

The Systematic School-to-Work Transitions Initiative

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Background: Lost in a profusion of programs

High-quality vocational training provides young people with the prospect of qualified employment. Unfortunately, not all youngsters in Germany make a smooth transition from schoolroom to training program. Many only succeed after spending much time and money participating in one or more of the many “temporary” initiatives designed to facilitate such a transition. Some never find a training position at all. This is not only unacceptable from a societal, political and economic standpoint, it is unacceptable on a human level as well.

The goal: Vocational training for everyone!

The Systematic School-to-Work Transitions initiative is committed to helping all secondary-school students in Germany who desire vocational or career training to find a suitable position – in a systematic, timely manner – that offers the prospect of earning a recognized certificate or degree.

In the future, students who have not found a training position should no longer lose valuable time participating in temporary programs that offer no prospect of recognized qualification. Instead, training should be made available to them directly following their secondary schooling – and where possible, within Germany’s established twin-track (school/training) educational system. If this is not feasible, training should then take place in non-business or full-time school settings. For youngsters not yet ready for training, individual approaches geared toward specific target groups should be employed to prepare them for entering a suitable program. Once they are ready, young people should receive a binding offer to enter a program designed to provide a recognized certificate or degree.

Such an approach would transform Germany’s current profusion of temporary and transitional programs into an efficient, transparent system that is, in fact, systematic.

The participants: Together we’re strong!

In the launch phase, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is working together with government ministries in five states to develop an approach capable of reaching the above goal. To this end, the foundation, its partners and academic specialists have been examining strategies and outcomes in the area of school-to-work programs in order to identify best practices and their transferability. The resulting portfolio of findings will be collated into a standardized process. Following that, the findings will be used as the basis for an exchange of experience across state borders and to develop the approaches further. This will allow the common goal to be pursued via a variety of paths in the different states and in consideration of varying local contexts.

In the next phase, as of mid-2010 the process will be opened to additional states and participants in order to promote implementation and to realize the goal in an interactive, cross-institutional, multi-state process. All outcomes will be documented and made available for transfer.

Participating states

Baden-Württemberg

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