht and Walden, 2014[35]). These findings somewhat contradict previous findings that found that immigrant parents and students are more oriented towards tertiary education than families without a migration background [see for instance Autorengruppe Bildungsbereichterstattung (2016[33])].

Summary strengths, challenges and policy pointers

Strengths

Building on a strong VET system

Germans are understandably proud of their VET system. It is a system that demonstrably provides learners with skills demanded by employers: the employment rates of VET graduates is the highest within the EU. The system incorporates work-based learning with students spending the majority of their training in a workplace and has a successful history of helping weaker learners to benefit from VET through preparatory programmes. The social partners are closely involved in VET policy-making, and they have a strong sense

of ownership of the education and training system, occupying clearly defined roles at all levels and by sector. Such a structure represents a major advantage for Germany. In privileging, as it does, the importance of workplace exposure, employer engagement and stronger support measures for those in need, it lays a strong foundation for enabling the sustained integration of migrants.

Germany has made impressive and creative efforts to date in addressing barriers preventing migrant access to VET

Over recent years, many new measures have been implemented at a federal, *Länder* and local level, aimed at supporting the integration of migrants. Responding to a complex situation, very significant efforts have been made involving a board part of society. Authorities, employers, trade unions, civic organisations and numerous individual volunteers have all played important roles, responding to the needs of migrant youth, especially recent refugees and asylum seekers. Many initial measures, notably in terms of language acquisition, were specifically targeted at migrants. Migrants are now increasingly enrolling in measures that are available to all struggling learners. Work-based learning is a common thread across all such measures. It is an approach which has proven track record in supporting vulnerable youth, of all backgrounds, to achieve within the VET systems. The close engagement of employers helps to ensure that preparatory provision is aligned with real labour market demand and practice. Not all countries recognise the importance of work-based learning in migrant integration and many will benefit from consideration of its role within German provision.

Challenges and summary of policy options

Chapter 2: Getting informed about VET

Ensure that existing career guidance services are pro-active, personalised and co-ordinated.

The OECD welcomes current efforts in improving the co-ordination of career guidance. As such services are already strong in Germany, opportunity exists to continue building on these structures and make sure that the policy is better aligned in order to increase efficiencies by avoiding overlap and increase quality by expanding successful provision. It is important that guidance counsellors have the right skills to meet the migrants' complex needs.

With many migrants arriving in Germany from countries where VET is an unattractive educational pathway, further consideration can be given to ensuring that the career guidance services are pro-active, personalised and accessible both for migrant students and adults. Provision should allow them to consider the breadth of education and training options and challenge stereotyping that may exist about VET options. Direct encounters with workplaces are essential to effective career guidance.

Chapter 2: Building the necessary skills to enter VET

Ensure that recent arrivals have access to high quality language learning at an early point and throughout their training. Consideration should be given to scaling up provision that focuses on combining language learning and VET as this is a particularly effective mechanism for both learning and integration.

Language acquisition is essential to integration into German economic life and the sooner it is achieved, the better the results for individuals and society. It is important, consequently, to make sure that migrants in need have access to high-quality language learning at an early stage and throughout their VET training. Building up quality assurance mechanisms are necessary to ensure that the standard of the language training is satisfactory.

Ensure that there is sufficient evidence on the effectiveness of existing preparatory programmes through evaluations.

Preparatory classes for recent arrivals demand greater evaluation with the educational and employment trajectories of participants tracked, identifying success factors and assessing their impact on finding apprenticeships and/or employment.

Ensure that existing preparatory programmes are consistently available across Länder.

Preparatory programmes in VET schools are essential to enabling access to apprenticeships. They increase the knowledge and skills of learners and thereby reduce risks to employers. Poorly prepared learners take longer to develop the productive skills which ensure that the cost of an apprenticeship is outweighed by the benefits of provision.

Consider increasing access to successful preparatory programmes to learners over 18 years old.

In order to fully secure the opportunities presented by such successful provision, the age limit for preparatory classes in VET schools should be increased, so that a greater number of young migrants can benefit from such measures. Eligibility up to the age of 25 years, as is already the case in some *Länder,* might be considered throughout Germany.

Increase peer-learning between the Länder on successful programmes.

Finally, peer-learning across *Länder* on providing quality preparatory courses for recent arrivals should be strengthened, for instance by creating a co-ordinating body for the transition system across the regions. Opportunity exists to improve quality and to increase economies of scale through greater co-ordination.

Chapter 3 Getting into VET

In order to ease access into VET, consideration should be given to policy options that will:

- *Further roll out introductory training (Einstiegsqualifizierungen - EQ)* in co-operation with employers as this has proven to be a successful stepping stone into apprenticeship training.
- *Ensure a consistent implementation of the 3+2 scheme across Germany* with access to the status granted from the moment an apprenticeship contract is signed.
- *Provide diversity training for recruiters, focusing particularly on SMEs to address the issue of discrimination.*
- *Reduce unconscious stereotyping towards, and build the social capital of, humanitarian migrants and other youth with migrant parents,* by enabling more opportunities to engage with potential recruiters, e.g. through job fairs, short work placements during school and visits to companies.

Chapter 4 Support during VET

The dropout rates from apprenticeships of youth with migrant parents are a matter of concern. It is towards the end of an apprenticeship when an employer recoups early investment in training. Greater action to reduce dropout will build employer confidence.

Strengthen the availability of existing support measures during VET, such as assisted vocational training (Assistierte Ausbildung, AsA), to provide employers and humanitarian migrants, as any other learner at risk of poor outcomes, with necessary help so that they can complete upper secondary VET. As Germany already has existing structures to build on when it comes to supporting apprentices and employers, make sure this support is consistently available. Review the effectiveness of existing measures and prepare to scale up the successful ones.

Ensure that collaboration and communication locally between apprentices, employers, schools and social services is strong. There is a need to identify, and respond to, potential challenges as early as possible in order to increase the chances of migrants completing VET.

Chapter 5 Governing the system

Ensuring policy coherence

In the ongoing work of updating the Federal Action Plan, include a specific focus on VET as a mechanism for integrating migrants. The strategy should contain long-term measurable objectives and articulate the cross cutting responsibilities of different ministries to make sure that measures are well co-ordinated.

Continue and strengthen efforts to co-ordinate policy between the federal ministries and underlying agencies to ensure the effective implementation of the revised strategy and facilitate information exchange and policy discussion among key stakeholders.

Policy-making should be co-ordinated with stakeholder groups, including bodies representing migrants.

Secure evidence needed to make informed policy decisions

Take steps to improve evidence on the effectiveness of implemented measures. There is a need for better knowledge about what programmes are delivering. Putting a stronger focus on evidence includes encouraging local initiatives to build in evaluation mechanisms. Based on this information, successful practices should be rolled out, while ineffective ones should be scaled down and their abolition considered. Further, make sure that there is appropriate data available about how the migrants, particularly humanitarian migrants, are performing through the system.

Ensuring policy co-operation and peer-learning

Place greater emphasis on facilitating peer learning across the Länder which can lead to increased effectiveness. The federal level should take responsibility for creating a culture of learning through experience.

Consider revising funding mechanisms for projects locally to ensure sustainability, successful outcomes, innovative practices and value for money.

Chapter 6 Exploring increased flexibility in the VET system

Drawing upon experience of local initiatives and other OECD countries, consider developing in close alignment with employers more flexible pathways targets both youths and adults within the VET system.

Exploring flexible approaches in the regular VET system can help in meeting the specific needs of youth and adults who struggle to enter or complete VET including, but not exclusively, migrants and the native-born children of migrant parents. Increased flexibility can enhance student success rates in developing certified skills that enable self-sufficiency and contribute to the economy as a whole.

More flexible solutions can take many forms. Three main approaches include: shorter linked apprenticeships; longer apprenticeships; modular approaches.

Such approaches have been seen to be effective in enabling the progression of youth at risk of poor outcomes without compromising their employability. By monitoring the migrants' performance within VET, assessing local pilots that are experimenting with flexible solutions and learning from international practice, opportunity exists to give serious consideration to the development of more flexible models in Germany. This is particularly important should progression rates through the VET systems fail to significantly increase.

In considering policy options, perhaps greatest priority relates to embedding stronger mechanisms for evaluation and peer learning. Over recent years Germany has responded to significant new demands on its VET system with determination and creativity. Building on excellent foundations, opportunity exists to better review, identify and expand more effective provision based on deeper understanding of the extent of challenges faced by different learners. Such practice not only underpins effective provision, but also enables strategic leadership and nurtures a culture of continual improvement of relevance to all VET learners.

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Notes

[1] For the definitions of key words and phrases used in this report to describe 'migrants', 'refugees', 'asylum seekers', 'toleration status', 'humanitarian migrants', 'young people with a migration background' and 'foreign nationals', please see the Glossary.

[2] 64% of migrants are between 18 and 40 years old, compared to only 27.9% of the German population being in this age group. Only 2.1% of migrants are older than 65 years, compared to 19.8% of the German population.

[3] Compared to 2016, the transition system recorded a decline of 10.9% in 2018 due to declining numbers of refugees in Germany.

[4] The survey (*IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung*) includes 4 500 asylum seekers, refugees and tolerated persons who arrived in Germany between 2013 and early 2016.

[5] Pupils who lack basic reading skills are those who score no higher than Level 1 (or 407 points) in PISA assessments of reading proficiency.

[6] No distinction is made between foreign and native-born students.

2 Getting migrants ready for vocational education and training in Germany

This chapter looks into the hurdles many migrants meet as they get ready for vocational education and training (VET). OECD data show that both migrants and natives with immigrant parents often possess levels of academic proficiency and types of professional aspiration which are significantly different from the native population. Obstacles relate to confidence in pursuing VET routes, possession of relevant knowledge and skills and access to social networks providing advice and support. The chapter explores policy options and illustrates examples of effective practice from Germany and other OECD countries on how to successfully equip migrants with the necessary skills to enter upper secondary VET. The chapter first discuss how to get migrants and natives with immigrant parents informed about the prospects of VET, while the second section is about the broad variety of preparatory measures to build up necessary skills to enter VET, including language, basic skills and vocational skills.

Getting informed: Supporting young people with limited networks and knowledge about the apprenticeship system

One fundamental question in getting migrants ready for vocational education and training (VET) is whether young arrivals perceive VET as a desirable option in the first place. Pursuing vocational education may not appear to be financially viable for asylum seekers or refugees if they have to support family members, including family members who are living abroad. Furthermore, in global terms, the status of the German VET system is high. Many migrants arriving in Germany can be expected to come from countries where VET is seen in much less attractive terms. The following section looks into the issue of getting migrants informed about VET.

Background: The provision of career guidance to migrants

Germany has a well-developed career guidance system

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of high quality careers guidance as a means to enhance the educational and employment outcomes of young people (Hughes et al., 2016[1]). Germany has a strong but complex system of career guidance institutions, providing educational and professional counselling to students of all age classes. In beginning early, engaging students intensely in multiple activities and engaging employers and workplaces richly in its delivery, German provision embodies key characteristics of effective guidance (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]). The provision distinguishes between educational guidance (school guidance, educational paths, psychological services, higher education) and vocational guidance (employment agencies services, municipal agencies, adult centres, further training). During compulsory school, vocational counselling is an integral part of the curriculum, often including workplace visits or internships. Notably, the BMBF provides career guidance at the lower secondary level ("career guidance programme", *Berufsorientierungsprogramm*, BOP), mainly through skills assessments (*Potentialanalyse*) and vocational workshops (*Werkstatttage*). The skills assessment, which usually lasts up to three days and takes place during the second semester of the seventh grade, intends to motivate students to engage in their career planning and serves as basis for subsequent support measures. During the two-week vocational workshop, students try out practical work in at least three different fields. An evaluation (BIBB, 2018[3]) indicates that BOP can in general have positive effects, for instance that some students are more certain about the choice of future professions, which do not differ for migrants or natives. In 2017, the *Berufsorientierungsprogramm* offered grants for more than 190 000 students.

For students and also adults, the major counselling provider is the Federal Employment Agency (PES) with its local public employment services, i.e. job centres and career information centres (*Berufsinformationszentrum* BIZ). Due to the importance of dual VET in Germany, the PES are already involved at the lower secondary level, offering counselling regarding apprenticeship training and the labour market, for example within the BO (*Berufsorientierung*) and BOM (*Berufsorientierungsmaßnahmen*) context (Jenschke, Schober and Langner, 2014[4]; BMBF, 2018[5]). Within BOM (§48 SGB III), for which at least 50% has to be co-funded by a third party, the PES offers various career guidance measures (e.g. information about vocational fields; assessments of interests, eligibility, and competences; capacity building; socio-pedagogic support) in addition to the regular vocational orientation which is offered by counsellors of the PES (§33 SGB III).

Germany's approach has been innovative

Besides such regular structures, federal ministries, *Länder* and communities together with chambers and networks have initiated innovative projects to facilitate the transition into VET and thereby address the skills shortage. Such measures engage members of the economic community to make it easier for young people to understand the opportunities that exist in occupational areas which are struggling to generate

interest from suitably qualified young people. With access to new information, contextualised through access to workplaces, it is anticipated that young people will come to make more informed decisions about their aspirations. One example is the *Educational chains initiative* (*Bildungsketten*) by the German Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Federal Employment Agency in co-operation with the federal states. The initiative aims to co-ordinate and connect federal and *Länder* career guidance programmes to support young people on their way from school towards apprenticeship.

These programmes are available to all students regardless of their background. Typically, the career guidance process starts in grade 5 helping young people to reflect on their interests and abilities (*Potentialanalyse*). Based on the results, they receive occupational information through counselling, vocational workshops and internships to get to know different occupational fields. If required, the students are accompanied by educational coaches *(Berufseinstiegsbegleitung)* through their final school year and, in cases where direct entry into VET is not possible, through the transition system. In 2019, 14 *Federal-Land-Agreements of Bildungskette* existed. 517 000 students received occupational counselling by the PES. Within the preparatory mentoring programme (*Berufseinstiegsbegleitung*), a further 113 000 were individually supported from the last school year up to the first year of their apprenticeship (BMBF, 2018[5]). Studies of career guidance commonly highlight the greater needs of young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds to receive more intense interventions. Evidence indicates that their understanding of the labour market and its relation to educational provision is weak. All youth at risk of poor outcomes should be candidates for more intense careers guidance, and this includes in particular learners from migrant backgrounds (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]).

Additional guidance services for migrants

In general, migrants have access to all regular career guidance provisions. Addressing migrants increased need for information and counselling, Germany offers various services specifically targeting migrants (Box 2.1).

Social networks can affect the job search and the overall success in the labour market

By either providing information about available apprenticeships, information about the company's recruitment process, or putting in a good word, social networks can affect the success of an apprenticeship search (Roth, 2014[6]). Networks or informal contacts are one of the most common ways to secure jobs across the OECD. Recently arrived refugees have difficulties finding networks and contacts across the economic community (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[7]). However, around one out of two employment changes in the immigrant population were due to social networks. Especially important are networks with the native population (Drever and Hoffmeister, 2008[8]).

Box 2.1. Guidance services targeting migrants

Migration Services – Over 450 Youth Migration Service (jugendmigrationsdienste, JMD) offices for migrants aged 12-27 and over 1 300 Migration Counselling for adults (Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer, MBE) offices for migrants above the age of 27 in all regions support migrants on vocational, political, cultural and social topics. Social workers and pedagogues individually counsel migrants, using a case management approach. In 2017, roughly 125 000 persons were accompanied in the JMD. The JMD – part of the initiative "Strengthen the Youth" – are funded by the federal government with yearly expenditure of around EUR 50 million (BMBF, 2018[5]). In the MBE, 305 000 people were counselled in 2018. The MBE was funded by the federal government with EUR 52 million in 2018. In 2019, funding was raised to around EUR 70 million.

KAUSA – The "Coordination Agencies for Education and Migration" (KAUSA) support migrants through counselling and preparation for VET. At 31 service points across Germany, especially self-employed entrepreneurs with migrant background but also young migrants interested in vocational education and their parents receive information and support while involving further institutions such as chambers or the PES.

IQ network – Initiated in 2005, the "Integration through Qualification" network is funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the European Social Fund (ESF), in strategic co-operation with BMBF and the PES Aiming to improve employment opportunities for migrants, the network consists of 16 regional networks, around 360 subprojects and 5 competence centres. It facilitates peer learning and promotes quality development and best practices. Additionally, the network provides some services relating to career guidance.

The BMBF initiated in 2016, the programme "Career Guidance for Refugees" (Berufsorientierung für Flüchtlinge, BOF). Refugees are prepared for an apprenticeship in VET through intensive vocational counselling, vocational language and knowledge learning. So far, about 2 500 refugees have participated (BIBB, 2019[9]).

In addition, the Federal Employment Agency offers targeted programmes including career guidance within the transition system, such as PerjuF and PerjuF-H (expired since December 2018) and PerF-W.[1]

MySkills is a test that uses pictures and videos to assess foreign job-seekers' skills or work experience which cannot be evidenced by other means. The idea is that job seekers do the test early in the integration and counselling process to allow employment services rapidly to determine further steps, such as occupational and/or language training. MySkills is currently available in six languages including Farsi and Arabic, and for eight occupations including cooks, skilled metal workers, building and object coaters and motor vehicle mechatronics technicians (www.myskills.de/en/).

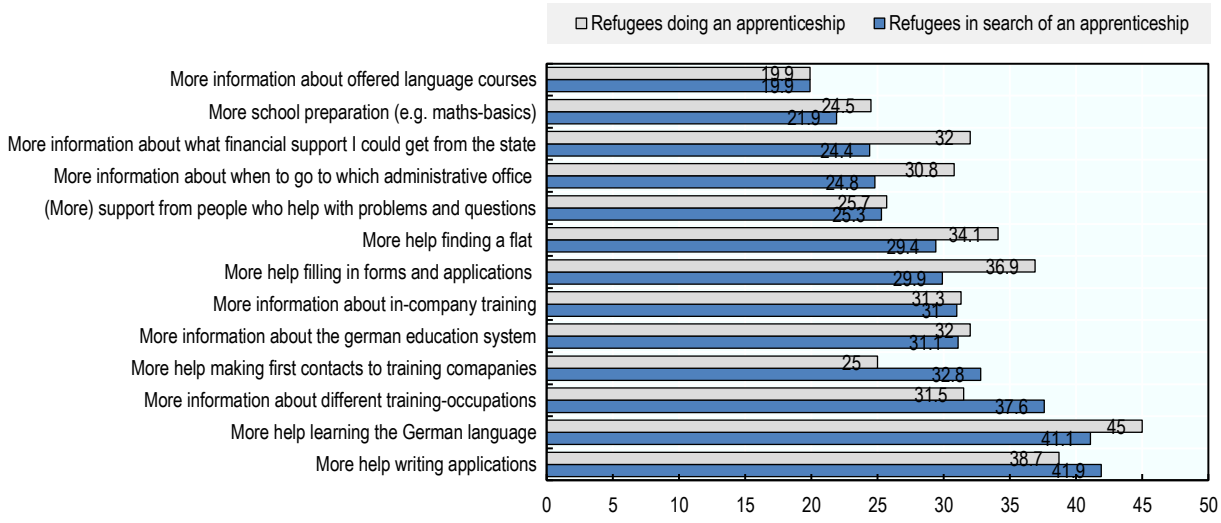
Source: BIBB (2019[9]), Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2019. Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung, https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/Datenreport_2019_Vorabversion_final.pdf; BMBF (2018[5]), Berufsbildungsbericht 2018.

Challenges in providing career guidance for migrants

Some migrants lack basic understanding of the education system including of VET options

National education and training systems are often hard to navigate: different options lead to very different career prospects, with very different labour market outcomes. For new arrivals, this navigation can be even more difficult. First, they might have less knowledge of the host countries' educational system, in particular vocational programmes. They may come from countries where educational structures differ substantially. For example, VET is virtually absent in countries such as Afghanistan and Eritrea. While in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran VET is available, programmes are school-based, and dual apprenticeships, as predominant in Germany, are largely unknown. Moreover, apprenticeships in some countries are associated with informal training in crafts (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016[10]; Stoewe, 2017[11]). For instance, only about 6% of refugees and asylum seekers over 18 years old in Germany graduated from a vocational school in their home country, whereas among Germans this figure is over half (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016[10]). The German Federal Agency for VET (BIBB, 2019[9]) shows that 37.6% of refugees searching for an apprenticeship are in need of more information about the different career opportunities, and 31.1% require more information about the German education system (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Survey on refugees' need of support when doing or searching an apprenticeship



Note: Multiple answers were possible.
Source: Adapted from BiBB (2019[9]), *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2019. Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung*. https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/Datenreport_2019_Vorabversion_final.pdf.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998272

In many countries the quality and prestige of vocational education is considerably lower than in Germany, and university education is a much more attractive pathway. As the OECD has illustrated, young people's thinking about career choices is as much, if not more, influenced by assumptions and social expectations as it is by "rational" decision making (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]). Therefore, recent arrivals who can be expected to have highly limited family connections to people familiar with the VET system, may not immediately understand the advantages of VET and rather aspire to university education, even when they may be more suitable for vocational education. This means that they may consider only general education options and be discouraged from engaging into VET.

The legal situation for migrants, the educational system and labour market, and migrant-specific services such as skills validation and recognition of foreign qualification are complex in Germany and often differ across the *Länder* (IQ, 2011[12]). This complexity means that career guidance counsellors will require specific and extensive knowledge on the different procedures for adult migrants, including some specific intercultural skills.

Migrants aspirations are often high, while many tend to underestimate the prospects of VET

Across the OECD, there is strong basis to believe that young people's career expectations are often unrealistic and poorly aligned with actual labour market demand. Students often make career decisions with little knowledge of the labour market. Career thinking is shaped by many different individual characteristics, such as gender, family background and migration status (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]).

Migrants often have high aspirations and they tend to be optimistic about their chances, especially those in the less demanding tracks such as *Hauptschule* (Wicht, Siembab and Ludwig-Mayerhofer, 2017[13]). For instance, after accounting for socio-economic background and academic performance, immigrant students in Germany are 8.6 percentage points more likely to expect to graduate from tertiary education than natives, and 15.9% more likely to expect an "ambitious" career, i.e. to become a manager, professional,

associate professional or technicians by the age of 30 (OECD, 2018, p. 247[14]). Evidence shows that students who underestimate the education required for their desired profession are more likely to become unemployed (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]).

Therefore, to be able to make fact-based decisions, it is essential that immigrant students and their parents have a good understanding of the German educational system, including of the vocational options and the occupational prospects to which they are gateways. Career guidance can help to correct potential misperceptions of dual VET, in particular of recently arrived migrants. Indeed, access to information has an impact on migrants' perception of the different tracks. Indeed, studies indicate that, the longer a migrant stays in Germany, the perceived status of VET tends to increase (Bolli and Rageth, 2016[15]).

While reasons for dropouts and contract apprenticeship terminations are complex, surveys indicate that some important factor relates to misplaced initial expectations about the profession. (Read more about contract termination in Chapter 4). Migrants, and especially humanitarian migrants have a higher rate of contract terminations. While the causal relationship is not clear, there are several reasons possible. First, migrants, as well as *Hauptschule* graduates, might have more difficulties in finding an apprenticeship place for their desired occupation, and thus start apprenticeships that are not their first choice. Second, migrants might have more difficulty in following the theoretic curriculum in VET schools, especially if they have limited language skills. Third, migrants might have expectations (e.g. concerning working conditions, the occupation or the employer) that differ from reality. The role of career guidance is to help to tackle such issues and thereby reduce the number of contract terminations. Individual counselling and mentoring can help to align the expectations or aspirations of migrants and the needs of the labour market.

The career guidance system is well-developed and extensive, but practices seem to vary between the Länder

The career guidance system in Germany is extensive, but practice tends to vary between the *Länder*. As laid out in the beginning of this chapter, Germany has a well-developed career guidance system, where different institutions are involved and provide comprehensive services to both natives and migrants. The legal situation for migrants, the educational system and the labour market, as well as the additional migrant-specific services are however complex, and provision differs in between *Länder*. Previous experience has shown that the provision of comprehensive, holistic career guidance requires intensive co-operation between different institutions (IQ, 2011[12]). One important study suggests that co-operation is not always well developed between career counsellor and advisors in asylum institutions, such as social workers, who work closely with migrants. While the social workers expect a pro-active approach from career services, those in turn rely on mediation by the asylum institutions (Granato and Neises, 2017, p. 94[16]).

The complex structures of the career guidance system provided by mainly the PES, but also by the federal ministries, the *Länder* and civil society, however, could induce parallel structures, duplication of efforts or even competing offers. As well as risks of inefficiencies, a complex structure can lead to confusion among the students. Some projects such as BOF and AsA are also short-term and might expire.

Despite general good provision, some new arrivals may not receive the support they need

To make sure that all young people are adequately informed to make career decisions, a pro-active approach involving career guidance specialists, teachers, employers and, in the case of migrants, social workers, is crucial (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]). The 2016 IAB-SOAP survey showed that only a small minority of refugees were aware of their eligibility to access counselling services. For instance, only 7% were aware of the Youth Migration Services, while 35% knew about the career guidance services of the PES (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016[10]). It is thus not surprising that young refugees often do not reach out to counselling services by themselves (Granato and Neises, 2017[16]). Moreover, studies have illustrated that migrants with distinctive characteristics, such as the young, female refugees are less likely

to actively reach out for counselling services (Granato and Neises, 2017[16]). PISA analysis of international practice also shows that commonly socio-economically disadvantaged students participate less in career guidance activities, such as job shadowing, career fairs, or advisory at schools (Sweet, Nissinen and Vuorinen, 2014[17]; Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]). Humanitarian migrants, who are overrepresented among disadvantaged students, also tend to be less familiar with local career guidance structures.

In general, refugees do have access to career guidance services. For asylum seekers however, access to various support measures are limited to those with good prospects of remaining. In addition, those outside this category who nevertheless remain in Germany, including migrants from European countries, also require career guidance.

Policy message

Ensure that existing career guidance services are pro-active, personalised and co-ordinated.

The OECD welcomes current efforts in improving the coordination of career guidance. As such services are already strong in Germany, opportunity exists to continue building on these structures and ensure that the policy is better aligned in order to increase efficiencies by avoiding overlap and increase quality by expanding successful provision. It is important that guidance counsellors have the right skills to meet the migrants' complex needs.

Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the career guidance services are pro-active, personalised and accessible both for migrant students and adults, allowing them to consider the breadth of education and training options and challenge stereotyping that may exist about VET options. Direct encounters with workplaces are essential to effective career guidance for youth at risk.

Policy arguments

Why career guidance for migrants is important

While high-quality and effective career guidance provision is important for all students, migrants have an even larger need for information and counselling. As noted above, migrants in general and recent arrivals in particular often do not have enough knowledge about VET, the education system and services available in Germany, and thus need comprehensive counselling from an early stage. Often, this also applies to young people with immigrant parents, who may not be familiar with the German VET system or lack a professional network that they can activate to help their children find an apprenticeship placement. Socio-economic status affect career expectations, and education and training choices (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]).

Pro-active, accessible career guidance for migrant students can be an effective mechanism to broaden career aspirations

Socio-economically disadvantaged persons, especially new arrivals and their parents, often have weaker professional and social networks, making it very important that such students have access to career guidance services. High quality career guidance can have economic, education and social benefits, including preventing dropout (Hughes et al., 2016[1]; Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]). It is therefore essential that schools and social workers systematically identify students at risk especially, and actively support their career development. Ideally, new arrivals are counselled as early as possible to ensure a smooth integration process. Informing has significant effect on the career development: Research studies suggest that refugees who received counselling were more likely to participate in the integration course (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016[10]).

There is also international evidence on the importance of a pro-active approach from other countries. In Denmark, municipalities are obliged to pro-actively contact those who dropped out of formal education up to the age of 19 (OECD/The European Commission, 2004[18]). Switzerland introduced a 'VET case management' (*Case Management Berufsbildung*, CMBB), where school-leavers at risk of failing to transit into the upper secondary level are mentored throughout the transition and beyond. An evaluation (Egger Dreher & Partner AG, 2015[19]) concluded that the programme is especially successful in cantons which systematically identify persons at risk. As the youth cohort is getting more diverse, creating a pro-active guidance service that is able to meet the needs of vulnerable youths can be an important measure to combat drop out.

Enhancing co-ordination can provide a holistic guidance service that meet adult migrants' complex needs

The needs of adult migrants are complex and guidance services need to be well co-ordinated, to avoid confusion and overlap in measures. Such competition should be avoided and whenever possible, measures should be consolidated into regular structures.

One promising way of coordinating different activities locally are one-stop-shops (Degler and Liebig, 2017[20]) where migrants are provided with all information necessary to proceed their careers. Such agencies provide initial counselling regarding living and working in different languages and co-ordinate the services available in the region, often through a case management approach. Examples of such one-stop-shops are the "Integration Points" in North Rhine-Westphalia, the welcome center in Baden-Württemberg and the youth employment agencies (*Jugendberufsagentur*) (Jenschke, Schober and Langner, 2014[4]). The knowledge and networks build through successful projects should be consolidated into the existing guidance and counselling structures through strengthened co-operation and co-ordination.

Individualised approaches can work better to meet the migrants' complex needs

Career guidance should not be limited to the provision of information, but include opportunities for migrants to explore for themselves, through career events, job shadowing and work placements (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[2]; Jeon, 2019[21]). Migrants vary in their language skills, prior knowledge, legal status and perceptions of VET. Also many migrants lack the network to help them make career choices. Especially adults can be left a bit on their own to figure out how the system works. Individual mentoring can be an effective way of making sure that many of the recent arrivals have access to the necessary information to make well-informed career decisions. Mentoring may consist of tutoring, social and emotional support, and educational and vocational orientation, as well as practical information about the local community. The success of mentoring rests on how well mentors have been trained, the extent of schools' co-operation, and the engagement of parents and children (OECD, 2018[14]).

Building the necessary skills to enter VET

Introduction: Preparation for VET is differently organised for school-age migrants, young migrants and adults

Migrants and natives with immigrant parents tend to have lower levels of proficiency, but higher levels of aspiration. This works against easy progression into VET. For many recent arrivals moreover, given that their educational backgrounds and basic skills level are often low, pursuing VET requires a long-term investment. For employers, there are substantial costs in taking on a vulnerable candidate in risk of dropping out. Both employers and VET schools demand a high level of German fluency in order to start apprenticeship training. Most recent arrivals are in need of substantial support in order to build up their skills set and get ready for starting an upper secondary VET qualification. This section looks into the broad

variety of preparatory measures designed to build skills in order to prepare students for VET. Some of these measures are migrant-specific, while others are generally available for other groups of students who did not secure an apprenticeship at the end of lower secondary schooling. Although there are considerable regional variations, there is broadly speaking a difference in preparatory measures targeting young students of compulsory school age (younger than 18), young adults (mostly younger than 25) and adults.

The provision for school-age migrants

Recent arrivals in school age are obliged to attend compulsory school. *Länder*, which are responsible for compulsory education, implemented different models: While some are initially educated in separated classes and eventually enter mainstream education, others attend regular classes and receive remedial (language) courses, still other *Länder* have a mixed model. For asylum seekers, the start of schooling also differs across *Länder*. Some are obliged to immediately attend school, whereas in some *Länder* there are waiting periods (3-6 months) or the schooling starts after the distribution into municipalities (Massumi et al., 2015[22]).

Support for young people who did not find an apprenticeship is largely organised through the transition system

There is a considerable number of pathways to prepare young people who have not managed to find apprenticeships. Most notably, these include programmes in the transition system (*Übergangsbereich*), after which students are supposed to enter dual or school-based VET or find employment. While programmes in the transition system are diverse, there are five broad options available: a pre-vocational year (*Berufsvorbereitungsjahr* and other school-based programmes that seek to build vocational skills); preparatory educational programmes offered by the PES; school-based programmes to obtain a lower-secondary diploma; introductory training (*Einstiegsqualifizierung*); and preparatory internships for VET in childcare.

Table 2.1. Programmes in the transition system

New participants, 2018

	All	Foreign born nationals	Share of foreign- born nationals
Pre-vocational year (berufsbildende und berufsvorbereitende programme)	195 422	78 158	40%
Preparatory educational programmes offered by the PES (*berufsvorbereitende Bildungsgänge der BA*)	39 795	5 145	12.9%
Programmes to obtain a lower secondary diploma (*allgemeinbildende Bildungsgänge*)	19 964	4 241	21.2%
Introductory trainings (*Einstiegsqualifizierungen*)	11 118	4 436	39.9%
Preparatory internships for VET in childcare[2]	3 692	356	9.6%
Total	269 991	92 337	34.2%

Source: Adapted from Statistisches Bundesamt (2018[23]) *Schnellmeldung Integrierte Ausbildungsberichterstattung Anfänger im Ausbildungsgeschehen nach Sektoren/Konten und Ländern – 2018.*

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998424

As has become common practice, the majority of students who entered the transition system went into a pre-vocational year (73% in 2017) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018[24]). Pre-vocational years usually include training in vocational and academic core skills as well as career guidance. These can be offered by vocational schools (*Berufsschule* or *Berufsfachschule*) as well as private institutions, and depending on the programme can also lead to a lower secondary diploma. Given their importance in the transition

system, this section will focus on the pre-vocational year and how they have been adapted to support recent arrivals. Introductory training (*Einstiegsqualifizierungen*) is discussed in Chapter 3.

Länder have introduced specialised preparatory classes in VET school for young recent arrivals, combining language learning and skills building

As part of the transition system, all *Länder* currently offer special preparatory classes in VET schools for young recent arrivals, but who are older than the compulsory school age, combining preparation for VET with language courses. Programmes are diverse, but usually seek to prepare students within one or two years to be ready to secure an apprenticeship. The high number of recent arrivals has required considerable adjustment within VET schools. The share of foreign-born students in the pre-vocational year has increased sharply from 18 000 in the school year 2014/2015 to 81 000 in 2016/2017; around 70% of this group (55 000) were born in one of the main asylum countries[3] (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018[25]). Since the majority of *Länder* requires no or only limited language skills to enter such provision, the first half of the programme usually focuses on language learning and possibly alphabetisation. The second half has a stronger focus on career guidance and vocational and academic skills and may offer the option of an internship. Whether students have the option to finish these courses with a school diploma varies from state to state.

Many young migrants from the main asylum countries participate in preparatory traineeships

A closer look at participants in these measures shows that young people from the so-called main asylum origin countries are strongly represented in preparatory traineeships, but participate less in other preparatory educational programmes and mentorship programmes (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2. New participants in VET-related support measures offered by the PES, 2017

	Main asylum origin countries	German nationals
Introductory training (EQ)	7 961	12 479
Training-related assistance (abH)	5 540	25 623
Assisted vocational training (AsA)	2 090	7 715
Career entry support by mentoring programmes (BerEb)	1 806	26 271
Pre-vocational training measures (BvB)	1 669	54 974

Note: The main asylum origin countries include Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic.
Source: Adpated from Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2018[26]) Berufsausbildungsbeihilfe, Ausbildungsgeld, Übergangsgeld (Monats- und Jahreszahlen).

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998443

Research shows that young people with immigrant parents generally are more likely to receive additional support whilst still in secondary school compared to apprentices with German-born parents. This reflects the aforementioned higher chance of this group to have lower grades, more difficulties in finding apprenticeships and also their higher concentration in lower secondary schools – a school type that is more strongly targeted by counselling and support measures in the first place (Eberhard et al., 2013[27]). However, one out of four refugees who are searching for an apprenticeship require more support (Figure 2.1) (BIBB, 2019[9]).

The PES provides programmes to prepare adults for VET

Many recent arrivals are too old to enter the regular transition system, even in *Länder* that have opened up preparatory VET classes beyond the age of compulsory schooling. This group of young adults is highly heterogeneous, possessing different skills, professional and educational backgrounds and career aspirations. This diversity in profiles is a challenge for countries, as a one-size-fits-all approach to integration policy is unlikely to succeed (OECD, 2016[28]).

A considerable number of programmes were initiated in 2015/16 providing skills assessment, career guidance and information and first experiences in the labour market. Many of these targeted particularly young arrivals beyond compulsory schooling age (Box 2.2). Given the breadth of integration programmes on a federal, regional and municipal level, the following sections will only focus on federal programmes that address young adults specifically and seek to prepare them to enter VET, further education or employment.

Box 2.2. Programmes by the PES aiming to prepare adults for VET

The programme Perspectives for Young Refugees (*Perspektiven für junge Flüchtlinge, PerjuF*) aims to provide career guidance and practical insights into different occupational fields to prepare participants for VET. The programme lasts four to six months and in the first two weeks starts with an orientation and information phase to assess participants' language skills as well as their professional skills and interests. Based on this assessment, participants are interning or work shadowing in companies. Additional support, e.g. language courses or support in the application process, should be made available during the work experience phase, based on the individual needs of participants (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2016[29]). The programme is open to refugees as well as asylum seekers - and tolerated persons with access to the labour market. Participants have to between 18 and 24 years old.

The PES also offers this programme specifically for the skilled trades (*Perspektiven für junge Flüchtlinge im Handwerk, PerjuF-H*) that seeks to introduce participants to at least three different occupations in the skilled occupations. The aim was to offer this programme to 10 000 young migrants between 2016 and 2018 and is a joint initiative by the Ministry for Education and Research, the PES and the employers' associations for skilled crafts. The programme expired in December 2018 (*Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks, ZDH*).

In addition, the PES introduced a programme targeting refugee women (*Perspektiven für weibliche Flüchtlinge, PerF-W*), seeking to support their integration into the labour market or further education. There is no age limit in this programme and no specific VET focus, however it is currently the only targeted programme the PES offers for women.[4] It seeks to provide career guidance, skills assessment and first practical experiences, and also supports participants in finding childcare during in the programme. The programme lasts four months and is offered part time.

Source: Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2016[30]), Asylbewerber und Flüchtlinge. Überblick über wesentliche Aktivitäten der BA zur Integration von Flüchtlingen in den Arbeits-und Ausbildungsmarkt.

Language support for adult migrants

There is a relatively broad provision of both public and privately funded language courses in Germany, including the Integration Course – the main language course for adults – organised by the BAMF and funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) (Box 2.3).

In 2016, the Federal Government, in co-operation with the BMI and the BMAS, designed the so-called "*Gesamtprogramm Sprache"* (Overall Programme Language) which interlinks general and vocational language support. The first step in this programme is the Integration Course, which is followed by a successor programme (*Berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung*) that mainly focuses on labour market integration by providing additional job-related language courses and further qualification modules.

Unemployed people who receive social benefits, people with a migration background (including asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining) and people who concluded the integration course typically have access to the programme, even if they currently attend an apprenticeship. In 2017, about 80 000 persons participated (BMBF, 2018[5]).

The BMAS has also introduced a language-learning programme *Vocational Language Support for Migrants',* co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) to enhance migrant's chances of integrating into the labour market. The course includes basic language teaching, but also vocational vocabulary and enables access to internships.

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) also offers, in addition to the normal integration courses, integration courses that are specifically targeted at young adults. One example is a youth course (*Jugendintegrationskurse*), where participants have to be beyond compulsory schooling age (between 16 and 18) and under 27. Courses are offered by external service providers that apply to the BAMF for funding. Youth courses include language training (900 lessons, i.e. 675 hours) and civic education (100 lessons, i.e. 75 hours). The language learning component has been adapted, focusing on school-relevant terminology, such as vocabulary for mathematics, geography or natural science. In addition, participants learn how to write application letters, receive information about main recruitments channels and are introduced to other service providers, such as the PES or the Migration Services for Young People (*Jugendmigrationsdienste*).[5] Courses should also include trips to companies to get to know working environments first-hand as well as a short internship, work shadowing, or sitting in on classes in schools or universities.

Although several language courses exist, 19.9% of refugees searching for an apprenticeship require more information about offered language courses and 41.1% are in need of more support while learning the German language. Refugees who are already doing an apprenticeship need even more support while learning the German language (45%) (Figure 2.1) (BIBB, 2019[9]).

Box 2.3. Language learning for adults

The integration course is the first step to learn the German language

Although the main focus of the German integration course is civic and social integration, the German language is taught from the very beginning. The integration course usually consists of 600 lessons of language training, as well as 100 lessons of orientation, where information on the legal system, history and culture is taught. The language course is completed with a German test for immigrants (*Deutschtest für Zuwanderer*). Participants should by the end have reached level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Even though the integration course does not focus on labour market integration, 3 out of its 11 fields refer to labour market topics. In addition, non-native speaking persons have the possibility of attending various language courses, mainly offered by colleges or adult learning centres (*Volkshochschulen*), private commercial institutions, VET schools or the civil society. For instance, the BMBF co-ordinated the nation-wide programme "Entry German" (*Einstieg Deutsch*), where over 3 000 volunteers helped migrants above school age to learn German. The programme ended in December 2018.

Source: BMBF (2018[5]), *Berufsbildungsbericht 2018*.

The challenges in preparing migrants for VET

As the skills of humanitarian migrants are often not directly applicable in highly formalised OECD labour markets, learning the language and building the necessary academic and vocational skills before entering VET is a key challenge. It is also of considerable importance. Risks of economic marginalisation are high

and arguably growing as low-skilled tasks are automated. This section looks into the challenges that can arise when migrants are building the necessary skills to enter VET.

Learning the language takes time

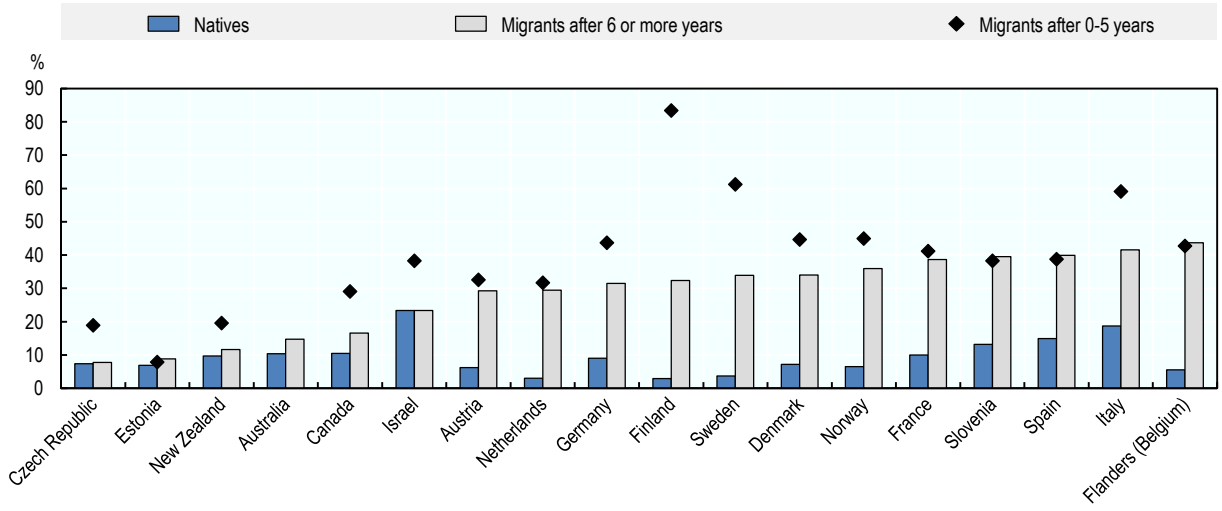
In general, it takes time for new arrivals to reach a level in the host country's language which enables them for work. In the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), data show how the literacy level increases with the time the migrants stayed in the country. For Germany, more than 40% of migrants in between the ages of 16-35 who had arrived in the country five years or fewer before the test, did not reach the baseline in literacy skills. For migrants staying more than five years, the share decreases to around 30%. Compared to natives, these shares are relatively high (Figure 2.2). These results indicates that learning the language is not a quick fix and require time.

For many migrants, the integration course alone does not seem to be sufficient to qualify for apprenticeship training. A substantial barrier for employers in taking on migrant apprentices is insufficient language skills. Throughout the visits that the OECD team undertook, a common requirement from employers was repeated; migrants need a B2 level in German in order to start apprenticeship training. Reaching a B2 level in a foreign language is in many ways a relatively high level of language proficiency, and probably unrealistic to reach for many migrants within a short time horizon.

Further the provision of vocational language courses seem to be insufficient. Not all have access to vocational language courses. For instance, 72% of local IHK-chambers report that such provision are insufficient in their region (DIHK, 2018[31]).

Figure 2.2. Percentage of students not attending baseline literacy skills, by immigrant background

Share of natives and natives with immigrant parents aged 16-35 not attending baseline literacy skills, by duration in the host country



Note: Statistically significant differences to natives are marked in dark blue.
Source: Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (2015) (database) http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/publicdataandanalysis/

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998291

Assuring the quality of the language courses can be challenging in periods of high demand

A recent survey where refugees evaluated their own language skills, 31% of the respondents rated their language skills as very good or good, which is an increase compared to previous years. However, a main challenge of having a large group of migrants entering the country within a short time frame is to upscale

the supply of integration programmes. As language courses are one of the first stops in the integration process, the challenge would in the short term be most evident here. Considering the number of new arrivals in Germany during the exceptional inflow in 2015/16, it is impressive how fast Germany was able to expand language learning offerings. Nevertheless, the increase in demand have delayed access to such courses (Granato and Neises, 2017[16]). Furthermore, the capacity of offerings varies across regions, and especially rural areas do not always provide sufficient language learning opportunities. In some regions, where participant potential is low, it is required that a minimum of 14 participants register for general integration courses and 10 participants for literacy and youth courses (DIHK, 2018[31]). The low level of supply of language courses can be a considerable challenge in effectively integrating the migrants.

BAMF has created a system enabling the scaling up and down of the supply of integration courses according to the demand. Private course providers have to apply to BAMF for a licence and funding in order to engage with the work. BAMF has developed comprehensive guidelines on how to organise these courses. In addition, teachers have to be qualified to teach German as a second language. The criteria set for teachers can also be adjusted according to needs, which was done in 2016, but has now been reversed. Due to a great lack of teachers in Germany, attracting highly qualified labour to teach German as a second language can be challenging (forsa, 2019[32]; Kultusministerkonferenz, 2018[33]). At the same time as the provision needs to be flexible to meet increased needs, the job situation for teachers' needs stability.

Further, assuring programme quality can be a constraint. According to interviews that the OECD review team conducted, the BAMF has begun evaluating the impact of the youth courses, but findings are not yet available. The BAMF also seems to have limited capacity to follow up the courses provided by numerous private course providers. The courses are followed up by regional co-ordinators, who hold a broad responsibility, including assessing whether the local course providers meet predefined quality standards. The low number of such co-ordinators can give limited opportunity to make sure that the courses reach desired results (Degler and Liebig, 2017[20]).

Many of the preparatory programmes within the transition system organised by the Länder are aimed at young people who are still of compulsory school age

As part of the transition system, the *Länder* offer special preparatory classes in VET schools for young recent arrivals who are older than the compulsory school age. In about half of the states, these preparatory programmes are mainly accessible to students up to the age of 18. A number of states have opened up these courses to older students up to age 20 or 21, e.g. Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, while others have introduced additional courses for those beyond compulsory schooling age allowing students up to the age of 25 to enter these special programmes (for example in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia). Whether adult students are entitled to access these classes or whether it is up to the school or local school authorities to grant permission also varies across Germany.

While some Länder have started evaluating these preparatory classes within the transition system, there is generally little evidence on their effectiveness

There is currently limited knowledge as to how effective the preparatory classes aimed at adults to facilitate transition into VET are. First evaluations of the Bavarian preparatory classes in 2016 show that right after the two-year programme close to 40% enter dual or school-based VET, a preparatory traineeship (7%), continue with a general education programme within the upper secondary level (4%) or find employment (5%). Close to one in five continues with another educational programme in the transition system or repeats a year. For around 25%, next steps are not known (Schiffhauer and Magister, 2016[34]).[6] A second evaluation round for the school year 2017 has shown similar results (Magister, 2017[35]). For Hamburg, around 30% enter VET, around 8% found employment and another 7% continued with upper secondary education right after finishing the preparatory classes (Hamburger Institut für Berufliche Bildung, 2018[36]).

Whether these are “satisfactory” results is not easy to determine. Given that recent arrivals often arrive with very little formal schooling, findings that around 30-40% manage to “catch up” to the educational and language level required for VET within two years, can be read as a success story. It is striking that these results are similar to the outcomes of students in the transition system in general; evaluations on the effectiveness of the overall transition system – including all students – indicate that around 40% manage to find an apprenticeship within six months after having finished the preparatory programme (BMBF, 2016[37]).

At the same time, these evaluations also show that a considerable proportion of learners does not manage to get into VET. For the regular transition system, findings indicate that after three years, 70% of all learners ultimately secure an apprenticeship (BMBF, 2016[37]). Whether this will be also the case for recent arrivals remains to be seen and will strongly depend on what kind of programmes – if any – they participated after their pre-vocational classes. Currently, however, a systematic tracking of those who do not enter into VET after preparatory classes seems to be largely absent.

Participation in preparatory classes varies substantially across Länder

For those regions where data is available (13 out of 16), approximately 70 600 foreign nationals attended preparatory programmes in VET schools in 2016/2017 (Table 2.3). Not all students in these classes are asylum seekers or refugees, but given that these courses were largely introduced or expanded to cater to this group, it nevertheless gives an indication.

As Table 2.3 shows, close to one-third of all students enrolled in preparatory VET courses were in Bavaria, whereas in other *Länder* numbers are considerably lower. These differences partly reflect lower numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in certain regions, but it should also be noted that Bavaria has one of the most developed and comparatively long-standing systems in Germany for preparing recent arrivals for VET schools (Box 2.4).

Participation in preparatory programmes for adults by the PES has been rather low

So far, the participation in preparatory programmes offered by the PES for adults has been low compared to the number of new arrivals. In a representative survey among recently arrived asylum seekers and refugees, around 1% stated that they had participated or were still participating in PerjuF (Romiti et al., 2016[38]). However, there is currently no evaluation available that assesses whether these programmes are effective. Therefore, it is currently not possible to conclude whether these programmes should be rolled out.

Combining different preparatory programmes for adults by the BAMF and PES can lead to a preparation time of up to three years

PES preparatory programmes require participants to speak a basic or intermediary level of German and therefore are mostly offered to persons who have already taken a language course. Thus, the trajectory that is usually foreseen would require recent arrivals to participate in a language course, PerjuF or PerjuF-H (expired since December 2018) and possibly BOF at the end. Such a trajectory would take around two to three years, assuming that all programmes are conducted full-time and back-to-back.

Nevertheless, if academic skills are lacking after this preparation period, participants would have to undergo additional training, adding further to the preparation time.

Table 2.3. Foreign nationals in preparatory programmes, in VET schools

School year 2016/2017

	New participants	Eligible age group
Baden-Württemberg	9 100	16-20
Bavaria	22 000	16-21
Brandenburg	1 300	16-18
Bremen	1 000	16-18
Hamburg	2 700	16-18
Hesse	7 400	16-18
Lower Saxony	5 600	16-18; up to 21
North Rhine-Westphalia	12 000	16-18; 16-25
Rhineland-Palatinate	2 200	16-18
Saxony	2 500	16-27
Saxony-Anhalt	1 300	16-18
Schleswig-Holstein	2 700	16-18
Thuringia	800	16-21
Total	70 600	

Note: Data for Schleswig-Holstein from Dec. 2015. For Brandenburg, Bremen, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, data are from a reporting month or beginning of the school year in 2016 rather than the full school year 2016/2017.

Source: Landetag von Baden-Württemberg (2017[39]), *Sprachförderung von jungen Menschen mit Flucht- und Migrationserfahrung in Baden-Württemberg*, https://www.landtag-bw.de/files/live/sites/LTBW/files/dokumente/WP16/Drucksachen/1000/16_1929_D.pdf; Regierung der Oberpfalz, Bayern (2016[40]), *Überblick über die Beschulung von berufsschulpflichtigen Flüchtlingen und Asylbewerbern in Bayern, Deutschland*, https://www.kmk-pad.org/fileadmin/Dateien/download/VERANSTALTUNGEN/PAD-Fachtagung_Integration/Workshop-Beitraege/D1_Englhardt-Kopf.pdf; Land Brandenburg (2017[41]), *Neue Zahlen, neue Informationen*, https://www.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/bb1.c.473404.de; Bremische Bürgerschaft (2016[42]), *Antwort des Senats auf die Kleine Anfrage der Fraktion der CDU*, Drucksache 19/406, https://www.bremische-buergerschaft.de/drs_abo/2016-04-27_Drs-19-406_d7c18.pdf; Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2017[43]), *Schriftliche Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Franziska Grunwaldt und Karin Prien (CDU) vom 31.05.17 und Antwort des Senats*, Drucksache 21/9286, https://www.buergerschaft-hh.de/ParlDok/dokument/58045/ist-die-ausbildungsvorbereitung-avm-dual-f%C3%BCr-fl%C3%BCchtlinge-wirklich-ein-erfolgsmodell-.pdf; Hessisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Energie, Verkehr und Landesentwicklung (2017[44]), *Berufsausbildung in Hessen 2017*, https://www.hessen-agentur.de/mm/mm002/946_BAB_2017_komplett.pdf; Nieder Sachsen (2017[45]), *Die Niedersaechsischen Berufsbildenden Schulen in Zahlen Schuljahr 2016-2017*, https://www.mk.niedersachsen.de/download/119668/Die_niedersaechsischen_berufsbildenden_Schulen_in_Zahlen_Schuljahr_2016_2017.pdf; Landtag Rheinland-Pfalz (2017[46]), *Antwort des Ministeriums für Bildung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Anke Beilstein (CDU), Drucksache 17/4257*, http://dokumente.landtag.rlp.de/landtag/drucksachen/4427-17.pdf; Landeshauptstadt Dresden (2016[47]), *Asyl in Dresden - Aktuelle Informationen,* https://www.dresden.de/de/rathaus/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/archiv/2016/04/pm_070.php; Landetag von Sachen-Anhalt (2016[48]), *Antwort der Landesregierung auf eine Kleine Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung Abgeordnete Henriette Quade (DIE LINKE), Bildungszugang von geflüchteten Kindern und Jugendlichen in Sachsen-Anhalt Teil 2, Kleine Anfrage, KA 7/294,* https://www.landtag.sachsen-anhalt.de/fileadmin/files/drs/wp7/drs/d0719dak.pdf; Schleswig-Holsteinischer Landtag (2016[49]), *Bericht der Landesregierung,Bericht zur Integration von Flüchtlingskindern ins Schulsystem, Drucksache 18/3540*, https://www.landtag.ltsh.de/infothek/wahl18/drucks/3700/drucksache-18-3715.pdf; Freistaat Thüringen Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport (2016[50]) (2016), Sprachförderung Deutsch als Zweitsprache an Thüringer Schulen, https://www.thueringen.de/mam/th2/tmbwk/bildung/konzept_dummy.pdf.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998462

Box 2.4. Vocational Integration Classes in Bavaria

Bavaria had rolled out a successful programme within the region, Vocational Integration Classes (*Berufsintegrationsklassen*) state-wide, increasing provision from around 180 classes in 2014/2015 to around 1 150 classes in 2016/2017, with approximately 22 000 students participating in the same year.

The programme takes two years. The first year predominantly focusses on language learning with an option for additional literacy training. In the second year, language acquisition is continued, alongside preparatory classes that focus on building academic skills – predominantly in mathematics – as well as career guidance, application training and information about the German VET system. The final semester usually includes an internship. Students also have the option to obtain a lower secondary diploma after finishing the second year. Students can also repeat a year if skills are not sufficiently developed and additional support can be offered to students with limited or no literacy skills.

Vocational Integration Classes are mandatory for recent arrivals aged 16-21 whose language skills are not good enough to follow mainstream education or to find an apprenticeship. In exceptional cases, these classes are accessible to students up the age of 25. In addition, Bavaria has organised language classes for this age group to bridge the waiting times between arrival and the new school semester.

Source: Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Bildung und Kultus, Wissenschaft und Kunst (2017[51]), *Lehrplan für die Berufsintegrations- und Sprachintensivklassen*, http://www.isb.bayern.de/download/19735/lp_berufsintegrationsklassen_07_2017.pdf.

Policy message

Ensure that recent arrivals have access to high quality language learning at an early point and throughout their training. Consideration should be given to scaling up provision that focuses on combining language learning and VET as this is a particularly effective mechanism for learning and integration.

Language acquisition is essential to integration in German economic life and the sooner it is achieved, the better the results for individuals and society. It is important, consequently, to make sure that migrants have access to high-quality language learning at an early stage and throughout their VET training. Building up quality assurance mechanisms are necessary to ensure that the quality of the language training is satisfactory.

Make sure that there is sufficient evidence on the effectiveness of existing preparatory programmes through evaluations.

Preparatory classes for recent arrivals demand greater evaluation with the educational and employment trajectories of participants tracked, identifying success factors and assessing their impact on finding apprenticeships or employment.

Make sure that existing preparatory programmes are consistently available across Länder.

Preparatory programmes in VET schools are essential to enabling access to apprenticeships, as it increases the skills of the students and thereby reduces the risks to employers that the costs of provision will not outstrip benefits.

Consider increasing the access to successful preparatory programmes to students over 18 years old.

In order to fully secure the opportunities presented by such successful provision, the age limit for preparatory classes in VET schools should be increased, so that a greater number of young migrants can benefit from such measures. Eligibility up to the age of 25 years might be considered.

Increase peer-learning between the Länder on successful programmes.

Finally, peer-learning across *Länder* in relation to the provision of high quality preparatory courses for recent arrivals should be strengthened, for instance by creating a co-ordinating body for the transition system across the regions. Opportunity exists to improve quality and to increase economies of scale through greater co-ordination.

Policy arguments

To improve language skills among migrants, make sure that the language courses are accessible and assure the quality of the training

Learning the language is one of the key issues in successfully integrating migrants into work and the society. Good language skills is particularly important in VET, as the employers value a high language level in order to take on migrants as apprentices. Providing migrants with language courses is one of the key measures in this regard. Making sure that the courses are available also in rural areas is important. To make sure that courses lead to desirable outcomes, putting increased emphasis on assuring the quality of the training is essential. This includes securing information and evidence on the outcomes of programmes.

Language courses that are relevant for a vocational area can improve learner motivation and thereby success rates

Vocational language training can not only improve the vocabulary relevant for VET, but can also be expected to be particularly motivating to learners, since they typically are unambiguously oriented towards employment and make use of applied learning environments. Evidence suggest that the German vocational language course provided by the BAMF have positive effects on the chances for employment. Controlling for personal background characteristics, participants in this course had 30% higher chances of employment compared to migrants who did not attend this course. In comparison, participants who completed the introduction course had a 10% higher chance of being employed (Vallizadeh et al., 2016[52]). Such offerings can be further enhanced across Germany targeting recent arrivals. Ideally, vocational language learning is combined with practical work, for instance in form of internships such as the EQ. Indeed, recent analysis of OECD PIAAC data has shown that use of literacy (and numeracy) in workplace settings can have very significant positive impacts on proficiency levels (Jimeno et al., 2016[53]). However, such internships rely on employers willing to engage in training. Other OECD countries are also providing such courses that combine language with VET. Sweden is offering migrants with subsidized employment (*introduktionsjobb*) that provides the opportunity to combine work with language training (Swedish for Immigrants). The results show promise, as almost half of the participants enter regular employment. Denmark has two courses which connects language learning with practical work. In a three step course, students first attend language learning lessons for four to eight weeks, before they enter a traineeship in an enterprise, followed by additional language lessons (26-52 weeks) (Jeon, 2019[21]).

Regional differences in preparatory programmes can help to determine what approaches work best and how to improve programmes

While pre-vocational programmes across Germany all follow the same ultimate objective, there is considerable heterogeneity in how *Länder* organise and implement these courses, including their content, duration and eligible age groups. The variation of outcomes between their programmes tantalisingly is unknown. However, it is known that some are associated with very positive results. Thus, considerable opportunity exists to draw from these different experiences to gain useful insights into how to make these programmes effective across the country. In the long-run, combined with improved evaluation evidence and comparative data, such peer learning could also contribute to good practices becoming more widespread, thereby harmonising preparatory programmes across the country (see more on peer learning in Chapter 5).

It is beyond the scope of the youth course and PES programmes to build academic skills

Many recent arrivals have little educational schooling or have experienced considerable breaks in their schooling career. Consultation rounds with German employers and VET teachers have also demonstrated recent arrivals often struggle to follow the regular curriculum in VET schools, even when they are doing well in the workplace (OECD and UNHCR, 2018[54]). Preparation for VET also needs to include the building of academic core skills and obtaining a certain level of general education. These go beyond German language skills and would enable recent arrivals to follow the regular VET school curriculum, including subjects such as maths, history and geography.

Both the youth courses and the PES programmes focus on language learning, career guidance and practical training. While this labour market focus may support those who seek direct employment afterwards, it is unlikely that participants will leave the course with the necessary academic skills to succeed in VET schools. Qualitative research with PES case workers, refugees and employers supports this assumption and also reveals a broad assessment that programmes are considered too short to prepare participants adequately (Knuth, 2016[55]; Boockmann, 2017[56]; Knapp et al., 2017[57]).

Building on existing structures of the preparatory classes can be more effective and efficient

Thus, for those who want to continue with VET, it is quite likely that a considerable share would need to enrol in preparatory VET programmes first. However, given the age restrictions for these programmes, many will already be too old to be admitted. Therefore, increasing the age limit for preparatory courses at VET schools, for instance by granting access to everyone up to the age of 25, will allow for a more academic preparation and is likely to increase the chances of succeeding in VET to a larger degree than through the route of language courses and PES training.

Thus, trying to channel as many young people as possible into the existing structures of preparatory classes in VET schools appears to be the more effective and time-saving approach.

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Notes

[1] For a definition see Box 2.2.

[2] Such internships may not be formally part of transition programmes, but are a mandatory requirement for accessing VET in childcare.

[3] Data does not distinguish by legal status and citizenship is therefore taken as a proxy for asylum seeker or refugee status. The definition of "main asylum countries" follows the definition used by the PES and includes the main eight countries of origin of asylum seekers in the past years: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Somalia.

[4] The PES also offers a similar programme, Perspectives for Refugees, (*Perspektiven für Flüchtlinge, PerF*) without a gender focus that aims to prepare refugees for the labour market, but has neither an explicit VET focus nor an age cap.

[5] Migration Services for Young People provide counselling and information services for young migrants between the age of 12 to 27 regarding their integration into education, employment and a new social environment. There are more than 450 agencies in Germany that are financially supported by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

[6] The survey was conducted among 21 Bavarian VET schools. These schools all take part in a project that evaluates preparatory classes, connects schools with each other and produces guidance and materials on how to organise such classes for recent arrivals.

3 Getting into vocational education and training in Germany

Combining school-based with workplace-based learning is one of the strengths of the German vocational education and training (VET) system. Yet, securing an apprenticeship can also present a challenge for young people, particularly when their grades are low and when their parents cannot support them during the application process. This chapter identifies the main challenges that recent arrivals and young natives with immigrant parents might face when they are trying to secure an apprenticeship, as well as the barriers employers might have in taking on a migrant apprentices. The main challenges identified include: 1) finding an apprenticeship, 2) getting employers on board, and 3) tackling discrimination in the apprenticeship market. It further discusses how Germany has responded to these challenges, provides policy recommendations on how to facilitate entry into VET and highlights good practice examples from other OECD countries and *Länder* in Germany.

The issue and challenges

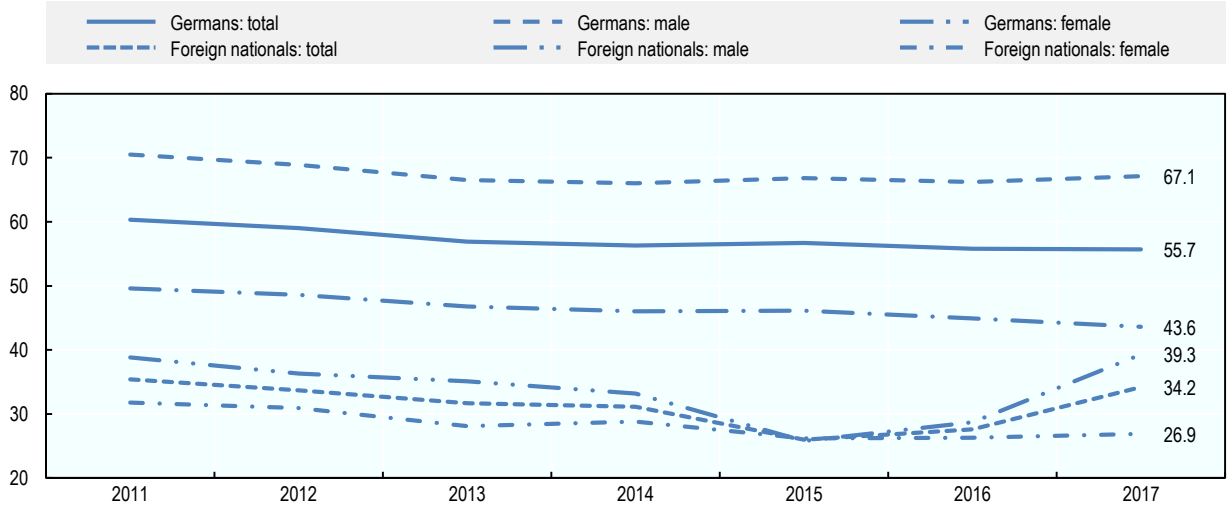
Migrants and natives with immigrant parents are less likely to find an apprenticeship than those without a migration background

Migrants are less likely to enrol in dual VET

Foreign nationals in general are much less likely to start apprenticeships than Germans. While more than half of young Germans enter a dual vocational training, only about a third of young people who were born outside the country do so (Figure 3.1). The strong inflow of migrants in 2015 affected the vocational education and training (VET) share substantially. The share of people enrolled in VET in the age group 16-24 has in general decreased, but until 2016 especially for migrants. Many of the migrants who arrived in 2015 and onwards are of a typical age for VET, but cannot start immediately. This delay can be seen in the increase (+6.6 percentage points) of foreign nationals starting an apprenticeship in 2017, mainly male foreign nationals. (BIBB, 2018[1]).

Figure 3.1. Migrants participate substantially less in VET

Share of permanent population (16-24 years old) starting an apprenticeship



Note: The permanent population includes asylum seekers and those with temporary residence.
Source: Adapted from BIBB (2019[2]) *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2019.* Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung, https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/Datenreport_2019_Vorabversion_final.pdf.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998310

Numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in VET are still low

Data show that in 2015 and 2016, the engagement of asylum seekers, refugees and persons with a toleration status in apprenticeships was very low. In the school year 2015/16 (October 2015-September 2016), around 10 300 migrants from these backgrounds were registered at the employment agency as seeking an apprenticeship, and only around 20% were women.[1] Generally, they were also older, with almost one in four being 25 or older. This was only the case for around 6% of applicants who are not refugees or asylum seekers. In 2015/16, around 3 500 found an apprenticeship (Granato and Neises, 2017[3]). At the same time, the number of refugee VET students graduating with a VET upper secondary

diploma has also been low. In 2016, around 900 students from the main asylum origin countries finished VET.

During the 2016/2017 school year, the number of refugees, asylum seekers and tolerated persons registered seeking an apprenticeship (age information was not available) had more than doubled compared to the previous year to around 26 000 and further increased by 9% in 2018. As of September 2017, around one in three from this group had signed an apprenticeship contract (9 500); 20% were still in school or participating in preparatory measures offered by the PES and information was missing for a further 20% (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2018[4]). In June 2018, around 27 000 persons with a nationality from the main origin countries of asylum were in a dual apprenticeship, around 14 000 more than in 2017 (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2019[5]).

One explanation for the low levels to date of new humanitarian migrants entering in VET is because it takes time to build language skills that are sufficient to start VET. Many of the recent arrivals are still participating in preparatory measures, as seen in Chapter 2. Looking at the stock of the 1.3 million dual VET students in 2016, approximately 11% were foreign nationals and among these, around 10% (9 500), i.e. less 1% of the total VET student population, were nationals from one of the eight main asylum countries. For school-based VET, data on nationality is only available for VET in the health care sector, and in 2016, a higher proportion, around 5% (app. 850), were from the main asylum origin countries (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018[6]).

Migrants have more difficulties in finding apprenticeship places

The large gap in participation rates of natives and foreign-born shows that migrants have more difficulties entering vocational upper secondary education. Indeed, various studies confirm that migrants, in general, have a lower likelihood of successfully securing an apprenticeship or an equivalent school-based qualification (Hunkler, 2016[7]), identifying various reasons for the gap (Hunkler, 2016[7]; Beicht and Walden, 2017[8]). High aspiration and a stronger preference towards general education (see Chapter 2). explain parts of the gap, especially the lower attendance of women (this holds for both, migrants and Germans). However, even after taking such preferences into account, migrants still experience considerable difficulties in finding an apprenticeship (Beicht and Walden, 2015[9]).

Migrants with lower socio-economic background are struggling the most in finding an apprenticeship placement

In contrast to general education, school-leavers interested in VET cannot choose apprenticeship places unilaterally, but rely on an employer who is willing to hire them. Since those employers usually hire the best candidate available, school-leaving qualifications play a crucial role in Germany. Indeed, a growing proportion of German apprentices enter provision after having first secured a bachelor's degree. Students with a lower socio-economic background tend to perform worse in school and often do not obtain higher education entrance qualification, impacting on apprenticeship opportunities (Beicht and Walden, 2015[10]). This is particularly the case for migrants and especially refugees, who are overrepresented among disadvantaged youth. Even among those young people from migrant backgrounds who found an apprenticeship employer, previous experiences have shown that only half as many foreign nationals as Germans are trained in their desired occupation (Diehl, Friedrich and Hall, 2009[11]). This shows that migrants are vulnerable regarding the dynamics of demand and supply of apprenticeships. Hence, making sure that there are sufficient VET opportunities, as well as engaging employers is crucial.

Securing an apprenticeship can be difficult even for natives with immigrant parents

Research show that even natives with immigrant parents face more difficulties than applicants with German-born parents in securing an apprenticeship. Research shows that they need to search more

actively for apprenticeships and send out more applications. Only one in ten of natives with immigrant parents indicate that they did not have any difficulties finding an apprenticeship compared to one in four among those with German-born parents (Beicht, 2017[12]).

Taking a closer look at how natives with immigrant parents searched and applied for apprenticeships shows somewhat different patterns compared to other applicants (Table 3.1). While similar proportions indicated that they had sent out written applications for apprenticeships, natives with immigrant parents made considerably more applications in total (40 compared to 28 among those without a migration background), being far more likely to approach companies in person whether they offer apprenticeship positions. Despite approaching more potential employers, young people from migrant backgrounds are less likely to be invited for interview. Finally, migrants require more interviews on average to secure a position than native Germans.

Even when taking contextual circumstances into account, migrants are still significantly less likely to secure an apprenticeship

Educational performance, occupational choices and local labour market conditions do explain some of these difficulties in finding apprenticeships. Yet, importantly, even when controlling for these background factors, young people with immigrant parents – here including both native- and foreign-born students – are still 14 percentage points less likely to secure an apprenticeship than their comparable peers with German-born parents (Beicht, 2017[12]).

Table 3.1. Differences in searching for apprenticeships between native-born applicants with and native and immigrant parents, 2016

	Natives with immigrant parents	Natives without migration background
Written application (%)	79	81
among these: average number of applications sent	40	28
Asked companies in person for an apprenticeship (%)	41	34
among these: average number of contacts with companies	27	21
Participated in an interview (%)	52	62
among these: average number of interviews	6	5

Note: Data from the *PES/BIBB Bewerberbefragung* (Survey among VET Applicants). In this survey, natives with immigrant parents are defined as young people who were born in Germany and do not possess German citizenship or indicated that German is not their first language.
Source: Adapted from Beicht (2017[12]) *Ausbildungschancen von Ausbildungsstellenbewerbern und -bewerberinnen mit Migrationshintergrund. Aktuelle Situation 2016 und Entwicklung seit 2004.*

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933998481

Box 3.1. Occupational preferences are strongly gendered and differ between native- and foreign-born students

In general, apprentices in Germany are concentrated in a small fraction of VET occupations. In 2016, more than half of new apprentices clustered in 20 professions (out of more than 300 VET occupations). Occupational choices are also strongly gendered, with women being over-represented in care and medical-related occupations and office management, whereas men disproportionately choose technician and craft occupations (BMBF, 2018[13]).

Data on occupational preferences currently does not distinguish whether young people with a migration background were born abroad or born in Germany, but rather distinguishes according to nationality. Foreign nationals are generally more concentrated in particularly popular professions. In 2016, 54% of German native apprentices were being trained in one of the 20 most frequently chosen VET occupations, whereas this was the case for 64% among foreign nationals. In addition, this concentration is particularly high for women with a foreign nationality and lies at 84% compared to 70% among female VET students with German nationality (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017[14]).

Without distinguishing whether young people were born abroad or in Germany, applicants with immigrant parents are generally more concentrated in apprenticeships in the service sector than those with native-born parents (Beicht and Walden, 2015[9]). This holds both for male and female applicants, with differences more pronounced among young women. In addition, close to half of VET students from the main asylum countries who were enrolled in apprenticeships in 2016, were doing their apprenticeship in the skilled crafts sector, compared to 25% of German nationals (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017[14]).

Source: BMBF (2018[13]), *Berufsbildungsbericht 2018*; Statistiches Bundesamt (2017[14]), *Bildung und Kultur - Berufliche Bildung 2016. Fachserie 11 Reihe 3*; Beicht, U. and G. Walden (2015[9]), "Unterschiedliche Berufsinteressen als Einflussfaktor für die Einmündungschancen in betriebliche Ausbildung? Ein Vergleich zwischen männlichen und weiblichen Jugendlichen mit und ohne Migrationshintergrund", *Journal for Labour Market Research*, Vol. 48, pp. 325-346.

Barriers when searching for an apprenticeship

Survey data for the 2016 cohort show that only around 27% of natives with immigrant parents who were registered with the PES started dual VET, compared to 42% among those without migration background, see Chapter 5 data on natives with immigrant parents in the VET system. Interestingly, there is only a small difference compared to the entry of foreign-born applicants (25%).[2] Chances of starting an apprenticeship among young natives with immigrant parents are also impacted by the educational background of applicants. Among this group, only 21% of lower secondary graduates *(Hauptschule)* entered VET compared to 33% among those with upper secondary diploma (*Abitur)* (Beicht, 2017[12]).

A closer look at unsuccessful applicants shows that close to one in three leave the education system and do not continue with any other form of education or training. For those with native-born parents, this is only the case for one in five. These shares have been rather stable over the past ten years (Beicht, 2017[12]). By the end of 2016, 13% of unsuccessful native applicants with immigrant parents had found employment and 12% were unemployed.

Weaker educational outcomes, lower literacy skills and older age negatively impact the likelihood for finding an apprenticeship. However, research also shows that even under same conditions, controlling, amongst other factors, for the type of degree, grades, age, regional differences in apprenticeship markets and participation in preparatory measures, young people with immigrant parents are 14 percentage points

less likely to enter VET that those with native parents (Beicht, 2017[12]).[3] It is unknown whether the gap between comparable new humanitarian migrants and natives is even greater.

As described above, even comparable young people from migrant and native backgrounds experience significantly different outcomes when applying for apprenticeships. Why this is the case is difficult to determine precisely; neither differences in occupational preferences nor a concentration in areas with high demand, but low supply of apprenticeships explain this discrepancy (Beicht and Walden, 2015[9]). After all, survey data show that natives with immigrant parents are generally more actively applying for positions than applicants with native-born parents. A number of possible rationales might explain the discrepancy: that young people from migrant background are less effective in presenting themselves to employers; that they lack social networks which help secure apprenticeship positions; that employers lack confidence into hiring migrants due to ambiguous legal status; and/or, that employer discrimination prevents fair access to apprenticeship opportunities (Beicht and Walden, 2015[9]).

Getting employers on board to hire recent arrivals and young people with a migrant background

Employers bear a larger financial risk when taking on "weaker" VET students and assessing their skills levels can be challenging

Taking on VET students is a considerable investment for a firm, and particularly so for small companies. The average German employer spends close to EUR 18 000 per apprentice per year. Around two-thirds of these costs are typically recovered by the work of the apprentice, leading to an average net cost of around EUR 5 400 per year.[4] While these costs decrease throughout the apprenticeship, in most cases, these rather high investments are only profitable for the firm if they hire the apprentice afterwards (Jansen et al., 2015[15]; Mühlemann, 2016[16]). Thus, if employers are doubtful of the productivity of VET students, they may not be willing to take the risk of hiring "weaker" apprentices whose language skills and vocational skills may still be limited (Kis, 2016[17]). There are no formal entry requirements to start an apprenticeship. German employers decide for themselves on prerequisites for entry. As educational attainment among many refugees is low and many hold weak basic skills (read more in Chapter 1), and it can be challenging for employers to assess the actual skills level of refugee applicants, taking on such apprentices can be perceived to be more of a financial risk for employers.

Getting incentives right is difficult

Across the OECD, governments have applied different strategies to create incentives for employers to offer apprenticeships. This includes: 1) financial incentives through subsidies and tax breaks or prioritising companies with apprentices in the public procurement process; and 2) non-financial approaches, such as pre-apprenticeship programmes, additional support for supervisors and trainers as well as support for employers for instance to reduce the administrative burden and assistance to apprentices themselves, e.g. through mentoring or remedial classes during VET (Kuczera, 2017[18]).

Generally, financial incentives for taking on apprentices are rather common across many OECD countries with developed VET systems. Yet, their impact is often limited. Getting incentives right is very difficult. Too little and schemes may yield deadweight losses, i.e. they subsidise apprenticeships that would have been offered anyway. For instance, experiences with the training bonuses for disadvantaged students in Germany showed that firms often applied for receiving the bonus only after having already made the hiring decision and that overall, no additional apprenticeship placements were created through the scheme (Mühlemann, 2016[16]). Too great incentives, moreover, may distort the operation of the market by encouraging employers more interested in the financial incentive than in providing quality training. In general, the evidence available on the effectiveness of financial incentives in influencing employer behaviour is limited (Kuczera, 2017[18]).

Financial incentives are unlikely to gain traction if skills of VET applicants are too limited

If applicants are far from fulfilling employers' skills expectations, it is unlikely that financial incentives will have a strong impact on hiring decisions. Research indicates that a focus on non-financial incentives can help improving the cost-benefit balance for employers by accelerating the pace of becoming productive, particularly when they ensure through preparatory work-based programmes that candidates develop the right skills for VET (Kis, 2016[17]). Germany introduced such preparatory programmes in 2004 as a means to support young people who had not secured an apprenticeship. Preparatory traineeships (*Einstiegsqualifizierungen,* EQ) are funded by the PES and trainees participate in an internship of six to twelve months duration, during which they are expected to build vocational skills, thereby increasing their opportunities to enter regular VET afterwards. (read more on preparatory programmes in Chapter 2).

Legal uncertainty creates additional disincentives for employers

Given that offering an apprenticeship is a substantial investment, employers would like to have the opportunity to hire apprentices afterwards. Yet, for asylum seekers it is unclear how long they will be allowed to remain in the country. Moreover, persons who receive a toleration status are *de jure* not residents but only benefit from a temporary suspension of deportation and refugees with a subsidiary protection status only receive shorter-term residence permits.

Responding to this issue, a new law – the so-called 3+2 rule – was introduced in 2016 that grants rejected asylum seekers under certain conditions a toleration status for three years if they are doing an apprenticeship. After completing the apprenticeship, they can remain in the country for an additional two years if they find employment that corresponds to their skills level. While this in principle enhances legal certainty considerably, the implementation of this rule differs across the *Lände*r and currently, not all *Länder* governments are fully implementing it. Moreover, there is no data available on how many persons have received a toleration status under the 3+2 scheme, which renders it difficult to ascertain the impact of this legislative measure.

What's more, whether the 3+2 rule is applied is decided by the local Foreigners' Office on a case-by-case basis, which adds another level of discretion and, subsequently, uncertainty for employers. Apprenticeship contracts are often concluded well in advance and during the period between signing the contract and starting the apprenticeship, it is at the discretion of immigration authorities whether a toleration status is prolonged and again, this is handled differently across the *Länder*.

Tackling discrimination in the apprenticeship market

Discrimination might also contribute to the lower VET participation rate of migrants and natives with immigrant parents (Diehl, Friedrich and Hall, 2009[11]; Hunkler, 2016[7]; Beicht and Walden, 2017[8]). Combating discrimination in the labour market is difficult, not only because it brings to light a deeply rooted social problem, but also because it can be difficult to prove. In addition, recruiters can be unaware of their behaviour as they may act on their bias unconsciously.

Discrimination in the hiring process is widespread

A growing body of research, however, has documented labour market discrimination in Germany against applicants with "foreign-sounding" names when applying for jobs (OECD, 2013[19]; Weichselbaumer, 2016[20]). While there is less evidence available for VET specifically, discriminatory hiring practices have also been found in the German apprenticeship market. By sending out fictitious applications that only differed in the name of the candidate, on average young people with a Turkish name had to send seven applications before being invited to an interview for an apprenticeship placement. Candidates with a German name had to send five (Schneider, Yemane and Weinmann, 2014[21]). The study also showed that employers' behaviour varied with the size of the company. Recruiters in smaller companies were less likely

to contact applicants with Turkish names than those who worked for larger firms. This may reflect that discriminatory attitudes are intensified when employers have few staff, limited HR resources and perhaps feel that they can less afford what they perceive to be a "risky" candidate. Given the large share of SMEs in the apprenticeship market this is clearly a challenge.

Discrimination in the labour market is particularly pronounced for Muslim applicants

Results from one German survey suggests that Muslim applicants are particularly strongly affected by discrimination in the hiring process. For instance, survey-based research[5] on hiring practices shows that some 35% of employers indicated that they would not hire apprentices wearing a headscarf. A further 12% stated bluntly that they simply would not hire practicing Muslim apprentices (Scherr, Janz and Müller, 2013[22]). While these results from one survey are not representative and are likely to underestimate discrimination because respondents are often reluctant to openly voice prejudice, it nevertheless gives an indication that Muslim applicants face discrimination in the application process. CV testing has also demonstrated considerable discrimination against female Muslim applicants in the German job market, particularly when they wear a headscarf (Weichselbaumer, 2016[20]). With many of the new arrivals coming from predominantly Muslim origin countries, it can be expected that discrimination will impede access to VET for this group.

Perceived discrimination is high among refugees

Survey data from 2013 show that more than half of refugees in Germany indicated that they felt that they had experienced discrimination, and among this group, the most frequently named area was searching for employment or an apprenticeship (55%) (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2016[23]). It should be noted that on the one hand, perceived discrimination may not always reflect "actual" discrimination and, on the other hand, that discrimination may also go unnoticed. While perceived discrimination is therefore an imprecise measure of the actual extent of the phenomenon, it nevertheless raises a serious challenge. If new arrivals have the impression – no matter if that experience is based on real discrimination or not – it may lead to fewer people applying for apprenticeships as the expectation may be that it is an unobtainable goal.

Policy message

In order to ease access into VET, consideration should be given to:

- *Further rolling out introductory training (Einstiegsqualifizierungen - EQ)* in co-operation with employers as this has proven to be a successful stepping stone into apprenticeship training.
- *Ensuring a consistent implementation of the 3+2 scheme across Germany* with access to the status granted from the moment the apprenticeship contract is signed.
- *Providing diversity training for recruiters and focus particularly on SMEs to tackle the issue of discrimination.*
- *Addressing unconscious stereotyping towards, and building the social capital of, humanitarian migrants and other youth with migrant parents*, by enabling more opportunities to engage with potential recruiters, e.g. through job fairs, short work placements during school and visits to companies.

Policy arguments

Getting employers on board

Evaluations of introductory training show that they facilitate transition into regular VET

EQ (*Einstiegsqualifizierung*) is one preparatory measure within the transition system (read more in Chapter 2). Research has shown that EQs are effective in facilitating the transition of young people into the labour market. Based on data from 2007 to 2010, an evaluation showed that close to 70% of EQ interns managed to find an apprenticeship within half a year after finishing their introductory training, and around 40% of them stayed with the company in which they had interned (Popp et al., 2012[24]). Around 40% of EQ trainees had immigrant parents, indicating that this group is over-represented in EQ. Refugees are even more strongly over-represented; in 2017, out of 12 000 new EQ trainees, around 8 000 came from one of the main asylum origin countries.[6] These are encouraging results, however, given the large number of recent arrivals, the absolute number of participants is still low. Since EQ is a long-standing and well-known support measure already, increasing the number of participants could be useful to facilitate entry into VET for refugees. This relies, however, on the willingness from the employers to take on migrant apprentices. The Swiss are piloting a similar scheme that targets migrants specifically (INVOL) which provides an interesting model of provision. This one-year programme, developed with social partners, has a particular focus on combining language learning with VET skills, and the aim is to prepare the students for VET. The Swiss authorities will evaluate the pilot as it is being implemented (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[25]; Jeon, 2019[26]).

There is some indication that employers value EQ as a stepping stone for recent arrivals into VET as it can help employer assess the migrants skills level

Research on asylum seekers and refugees on this particular transition programme is sparse. However, opt-in survey data based on 2 200 German employers with experiences of receiving applications from refugees or asylum seekers highlight largely positive experiences when taken on as EQ trainees (Degler and Liebig, 2017[27]).[7] Close to 90% indicated that they were fully or mostly content with migrant learner performance during the EQ (40% and 48%, respectively) and around 80% had offered or were planning to offer the trainees an apprenticeship or job contract after the EQ.

While it needs to be kept in mind that the survey is not representative, it nevertheless provides further evidence that EQs do appear to offer an effective route into regular VET or employment for recent arrivals. Research has also highlighted factors which help explain the success of the EQ: it lowers the risk for employers – particularly for SMEs – by allowing for a trial period, while giving trainees an opportunity to demonstrate their practical talents and motivation; skills that may also be difficult to convey in a regular recruitment process or with weaker language skills. In this way the employers can more easily assess migrant skills, which can be challenging in an ordinary recruitment process (CEDEFOP, 2018[28]; Hoeckel and Schwartz, 2010[29]).

Employers are concerned about legal uncertainty and employer associations have expressed their need for more long-term planning

For a considerable share of recent arrivals, long-term planning for employers is limited. Among employers which had participated in the employer survey (Degler and Liebig, 2017[27]) and had hired apprentices, around one in three stated that the insecure legal status of their apprentices posed some or considerable difficulties in everyday working life.[8] While the 3+2 rule seeks to address this issue, getting more employers on board will be difficult as long as there is no consistent implementation of this policy. Employers'

Associations have also expressed the need to be able to better plan ahead when making hiring decisions and have called for a more transparent and consistent implementation of the 3+2 policy.

Legal certainty could also be increased by guaranteeing a toleration status throughout the EQ. EQs appear to be an effective, relatively low-risk approach to getting employers involved in taking on recent arrivals in their companies. It does not incentivise employers artificially to take on migrants, but allows employers to judge them on their merits. However, uncertainty as to whether asylum seekers or people with a toleration status can stay throughout the traineeship, creates a considerable disincentive, particularly when employers view the EQ as an investment to prepare trainees to become apprentices in their company later on.

Tackling discrimination

Diversity training is an important starting point to raise awareness about implicit bias and can give guidance on how to avoid discrimination in the application process

One response to evidence of employer discrimination is to address the question of "implicit bias". This describes the holding of attitudes and stereotypes towards certain groups without one's conscious knowledge. Addressing prejudice that people are not aware of having, but that they may still act on when making hiring decisions, is thus a key challenge to open up the apprenticeship market to religious and ethnic minority candidates.

Diversity training that informs recruiters in a non-judgemental way about how implicit bias can inform decision making is therefore a starting point to address discrimination in the hiring process. In addition, practical hiring guidelines can help moving from simply being aware of this issue to more concrete actions on how to "de-bias" the application process (Bohnet, 2016[30]). These can include introducing structured interviews that ask all applicants the same questions, making the impact of personal preferences and sympathy for a candidate more visible by giving candidates a numerical "likability" score, and asking applicants for a work sample if this is applicable for the specific apprenticeship.

While a dedicated approach to diversity management is usually more likely to be undertaken by larger firms with their own HR departments, such comparatively small changes in the applications process can also be easily implemented by smaller firms. Thus, given their dominance in the VET sector, information on low-cost, easy-to-implement adjustments in the application process should be specifically targeted as SMEs.

Creating opportunities for employers and applicants to meet in person can help to decrease stereotypes

Creating occasions where employers and prospective apprentices can meet does not only offer young people the opportunity of building professional networks, but may also decrease (consciously or unconsciously held) stereotypes among employers.

Research shows that contact between different groups (e.g. differences regarding ethnicity, gender or age) generally reduces prejudice, particularly when members of different groups can identify common goals and objectives (Pettigrew et al., 2011[31]). The main mediators for these effects are largely found to be on an emotional level, with contact in a nonconflictual setting reducing anxiety and increasing empathy. Therefore, bringing employers and prospective apprentices into direct contact, for example by organising job fairs, site visits or short work placements, may facilitate the hiring process and decrease implicit bias among employers. In addition, a more informal setting may also better allow recent arrivals with limited language skills to convey their skills and motivation compared to a written application process.

Box 3.2. Getting young people with a migration or refugee background into direct contact with employers

Matching employers who seek to hire apprentices with young people with a migration or refugee background can be a considerable challenge, often because these groups have limited networks and little direct access to potential employers. Around one out of three refugees in Germany state that they are in need of more support when getting in contact with training-companies (BIBB, 2019[2]). Different stakeholders in OECD countries, however, have developed a number of tools to bridge this gap.

Organising recruitment fairs has been a very hands-on approach to getting employers and applicants into contact. Job fairs targeted at recent arrivals have been held for instance in Austria, France and Germany. So far, however, these fairs have mostly focussed on employment rather than VET. Provided that both employers and candidates are well prepared, such direct encounters can be a useful tool to connect applicants and employers.

While job fairs are likely to attract larger firms, also smaller companies could benefit from specialised job-matching platforms. Such online platforms, often run by social enterprises or NGOs, have been created in a number of countries, including Canada, France and Germany. Usually, such platforms are particularly effective when they act as an intermediary broker, supporting both refugees and employers in the application and hiring process.

Promoting mentoring programmes can also bring young people in contact with employers, when mentors share their professional networks and act as intermediaries. While much of these programmes then depend on a good match between mentor and mentee as well as clearly defined aims and adequate training for mentors, successful schemes are currently running in a number of OECD countries, for instance in Canada, Denmark, New Zealand and Norway (Jeon, 2019[26]).

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Notes

[1] This group does not include all young people seeking an apprenticeship, as only those who are registered at the Employment Agency find their way into their statistics. Young people who do not want or need support by the PES are therefore excluded here. In addition, people are only registered as seeking an apprenticeship if PES counsellors think they are adequately prepared to start VET. Therefore, it is likely that particularly strong VET applicants as well as weaker pupils are under-represented among this group. Overall, it is estimated that in 2016, around 70% of young people seeking an apprenticeship were registered with the PES (Beicht, 2017[12]).

[2] See Chapter 5 for an overview of the survey's methodology.

[3] This research does not make a distinction whether young people with immigrant parents were born in Germany or abroad.

[4] Net expenses differ strongly across sectors. Net costs are highest for apprenticeships in the public sector (EUR 8 000), followed by industry and commerce (EUR 6 000) and skilled crafts (EUR 3 800). For around 30% of apprentices, firms make a net gain; apprentices' productivity is higher than employers' expenditures (Jansen et al., 2015[15]).

[5] The survey is based on interviews with human resources (HR) managers from companies. Expert interviews with social workers and employees of associations, as well as participatory presentations and events of business associations.

[6] Nationals from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

[7] As part of a review on the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the German labour market, the OECD, together with the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, conducted a survey among German employers. The survey was conducted on line between 16 January and 7 February 2017 and disseminated through the local chambers of commerce. Around 2 000 employers participated in the survey through this channel. In addition, the survey was also disseminated via the DIHK network Companies Integrate Refugees (*Netzwerk Unternehmen integrieren Flüchtlinge*), where a further 200 employers responded. Results are not representative since the survey only reached DIHK members and was predominantly taken by employers who had already received applications from asylum seekers or refugees (60% of respondents).

[8] However, most employers who hired apprentices also hired refugees and asylum seekers as interns or employees. Therefore, it cannot be ascertained that this number applies only to apprentices. Nevertheless, it gives an indication that insecure legal status is experienced as a difficulty for employers.

4 Support during vocational education and training in Germany

While most vocational education and training (VET) students learn their skills during an apprenticeship without additional support measures, some apprentices struggle to complete the training. Broadly speaking, students with immigrant parents are generally as content with their apprenticeships as students with native-born parents. They are more likely to participate in additional support measures, but are more likely to drop out of VET, and the apprenticeship contract cancellation rate is particularly high for students from the main asylum countries. For humanitarian migrants, a major issue is weak language skills, which makes it difficult to follow the theoretical curriculum in VET schools. This can indicate that many migrants need targeted support during their apprenticeship, which can increase the chances of completing the training and secure a stable connection to the labour market. This chapter discusses the challenges migrants might meet during their apprenticeship training.

Issues and challenges in supporting apprentices, schools and employers

Many migrant apprentices struggle to complete the training

Satisfaction of youth with migrant parents with VET is mixed, but not consistently worse than apprentices without a migrant background

While there is no evidence yet for refugee students, research shows that apprentices with immigrant parents[1] are as content with their apprenticeship as those with German-born parents; for both groups close to 40% indicate that they are very content with their apprenticeship (Granato and Hall, 2015[1]). This is perhaps surprising as young apprentices with immigrant parents are less likely to find an apprenticeship that reflects their occupational preference (Beicht and Walden, 2014[2]).

However, there is evidence that they are more likely than peers with German-born parents to indicate that they work overtime and are under time pressure. Moreover, a larger share is not content with their apprenticeship wages and having sufficient free time outside of work (Krewerth, 2011[3]).

At the same time, apprentices with immigrant parents assess the importance of the work of the company, the diversity of tasks and their supervisors' understanding when mistakes are made to an extent which is similar to those with German-born parents. In addition, they are more likely to state that they receive positive feedback and appraisal when they do a task well and that they are given the autonomy to learn and work independently in the company (Gei and Granato, 2015[4]). Thus, experiences of apprentices with immigrant parents are mixed, but not consistently worse than those among apprentices without a migration background.

Migrants have higher chances of dropping out of VET

Currently, evidence on drop-outs in the German vocational education and training (VET) system is limited. Information is available on VET students whose contracts with their employer have prematurely ended, yet it is unclear whether they move on to another apprenticeship or whether they drop out and leave the education system entirely. Generally, studies have estimated that around 16% of those starting dual VET do not finish their education with a VET diploma, either because they dropped out altogether or because they continued in different educational tracks, e.g. school-based VET, higher secondary school or university (Uhly, 2015[5]).

The share of students discontinuing VET varies strongly across regions, educational background and occupations. In 2016, shares were higher in the east of Germany, among students with a lower secondary diploma (*Hauptschule*), students without German citizenship (32% compared to 25% among German nationals in 2016) and in a number of occupations, such as the hospitality sector, construction and the food industry (BIBB, 2017[6]; Uhly, 2015[5]).

Drop-out rates are particularly high among asylum seekers and refugees; the contracts of around 40% of students from the main asylum origin countries are ended prematurely (BIBB, 2017[6]). This high share nevertheless may demonstrate a considerable mismatch between employers and VET students. It is not clear what proportion of trainees continue in some other form of apprenticeship or education

There is currently no data available to assess drop-out rates specifically among natives with immigrant parents. However, as they are more strongly represented in VET occupations with high discontinuation rates (Beicht and Walden, 2014[2]), are more likely to hold a lower secondary degree *(Hauptschule*) and less likely to do an apprenticeship in their preferred occupation, it becomes clear that a lot of risk factors can come together that increase their likelihood of dropping out.

The reasons behind the relatively higher rates of apprenticeship contract termination among migrants is not clear. However, consultation rounds with German employers and VET teachers have demonstrated

recent arrivals often struggle to follow the regular curriculum in VET schools, even when they are doing well in the workplace (OECD and UNHCR, 2018[7]). This issue was also discussed throughout the OECD team's visit to Germany with many of the key stakeholders. Many recent arrivals it was argued lack sufficient language skills, and as a result they encountered difficulties during the theoretical school part of the training.

The completion rate of VET for migrants is generally lower than apprentices without a migrant background

The overwhelming majority of VET students who stay in VET until the end pass their final exams; in 2016, more than 90% successfully completed their apprenticeship exams (BIBB, 2018[8]). Survey data show that the share of apprentices with immigrant parents[2] who successfully finished VET within the three-year period is lower than among VET students without migration background (77% vs. 85%). However, when controlling for their generally less advantageous starting positions, such as lower grades and lower likelihood of undertaking VET in their preferred occupation, the likelihood of apprenticeship completion (and so obtaining a VET upper secondary qualification) are comparable among both groups (Beicht, Granato and Ulrich, 2011[9]). These results are likely to reflect a positive selection effect occurring at the beginning of VET as students with immigrant parents face more hurdles in securing an apprenticeship in the first place. In addition, the survey only included students with an intermediate school leaving certificate (*Realschule*), and it is thus not clear if graduation rates may be different among students with a lower secondary degree.

There is a general lack of teachers, which can make it challenging for schools to follow up on struggling learners with additional needs

In the dual system, although the majority of the training time is spent in a company, the apprentices still spend substantial part of their training in schools learning academic and practical skills. The *Länder* are responsible for the schools, including teacher training. Consequently, practice differs between and also within the *Länder*.

In recent years, Germany has been affected by a severe lack of teachers, mainly as a result of increased birth rates and immigration. One study estimates that by 2030, about 43 000 additional teachers for all school types will be required (Klemm and Zorn, 2017[10]). There are however regional differences. In East Germany, the study expects that additional teachers are particularly required at the upper secondary level, whereas in West Germany only teachers on compulsory level are likely to be lacking. To tackle this issue, many *Länder* have introduced alternative pathways to become a (VET) teacher. Often, graduates from university programmes (mostly at Masters level) can now directly attend the practical part of initial teacher education (*Quereinsteiger*), or even work as teacher without formal qualification (*Seiteneinsteiger*) but usually with a pedagogical supplementary qualification. In 2017, one out of ten newly hired teachers had no formal teaching qualification (Kultusminister Konferenz, 2018[11]). A lack of teachers can make it harder for schools to follow up on struggling learners and provide them with necessary support so that the likelihood of completing the training increases.

Humanitarian migrants might require other types of support than apprentices with more experience in the country, for instance linked to language learning and social support. In addition to a lack of teachers, another question is therefore if the teachers at the VET schools are equipped with the right competences to teach and support students who are struggling with the language. Teacher training programmes across Germany are therefore exploring the inclusion of units of multicultural and language training into curricula.

Co-operation between employers, VET schools, the PES and social services can be improved

A majority of the German companies do not or rather seldom collaborate with vocational schools that their apprentices attend. In a recent survey of employers, 93% of the companies reported that they did not or seldom co-operate with the vocational schools (Gessler, 2017[12]). As there are many actors involved in the integration process of migrants, there is need to make the collaboration work smoothly in order to identify potential need for support measures. There is risk of duplication of actions and that potential challenges are not well communicated in between the key stakeholders.

Box 4.1. Support for apprentices

There are many measures available for apprentices that offer support for skills development

Many, but not all, VET schools and other education providers offer additional services for migrants. For instance, 53% of the providers covered by the wbmonitor survey (Ambos, Koscheck and Martin, 2017[13]) offered counselling regarding further training and qualifications, 43% offered socio-pedagogic counselling and support, and 25% (mainly adult learning centres) offered language training during the qualification. In addition, they often support language aptitude tests, help to find internships or jobs or offer further services for migrants.

The public employment service also offers support measures during apprenticeships. First, training related assistance (*Ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen, abH*) includes remedial courses for the vocational training, preparation for examinations, language support, assistance on everyday problems and mediation between apprentices and instructors, teachers and parents. The support measures are provided during the whole apprenticeship on an individual basis. In 2016, access to abH was extended to asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining and tolerated persons. In 2017, about 36 000 people participated and 81% of them were employed six months after the programme (BMBF, 2018[14]).

Second, assisted vocational training (*Assistierte Ausbildung, AsA*) also provides support during VET. Financed by the PES, the instrument aims to enable regular dual apprenticeships through support measures for both apprentices and employers. In 2017, 12 000 school-leavers started assisted vocational training (BMBF, 2018[14]). The instrument typically starts with a preparation phase of six months, including skills assessment, career guidance, application training, and general assistance (e.g. financial issues, childcare). Hence, in contrast to abH, the measure starts earlier. After this preparatory phase, participants are supported during the whole dual apprenticeship. Among the participants, over 40% had a migration background and over 20% migrated themselves. Between July 2016 and January 2017, almost 17% of new participants in the programme were humanitarian migrants, more than half of them refugees (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2017[15]).

In the context of the educational chains initiative, the BMBF initiated VerA (*Verhinderung von Ausbildungsabbrüchen*) (see also Chapter 2). Within this programme, voluntary senior experts counsel apprentices who are experiencing difficulties and considering terminating their training. The experts (retired professionals with broad experience) help to build capacity in order to prevent dropouts. An evaluation of the initiative concluded that about 80% of participants successfully completed their apprenticeship (Huismann, 2018[16]). In addition to such federal initiatives, many *Länder* have developed their own programmes to support apprentices and prevent drop out.

Migrants can have access to financial support

Apprentices struggling to finance their training or pre-vocational training measures can obtain financial support through the BAB (*Berufsausbildungsbeihilfe*) mechanism. Eligible are those whose apprenticeship takes place too far away from their parents' home, so that they cannot live at home; those who participate in a BvB (*berufvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahme*); those who are older than 18 years, married or living together with their partner; and those who have children and do not live in the residence of their parents. Asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining are eligible once they are not covered by the asylum support (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*) anymore (BMBF, 2018[14]). In 2017, about 87 000 persons received BAB. The share of non-German nationals among them is rising from 13% in 2016 to about 17% in 2017 (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2018[17]). However, survey data show that 32% of refugees who are already undertaking an apprenticeship require more information about what financial support they can get from the state and 36.9% wish for more support filling in forms and applications (BIBB, 2019[18]).

Box 4.2. Support for employers

Apprentices spend more than half of their time in workplaces, where they receive hands on training and engage in productive work. It is a requirement that such employers or "training companies" employ at least one company instructor who has a professional qualification and has successfully passed an aptitude test to prove pedagogical knowledge (Eignungsverordnung, AEVO). A preparation course for this test consists of 115 lessons, but is optional (KMK, 2017[19]).

The main providers of support services for employers are the chambers. In most sectors, the membership in a chamber is required by law. The support from chambers varies across sectors. For instance, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) initiated a programme to support the integration of refugees, where they, amongst other, inform and counsel employers and help refugees to find apprenticeships. Local IHK agencies usually offer information events, individual counselling, firm visits, counselling in VET schools, job fairs and other initiatives (DIHK, 2016[20]).

In 2016, the IHK together with the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) launched the initiative Network Companies Integrate Refugees (NETZWERK Unternehmen integrieren Flüchtlinge), offering legal and practical counselling and promote peer-learning and good practice. The network consists of 1 837 members as of September 2018, which engage in training and employment of humanitarian migrants.

Within the Jobstarter Plus initiative (2015–2020), the federal government supports various projects to enhance regional training markets. For instance, measures include counselling and support for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) which take on apprentices or help enhance the quality of apprenticeships.

Source: "Willkommenslotsen" programme: (with support of the ZDH), Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (2019[21]), Wilkommenslotsen, Unternehmen bei der Besetzung von offenen Stellen mit Geflüchteten unterstützen, https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Wirtschaft/willkommenslotsen.html.

From VET into the labour market: Evidence on the transition into employment

Generally, the German VET system facilitates a smooth transition into the labour market. Around two out of three apprentices continue working in the same firm where they did their apprenticeship and four out of five enter the labour market without experiencing unemployment. Only 6% of VET graduates are unemployed for four months or longer after completing their apprenticeship (Seibert and Wydra-Somaggio, 2017[22]).

Given the additional hurdles that refugees and, more broadly, students with immigrant parents face, the question is therefore if these disadvantages continue to be present when entering the labour market or if the German VET system works equally well as it does for apprentices with native-born parents. This is crucial also because holding a vocational degree has shown to be particularly important for natives with immigrant parents in order to find employment. Previous research has demonstrated that the added value of VET is even stronger for young natives with immigrant parents than for those with German-born parents. When adjusting for different background characteristics, the chance of being employed is 2.4 times higher for natives when they hold a vocational diploma compared to those who do not. For natives with immigrant parents the odds are 5 times higher, meaning the effect is more than twice as strong as among those without a migration background (OECD, 2007[23]).

While there is no research available regarding the transition of refugee VET students into the labour market, further evidence is available from the BIBB Transition Survey (*Übergangsstudie*), conducted in 2006 and 2011, for students with immigrant parents. However, research based on these survey results follows the same definition of “migration background” as the Applicant Survey (see more in Chapter 5) and furthermore does not distinguish between native- and foreign-born graduates with immigrant parents.

With this caveat in mind, there is evidence that once young people with a migration background have successfully completed upper secondary VET, they are significantly more likely to continue working in the same firm where they did their apprenticeship than VET graduates with native-born parents (70% and 60%, respectively). This higher likelihood remains when controlling for students’ grades and socio-economic background (Beicht and Walden, 2014[2]).

For those who do not stay at their training company, within two years, only around 55% of young people with a migration background had found a job corresponding to their skill level. For those without a migration background the share is at 59%. Yet, when controlling for individual background characteristics, the already small difference between these two groups is no longer statistically significant. Factors that are found to negatively impact the likelihood of being employed are having a low-skilled father and lower grades in VET school. In addition, young women are less likely to transition into employment than their male peers (Beicht and Walden, 2014[2]).

There are some indications as to why higher retention rates in companies are higher and transitions into employment at other companies are similar among both groups. In 2011, data for VET students without German citizenship showed that this group was more strongly represented in VET occupations with labour shortages than German nationals (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012[24]; BIBB, 2012[25]). This labour shortage may contribute to high retention and employment rates. In addition, and more difficult to quantify precisely, it can be assumed that there is a positive selection effect of students with a migration background into VET. Given the considerable hurdles they face when searching for VET, it is likely that those students who succeed in finding and completing their apprenticeship are different from other students on a number of unobservable characteristics that are not captured by the data, such as social skills, ambition or social networks (OECD, 2018[26]). Thus, rather encouraging results regarding their transition into the labour market may also reflect inequalities when searching for apprenticeships.

Nevertheless, it shows that vocational education facilitates the transition for young natives with immigrant parents into the labour market and to some extent levels the playing field once students have found an apprenticeship and completed it. However, the considerable obstacles students with migrant parents face

when accessing VET are cause for concern and demonstrate that concerted efforts are necessary to facilitate the entry into VET, as well as supporting the migrants throughout the training.

Policy message

Strengthen the availability of existing support measures during VET, such as assisted vocational training (Assistierte Ausbildung, AsA), to provide employers and humanitarian migrants, as any other learner at risk of poor outcomes, with necessary help so that they can complete upper secondary VET. As Germany already has existing structures to build on when it comes to supporting apprentices and employers, make sure this support is consistently available. Review the effectiveness of existing measures and prepare to scale up the successful ones.

Ensure that collaboration and communication locally between the apprentices, employers, schools and social services is strong. There is a need to identify, and respond to, potential challenges in the training as early as possible in order to increase the chances of migrants completing VET.

Policy arguments

Recent arrivals might be in need of support during the training, which can improve their chances of completion

Work-based learning can provide great advantages for students, including youth at risk. This is particularly linked to a successful transition from education to work, as well as tackling youth unemployment. Work-based learning can represent a hands-on and motivating training for many, and thereby increase the chances of completion with a qualification valued by the labour market. Although work-based learning has clear advantages, it is not a guarantee in itself for successful completion, but should rather be understood as an important first step. For vulnerable youths, such as many young humanitarian migrants, there can be challenges in completing an apprenticeship (Kis, 2016[27]). With commonly lower academic, language and social skills there are many hurdles to overcome. Taking into account the previous experiences apprentices with a migrant background have, it is reasonable to suspect that recent arrivals will also meet similar struggles in completing the training.

Additional support such as remedial courses and mentoring programmes can help humanitarian migrants overcome challenges, and thereby have higher chances of completing the training. Although research is limited, a number of studies suggests that the lack of support measures during VET can be linked to non-completion. The support provided to apprentices can take different forms, for instance support on completing the academic part of the education that takes place at the school, vocational support for apprentices both at school and at the company. Also support can be more broadly focused than on individual challenges that the migrant is experiencing. This is support that can both be given to the apprentice, but also support for the employer, for instance on preparing for the arrival of the apprentice or to mediate in case of conflict (Kis, 2016[27]).

There are today numerous programmes and measures that aim at supporting migrant students during training. Central to their effectiveness is the need to ensure that collaboration between VET schools, employers, social services and migrants can help identify potential challenges at an early stage and find suitable ways to follow-up the apprentice. A lack of a clear communication can delay problems being addressed and lead to early termination of the apprenticeship contract.

Additional support for migrants can also be beneficial for employers and increase their willingness to provide training for struggling learners

There can be substantial risks for employers in taking on recent arrivals as an apprentice and provide them with training. Recent arrivals have often weaker set of skills compared to students who went through the German school system. The employers' training costs training might rise, as weaker students can be more dependent upon more support from trainers and co-workers as they develop productive skills at a slower pace. Well-crafted support measures, such as remedial courses in language, mentoring, can help improve the migrants' ability to learn and develop. In this way, employers' costs can be reduced because they are not left alone in supporting the migrants during the workplace part of the training. Lowering the risks of taking on struggling learners can in this way also improve the employers' general willingness to provide training for vulnerable groups (Kis, 2016[27]).

Providing support for employers can lower their risk of taking on struggling learners

As taking a training responsibility for recent arrivals can increase the costs of training for an enterprise, there can be a need for measures to make sure that the costs and benefits for the employers are more balanced. Providing support directly to employers can help in this regard to contribute to lower employers' costs. SMEs can be in particular need for support in training in general terms because they would not have the same capacities as bigger companies, notably in terms of human resource management. When apprentices present a wider range of challenges in progressing successfully through provision, the need for external support grows. Support measures can include, for instance, training for trainers and reducing the administrative burden falling on employers (Kis, 2016[27]).

There are already measures in place in Germany that provide such support, but opportunity exists to ensure that such support is consistently available. The chambers are the main providers of support for employers, but federal measures also exists. One important example is the KAUSA (The Coordination Agencies for Education and Migration) service points. One of its core objectives is to provide support for SMEs run by migrants to take on apprentices. This can be support in supporting the management of administrative arrangements involved in recruiting and training apprentice. KAUSA points also facilitate communication with VET schools and the local employment services to be able to identify and address potential challenges. The KAUSA project is however temporary and also only available in some areas. There is potential for the authorities and the chambers to consider increasing sustainable support mechanisms that target the employers and it is important to monitor closely the costs incurred by employers in offering apprenticeships.

Supporting migrant apprentices during the school part of the training can improve their language and academic skills and so increase completion rates

Many migrant students struggle during the school part of the training to keep up with the academic skills. Weak language skills can be one explanatory factor. Having support to improve language skills and the academic skills can be substantial elements in completing the training. Putting increased emphasis and resources on support at the schools can therefore be a worth-while investment, for instance by providing remedial programmes.

The content of the teacher's education can also be another approach. Teaching an increasingly diverse youth cohort can require specific competences for the teacher. Migrant students benefit from teachers who take into account the diversity of their students in their pedagogical approaches (OECD, 2015[28]). Training to teach students with diverse backgrounds can include intercultural training and training for different learner needs. In Germany, teacher training is the responsibility of the *Länder*, which means that the provision can vary between the regions. Examples from other countries show how diversity training can be incorporated in the teacher education. In the French Community of Belgium, intercultural education has

been part of teacher training since 2000 (OECD, 2018[29]). In the Netherlands, an understanding of cultural diversity is also a prerequisite for qualifying as a teacher. In Norway, the government has introduced a five-year plan in 2013 to improve multicultural competence among teachers, including multilingualism and second-language teaching (Jeon, 2019[30]).

With the VET cohort changing in terms of increasing numbers of migrant apprentices, it is important to be ready to scale up promising measures

Germany has put its focus on preparing the migrants for VET, and rightfully so, migrants meet substantial hurdles in trying to secure an apprenticeship placement. As the humanitarian migrants who arrived in Germany in 2015-16 are moving through different preparatory courses and are getting ready to enter VET, there are reasons to believe that the demand for additional support services during VET might increase in the coming years. There can now be a need to raise the awareness of also supporting struggling learners after they start their training. Support during the training can raise the chances of completing with a qualification, which has advantages in terms of the future connection the labour market.

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Notes

[1] No distinction is made whether apprentices with immigrant parents are born in Germany or born abroad.

[2] No distinction is made whether students were born in Germany or abroad. For refugee students, graduation cohorts are still too small to assess how they fare in their final exams.

5 Governing the vocational education and training system in Germany

The high influx of humanitarian migrants arriving into a host country within a short time frame can challenge the governance of a system. As an integration agenda cuts across different polices, the governance structure of vocational education and training (VET) aiming integration is complex. Governing the system in a coherent and effective manner can therefore be an issue. This chapter identifies two key challenges in Germany: 1) how to ensure policy coherence across education, labour market and social policies; and 2) how to secure co-operation and peer learning across the regions. Policy options in relation to the development of an overarching strategy and the co-ordination of its delivery are proposed. Taking steps to further enhance evidence and data is important in order to inform decision making and identify good practice. Further, opportunity exists to enhance peer learning between the regions on effective and innovative practices.

The complexity in the governance of VET

The governance of VET aiming integration is a complex issue across OECD countries

For the purpose of this study, governance is defined as the formal and informal arrangements that determine how decisions related to the migrant integration through VET are made, who makes them and on what basis (OECD, 2018[1]). Key aspects of governance can be defined through four activities:

- Defining goals and decision making: articulating a common set of principles for society.
- Creating coherence: co-ordination and consistency of policy goals.
- Steering: mechanisms and instruments for attaining goals.
- Accountability: holding key actors responsible for their actions and decisions (Pierre and Peters 2005, as cited in (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]).

The OECD's Skills Strategy (2019[3]) identifies four key building blocks in strengthening the governance of skills systems. These are promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government, engaging stakeholders, building integrated information systems and aligning co-ordinating financing arrangements.

In response to the high influx of migrants arriving into the country within a short time period in 2015-16, numerous measures have been implemented in Germany at the local, regional and federal level by a broad diversity of actors. Unsurprisingly, the issue of integrating migrants involves inherent challenges to governance across OECD countries (OECD, 2018[4]). First, the policy area involves many stakeholders and cuts across traditional policy lines within governments. Responsibilities are often divided and placed across many different ministries and underlying agencies. Integrating migrants through VET involves at least three main broad policy areas which are interlinked: education, labour market and social policy. Further, integration of migrants into society and work is a long term project, which means that it can be difficult to measure effects of policy implementation. Countries also have to a varying degree long-term experiences with migrant integration into the labour market. It can take a long time to equip both migrants and natives with immigrant parents with the skills needed for a sustained integration into the labour market on equal basis as the native population. Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) data show that students with an immigrant background tend to underperform in school (OECD, 2018[5]). In the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), data show that the labour market outcomes of migrants tend to lag behind those of the native-born across the OECD countries (OECD, 2018[6]).

Moreover, education systems have in general become increasingly complex due to a number of developments within society. Information about the performance of education systems is becoming more plentiful, and the focus on individual learner needs has increased. Driven by fast-spaced technological change, the labour market is becoming more dynamic. Because of this complexity, finding the right balance between ensuring a governance system that is responsive towards local needs, while at the same time ensures a unified policy is challenging at the best of times. Regardless of the migrant situation, education governance is an issue receiving increased attention (Burns and Köster, 2016[7]). Although the governance of VET cannot be not separated from the governance of general education, VET systems have some specific features that should be reflected in a governance model. These features are related to the larger number of stakeholders engaged in VET and the need for VET provision to reflect the changing needs of the labour market (Oliver, 2010[8]). Governments with engaged stakeholders in driving coherent policy agendas are more likely to have economic gains compared to governments with uncoordinated and conflicting policies (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

The complexity of governance on the issue of VET and migrants in Germany

The governance structure in Germany involves numerous actors, first at the federal level, further within the 16 *Länder* and then at a local level. As Germany is a federal state the principle of decentralisation and recognition of autonomous *Länder* stands strong. At the federal level, several ministries and underlying agencies hold separate responsibility for policy affecting the integration process of migrants into VET. Stakeholders are involved in the policy making through consultation processes.

The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) are responsible for setting up the introduction courses that mainly consists of language training for migrants. The Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the Public Employment Services (PES) are responsible for employment measures, including some of the preparatory measures provided within the transition system, including vocational language courses, as well as employment measures for adults. The PES is organised with one federal office, as well as ten regional offices and numerous local agencies.

Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) characterise the governance of education in Germany as highly complex. In the case of VET, governance includes a clear division of responsibilities between the federal and *Länder* level, as well as the extensive involvement of social partners in decision-making processes on, for instance, the development of the system and the content of training regulations and occupational profiles. While such engagement has many strengths, it also presents challenges for strategic leadership.

The German education system is a state-run, predominantly public-sector, legally regulated structure comprising various education institutions. Under the Basic Law, it falls within the sovereignty of the *Länder* and is delivered through a federal structure. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) which regulates apprenticeship training, whereas the *Länder* run the VET schools. The Vocational Training Act sets out the responsibilities of the chambers as bodies overseeing the in-company part of the dual apprenticeship system. Federal training regulations exist for each of the recognised apprenticeship occupations, while the school-based sector is under the responsibility of the *Länder* (Protsch and Solga, 2016[10]), each of which work under wide ranging educational legislation and administration models. As some professions follow a school-based model, the *Länder* are responsible for these. There is in addition a great deal of autonomy in how the *Länder* choose to implement federal policy. This can result in great variation between the 16 *Länder* in implementing the same overall federal initiatives (KMK, 2017[11]). At the local level many actors are involved, such as municipalities, VET schools, employers, and local employment agencies, social partners, private service providers, volunteers and migrant associations.

Challenges can arise in securing consistency in policy and co-operation across the regions

In response to recent significant increase in humanitarian migrants, there has been a proliferation of initiatives. The unprecedented migration situation of 2015-16, effective policy making and implementation has demanded all relevant stakeholders to work together. However, the role of the federal government has always been constrained to setting the regulatory framework and facilitating horizontal and vertical co-ordination (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). Three main challenges arise when looking into how Germany can govern the system, namely: ensuring unity across the three main policy domains (integration, labour market and education), securing evidence to inform policy decisions and secure co-operation and peer learning across the regions.

Ensuring policy coherence

The challenge of ensuring policy coherence

Many measures have in recent years been implemented by a broad range of stakeholders

A great range of measures has been developed and implemented in order to effectively integrate recent arrivals into society and work. Compared to many other countries Germany has developed and implemented measures that are refugee specific (Scholten et al., 2017[12]), although these measures have been small in scope. Germany has responded to the challenge with a combination of existing policy tools and a number of new initiatives, launched by many different public or private stakeholders at different levels. Efforts have been considerable in especially setting up language courses.

This proliferation of initiatives has led to significant variations across *Länder*. One example is seen within the broad variety of preparatory measures, as seen in Chapter 2. Moreover, in addition to measures funded by the federal government or the regional authorities, there have also been many other local measures. German has focused on getting migrants ready for educational opportunities and especially through the transition system. The vision has been to support migrants to be able to participate productively within work-based learning as an entry to full immersion in the labour market. In enhancing VET provision, a number of interventions aimed specifically at enhancing migrant participation have been introduced.

The risk of a complex governance structure can be a lack of co-ordination between stakeholders and overlaps in provision

As many government agencies are involved in policy making and also in providing services to migrants, the risks exist of a lack of co-ordination between important actors, as well as of overlap in measures or services being provided (OECD, 2019[3]). Within the German education system in general, challenges have been identified in a lack of transparency, co-ordination and communication between the many actors involved (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). Risks have been understandably exacerbated by the unprecedented numbers of migrants seeking protection in recent years. Similar challenges in the field of VET are to be expected.

The OECD (2017[13]) has previously argued that co-operation between the authorities being responsible for the recent arrivals in Germany can be enhanced. Responsibilities move between the employment agency and the local job centres when the status of a migrant changes from asylum seeker to refugee, and several studies have pointed out challenges in this regards, which can be linked to lack of co-ordination and duplication of measures provided (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016[14]). There is no consistent solution to this challenge across Germany today, and *Länder* have found different ways of dealing with the problem. The OECD has recommended simplifying these structures by either transferring the responsibility for both groups of migrants to one office or to create one-stop shops (Degler and Liebig, 2017[15]). Other studies have also highlighted the desirability of creating co-ordinating units locally, for instance by establishing a task force consisting of members of employment services, job centres representatives of immigrations offices and social workers from the municipalities. One of these solutions can be seen in North Rhine Westphalia which has created an Integration Point (Box 5.1). For a different target group, some *Länder* have established Youth Employment Agencies in order to increase co-ordination. While variation in practice can suggest measures which are responsive to specific circumstances, they also suggest remedial co-ordinating action that is ad hoc and inconsistent across the country.

A second challenge is linked to a risk of overlap in measures leading to potential inefficiencies in delivery. When several authorities are responsible and involved in the integration process, the lines between these responsibilities can be blurred, especially when migrants are transitioning from one course to the next. One example can be when migrants transition from language courses, which the BAMF are responsible

for, into preparatory measures, which the PES often is responsible for and that also have strong components of language learning. The co-ordination of available measures to recent arrivals is important in order to avoid overlap in the services and to ensure progression and an individualised approach. Opportunity exists to build on the work of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMAG), established in 2016-17, to co-ordinate the federal government's integration policy with the aim of achieving consistency, and to enable networks in between the ministries (BAMF, 2005[16]). The mandate of this group is to formulate recommendations, taking into account the different responsibilities of the federal ministries (BAMF, 2010[17]).

Box 5.1. Integration Points in North Rhine Westphalia

Integration Points are one-stop shops introduced in 2015/2016 in North Rhine Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg in order to centralise, accelerate, and simplify migration services and to avoid overlapping structures. Within these centres, the PES, Jobcenters and municipal agencies – typically migration and social welfare agencies – co-ordinate their services. Some integration points also include partners such as youth agencies, refugee networks, and other civil society organisations.

Integration Points provide counselling services in various languages on topics such as social welfare, assessment of skills and education; recognition of foreign certifications and professions; language courses and professional/educational integration; and job placements.

Source: Degler, E. and T. Liebig (2017[15]), *Finding their Way. Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Germany*, http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Finding-their-Way-Germany.pdf.

The federal strategy on integration covers VET, but it lacks concrete, measurable goals

The German government has over the last decade developed several action plans on the integration of migrants, with elements relevant to VET provision. The latest plan from 2012 describes an impressive range of measures implemented. Within education and VET, four main strategic areas are defined, in addition to four indicators which aim relevant to migrants within the educational provision (Box 5.2). The plan does not, however, include clear, concrete and measureable objectives on what the government aims to achieve with its efforts to integrate migrants through VET. Also, a broad range of measures targeting migrants and VET has been developed in recent years, which can indicate a need to update the strategy. Thränhardt and Weiss (2017[18]) describe the integration policy on a federal level as lacking coherence. The weakness in national strategy can make it more difficult for the proliferation of policy initiatives, managed by multiple federal, regional, local and private administrations to align around a clear and measurable set of objectives. The German authorities are currently working on updating the Federal Action Plan on Integration.

Some of the regional authorities have developed strategies, but this is not the case across the whole of Germany.

New stakeholder groups have arisen but are to a limited degree involved in the policy development

Germany has a great tradition of a close involvement of the social partners in developing VET policies. The opinions of both employers' and employees' organisations are taken seriously and often incorporated into policy. Continuing to build on the great collaboration is one important part in order to govern the system effectively (OECD, 2019[3]). Historically, migrant organisations have played a role in enabling the integration of newcomers in Germany, first with Greek and Italian organisations taking an active role, and

later with Turkish organisations, for instance through establishments of business communities (Liebig, 2007[19]). The OECD team met with two migrants associations working on issues related to migrant rights and ensuring effective integration exists to increase the involvement of new stakeholder groups on a formal level, also at the federal level, when policies are being developed. The argument for stronger engagement of migrant groups in social partner collaboration related to VET is that migrants, particularly new humanitarian migrants, face barriers to entry into VET that are systematically greater than for natives. Structures that enable dialogue at a decision-making level related to better understanding of how barriers are experienced and the likely effect of remedial measures can be expected to improve progression. Engaging groups which represent migrants also enables stronger communication between the leaders of German VET and migrant communities. Success is related to the capacity of all parties to engage.

Box 5.2. Description of latest action plan related to VET and migrants

The Federal Action Plan on Integration (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration, NAP-I) was published in 2012 as a result of the yearly integration summits, where Federation, *Länder*, municipalities, non-governmental actors and migrant organisations have discussed integration since 2006. The objective of the NAP-I is to make integration policies more binding and to make results measurable. The plan intends to formulate concrete goals and define indicators to monitor the success.

The NAP-I is structured in two main parts: the results of policy dialogues held during summits, and contributions from the *Länder*. Both parts cover 11 topics: 1) Early childhood education, 2) Education and VET, 3) Labour market and work, 4) Migrants in public services, 5) Health, 6) Regional integration, 7) Language and integration course, 8) Sport, 9) Civil society and integration, 10) Media, and 11) Culture.

Within topic 2, Education and VET, four strategic areas are defined on federal level:

1. Optimising the framework conditions for equal opportunities regarding access and participation in education, vocational training and further education.
2. Shaping transitions within the educational- and training-systems and enhance the permeability.
3. Enhance individual support; Identify and support the potential of children, adolescents and (young) adults with a migration background.
4. Continue quality assurance; development and diversify educational research; develop educational reporting in Germany.

The *Länder*, represented by the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (KMK), propose a number of strategic goals within the areas 1, 3 and 4 above, including:

- Area 1: Develop teacher training and strengthen intercultural skills; increase the migrant share of teachers and pedagogues; enhance parent participation and activate social networks, strengthen the recognition of foreign qualifications, improve the transition into VET (e.g. through the initiative "'Educational chains"').
- Area 3: Enhance individual support, i.e. increase education levels, avoid school graduates without upper secondary education, enhance linguistic and intercultural skills.
- Area 4: Capture the migration background in statistics; develop skills frameworks.

As indicators to measure the success, the following are mentioned: 1) Number of migrants in the VET system; 2) Enrolment rate of migrants; 3) Migrant apprentices per field; 4) Highest professional degree of migrants.

Policy messages: Taking steps to ensure consistency in policy across policy domains and governance levels

In the ongoing work of updating the Federal Action Plan, include a specific focus on VET as a mechanism for integrating migrants. The strategy should contain long-term measurable objectives and articulate the cross cutting responsibilities of different ministries to make sure that measures are well co-ordinated.

Continue and strengthen efforts to coordinate policy between the Federal ministries and the underlying agencies to ensure the implementation of the revised strategy and facilitate effective information exchange and policy discussion among key stakeholders.

Policy-making should be co-ordinated with stakeholder groups, including bodies representing migrants.

Policy arguments

A coherent and overall strategy can help ensure consistency

UNESCO and ILO (2018[9]) identify employment, migrants and skills as three complex policy domains where it is important to ensure co-ordination and clarity of purpose. In developing policy in this context, challenges need to be identified and discussed in consultation with the main stakeholders. Establishing a strategy and an implementation plan, including indicators and means to verify them are necessary steps in this regard. Where, at a federal level, strategies are designed in ways to cut across the established lines of responsibilities in between ministries and underlying agencies greater consistency in policy can be expected. Important aspects within such strategies include the need to ensure that related policies are aligned and sustainable, set clear targets that are measurable and create mechanisms to adjust policy, in light of experience, as it is being implemented. This requires a plan to collect data and evidence on the effectiveness of the policy, and share it across federal ministries regions. To build trust and legitimacy, it is important that all stakeholders are aligned behind the objectives of a strategy, and especially the regional authorities. In Switzerland, a country with a similar VET system and governance structure as Germany, the federal government together with the regional authorities have established such a strategy. The strategy includes five measureable targets on how to integrate migrants into upper secondary education, including VET, which are directly tied to funding which regions receive in relation to targets being achieved (Box 5.3). The Danish authorities have also set clear measurable general targets on integration policy, and are monitoring the situation closely (Box 5.5).

Box 5.3. The integration agenda in Switzerland

The Swiss confederation introduced a strategy, the Cantonal Integration Programme, in agreement with the 26 cantons in 2014. Before this, the integration of migrants was the responsibility of the cantons. The programme initially covered four years (2014-2017), followed by a second phase to be implemented over 2018-2021. The strategy covers areas such as language learning, including vocational language training and employability measures.

In addition, the Swiss Federal Government (Federal Department of Justice and Police (EJPD) and Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) together with the cantons (Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education - EDK) and social partners agreed on a national strategy to integrate immigrants into general education, the VET system and eventually the labour market. Introduced in 2016 and currently being implemented, the integration agenda incorporates a three-fold increase of the federal funding from CHF 6 000 to 18 000 per person and year (Koordinationsgruppe Integrationsagenda, 2018[20]).

Funding is tied to five clear targets, which cantons are required to meet:

1. All refugees have a basic knowledge of one national language three years after arrival, at least at A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CFER).
2. 80% of refugee children aged 0–4 are able to communicate in the language spoken at their place of residence by the time they start compulsory schooling.
3. Two-thirds of refugees aged 16–25 are in an upper secondary education (including VET) five years after arrival.
4. Half of adult refugees are sustainably integrated in the labour market seven years after arrival.
5. All refugees are familiar with the Swiss way of life and have contact with Swiss people seven years after arrival.

A common challenge facing countries seeking to integrate young migrants is the need to engage multiple stakeholders. This is especially the case in federalist countries. While a federal structure allows for flexible and tailored solutions, risks of significant variation in outcomes and poor peer learning are high. A general framework for integration has historically been underdeveloped in Switzerland (Liebig, Kohls and Krause, 2012[21]). The Integration Agenda addresses this issue by clearly defining the responsibilities between federal agencies (SEM and SERI), involving social partners as well as developing specific frameworks together with the cantons. The approach ensures that the involvement of cantons and social partners, which is a crucial factor of the Swiss governance system, is respected.

Source: Kantonale Integrationsprogramme (2019[22]), *Integration als Verbundaufgabe*, http://www.kip-pic.ch/de/kip.

Current efforts in co-ordinating policy at the federal level and between the Länder can support the implementation of a strategy and promote collaboration across established governance lines

As is now widely accepted, the process of implementing a strategy can be hindered without a co-ordinating mechanism to resolve cross-ministerial issues (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]). In the case of this study, the ministries and agencies involved at a federal level all have strong interest in ensuring that VET provides migrants with the knowledge and skills demanded by employers so enabling integration within economic and social life. To ensure clarity of purpose across policy domains, coordinating mechanisms can ensure unity in policy and adequate implementation processes (OECD, 2017[23]; ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

There are several models of inter-ministerial co-ordination. One model is that one ministry holds a leading or coordinating function for the policy. Another model is to establish a council over the established agencies which consist of the important actors, including stakeholders (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]). Many countries have in recent years set up such councils outside of established structures with a responsibility to set priorities, develop action plans, as well as being involved in the implementation. The OECD (2017[23]) argues that such co-ordination councils should not necessarily be understood as a mechanism to increase centralisation, but rather aim to give support and advice to the work in government within complex horizontal projects.

In Germany, there are two such co-ordinating functions. First, the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (KMK) is designed to enable co-ordination between the *Länder*. Second, in 2016-17 an Inter-ministerial Working Group (IMAG) was established, which aims to co-ordinate policy between the federal ministries. The OECD welcomes these efforts. However, potential exists to further strengthen policy co-ordination between

federal ministers, underlying agencies and the *Länder*, and to deepen the engagement of relevant stakeholders, including the social partners.

Involve new stakeholder groups to keep policy relevant

Although Germany has a well-developed system for engaging experts and social partners within policy development in general terms and VET in particular, the OECD has previously recommended Germany open up consultation processes more systematically to the general public, release impact assessments for public consultations and systematically publish responses to comments from consolations on line (OECD, 2018[24]). The steadily increasing migrant population in Germany over the past decades has created a range of migrant stakeholder groups that work to enable migrant voices to be considered within policy making. Including a broad variety of stakeholders builds consensus and ownership across diverse interests (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]). Considering using the experience and knowledge of such groups can contribute in processes also at a federal level, which can increase the likelihood of building a policy that is relevant to meet the migrants need.

Secure evidence needed to make informed policy decisions

Challenges relating to data and evidence

The culture of experimentation stands strong, but presents challenges for peer learning and continuous improvement

The German approach to integrating migrants has in its initial phases been characterised as innovative (Scholten et al., 2017[12]). The impressive broad range of measures implemented in Germany in the area of integrating migrants through VET creates a unique context. Other countries might learn from the breadth of engagement from stakeholders which has been witnessed in Germany. The country can be seen as a testbed of experimentation welcoming innovative approaches to shared challenges. The approach provides opportunities to test the comparative effectiveness of measures adopted in different *Länder*. However, with local innovation come risks of significant variation in the quality of provision, challenges in maintaining a national, strategic overview of provision and demand for action to enable and ensure peer learning, adapting provision in light of evidence.

Lack of information makes it difficult to distinguish the effectiveness of practice

While German investment in research into VET in general terms is exemplary, the country faces a number of important challenges related to the identification of effective practice with regard to migrant participation Access to reliable information sources, data and evidence is limited on how projects have been implemented and if the desired outcomes are being reached.

First, data on migrants in Germany is not consistently collected. Identifying the migrants' enrolment within preparatory or educational measures presents significant difficulties. There is not one official data source. In order to get an overview of the situation for refugees, six data sources from three different government agencies are needed. This is first Integrated Training Reporting system (iABE) and Training Satistics (*Berufsbildungsstatistik*) from the Federal Statistical Office (DE Statis). Second, statistics on the VET market and applicants to VET (*Ausbildungsmarktstatistik/Bewerberstatistik*), employment statistics (*Beschäftigungsstatistik*) and statistics on assistance measures (*Förderstatisti*k) from the PES. And third, statistics on integration courses (*Integrationskursgeschäftsstatisti*k) from BAMF. None of these sources were set up to monitor the migrants' movement towards VET qualifications. According to Matthes et al. (2018[25]) three main challenges arise in analysing these data to understand the hurdles faced by refugees: data sources identify different populations; sources do not consistently identify refugees, so

approximations need to be done based on country of origin; and lastly, sources vary as to what is counted, over what time period and at which cut-off date. Identifying natives with immigrant parents is challenging too, because the collection of data varies across *Länder* (Box 5.4). The lack of data is not a new situation. In a review from 2007, the OECD (Liebig, 2007[19]) pointed out that the collection of data on migrants were weak in Germany. Not having clear and consistent datasets on migrants and natives with immigrant parents undermines the making of informed policy decisions and of measuring, and comparing, progress in integration across the country.

Second, opportunity exists as well to improve the monitoring of programme delivery at both federal and regional level. In addition to reliable data sources, evaluations that follow projects can give valuable information so that adjustments in ongoing measures can be done effectively. While recent improvements are acknowledged, Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) point to a lack of culture of evidence-based policy making within education, and especially at the local level where the policy is often implemented.

Box 5.4. Data on natives with immigrant parents in VET

Identifying young natives with immigrant parents in VET statistics is not always possible as school and VET statistics differ across the *Länder*: some record students' citizenship, country of birth and main language spoken at home, others only record one of these characteristics and none ask for parental place of birth. Therefore, in federally centralised data, only citizenship is available as a proxy for children with a migration background.

This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, and more generally, all immigrants and their children who acquired German nationality cannot be accounted for. In Germany, this is a considerable share; in 2016, around half of all migrants and those with immigrant parents are German nationals.

Secondly, the population of natives with immigrant parents is growing and research based on survey data shows that they often struggle in the VET system despite having gone through the German education system. Hurdles they encounter are likely to be different compared to obstacles faced by migrants who arrive as children or as young adults.

As VET statistics do not ask for parental country of birth, specific surveys as well as census data are used to gain a better insight into the situation of natives-born learners with immigrant parents in the VET system. The BIBB and PES regularly conduct surveys among VET applicants (BA/BIBB *Bewerberbefragung*, Survey among VET Applicants) and students (BIBB *Übergangsstudie*, Transition Survey) that allow applicants with a migration background to be identified. However, the survey only captures young people who are registered at the PES as seeking an apprenticeship – and it is estimated that only 70% of young people interested in finding an apprenticeship are registered with the PES. Young people who do not engage with the PES are excluded. This implies that high-performing students are likely to be underrepresented in the survey, but this might also be the case for migrants who lack confidence in engaging. Furthermore, the survey does not ask questions about parental country of birth. Therefore, 'migration background' is defined as being born abroad, having a foreign citizenship or not speaking German as a first language at home (or growing up with two languages). If respondents indicate that they were born in Germany, but fall into the latter two categories, they are considered as "second generation." However, this leaves out natives who have immigrant parents, but grew up speaking only German at home and only hold German nationality. It also conflates the children of economic migrants (often from a European background) and humanitarian migrants.

Policy message: Information, data and evidence are crucial elements in developing mechanisms to identify effective practices

Take steps to improve evidence on the effectiveness of implemented measures. There is a need for better knowledge about what programmes are delivering, putting a stronger focus on evidence and encouraging local initiatives to build in evaluation mechanisms.

Based on this information, successful practices should be rolled out, while ineffective ones should be scaled down. Further, make sure that there is appropriate data available about how the migrants, particularly humanitarian migrants, are performing in the system.

Policy arguments

Evaluation of new approaches can help identify successful projects so that good practice can be shared and scaled up

Burns and Köster (2016[7]) characterise experimentation as implementation of policy on a small scale, with an aim to evaluate its effect and scaling up successful practices. There is great potential to take advantage of the experimentation and innovation in developing policy undertaken over recent years in Germany. Instead of developing policy that is narrowly focused within one context or geographical area, the experimentation that is happening locally should aim to impact the practices also in a broader context and outside of the project's scope. In order to make this happen, evaluation mechanisms should be built into programmes so that decision-makers have access to reliable information on the performance. It should also be the expectation that new initiatives take account of available evidence on the success of comparable programmes (OECD, 2019[3]; ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

The collection of data on migrants should be strengthened and made more coherent to inform policy decisions

There is a need for accurate information sources on migrants across many OECD countries, including in Germany (Jeon, 2019[26]). By identifying both refugees and natives with immigrant parents, and their characteristics, training records and labour market outcomes, it can be easier to identify patterns in ability to engage successfully in VET and so provide help to groups in need. Consequently, data can increase understanding of the specific needs for different groups, for instance in providing extra language training (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007[27]). In England (United Kingdom), where the Department for Education has set a target to increase participation in apprenticeships by 20% by 2020, collecting and analysing detailed data on the migrant background of apprentices informs policy interventions.

As laid out previously, Germany already identifies country of origin as well as the legal status of the migrant, but this is not yet done in a consistent manner. With the responsibility for collecting data spread across the governmental agencies and levels, variability in approaches is significant. This makes it, for instance, challenging to identify the progression of migrants through different preparatory measures and onwards into VET. In order to better inform policy decisions, potential exists to better streamline the data collections for which the PES, BAMF and DE Statistics are responsible. This would contribute to increasing the quality of the evidence and research that is already being collected and allow for more sophisticated monitoring of the success of national policy (Dionisius, Matthes and Neises, 2018[28]).

Ensuring policy co-operation and peer-learning

The challenge of policy co-operation and peer learning across regions

The Länder have established a co-ordinating mechanism to discuss VET policy at the federal level

One way of meeting the need for co-ordination of policy between the *Länder* has been the establishment of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*). The 16 authorities play an important role in policy making and have established this consortium to develop and co-ordinating policy on education across Germany. By finding consensus and co-operation, the objective of the consortium is to formulate joint views and common objectives across the regional authorities. The measures that are subject to co-ordination have shared characteristics and are comparable across the regions. The KMK makes decisions based on resolutions that are supported either unanimously, with a qualified or simple majority. Resolutions have status of policy recommendations, with the commitment of turning it in to law within each region (KMK, 2015[29]; KMK, 2017[11]).

The consortium is also used for consultations between the federal and the regional authorities. KMK consists of several organs and committees. Since responsibility for the dual VET training is shared between the federal and regional authorities, a co-ordinating committee between the two levels of authorities has been established for VET. This committee has dealt with several issues on VET, for instance regulations for the company training and framework curricula for the school-based training (KMK, 2017[11]).

There are challenges with securing policy co-operation and peer learning across regions

The main trend in the governance structure of education across the OECD is decentralising decision making and allowing for greater local autonomy. This trend has led to more complex modes of governance (Burns and Köster, 2016[7]). A decentralised decision-making structure has some significant advantages attached to it. The regions are often closer to issues which help shape the efficacy of educational provision and can therefore be better placed to make decisions that suit the local context. There are large social and economic differences between the regions in Germany in terms of population size and density, GDP per capita, demographic challenges and educational performance measured in PISA (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). The opportunities within VET also differ across the regions. In highly decentralised systems, co-ordination of policy can however be a challenge. Many of the hurdles that the migrants are required to meet when integrating into society and work are the same across geographical areas. While it is sensible to have a certain degree of variation in practice in between regions, there can be challenges in taking advantage of economies of scale and innovative experiences from other regions. Variation can make it more difficult for stakeholders, be they migrants or employers, to understand what provision is in place, to enable coherent progression in learning pathways delivered in different regions and to achieve peer learning across the regional and local structures (Musset et al., 2013[30]).

In Germany, an approach to secure co-operation between the *Länder* on VET was established through an alliance consisting of representatives from employers, trade unions, *Länder* and the PES. The alliance pursued a partnership approach, where the participating representatives regularly assessed agreed objectives, updating them according to ongoing developments in implementation. The alliance was terminated in 2018.

Building sustainability in projects locally can be challenging

In securing policy co-ordination across Germany, the federal level often initiates and funds projects that are implemented locally. Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) studied this approach through the implementation of a BMBF funded project, LvO (*Lernen vor Ort*), which is an example of a policy instrument

aiming at improving the co-ordination between stakeholders in a multilevel structure. This case illustrates the substantial challenges that can occur in implementing federally funded projects locally, notably in terms of building sustainability locally. Even though the project included elements to enforce sustainability, for instance by applicants locally needing to develop plans for how to continue delivery after the conclusion of the project period and external funding ended, several factors interfered in the intention. Busmeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) highlight the dynamism of local political situations making the availability of local funding sources unpredictable. In any case, with the funding of federal projects often comparatively generous, the local level can have difficulties in upholding and securing the resources to maintain the extent and quality of provision. The funding of projects do not necessarily involve incentives in order for the local level to comply with the initial project plans. Even though many federal funded projects includes the possibility of revoking funding at the end of project periods, this rarely happens. Another challenge found in the study was the lack of willingness from established actors in the system to engage with short-term funded projects because of short duration and thereby lack of sustainability.

During meetings that the OECD team undertook through its three visits to Germany, building sustainability into local projects was brought up as a challenge. In the initial phases of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Germany, there was a pressing need to build up a system that would initiate many projects to meet need within a short time frame. When implementing locally, funding has in many cases been perhaps inevitably short-term. Now, in a more stable delivery environment, opportunity exists to enhance local delivery by nurturing effective provision and sharing lessons learnt on both success and failures.

Policy message: Ensuring policy co-operation and peer-learning

Place greater emphasis on facilitating peer learning across the Länder which can lead to increased effectiveness. The federal level should take responsibility for creating a culture of learning through experience.

Consider revising funding mechanisms for projects locally to ensure sustainability, successful outcomes, innovative practices and value for money.

Policy arguments

The federal level can take a stronger role in facilitating peer learning

In a federal system such as Germany, national governments have limited opportunity to initiate changes at the local level compared to more centralised modes of government, but that is not to say that they cannot influence the quality of local delivery. The role of the federal authorities as a catalyst for new policy and as a provider of resources is an important one. This form of policy leadership, by setting goals, funding projects and monitoring outcomes can drive system-wide impact (Burns and Köster, 2016[7]).

Funding projects that are implemented locally is a commonly used steering mechanism in Germany. Such funding mechanisms provide potential for generating peer learning between municipalities and regions. Such projects are usually set up with a competitive funding scheme, where local actors apply to participate and receive funding. Experiences from successful projects can spread to other areas and thereby the impact of the policy can be greater than the local project (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). This horizontal spread of knowledge between regions depends, however, on solid evidence of programme effectiveness and the existence of appropriate mechanisms to share successful experiences across local or regional layers of government (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

Using established arenas involving the key stakeholders, for instance the federal and regional authorities and main social partner representatives, to discuss policy, agree on goals and monitor the situation can be a means to enhance peer learning. Peer learning is underpinned by easy access to information on effective practice. The federal level is currently working on the establishment of an integration monitor. The

Länder are already publishing an integration monitor on 51 indicators every two years through the Integration Minister Conference (IntMK). Making this information routinely and easily available for all stakeholders can be expected to significantly underpin enhanced peer-learning.

The Danish authorities, for example, have created a website where the predefined goals on integration are presented, together with data that monitor the progression on the implementation side. The data are presented both nationally and in relation to each municipality (Box 5.5). In this way, good practises locally can be identified easily.

Box 5.5. Monitoring the implementation of the Danish integration strategy

The Danish government has developed an integration strategy which includes nine broad target areas, each consisting of one or several concrete goals for what they want to achieve with its efforts in integration the migrants. Employability, language learning and education are three of these target areas. The authorities closely monitor the implementation of these targets as each one is associated with one or several indicators. The development since 2012, both nationally and in each municipality, are presented on a webpage, the Integration Barometer (The Danish Ministry of Immigration, 2019[31]).

Funding schemes to support sustainability in projects

Linked to the benefits of stronger evaluation culture, there is potential in improving the steering mechanism of policy at a local level through funding arrangements to support sustainability within projects. Many projects at a local level have been funded on a short-term basis. Short-term financing as a main rule can result in loss of competence and fatigue in the sector. After a period of experimentation, there is now potential to create stability by identifying and dedicating longer term funding to programmes which deliver more positive results. With stronger understanding of good practice, longer term project funding can enhance accountability. This requires collaboration in setting goals, indicators and collect relevant data (OECD, 2013[32]; OECD, 2017[33]). Challenges in this regard are linked to understanding what the real effects of measures implemented really are, as well as an excessive focus on a limited set of measureable goals which not necessarily covers the full picture (OECD, 2017[33]). One option to look further into is to incentivise successful projects. The Swiss national authorities have linked part of the funding of the regional authorities to the measureable pre-agreed objectives (Box 5.3). Continuing the close collaboration with employers will be an important mechanism in ensuring that successful projects are sustained.

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6 Exploring increased flexibility in the vocational education and training system in Germany

This chapter explores the possibility for more flexible approaches to vocational education and training (VET) in order to meet the needs of struggling learners, including recent arrivals. As some learners are struggling to move through the VET system with a formal qualification, there can be opportunity to discuss alternative pathways through VET for particular groups. Increased flexibility can be more effective learners who are less likely to be admitted and complete a standard VET track. The development of new means of entry into VET can be linked, moreover, to sectors of the labour market which are experiencing skill shortage and are in need of recruiting apprentices. Learning from experiences locally in Germany and from other OECD countries, such flexible approaches include consideration of shorter qualification as a stepping stone towards a full qualification, prolonging the duration of apprenticeship training for specific groups, as well as a modularised approaches.

Issues and challenges

Migrants can get stuck in the transition system or in other preparatory measures which do not lead to the development of formal competences

Many migrants face substantial obstacles in getting appropriately prepared for participation in the dual system and once prepared, finding and completing an apprenticeship is more challenging, especially for the humanitarian migrants. At the same time as migrants have problems accessing apprenticeships, there is a skills need for vocational education and training (VET) competences (see more in Chapter 1). If the flow of learners from migrant background was to be considered as a pipeline or a series of pipelines, representing different groups of migrants, many blockages and leaks would be identified.

Students who are unable to find an apprenticeship placement, can attend different preparatory measures to try to enhance their skill levels and meet the employers' requirements. All students are provided with measures within the transition system (*Übergangsbereich*) (Chapter 2). The OECD has previously identified the ability of the transition system to prepare students for the regular dual model as one of the main challenges with the German VET system (Hoeckel and Schwartz, 2010[1]). Older migrants are provided with measures offered by the local employment services (Chapter 2). There is a lack of information on what migrants who are unable to find an apprenticeship contract do. Many might embark on a new programme of learning. In this way, the preparatory measures can be a time consuming process and learners might end up with no qualification at all. Despite the many advantages of preparatory programmes, one risk is that staying in those programmes for too long can be inefficient and counterproductive, and especially if the training does not lead to formal competences that are valued by the labour market (OECD, 2018[2]).

Lack of flexibility in the VET system can be particularly challenging for struggling learners

Typically, the apprenticeship scheme is built around the needs of the main target population. Other student groups, such as migrants, can have a different background and starting point and might therefore meet challenges in completing the training (OECD, 2018[3]). As elaborated in Chapter 4, the termination of apprenticeship contracts are particularly high for asylum seekers and refugees from the main asylum origin countries. It is estimated that 40% of these contracts are terminated early on, compared to 16% of all apprenticeship contracts. And there is not much information available on what these students choose to do afterwards. Many might find a new employer and sign a new apprenticeship contract. Other will choose another programme, for instance a school-based VET programme or general education programmes, and many might also drop-out from learning altogether either entering jobs without training or not in education, employment or training (NEET). One challenge for Germany is the lack of alternatives for students, whether migrant or native in origin, who experience problems in entering VET or who fail to complete the VET track.

The dual model stands strong in Germany

The German dual VET system is known and admired worldwide for its ability to provide the labour market with highly skilled VET graduates and for yielding benefits for the economy, most substantially visible in a low youth unemployment rate. This is a system that is built on long traditions and a history of strong co-operation between the social partners and the authorities. In Germany, VET is a shared responsibility between the federal level, the *Länder* and the social partners. Policy making is made in close co-operation, but also with a clear division of responsibilities. The system is based on stakeholders working together to find mutually attractive solutions. Changes to the system are most effective when they are made on a consensual basis (Hoeckel and Schwartz, 2010[1]).

As the dual, three-year apprenticeship model is well established, there seems to be reluctance to change a successful formula. Engagement with social partners has very many positive sides, but can also underpin conservative responses to system change. For example, discussions of creating alternative pathways through VET by introducing apprenticeship programmes leading to lower initial levels of qualifications, have been a controversial issue. Policy makers are primarily worried about lowering standards and reducing the attractiveness of VET.

Options do exist for more flexible pathways, but these are not used much

Even though the German dual model stands strong, the federal government has recently introduced options to provide students with more flexible solutions. While the vast majority of apprentices in Germany attend regular dual or school-based VET programmes, there exist alternative approaches within the law that underpin provision which is arguably better suited to meeting the needs of many migrants. This includes part-time training and extension of apprenticeship duration (Box 6.1). These are opportunities that can be used and further developed at a local level (Granato and Neises, 2017[4]).

Box 6.1. Existing flexibility in the German VET system

Part-time apprenticeships

It is possible to adjust the duration of apprenticeships on an individual basis. If apprentices and the training firm are able to prove a '"legitimate interest", they can request that the daily or weekly training time is reduced. An extension of the whole duration of the apprenticeship is not mandatory in such cases, but might be agreed upon if this seems necessary to successfully complete the apprenticeship. Such "part-time" apprenticeships are especially helpful for young mothers and fathers, who often do not have a post-compulsory education (BMBF, 2018[5]). Moreover, it might be possible to simultaneously attend language training or further remedial courses (Granato and Neises, 2017[4]) but it is uncertain if this would be sufficient to prove a legitimate interest. However, such part-time apprenticeships are only applied rarely. In 2016, 2 085 new contracts were part-time apprenticeships, corresponding to 0.4% of all new contracts (BMBF, 2018[5]).

Some local initiatives are however exploring alternative models

Some local or regional initiatives are exploring alternative pathways for migrants, one example is a pilot of a 1+3 model in Bavaria (Box 6.2). However, in comparison to countries like Sweden and Switzerland, alternative routes which take account of additional challenges facing certain learners are significantly limited.

Box 6.2. 1+3 model in Bavaria

The IHK chamber in Coburg, Bavaria had recently initiated a pilot-project called 1+3 where in VET provision (apprenticeships in mechanics and electronics) is combined with German language training. During the first year, apprentices visit language classes on two days, vocational school training on one and firm-based training on the remaining two days. The second to fourth years correspond to regular apprenticeships, but additionally includes 1-1.5 days German language training. The whole apprenticeship last 54 months or 4.5 years. This way, apprentices can improve their language skills throughout the training while receiving a salary and acclimatising to the German working world. In addition, they learn the language in a vocational context, what entails didactic advantages. The project is supported by the Bavarian government, which introduced a model-class at the VET school in Coburg which supports the language training. Training firms do not receive financial support. The rationale is that with additional language and academic support, apprentices from migrant backgrounds can contribute comparable benefits to employers as native peers, but over a longer timescale.

Source: IHK zu Coburg (2019[6]), *Pilotausbildungsmodell 3+1 für Flüchtlinge Erfolgreich Gestartet,* https://www.coburg.ihk.de/789-0-Pilotausbildungsmodell-31-fuer-Fluechtlinge-erfolgreich-gestartet.html.

Not many adults attend apprenticeship training

In Germany, the vast majority of VET students start their apprenticeship directly or soon after completing compulsory schooling. In 2016, about 80% of apprentices in the dual VET system were 22 or younger (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2017[7]). Adult education and participation in lifelong learning measures, on the other hand, is less common than in other countries (Eurostat, 2017[8]). However, the recent inflow of adult immigrants without upper secondary education has increased the importance of comprehensive provision of educational offerings that are adapted to adults needs.

In principle, there are several pathways available in Germany to adults interested in obtaining a VET qualification. For regular VET programmes, such as dual apprenticeships, both in and outside companies, or school-based VET, there are no formal age limits in place. With dual apprenticeships, employers decide whom they will hire, and some might prefer younger candidates. In rare cases,[1] employers are known to apply their own age limits. Mechanisms also exist for the existing knowledge and skills of migrants to be recognised within VET provision (Box 6.3), although many recent arrivals do not possess a VET qualification as described in Chapter 1.

Box 6.3. Alternative pathways to a VET qualification for adults

The initiative "Late starters" (*Spätstarterinitiative*), as from 2016 "Future Starters" (Zukunftsstarter) from the PES and the BMAS targets young people aged between 25 and 35 years without a VET qualification. The aim of the initiative is that 120 000 young participants will achieve a VET qualification by the end of 2020.

Recognition of foreign qualifications is applicable for holders of formal foreign qualifications. In 2012, Germany introduced a legal entitlement to examine the equivalence of foreign qualifications in the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (*Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz, BQFG*). The recognition procedure was subsequently strengthened and follows national standards, leading to a meaningful growth in new recognitions annually from 11 000 in 2012 to about 19 400 in 2015 (BMBF, 2017[9]) and almost 25 000 in 2017. While most applicants are European, almost 1 500 were refugees in 2015, an increase of 25% compared to 2014 (BMBF, 2017[9]). About two-thirds of all applications gain full recognition of their foreign qualification, with the qualifications of most other applicants being partially recognised. To obtain a full qualification, the IQ-network offers qualification modules, which are often applicable for refugees (BMBF, 2017[9]).

The German Bundestag has taken the decision to broaden opportunities for qualified professionals to work in Germany. The **Skilled Immigration Act** will make it easier for qualified professionals with vocational qualifications from countries outside the European Union to work in Germany. The act is expected to enter into force on 1 February 2020.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Germany goes back a long way, though historically there has not been a common legal framework and a standardised system at a federal level. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), together with the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) and the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH) agreed to ask selected chambers of both sectors to conduct the pilot project "ValiKom" as from the end of 2015. The aim of the project is to establish a common framework for the validation of occupational skills and competences through standardised procedures, assessment criteria and tools, in line with the approaches set out in the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG). The project builds explicitly on the responsibilities of the chambers set out in the Vocational Training Act (BBiG).

The validation appoach refers to the prevailing training regulations and occupational profiles and issues ultimately a certificate expressing the extent to which the skills demonstrated are equivalent to the ones normally gained under the Vocational Training Act [(Teil-) Gleichwertigkeitsfeststellung]. Following successful piloting, the partners launched in November 2018 the Valikom-Transfer project with a number of chambers involved and occupations involved.

Policy message

Drawing upon experience of local initiatives and other OECD countries, consider developing in close alignment with employers more flexible approaches that target both youths and adults to the VET system.

Exploring flexible approaches in the regular VET system can help in meeting the specific needs of youth and adults who struggle to enter VET or who are at risk of poor outcomes and are unlikely to complete a mainstream VET programme, including, but not exclusively, migrants. Increased flexibility can enhance student success rates in developing certified skills that enable self-sufficiency and contribute to the economy as a whole.

More flexible solutions can take many forms. Three main approaches include: shorter linked apprenticeships; longer apprenticeships; modular approaches.

Such approaches have been seen to be effective in enabling the progression of youth at risk of poor outcomes without compromising the employability of learners. Also adults can benefit substantially from more flexible measures. By monitoring the migrants' performance within VET, assessing local pilots that are experimenting with flexible solutions and learning from international practice, opportunity exists to give serious consideration to the development of more flexible models in Germany. This is particularly important should the progression pipeline experience unacceptable levels of blockages and leaks.

Policy arguments

By developing more flexible models that target specific groups, migrants can have higher chances of succeeding

In order to unlock the potential of migrants, the VET system can be more adapted towards the specific needs of migrants and other vulnerable groups (Jeon, 2019[10]). As recent arrivals have a diverse background, integration measures also need to be adaptable to individual needs (OECD, 2016[11]). Alternative pathways through VET can facilitate a more realistic educational option for many migrants by providing a more targeted educational offer in line with the migrant's needs and individual abilities. Youths and adults may have very different needs in terms of training. Flexibility on deciding for instance the duration of the training can be beneficial for both the learners and the employers. It can help to ensure that the learners reach the learning objectives and that the employers are able to balance the costs with the benefits of the training (OECD, 2010[12]).

Many of the key stakeholders find more flexible models important in order to integrate migrants

In an expert monitor, a clear majority of the respondents representing key stakeholders in the German VET system, among others employers and unions, finds alternative solutions such as prolonged or shorter models as the most important measure in integrating migrants into VET (Granato and Neises, 2017[4]). This is also in line what the OECD team heard through several interviews conducted through three visits in Germany. Many vulnerable groups can benefit by more flexible solutions adapted towards their needs (Kis, 2016[13]). This can include be natives with weak basic skills, second generation migrants or other migrant groups who have stayed for longer periods in Germany. Because the need for alternatives for this group is becoming more evident, the discussions of increased flexibility is opening up. Within discussions of alternative models, the reasonable preconditions for many of the stakeholders, particularly union and employers' representatives, is that such models should be universally accessible to all students, as opposed to being a migrant specific measure. Concerns also relate to fear that such reform might undermine the quality of German VET provision. Again, this is a reasonable point of contention. Where more flexible provision is at its most effective, strong consideration is given to maintaining quality.

Prioritising VET provision which leads to a formal competence can be more effective for the apprentice, the employer and for the society

One challenge is to keep the balance between adequately preparing recent arrivals to embark on a VET provision and retaining them too long in preparatory measures. Programmes provided outside the mainstream classes have disadvantages: students miss the normal curriculum, they might be stigmatised by participation, and fall behind in the rest of the curriculum (European Commission, 2015[14]; Nusche, 2009[15]). In a Swiss study based on interviews, a majority of migrants expressed the wish to combine language training with work (UNHCR, 2017[16]). Hence, it can be preferable to introduce migrants at an early stage to mainstream education, and in turn provide support during the training. Starting an

educational pathway towards a formal qualification can be more effective for apprentices who have a sufficient level on the language and basic skills. Although preparatory programmes can lead to an upper secondary qualification in some *Länder*, this is not consistently available. This is also a measure that can increase the supply of apprentices to employers who are in need of skilled workers.

Increased flexibility in the VET system can be achieved in different ways depending on who the target group is

Different alternative approaches can fit for specific target groups, for instance adults or young students, or for certain sectors in the labour market which are experiencing skill shortages and are in need of recruiting apprentices. Learning from practices in other countries, and regional or local examples within Germany, there are at least three alternative approaches that can be viable for Germany to further explore; a prolonged model, a shorter model as a stepping stone towards a full qualification and a modular approach.

A prolonged model can give weaker learners, including many migrants, extra time to meet with the academic requirements of apprenticeship training

In a prolonged model that combines VET with language training, apprentices can receive greater support and extra time during their training period to meet the academic and language requirements of the apprenticeship that is needed to complete the training. As elaborated in Chapter 4, many migrants tend to be in need of such additional support. By adding extra time to the ordinary three-year apprenticeship duration focusing particularly on additional support in language learning, the migrants gain in that workplaces are commonly seen as particularly conducive to learning. Combining language learning with learning a vocation, the students have the benefit of working together with colleagues who speak fluent German, which can be more motivating and effective (OECD, 2016[11]). An important distinction should be made between a prolonged model and for instance first doing an EQ and then embarking on apprenticeship training, in the former case students are starting a four-year pathway that leads to a formal qualification, increasing confidence that skilled employment will result. The apprenticeship placement is also secured, which means that the student can stay in a stable environment while they keep up with the requirements set at their VET school and by the employer. As students spend more time in the company, employers can have greater confidence that costs spent on the training are balanced out with the benefits of productive work (Kuczera, 2017[17]). The challenge, however, can be in keeping provision attractive to students, as many are in need of having a stable income to support themselves and their families. As laid out previously in the chapter, some *Länder* are already exploring more flexible models. These pilots should be followed closely within real-time evaluations with consideration being given to scaling them up if they are successful. If the numbers of migrant learners entering and succeeding within apprenticeships continues at a low level, longer duration apprenticeships represent a potentially attractive policy option for Germany.

Shorter models can reduce entrance barriers as well as provide training that leads to a partial qualification

Shorter apprenticeship models disaggregate apprenticeship learning into a number of linked qualifications that act as stepping stones towards a full qualification, so reducing entrance barriers to skilled employment. A shorter programme can be more realistic for many to complete and can give apprentices the opportunity to start their track towards a full VET qualification at an earlier point and thereby contributes to reducing entry barriers that many migrants meet. The target group can be students who are experiencing difficulties in finding an apprenticeship placement or adults who already possesses relevant experiences (OECD, 2018[3]). Such models can be particularly relevant to employers within sectors where there are shortages of qualified VET personnel. Increased flexibility can be made available at a local level or be more systematic by defining it in VET regulations at the federal level.

The consideration of developing shorter models should however be done with great care to avoid the creation of lower level of qualifications. The main objective should be to enable students to take a first step in a pathway towards a full formal qualification valued within the labour market and at the same time limit the amount of young people entering the labour market without a formal qualification. Such competence awarding possibilities can thus be beneficial both for the student because they can save time, but also for the society as a whole. While shorter time spent undertaking productive work decreases the short-term benefits for employers, this approach can also be a longer-term investment. As more students can gain access to formal training, the possibilities for recruiting qualified labour for the labour market can increase (Kuczera, 2017[17]).

In Germany, some professions are already experimenting with VET qualifications which are shorter in duration than regular apprenticeships, for instance one or two years. One example is within health care, where students can embark first on a one or two-year course, depending on the *Länder*, as a health care assistant, before either entering the labour market or pursuing further studies. Experiences locally suggest that many students choose to continue training after the completion of the first initial courses.

A comparable two year apprenticeship model has been successful in Switzerland. The provision is available in 57 professions leading to a VET certificate (EBA, *Eidgenössisches Berufsattest*). In this model, opportunity exists to secure a qualification that is both valued by employers and is clearly articulated as a stepping-stone towards a full VET qualification. Those who complete can join the three- or four-year apprenticeship, typically joining the second year of the programme (OECD, 2018[3]). The long-term transition after completing an EBA apprenticeship is in most cases successful. Three and a half years after completion, 87% of the 2012 EBA cohort was either employed or in education with 13% not in education, employment or training (NEET)[2] (FSO, 2018[18]). A challenge of EBA programmes, however, is that the immediate transition into the labour market is not always smooth and without interruption. More than one-fifth of contracts are terminated prematurely. As a result, only 74.1% of those who started in 2012 completed the apprenticeship directly after 2 years (SKBF-CSRE, 2018[19]). As well as potentially serving learners from migrant backgrounds, evidence from this Swiss model shows that such provision can be of relevance to many native learners who would, otherwise, struggle to succeed in regular apprenticeship provision. By adapting programme design, a wider range of learners are able to benefit from apprenticeship provision, providing employers with an ultimately deeper pool of skilled labour (Lüthi, forthcoming[20]).

The Danish have a similar two year model (*erhvervsgrunduddannelse* - EGU), targeting young learners under 30 not in education or employment, who currently lack the prerequisites to enrol in a regular VET program. The aim is to upskill these young students so that they can enter the labour market or enrol in further training, for instance a VET programme. The training is primarily practical, and is organised according to the dual principle, where the students alternate between school-based and work-based learning in a workplace. The content is set on an individual basis, and may include some elements from the normal VET track. On completion, the students receive certification. In case of overlap with the normal VET track, students can continue their training to receive a full VET qualification. The number of students enrolled in this programme is around 2 000 (The Danish Ministry for Education, 2019[21]). An evaluation of the scheme shows that completion of the programme reduces the students' likelihood of being welfare dependent. Many of the students completing typically choose further studies within VET, and among the non-completers, many of these are transferred to an ordinary VET track (Rambøll Management Consulting, 2016[22]).

Building upon the existing two-year EGU model, the Danish authorities are also currently conducting a pilot specifically targeting recent arrivals (*Integrations grunnuddanningen*). The pilot aims to secure the possibility of work and upskilling for migrants whose qualifications and productivity do not match the requirements in the Danish labour market. The pilot is a result of a 2016 tripartite agreement about labour market integration agreed by the government and the social partners. Migrants are hired by an employer and receive a salary, in addition to school training with additional allowance during the school period. Some of the migrants in the programme will either be enrolled on or will have completed the traditional integration

course. There are no language entry requirements, but the content of the training is adapted towards the migrant's individual needs and language level. As of April 2018, a total of 1 440 migrant were registered in the programme (The Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing, 2019[23]).

A modular approach can give flexibility in the provision from which especially adults can benefit

A modular approach to securing an apprenticeship qualification is gaining traction in many of European countries and can represent a more flexible pathway towards a VET qualification especially targeted at adult learners. Because training can be more easily combined with paid work, a modular approach can make it more attractive to adults to participate in formal learning opportunities. In the same way as with shorter models, a modular approach can be well-adapted towards some migrant learners as it can contribute to lowering entry requirements and addressing widespread desires for early labour market entry. Cedefop (2015[24]) defines partial qualifications as building blocks (such as modules) that can be combined into a full qualification. In this way modules can be understood as components of education and training programmes.

Across the European Union, the use of modules have been more commonly used in adult learning, rather than within the regular upper secondary VET system (Cedefop, 2015[24]). Australia has devised a flexible modular approach to its VET system, to which all age groups have access (Hoeckel et al., 2008[25]). Modularisation in the German VET system can be found in some occupations or through pilot schemes locally (Cedefop, 2015[24]). One objective in the Norwegian government's 2018 integration strategy is to increase provision available to migrants which leads to a formal qualification (The Norwegian Ministry for Education, Research and Integration, 2019[26]). One of the measures in this regard is an ongoing pilot which explores more flexible solutions for low-skilled adults, including migrants, through a modularised approach to upper secondary VET. In this way, migrants and other groups can take modules one by one at a slower pace allowing for mixing the training with payed work. Each module will be finalised with a formal assessment. When all modules are completed, the candidate can sign up for a normal VET trade and journeyman's certificate. In this way, the final examinations ensures quality in that these candidates are required to demonstrate the same competences as candidates following the normal VET track (The Norwegian Ministry for Education and Research, 2016[27]).

Recognising the labour market potential of the young newly arrived and the difficulties they face in entering an upper secondary vocational programme, Sweden introduced Vocational Packages (*yrkespaket*) in December 2017 in a range of fields. These are clusters of courses leading to a partial qualification that is recognised in the labour market. It allows students to combine courses from compulsory or upper secondary levels in upper secondary school or in adult education (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[28]; Jeon, 2019[10]).

The Danish authorities are targeting migrants in its existing modularised labour market education scheme (*arbeidsmarkedsuddannelsene*), which is a broad provision of short vocationally oriented courses. The scheme is designed to upskill adults with or without formal qualifications with skills or qualifications which are needed on the labour market. The provision can be part of a full formal VET qualification. Additional modules are provided for migrants with Danish as a second language. These modules are linked to language (at basic, intermediate and advanced levels as well as vocational language courses), introductions to the vocational area, the Danish labour market and how to apply for jobs. In addition, students take the vocational courses within the scheme, but that are adapted for migrants (The Danish Ministry for Education, 2019[29]).

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Notes

[1] For example, police training often applies age limits.

[2] However, such figures cannot assess the effectiveness of EBA apprenticeships conclusively, as it remains unknown how those graduates would have performed without any upper secondary education instead, thus a causal effect is uncertain (SKBF-CSRE, 2018[19]).

Glossary

The terms “migrant”, “asylum seeker” and “refugee” are often used interchangeably in public debate. Yet, making a distinction between these groups is crucial, as a person’s legal status has important repercussions regarding their access to services and to the labour market.

Migrant is a generic term for all persons who move to another country and intend to stay in the country for an extended period of time, regardless of their reason for migration. Migrants thus include labour migrants, family migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, international students and persons moving within free-mobility zones, such as the European Union, as well as undocumented migrants without valid residence permits.

Asylum seekers are people who have formally applied for refugee status and are waiting for the outcome of their application.

The term *“humanitarian migrant”* refers to people who have successfully applied for asylum and have been granted some sort of protection whether refugee or another status. People who receive *full refugee status* in Germany obtain a renewable residence permit of three years. There are different forms of protection that include refugee status according to the Geneva Convention or the German Basic Law, subsidiary protection, and non-refoulement. While the latter status usually provides a one-year, renewable residence permit and is granted relatively rarely in Germany (see Table 1.1), the share of people receiving subsidiary protection increased strongly in 2016 and 2017. Subsidiary protection status is granted for a year and can be renewed twice (for two years each). For this group, family reunification is severely restricted. For the sake of simplicity, the terms refugee and humanitarian migrant are used interchangeably in this publication.

Migrants can receive a *toleration status* when they cannot be returned to their country of origin, for instance because of health problems or administrative obstacles, e.g. difficulties in obtaining travel documents. This toleration status, however, does not constitute a legal residence permit, and only establishes a temporary suspension of deportation. As of December 2017, it was estimated that around 170 000 persons in Germany had this status designation and that approximately 90 000 of these were rejected asylum seekers. Toleration status can be prolonged and close to one in three have been in Germany for more than three years. Approximately one-third is between 16 and 29 years old (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2018[1]; Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2017[2]).

In this publication, the phrase “young people with a migration background” is used to designate both people who were born abroad as well as those who were born in Germany and have at least one immigrant parent.

In addition, the report will sometimes refer to statistics on “foreign nationals”, i.e. people who hold non-German citizenship only, as for school-based statistics this is often the only way to identify migrants.

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OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training

Unlocking the Potential of Migrants in Germany

The German vocational education and training (VET) system is admired around the world for its ability to prepare young people for skilled employment. In Germany, VET smooths transitions into work and is closely aligned with labour market demand. This report focuses on an unprecedented test of the German VET system: how to respond to the significant increase in migrants who arrived in the country in 2015-16. The study explores both the opportunities and the challenges presented by migration. Germany has already devoted significant attention to VET as a mechanism for enabling integration – and for good reason. Work-based learning assists integration because it demonstrably gives learners skills that employers want in real-world settings. The report assesses the barriers faced by learners in their journeys into and through VET, exploring how such challenges can be addressed. In addition, the study looks at system-wide issues in relation to how VET provision and integration policy is governed. Lastly, it explores opportunities for increased flexibility in the German VET system of relevance to all youth at risk of not succeeding in VET. In responding to migrant needs, German VET can become more inclusive without reducing quality.

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