



Report on the employment of disabled people in European countries

Country: Austria

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Background:

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the *Thematic report on the implementation of EU Employment Strategy in European countries with reference to equality for disabled people*.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation of the European Employment Strategy from a disability equality perspective, and to provide the Commission with useful evidence in support of disability policy mainstreaming. More specifically, the report will review implementation of EU Employment Strategy and the PROGRESS initiative with reference to policy implementation evidence from European countries, including the strategies addressed in the EU Disability Action Plan (such as flexicurity and supported employment).

The first version of the report was published in 2008. This is the second version of the report updated with information available up to November 2009.



Summary of changes since 2008

New quantitative data:

In terms of new available data the Austrian Government published in 2009 the “**Report on the situation of people with disabilities in Austria**”¹ with the year 2008 as the year of reference. With the beginning of the new government legislation at the end of 2008 the responsibilities of the former ministry of social affairs and consumer protection were expanded and now include all employment related agendas. Concerning available information and statistics, this concentration of competences has increased the availability of data, though not to a high level of explanation. Additionally the Industrial Association (Industriellenvereinigung) maintains an informative Homepage (www.arbeitundbehinderung.at) providing additional statistical information based on their own calculations of data from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) as well as the Austrian Labour Market Service (AMS). In 2008 in total 94.383 people had acquired the legal severely disabled (SD) status (“Begünstigter Behinderter”), out of which about 68% were employed (64%) or self-employed (4%). The Austrian Labour Market Service has changed its disability definition, with the new statistics now referring to people with health related placement restrictions. In total 31.263 people with health related placement restrictions were registered in 2008 as being unemployed; of this group 3.870 (4,1%) belonged to the SD group. The remaining 26.387 (27,9%) are not included in the official unemployment statistics and must probably be considered to be no longer seeking employment. The approximately 19.000 people (mainly with Intellectual disabilities) working in sheltered employment workshops are not included in the unemployment statistics. Registered people with health related placement restrictions accounted for 14,73% of the total number of unemployed people. Due to the economic crisis with its general increase in unemployment, the relative figure of people with health related placement restrictions decreased to 14,58% in August 2009 but the total figure has increased to 34.817.

New policy changes:

Apart from the concentration of work related competences in one ministry (see above), no major policy changes or new laws concerning the employment situation of people with disabilities have been introduced since the last ANED employment report. As a result of the economic crisis, disability policy issues seem to be of lower priority on the current agenda. The last official press release of the BMASK on employment for people with disabilities dates back to December 2008 on the UN Day of people with disabilities.

New research evidence:

No current research initiatives on the employment situation of people with disabilities, apart from the studies mentioned in the annex of this report have been carried out. Following the last ANED employment report, in 2008 the former minister of social affairs Erwin Buchinger announced in a press release the carrying out of a fundamental research project on the qualification and employment situation of the various disability groups as a major goal for 2009. There is currently no news about whether or not this goal has been resumed by the new Government.

The economic crisis:

The economic crisis has resulted in several new employment measures being introduced to battle the increase in unemployment.

Several general measures such as the “Combination wage model” for long term unemployed people over the age of 50 explicitly mentions people with disabilities as its possible beneficiaries.

¹ Online (in german):

http://www.bmask.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/9/5/7/CH0009/CMS1241615670780/behindertenbericht_09-03-17.pdf



Furthermore two additional projects have been carried out (although these were planned before the Economic crisis):

the “Disability-Flexicurity model” (see the Annex of this report for more detail) and the “Action 500” (a six month temporary wage subsidy model for newly created jobs and apprenticeship positions. Another result of the economic crisis has been a reduction of the budget for the Government’s employment offensive by 6 Million €, even though at the end of 2008 an increase in spending was announced in the press release mentioned above.



PART ONE: GENERAL EVIDENCE

1.1 Academic publications and research reports (key points)

As far as German-speaking academic discourse is concerned, Austrian university research so far has only rudimentarily dealt with participation and inclusion in working life of people with disabilities. Furthermore, Austrian research (see the references for a detailed list) seems to be lacking a critical academic discourse about the effects of supporting measures for people with disabilities, especially when compared to other European countries. This is especially true for those people with the most severe forms of disability. One of the main reasons might be that there is only one research department within all of the Austrian universities (Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, Klagenfurt and Innsbruck) - the research unit of vocational rehabilitation at the Department of Inclusive and Special Needs Education at the University of Vienna - which deals explicitly with this subject. The research unit was founded in 2002 and currently has one post-doctoral and two project researchers. As far as research about the employment situation of people with disabilities is concerned, numerous studies and evaluations have been financed, mainly by public and political bodies on both a regional and national level (also see the list of references). These have been conducted mainly by non-university based research organisations with an emphasis on employment related studies. The existing research can be classified as follows:

Studies, evaluations and descriptive accounts focusing on the effects of specialised service provisions on the overall labour market situation for people with disabilities from a national/federal perspective

In 2009 the national government published the second report² about the "Situation of people with disabilities in Austria" ("Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Lage der behinderten Menschen in Österreich 2008") with 2008 as the year of reference. The report includes a large descriptive and explanatory section concerning the administrative regulations and functioning of the Austrian system of vocational integration and support programmes geared to employment for people with disabilities, as well as a compilation of official sources of data. What is notably missing in the report is an incorporation of (inter)national comparative research. Two government financed research studies (described below) are briefly highlighted: The Evaluation of the Clearing Programme (Lechner, Riesenfelder, Wetzler et al. 2006), and the two Evaluations of the government's Employment Offensive for people with disabilities (Horak, Schmid, et al. 2003 and Eglseer, Lechner, Riesenfelder et al. 2008).

The research was the second evaluation of the overall effects of the Government's Employment Offensive for people with disabilities, which was originally launched in 2001, covering the period 2004-2006. The evaluation drew on a variety of data sources, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, including follow-up data from participants across project categories. The projects funded under the Employment Offensive can be clustered in four categories:

- Consultation Projects
- Employment Projects
- Personal Assistance Projects
- Qualification Projects

During the observation period there was an increase in Consultation projects (from 33% to 40%) and qualification projects were predominant : about 44% in 2006. The number of support cases increased in the observation period by 48%, with a significant increase in participants in projects which had a goal of direct integration in the labour market.

² The first report dates back to 2003. BMSGK 2003: URL: <http://www.start-labor.org/filedir/Behindertenbericht.pdf>



Concerning age distribution, in 2006, of a total 48,583 support cases (though not identical with persons being supported) 39.3 % of people were under the age of 25, 36.4% between 25 and 44 and 24.3% over 45 years. The gender distribution shows an over- representation of men: about 60% men and 40% women.

The distribution of types of disability during the observation period was as follows (this includes people with more than one disability assignment):

- People with a physical disability (N= 15751) 32%
- People with a mental health condition (N= 8595) 18%
- People with an intellectual disability (N= 8652) 18.1%
- People with a visual impairment (N = 1968) 4.1%
- People with a hearing impairment (N = 4770) 10%
- People with learning disability and/or social /emotional problems (18551) 38.7%
- People with Special Educational Needs (N = 13394) 28%

The distribution of average support time in the project categories (18,86 hours in Consultation projects, 136,87 hours in Employment projects, 103,16 hours in Qualification projects and 48,25 hours in Personal Assistance projects) shows that most projects provided short term support (under 6 months). During this time, about 1/3 of supported participants underwent at least two or more support measures. There was no data published indicating for which groups this model was more or less successful.

Follow- up chains were analysed for the various support programmes with the aim of direct labour market integration. After three half year periods after leaving a programme:

- 57% of participants from “Arbeitsassistentz” (Austrian Supported Employment) were predominantly in employment or in an apprenticeship
- 51% of participants from Consultation and “Empowerment” projects were predominantly in employment or in an apprenticeship
- 32.1% of Qualification project participants were predominantly in employment
- 62% of people who received monetary support (mostly issued as short term wage subsidies) were predominantly employed.

Several support services such as Consultation followed by Supported Employment, or Supported Employment followed by monetary subsidies achieved even higher employment rates (Eglseer, Lechner, Riesenfelder et al. 2008 URL:

http://www.lrsocialresearch.at/files/eb_final_eval_beschaefigungsoffensive_bmsk.pdf

The Evaluation provides very detailed information about the overall structure and undoubted efficiency of the diverse projects carried out with the Employment Offensive programme. However, many questions remain unanswered because the study basically provides descriptive information on diverse and highly aggregated variable sets of data. Cross variable comparisons, especially on more detailed participant characteristics (such as type of disability, gender, age, support needs, initial qualification, migration, etc.) on the effects of the support programmes is minimal and cannot be replicated. This problem must though be attributed to the very low availability of explanatory data in Austria. Detailed analysis concerning which groups of disabled people the current system is and is not working with cannot be made on the basis of the (published parts of the) revised final evaluation report.

In a study by the “Institute for the Study of Labor”, the impact of the Austrian Employment Act – especially the effects of official “Severely Disabled” (“Begünstigter Behinderter”) status on the employment prospects of people with disabilities – was analysed via secondary statistical analysis (Humer, Wuellrich and Zweimüller 2007). The sample used compared workers before and after the acquisition of this legal disability status.



It was shown that the status brought an improvement only for workers who were already holding down a job at the time of assignment, but that the labour market situation of job seekers who wanted to enter the labour market worsened. This particular “insider-outsider problem” had already been noted in several other research reports about the employment situation of people with disabilities (f.e. Badelt / Österle 2001).

In a policy evaluation that combined expert interviews and focus groups, about the effects and future perspectives of various support measures for young people with disabilities, the authors (Heckl, Dorr and Sheikh et al. 2004: URL: www.abif.at/deutsch/download/Files/13_Endbericht_Jugendliche_Internet.pdf) propose a concept for a permeable support structure focused on sustainable effects. This is in contrast to the present short term and fragmented system of vocational integration. They recommend more research however on the long term effects of integration measures.

Another study evaluated the “Employment Offensive of the Austrian Government” (Beschäftigungsoffensive für Menschen mit Behinderung) over the first two years of its existence (2001-2002). As part of the “Employment Offensive”, an additional approx. 78 million € were spent each year for active employment measures focused on supporting people with disabilities. The start of the “Employment Offensive” marked the beginning of various new support measures such as Clearing in 2001. The evaluation involved quantitative data analysis, secondary statistical analysis, structured forms of inquiry (questionnaire, panels/Expert interviews) and policy analysis (Horak, Schmid et al. 2003 URL: http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/5/4/8/CH0184/CMS1229092151364/evaluierung_07_0705.pdf). One of the key obstacles was seen to be the inconsistency of the various definitions of disability used by the different funding bodies to regulate access and eligibility to their services.

Evaluation-based research on special vocational support measures for people with a disability from a national perspective.

In a study about “Good Practice of not for profit work force secondment programmes for persons with disabilities” (Lechner, Riesenfelder et al. 2007 URL: http://www.lrsocialresearch.at/files/endbericht_gakue_fuer_mmb_landr_sozialforschung.pdf) the career development of 854 persons who had been active as temporary workers was followed up. The research was based on an analysis of 5 active projects dealing with work force secondment in Austria. Additionally, qualitative interviews were conducted with temporary workers with disability and members of the management of the projects. In terms of labour market integration, about two thirds of the members were predominantly employed 1,5 years after leaving the project. The high increase in the level of employment did not vary according to the type or severity of the disability. Thus the instrument seems to have been successful in achieving individually matched work opportunities.

The research took a close look at an instrument of active labour market politics for people with disabilities on which the government is currently putting a strong emphasis via the pilot project named “Disability Flexicurity”. Through this project, employees with a disability are to be leased to companies without a resulting administrative effort for the companies. Protection against dismissal is to be temporarily set aside, as the employees with disabilities are employed via workforce secondment projects.

The “Clearing” programme, a support measure at the transition from school-work interface, was introduced in 2001 through funds from the “Employment Offensive”. The programme has been evaluated using: a questionnaire that was sent to the Clearing personnel, structured interviews with the managers of Clearing services, secondary statistical analysis of the funding bodies’ data, structured telephone interviews with 220 users of the Clearing programme as well a control group (38 young people who had not attended the programme), as well as ten “Case Studies” (Lechner, Riesenfelder, Wetzl et al. 2006, URL: <http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/downloads.html?channel=CH0053>).



To investigate the overall effects of the clearing programme, “follow up”-data from the Social Insurance Agency, the Public Employment Service and the Federal Welfare Office were analyzed to determine time slices for different employment periods (e.g. out of the labour force, employment, unemployment, gaining qualifications, etc.). Even though direct effects could not be established, it was shown that a high proportion of youths could reach “employment-ready status”. Another important result of the study was to show the number of support measures young people were going through after completing the Clearing programme. About 18% were undergoing three or more follow up measures (see also Flieger 1999 for a qualitative account)³.

Another evaluation has concerned the “Integrative Vocational Training” measure (Integrative Berufsausbildung IBA: URL: www.bmwa.gv.at/NR/rdonlyres/6FD3E4C8-6BB4-45ED-9930-117251908129/0/IntegrativeBerufsausbildungEndbericht.pdf), which was introduced in 2003 after it was piloted through an EQUAL partnership. The evaluation comprised document analysis, secondary statistical data analysis, a questionnaire that was sent to support personnel and companies providing apprenticeship positions, expert interviews and workshops with key stakeholders (Heckl, Dorr, Dörflinger et al. 2006). Due to delays in implementing the IBA measure in 2003, the evaluation could not determine the effects of this measure, which was intended to close the qualification gap for people with disabilities.

Thus in 2008 a second multi- method evaluation was carried out by the same research institute (Heckl, Dörflinger et al. URL: http://www.kmuforschung.ac.at/de/Projekte/EVAL%20IBA/Endbericht_IBA.pdf) which could focus on part of the measure’s effects, as 554 IBA apprentices had already successfully finished the programme by 2007. By the end of 2008 in total 3.920 young persons were in the IBA programme. Among this group 2.650 people were in a “prolonged apprenticeship” and 1.270 people in a “partial qualification apprenticeship”. Among both groups 2.800 received their qualifications within regular companies and 1.120 in special vocational programmes.⁴ About two thirds of the programme leavers from 2007 were at the time of the research still employed in their apprenticeship company. In general, the employment prospects of the group who underwent the “partial qualification apprenticeship” were seen by the companies involved as still uncertain, as the diploma acquired was still not fully accepted in all sectors of the economy. Within its first five years of existence the IBA programme established about 3% of all apprentices as belonging to the IBA programme, within the dual vocational system in Austria. Following this, the 2008 time limit on the programme was dropped and it was included in the general system. One concern mentioned in the study was about the need for personnel in the supporting system, as the support ratio was considered as too high: especially in the support of young people with cognitive and complex support needs.

Although regionally focussed on Upper Austria, another evaluation of the IBA ought to be mentioned, as it analysed follow up data of successful leavers and drop outs from the IBA programme (Fischlmayer, Stadelmyer 2009 URL: http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/Evaluierung%20der%20BerufsausbildungsassistenzOOE_07Mai2009.pdf). The results of the study show that completion of the IBA programme reduces by three times the probability of being employed only in the unskilled labour sector, it increases the short term employment participation rate (69% successful leavers vs. 38% drop outs) as well as average monthly income. The research thus provides positive evidence on the efficiency of integrative qualification programmes in the transition period. Several challenges still remain: the success of the programme shows strong differences especially in terms of qualifications gained in companies vs. qualifications gained in specialised institutions. No research analysing follow up data comparing these two groups has yet been carried out. Creaming effects also pose another significant challenge, as government regulations concerning the IBA have deliberately expanded its definition of disability.

³ Flieger, Petra (1999): Dann mach ich halt die nächste Maßnahme – eine kritische Analyse von Projekten zur Integration auf den Arbeitsmarkt („Then I will just do the next measure“ – a critical analysis of projects for the vocational integration on the labour market). <http://bidok.uibk.ac.at/library/flieger-massnahme.html>

⁴ Data from 2008 retrieved from WKO Lehrlingsstatistik 2008 URL: <http://wko.at/statistik/jahrbuch/Lehrling1.pdf>



This must be seen in the light of the government's stated plan to provide every young person with an opportunity for a qualification. One result is the overrepresentation of young people with a migration background (especially in urban areas) in this programme originally designed for school leavers with Special Education Needs. This has led to an under- representation of people with intellectual disabilities in the IBA programme in certain regions, who in the development period of the IBA were one the major target groups. Another challenge is a lack of long term support programmes. As the research shows, the long term employment participation rate of successful programme leavers decreased two years after leaving the programme, from 68% to 54% ; thus almost matching the rate of drop outs, who had a participation rate of 49%, although with a higher average income.

A structural analysis and evaluation of the possibilities of the new conceptualisation of the „Integrative companies“ (Integrative Betriebe) was published in 2003. The Integrative companies were formerly called “sheltered employment workshops“ (Geschützte Werkstätten) and represent the “Employment Model“ of Austria's dual model of sheltered employment (see below for more details). Within the integrative companies, about 1.500 people with disabilities are employed (approx. 60% male and 40% female , which corresponds to the sex distribution in most of the employment related support programmes), with a majority of people with physical disabilities. The rate of transition into the general labour market of 3% is relatively low, especially as it is a stated goal of these companies. The report proposed a new modular structure, which in an adapted form was implemented subsequently (qualification, employment and provision of services) (Badelt, Horak et al. 2003, URL: https://broschuerenservice.bmsg.gv.at/PubAttachments/IB-Neuordnung_Langfassung.pdf). However, there is no statistical evidence as yet that the new structure has led to an increase in labour market transitions.

An evaluation of the “Arbeitsassistenz“ programme – the Austrian version of “Supported Employment“ has been conducted, with 1999 as the year for data acquisition. The evaluation was structured as an “activating formative evaluation“ and employed various, primarily quantitative methods, together with 20 “Case Studies“ and a questionnaire that was returned by 539 companies.

At the department of Sociology at the University of Linz a research project within the framework of the Disability Studies about the potential of the “Personal Assistance“ support model was carried out from 2007-2008. (Bacher et al.). A Summary of the project's main results can be downloaded in English via the URL: http://www.persoeliche-assistenz.net/forschungsbericht_download/summary_en.php).

Studies focusing on the employment situation of diverse disability groups

Studies about the employment situation of people from diverse disability groups are largely missing in Austria, with two exceptions:

Two qualitative studies focused on the life and employment situation of people with sensory impairments in Vienna – blind and severely visually impaired women (Witt-Löw 2004) and deaf women (Breitner 2005).

Studies focusing on regional aspects of either disability related issues or regional evaluations of support programmes:

Several non-academic research institutes have evaluated regional aspects of support programmes for people with disabilities, with many research reports being produced in the course of the EQUAL programme, mainly by non- university based research organisations (see the list of references).

Cross Country research and policy reviews mainly focussing on the transition from school-work

Two cross- country research reviews (policy analysis) commissioned by the OECD have been produced, comparing support measures in the transition period from school to work in Austria, Germany and Switzerland (Wetzel and Wetzel 2002; Fasching and Felkendorff 2008).



Research reviews and studies about quality issues in the employment of people with disabilities Since about 2001 quality aspects of support programmes for vocational integration have been subject to several research reports (Fasching 2004; Koenig 2007).

As mentioned above, most of the studies mentioned here were commissioned by official governmental bodies, either on a national or on a regional level. Their lack of academic methodological and theoretical rigour can be for the most part be attributed to resource and time constraints as well as to strict specifications made by the funding authorities. Independent critical academic research is so far practically non-existent. Even though there have been several studies conducted over the last years, they have either focussed on diverse support measures or have been largely descriptive in nature. Further research is needed in various fields; Largely missing are studies about the sustainability of a vocational support system which is as fragmented as is the case in Austria.

One of the main difficulties encountered in studies that try to analyze and compare the Austrian situation are the continuing diverse definitions of disability and competence used by the main “players” in the field. What is most urgently needed in Austria is therefore the establishment of a valid and sufficiently explanatory basis for data, which takes into consideration the specific situations of diverse disability groups and related support needs. Without this data base, the specific problematic situations of diverse groups of people with disabilities cannot be adequately analyzed. Following the last ANED employment report in 2008 the former minister of social affairs Erwin Buchinger announced in a press release the instigation of a research project on the qualification and employment situations of the diverse disability groups as a major goal for 2009. There is currently no news about whether or not this goal is to be carried through by the new Government.

Currently there very little transparency about who really uses support services and to who is denied access to these for various reasons. Providers of services are obliged to make a personal judgement about affiliation to a certain disability category in a central web based data portal, without the existence of clear guidelines. This especially is a problem with regards to people with intellectual disabilities, who are divided into two groups: those with a learning disability and those with mental retardation (the term is still in use). As research has shown in Germany, for example (Doose 2007)⁵, there has been a shift in the target groups of support services towards people who can be integrated more easily and quickly. Access to services for people with higher support needs (for whom the services were actually designed) is often denied (Koenig and Pinetz 2008)⁶. Political representatives seem to be very reluctant to take a closer look as long as the support programmes produce high output quotas. Research is needed to determine whether a similar target group shift (creaming effect) has occurred in Austria, and which people with which support needs are actually able to use the support services.

An employment sector that so far has not been subject to any comparative research is the federal system of sheltered workshops and occupational therapy facilities. This seems especially important as each province operates its own system, with separate legislation and different possibilities for people with severe disabilities.

Qualitative Research about the (self-perceived) effects of diverse support programmes and career development processes mainly does not exist.

⁵ Doose, S. (2007): *Unterstützte Beschäftigung: Berufliche Integration auf lange Sicht: Theorie, Methodik und Nachhaltigkeit der Unterstützung von Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten durch Integrationsfachdienste und Werkstätten für behinderte Menschen auf dem allgemeinen Arbeitsmarkt.* Marburg: Lebenshilfe Verlag

⁶ Pinetz, Petra and Koenig, Oliver (2008): *Berufliche Teilhabemöglichkeiten von Menschen mit einer so genannten geistigen Behinderung in Österreich.* In: Benkmann Rainer (Hrsg.): *Inklusion im Kleinen und Großen. Regionale und internationale Perspektiven.* Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt



One exception is a qualitative research report about the situation of women with disabilities in Salzburg (Buchinger and Gschwandtner 2008 – for a summary see the URL: http://www.salzburg.gv.at/zsf-studie_frauen-behinderung-erwerbsarbeit2008.pdf).

In the above mentioned research department at the University of Vienna, the first ever academic research project in Austria about the employment situation for people with intellectual disabilities – funded by the Austrian Research fund – is currently in progress. The main aim of this research project is to determine self-defined “experiences of participation in the vocational biography of people with an intellectual disability”, covering both the transitional period from school to work as well as different forms of participation in working life. The research takes a qualitative, participatory and long-term research approach. Furthermore, the research team aims to set up a valid data base on the employment and support situation of people with intellectual disabilities in Austria. Currently the following three full census surveys are being carried out (with results expected to be published at the beginning of 2010:

A Survey of all sheltered workshop (N = approx. 400) sites in Austria to provide information about the structure and types of service provision, numbers, types and quality of jobs, as well as support for transition to the open labour market.

A survey of all people with intellectual disabilities who completed a support programme in 2008 (N = 1400) with information obtained from the support agencies involved, to obtain data on the effects and success of support provision for this target group.

A sample survey of one entire age cohort who left the school system at the end of the academic year 2009, to gather personal data on their school situation, the educational and transition process as well as the support needs for students (n=3000) who were taught either according to the syllabus for severely disabled students or according to the syllabus for general special schools. (For a detailed account of the project’s employed methods see Biewer, Fasching, Koenig 2009. Project Abstract: URL: <http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/abstracts/abstract.asp?L=EandPROJ=P20021>)

1.2 Employment statistics and trends (key points)

According to the European mainstreaming strategy, disability politics in Austria is organised as an interdisciplinary field, with competences and regulations operating on both on federal and regional levels. This becomes especially evident in the policies regarding vocational integration of people with disabilities, with responsibilities residing with the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice: AMS: URL: <http://www.ams.at/>) under the authority of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit: BMWA: URL: <http://www.bmwa.gv.at/EN/default.htm>), the Federal Social Welfare Office (Bundesamt für Soziales und Behindertenwesen: BASB: URL: <http://www.basb.bmsg.gv.at/>) under the authority of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Soziales und Konsumentenschutz: BMSK: URL: <http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/siteEN/>), as well as the respective Social Departments of the nine Austrian provinces (Bundesländer). The main central government agency concerned with the employment of people with disabilities is the Federal Social Welfare Office, which is responsible for the operative regulation of employment agendas for people with disabilities and for the financing of support measures carried out under the Government’s “Employment Offensive”. According to it’s annual report (Bundessozialamt Geschäftsbericht 2008 URL: http://www.bundessozialamt.gv.at/basb/Neuigkeiten/Geschaeftsbericht_2008) in 2008 a total of €172.5 million were spent in on active employment -related support measures for people with disabilities and a total of 57,699 support measures were carried out: These support measures were provided as follows:

- Wage subsidies (16,135)
- Mobility subsidies (8,653)
- Work place promotion (1,665)

- Arbeitsassistenz (Supported Employment) (10,319)
- Clearing (Transition from School toWork) (6,690)
- Qualification projects (3,913)
- IBA Programme (3,555)
- Employment projects (1,407)
- Personal assistance at work (282)7

With new government legislation that began at the end of 2008, the competences of the former ministry of social affairs and consumer protection were expanded and they now include all employment related agendas (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz BMASK). Concerning available information and statistics, this concentration of competences has increased the availability of data, although not to a high level of explanation.

Statistical data about the employment and support situation of people with disabilities that has a significant explanatory power is hard to obtain in Austria because most of the administrative authorities have different definitions of disability, depending on regulations concerning access to the diverse forms of services or benefits they are managing. For example, the Austrian Labour Market Service has recently changed its definition of disability, with the new statistics now referring to people with health -related placement restrictions. The most important statistical indicator about the employment situation of people with disabilities is the number of people who have acquired a “severely disabled” (SD) status (“Begünstigte Behinderte”). The number of “severely disabled” people is published every year by the Federal Welfare Office in its annual report (together with the main statistical indicators of service access and approved financial benefits – see above), although usually with a considerable time delay. However it is possible to access this information more quickly through direct contact with the Federal Welfare Office. Additionally the Industrial Association (Industriellenvereinigung) maintains an informative Homepage (www.arbeitundbehinderung.at) providing additional statistical information based on their own calculations of data from the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) as well as the Austrian Labour Market Service (AMS).

Date of Reference 1.1.	People with official “severely disabled” status Overall
1980	44,662
1985	44,144
1990	43,023
1995	63,292
2000	77,812
2004	89,709
2005	91,086
2006	92,284
2007	93,596
2008	94,383
2009 (Sept.)	94,034
Source: BMASK	

⁷ Source: Geschäftsbericht Bundessozialamt 2008

There has been a steady increase in the number of people with disabilities who have acquired a legal disability status, and the specific problematic implications have been highlighted in the research section above (Humer, Wuellrich and Zweimüller 2007). 2009 is an exception, and this might be attributed to the effects of the economic crisis. There are several possible explanations for this increase, most obviously general European demographic development trends towards a steadily aging population and the increase of age and work related forms of disability, but possibly also to an increased awareness of disabilities in the professional sector, especially as companies with an employment obligation have set up internal “recruitment strategies” to fulfil their employment obligation and avoid the compensation fee (“Ausgleichtaxe”), which is set at 220€ at the moment). Another data source is the monthly unemployment statistic that is produced by the AMS (AMS Statistical data, URL: <http://iambweb.ams.or.at/ambweb/AmbwebServlet?trn=startabout>), although this uses a different definition of disability (see below).

The only available data about the employment rate for people with disabilities is statistical data about the employment status of registered disabled persons, which is published annually.

Employed and not employed „Severely Disabled“ persons between 1980-2006					
„Severely Disabled“ in employment					
Date of reference 01.12	„Severely Disabled“ Overall	At Companies with an employment obligation (> 25 employees)	At Companies without an employment obligation (<25 employees)	With Independent businesses	Not employed
1980	45,632	29,002	3,626	3,354	9,650
1985	37,276	24,068	3,134	1,692	8,382
1990	45,245	27,173	4,061	2,477	11,534
1995	65,817	36,712	5,222	3,043	20,835
2000	80,813	43,419	8,007	3,166	26,221
2004	91,387	45,594	10,168	3,729	31,896
2005	92,526	46,906	9,743	3,773	32,104
2006	93,830	48,208	9,705	3,841	32,076
2008	94,383	50,583	9,711	3,832	30,257
Source: BMSK and BASB					

In 2006, we can see from the above statistics that: of 93,830 “benefited/registered disabled” persons, 57,913 were employed, 3,841 were working in independent businesses and 32,076 were not employed. The main confusion when trying to analyze the employment situation of people with disabilities here is the broad definition of disability for the statistics provided by the Public Employment Service. Affiliation to either the group of “benefited/registered disabled” or people who have a disability status based on a “federal disability law” (“Landesbehindertengesetz”) is judged independently by the AMS, on the basis of whether a chronic disease or disability leads to a difficulty in acquiring a job. In certain provinces members of the AMS seem to assign a disability status more easily than others, especially at times when there are special support programmes (“Sonderprogramme”) for people with disabilities, as was the case in 2006/2007 when there was an increase in funding for companies carrying out Integrative Vocational Training. Thus in 2007 the AMS reported 31,392 (an increase of 2,334 people from 2006) unemployed people with disabilities, of which only 3,916 were “benefited/registered disabled”. It is not possible to tell from the data whether or not the remaining 28,221 “Benefited/registered Disabled” were in 2006 not seeking employment (for whatever reason).

Even though the last decade has seen an improvement in the labour market situation of people with disabilities (probably as an effect of increased active support measures after the implementation of the “Employment Offensive”), the employment situation in Austria (which improved overall in recent years) of people with disabilities has become worse when measured as a percentage of the overall unemployment rate.

Percentage of unemployed people with disabilities in relation to the overall unemployed population						
2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (Sept.)
12.70%	11.80%	11.30%	12.10%	14.12%	14.73	14.63
Source: AMS – Arbeit und Behinderung URL: http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at/de/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitsmarktdaten/gesamtarbeitslosigkeit.php						

In 2008 in total 94,383 people had acquired the legal severely disabled (SD) status (“Begünstigter Behinderter”), of which about 68% were employed (64%) or self-employed (4%). As mentioned above, the Austrian Labour Market Service has changed its definition of disability, with new statistics now referring to people with health related placement restrictions. In total 31,263 people with health related placement restrictions were registered in 2008 as being unemployed; of this group 3,870 (4.1%) belonged to the SD group. The remaining 26,387 (27.9%) are not included in the official unemployment statistics and may probably be considered to be no longer seeking employment. The approximately 19.000 people (mainly with intellectual disabilities) working in sheltered employment workshops are not included in the unemployment statistics. People registered as having health- related placement restrictions accounted for 14.73% of the total number of unemployed people. Due to the economic crisis and a general increase in unemployment, the relative figure of people with health- related placement restrictions slightly decreased to 14.63% in September 2009 (probably due to the efficiency of dismissal protection regulations)but the total figure has increased to 34,817.

International research has clearly identified that women with disabilities are confronted with double discrimination especially when it comes to employment. The EU directives of gender mainstreaming certainly have had an impact, at least on a macro political level, where target objectives are clearly geared towards a higher participation rate of women in vocational support programmes. Several measures and guidelines directed towards women have been produced, especially during the EQUAL programme, but so far with few measurable effects. For example, the coordinating agency with responsibility for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming measures in the ESF programme is no longer operating, a fate shared by many innovative EQUAL projects in Austria. The participation rate of women in vocational support programmes as well as the number of women with a “Severely Disabled” status is approx. 40%. As mentioned above, a new qualitative study about the employment situation of disabled women in Salzburg has just been published (Buchinger and Gschwendtner 2008, URL: http://www.salzburg.gv.at/frau_behinderung)

„Severely Disabled“ according to sex 1980 - 2007			
Date of reference 1.1.	„Benefited Disabled“		
	Overall	Women	Men
1980	45,536	5,077	40,459
1985	44,697	8,523	36,174
1990	43,147	12,861	30,286
1995	63,363	22,232	41,131
2000	77,839	28,565	49,274
2005	91,102	35,373	55,729
2006	92,306	36,186	56,120

2007	93,624	36,994	56,630
Source: BMSK			

In terms of the unemployment level of women we see a lower proportion of women with disabilities unemployed in relation to total number of unemployed women compared to men. as shown in the following table:

Percentage of unemployed people with disabilities compared by sex in relation to the overall unemployed population					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (Sept.)
Total	11.30	12.10	14.12	14.73	14.63
Women	9.40	10.30	12.20	12.66	12.32
Men	12.70	13.60	15.64	16.36	16.54

Source: AMS – Arbeit und Behinderung URL:
<http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at/de/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitsmarktdaten/gesamtarbeitslosigkeit.php>

Within the government's "Employment Offensive" and the EQUAL programme both young people at the transitional period of school to work, and older people with disabilities were identified as two of the most important target groups for vocational support programmes. We have two statistical sources; Data from the Federal Welfare Office about the age distribution of those officially registered as disabled. The statistics below show a steady increase with ascending age, with a peak in the 51-55 age-group, followed by a decrease.

A second source is statistical data on the number of pupils with a Special Educational Need status (SEN) ("Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf" SPF). Austria faces a situation of a decreasing number of pupils overall and a steady increase in the number of pupils being attributed a SEN. The SEN on the other hand is one of the eligibility criteria needed for accessing post school support programmes, including the Clearing measure that starts during the last years of school. In the year 2005, 3,374 young people were attending the Clearing programme. Nevertheless, the number officially registered as disabled up to the age of 30 remains relatively low, probably because of the negative employment effects associated with this status. The decrease after the age of 55 may be attributed to the growing number of disability-related early retirements as indicated in the OECD study in 2003.

„Benefited Disabled per Age, 1st Jan. 2007		
Completed age at the date of reference	„Benefited Disabled“	
	Overall	in %
to 17	109	0.12%
18 to 20	504	0.54%
21 to 25	2,259	2.41%
26 to 30	3,703	3.96%
31 to 35	6,203	6.63%
36 to 40	10,597	11.32%
41 to 45	15,025	16.05%
46 to 50	18,234	19.48%
51 to 55	19,430	20.75%
56 to 60	13,666	14.60%

⁸ OECD (2003): From Disability to Ability – An international comparison. Frankfurt / New York: Campus

61 to 65	3,155	3.37%
66 and older	739	0.79%
Overall	93,624	100%
Source: BMSK		

Again if we look at the percentage of unemployed people with disabilities in relation to the overall unemployed population in terms of age it becomes evident that within all age groups the proportion of disabled people compared to the overall unemployed population has increased.

Percentage of unemployed people with disabilities compared by age in relation to the overall unemployed population				
	Under the age of 25	From 25 to 44	From the age of 45	Total
2004	4.80	10.60	17.70	11.80
2005	4.60	10.20	16.90	11.30
2006	5.30	10.90	17.90	12.10
2007	6.50	12.47	20.72	14.12
2008	6.66	12.88	21.50	14.73
2009	6.24	12.92	21.86	14.63
Source: AMS – Arbeit und Behinderung URL: http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at/de/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitsmarktdaten/gesamtarbeitslosigkeit.php				

The available data does not distinguish different kinds of disability. Currently only the degree of disability classified in the medical eligibility application process for “severely disabled” status is regularly evaluated.

Date of reference 1.1.	Degree of disability							„Severely Disabled“ Overall
	30 and 40 %	50 %	60 %	70 %	80 %	90 %	100 %	
2007	168	43,088	19,480	14,998	8,447	2,147	5,268	93,596
2008	158	44,293	19,631	14,763	8,125	2,007	5,088	94,155
2009 (Sept.)	135	44,942	19,480	14,484	8,012	1,967	5,014	94,034
Source: AMS – Arbeit und Behinderung URL: http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at/de/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitsmarktdaten/gesamtarbeitslosigkeit.php								

Until 1999 the AMS reported on different kinds of disability. In 1999:

- 32,286 (88%) people reported as being unemployed had physical disabilities,
- 5,914 (15%) had a mental disability,
- 1,173 (3%) had an intellectual disability
- and 451 (1%) had a sensory disability.

The Federal Welfare Office reported in 2004 the following numbers based on access to different support measures:

- 34% had a physical disability,
- 27% had social-emotional disadvantages,



- 16% had a mental disability,
- 15% were people with a learning or intellectual disability and
- 8% had sensory disabilities (Source: <http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at>).

In the evaluation of the Government's employment offensive (Eglseer, Lechner, Riesenfelder et al 2008) the following numbers were reported for the evaluation period 2004-2006:

- People with a physical disability (N= 15,751) 32%
- People with a mental disability (N= 8,595) 18%
- People with an intellectual disability (N= 8,652) 18.1%
- People with a visual impairment (N = 1,968) 4.1%
- People with a hearing impairment (N = 4,770) 10%
- People with learning disability and/or social /emotional problems (18,551) 38.7%
- People with Special Educational Needs (N = 13,394) 28%

Data on affiliation to a certain disability/impairment group are still collected from the support services based on the categories shown above. Currently there are no guidelines on how assignment to certain disability/impairment groups is to be made. Furthermore, the Federal Welfare Office does not publish data on different disabilities/impairments in its annual reports.

The available data does not differentiate whether persons were disabled from birth or later in life.

One disability group faced with the most structural discrimination in the Austrian rehabilitation system are people with intellectual and/or severe multiple disabilities (usually acquired from birth). As mentioned above, disability policy regulations in Austria are mainly divided into national and federal competences, with all employment related policies residing in the national sphere of competence. The General Social Security Law ("Allgemeines Sozialversicherungsgesetz" ASVG) in § 273 defines "incapability of work" ("Arbeitsunfähigkeit") as a consequence of disability and/or other forms of disease/ailment, and this is set at a work performance level of 50% compared to a non-disabled employee or worker. Actually intended as a protection mechanism for acquired forms of disability over the life course and especially those acquired during (and due to) working life, this definition forms the basis for the categorisation of people with disability as either capable or not capable of work. In turn, this is linked to national or federal responsibilities.

The second criterion for being eligible for work-related forms of support is obtaining the status of a "severely disabled" person (Begünstigter Behinderter) as governed by the Disabled Persons Employment Act ("Bundesbehinderteneinstellungsgesetz"). To obtain this status, the person needs to be assigned a degree of disability of at least 50% after a primarily medical assessment procedure (which still largely corresponds to a "medical model of disability"). The appropriate guidance regulation originates from 1957 (minimally amended in 1999), at that time focusing on war-related forms of physical disability. Diverse forms of intellectual disability were not classified within this guideline, thus leaving it to the discretion of the doctor doing the medical assessment. Thus in order to be legally able to work and to qualify for employment related benefits, a person with a disability needs to have a work performance of at least 50% and a degree of disability of at least 50%. This can lead to the curious case of a person with an intellectual disability with an attributed degree of disability of "only" 30% but not reaching the needed work performance barrier. Employability – as it is obviously understood in Austrian law - deteriorates to a mere individual and deficit oriented construct. Especially when regarding the employment related rights declared in the UN Convention this, in the author's opinion, clearly indicates legal discriminatory. At the moment the only available options for most people with intellectual disabilities are different forms of (non-employment) sheltered workshops or occupational therapy facilities.



The Austrian system of sheltered workshops (other than the much smaller sheltered employment sector – see below) is organised by the federal states (Länder) and either regulated under the “federal disability laws” (“Landesbehindertengesetz”) (In Vorarlberg, Lower-Austria, Upper-Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrolia and Vienna), or the “federal Social Service laws” (Landessozialhilfegesetz) (In Burgenland and Carinthia). Several states have recently published new, more innovative “federal disability laws” (fe.g.. Styria in 2004 and Vorarlberg in 2006) leaving more freedom for decentralised forms of employment and support for people with severe disabilities. Other states (e.g.. Vienna, Lower Austria) are currently undergoing changes, with different forms of (non transparent) participation (generally only by representatives of large NGOs) in the policy development process. In the national report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (where inclusion is translated into integration – Bericht zum Sozialschutz und zur sozialen Eingliederung) it is mentioned that many states are now striving for increased employment-related opportunities for users of sheltered workshop facilities. But from close observation it must be said that there are currently no signs of a greater standardization of federal disability policies or an increase in employment possibilities (with the states of Vorarlberg and to a lesser extend Carinthia and Styria as exceptions). What most of the regional sheltered workshop systems have in common is that users of sheltered workshops (about 19.000) face many facets of unequal treatment by and international comparison (Koenig 2008)⁹:

- They have no independent social security,
- They are not subject to employment protection laws,
- They have no legal representation,
- They are not eligible for retirement,
- They do not receive wages (most states pay therapeutic “pocket money” of between approx. 20 and 50 € per month).

The situation of people with disabilities from ethnic minorities has so far not been subject to explicit research, though there is evidence that certain ethnic minority groups are overrepresented in specific support structures. especially in urban areas with a high proportion of people with migrant backgrounds. Pupils from Turkey and former Yugoslavia are significantly overrepresented in special education schools and classes (Luciak 2008)¹⁰. In support programmes such as Integrative Vocational Training we see again a high percentage of young people from ethnic minorities who are mostly placed in off-the job training sites. It can be said that young people from ethnic minorities are more likely to receive SEN status during their school careers with negative implications for post school employment prospects. There is currently no research to show whether this fact may be attributed to for example, insufficient language training . This therefore indicated another area where research in needed.

1.3 Laws and policies (key points)

Most impact on the Austrian system of vocational integration and employment related support for people with disabilities has probably resulted from the introduction of the “Employment Offensive of the Austrian government” in 2001, through which an additional approx. 78 Million € were (and are) spent each year for additional employment -related support measures.) In 2008, a total of 172,5 million euros was spent on employment related support programs governed and distributed by the Austrian Federal Welfare Office (Bundessozialamt). Several new support measures such as Clearing in 2001, Arbeitsassistentz for young people in 2001, the Integrative Vocational training (IBA) in 2003 and Personal Assistance at work in 2004 were introduced with this new funding.

⁹ Koenig, O. (2007): Europäische Modelle eines institutionalisierten Ersatzarbeitsmarktes zwischen Entwicklung und Bewahrung. Erscheint in Biewer, G./ Luciak, M./ Schwinge, M. (Hrsg.): Begegnung und Differenz. Menschen – Länder – Kulturen. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt Verlag

¹⁰ Luciak, Mikael (2008) Education of ethnic minorities and migrants in Austria. In: Wan, G. (Ed.) The Education of Diverse Populations: A Global Perspective. The Netherlands: Springer Science and Business Media <http://www.springer.com/dal/home/generic/search/results?SGWID=1-40109-22-173794403-0>



In the course of the implementation of the “Employment Offensive”, the Austrian Government steadily widened their definition of disability with implications for who could gain access to support services, as can be illustrated for the target group definition for the IBA. One of the four groups eligible for support through this programme is “persons from which, in the course of a vocational orientation measure or a not successful placement attempt in a regular apprenticeship, can – solely because of reasons located within the person – be expected that within a foreseeable time period no regular apprenticeship can be found.” (§ 8b (4) Z. 4 BAG). This definition must be seen in the light of the government’s plan to provide every young person with an adequate qualification, through, in most cases, in off the job training sites run by NGOs.

Most of the young people gaining access to the IBA through this means are again youth from ethnic minorities. As a consequence, this widening of the target group definition has led to increased “Creaming Effect”, for which accurate data (see above) still do not exist. Another reason for this reported “Creaming Effect” can also be traced to the steadily increasing quota obligations the Federal Welfare Office has been prescribing for service providers. The quality of vocational support services has so far predominantly been only measured by output quotas.

People with disabilities – as long as they are considered as “capable of working” - are in general treated as an equal group with one separate piece of legislation - the Disabled Persons Employment Act (DEA) (“Bundesbehinderteneinstellungsgesetz”) through which the employment of people with disability is additionally regulated. The most important regulations within the DEA are amongst others:

- Employment obligation on companies with more than 25 employees/workers (per 25 employees one “Benefited/registered disabled” person must be employed).
- Regulations concerning the compensation fee (Ausgleichstaxe) – a fee (currently set at 220€) which must be paid by companies for each designated position that is not filled.
- The Utilization of the Compensation tax fund (Ausgleichstaxfonds) pays for, for example, employment related support measures.
- The Definition and regulation on the application procedure to acquire official disabled status.
- Associated additional rights for this status (e.g. increased dismissal protection).
- Regulations concerning the “Integrative companies” (Integrative Betriebe) – the wage employment part of Austria’s Sheltered Employment sector.
- Of all the support programmes, only the “Arbeitsassistenz” is explicitly mentioned in the DEA in § 6d, although - as is the case with all support measures, without giving individuals legal rights.

In 2006 an Anti-discrimination Law (National law on equal treatment of disabled people – Bundesbehindertengleichstellungsgesetz) was passed, which followed a year- long struggle by disability rights activists from the Austrian Independent Living Movement. After implementation, of the Law, which removed several discriminatory passages from pieces of legislation, there is still disappointment that the Law in its current form does not meet the expectations of the Independent Living Movement. For example, one of the two main intervention mechanisms – the right to file an action (Verbandsklagerecht) can only be utilized by one organisation – the ÖÄR (Austrian working Group on Rehabilitation), which so far has not in one single case made use of this power.

The employment situation of people with disabilities forms part of Austria’s Implementation Report of the National Reform programme (2007), with a short descriptive passage about the support measure funded by the Federal Welfare Office and the Public Employment Service. In terms of the need for reform, the report briefly introduces two planned measures: a new consultancy service for companies and a “Disability flexicurity” pilot project, which is a model for non-profit employee leasing (see the research section above for more detail).



In the ongoing ratification process of the UN Convention the “National disability Law” (Bundesbehindertengesetz) – a law governing different competences at national and federal level, has been expanded with a paragraph indicating control of compliance with the rights stated in the UN Convention. For this purpose a Monitoring Board has been set up. At present the Austrian government assumes that no larger changes will be needed to meet the standards set in the Convention, especially as in the (not yet) finished German translation of the Convention the key term INCLUSION will probably be replaced by Integration different political and structural implications as a consequence.

1.4 Type and quality of jobs (summary)

Apart from the statistical data presented above, there are no other existing sources to document and compare the employment situation of people with disabilities in either the open labour market or sheltered employment. Even though the latter (sheltered employment), in the author’s opinion, deserves more critical scrutiny.

Based on the typology made by Visier¹¹, in a comparative policy analysis about the sheltered employment sector in Europe commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Austria can be classified as operating a dual model of sheltered employment. Thus, there exists an employment based model, known as “Integrative Betriebe” under national authority (as mentioned above) and a therapeutic model under the respective authorities of the nine provinces. In comparative European studies (e.g. Thornton and Lunt 1997; Samoy and Waterplas 1997 ECOTEC 2000; Bergeskog 2001; OECD 2003; Grammenos 2003)¹², only the Austrian employment model is mentioned (in Samoy and Waterplas 1997 there is only a footnote concerning the so called “occupational therapy workshops”) thus giving a misleading classification, especially as the population of users of Austria’s “therapeutic model” are comparable to the population of sheltered workshop users in other European countries (see for example the highly researched sector of sheltered workshops in Germany). See the chart below for a comparison of vocational support programmes, (non employment) sheltered workshops, and integrative companies in the nine provinces of Austria for the year of reference 2005 (Pinetz and Koenig 2008)

¹¹ Mainly based on the employment status of users of sheltered employment facilities, Visier differentiated four different models of sheltered employment in Europe: therapeutic-, intermediate-, employment and dual models. Visier, L. (1998): Sheltered Employment for persons with disabilities. In: International Labour Review, Vol. 137(3): 347-365

¹² ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd. (2000): Benchmarking employment policies for people with disabilities. Brussels: European Commission.

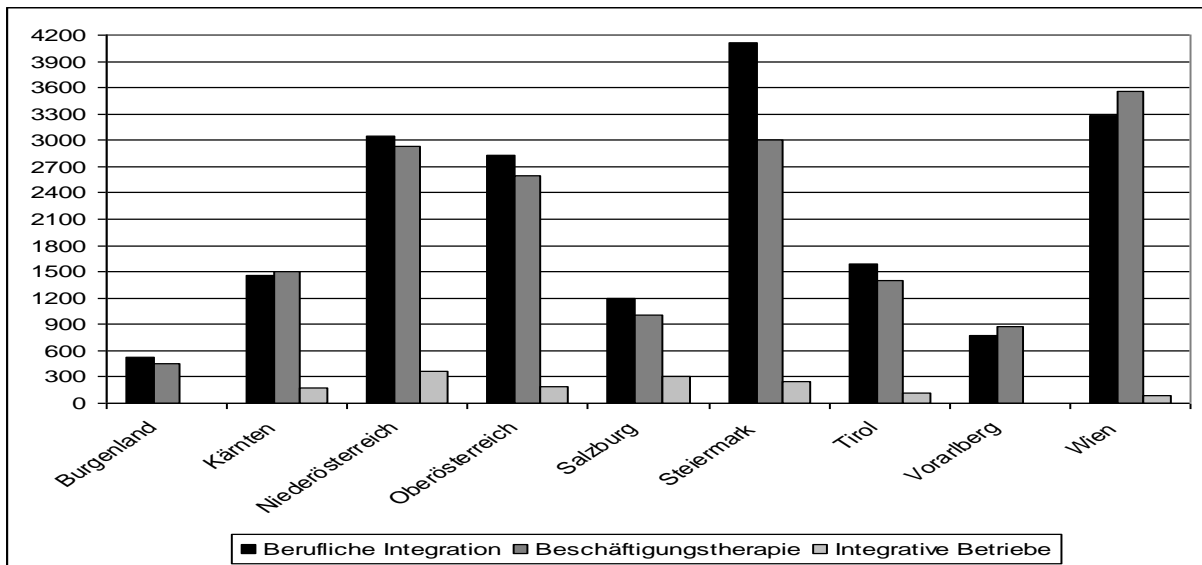
OECD (2003): Behindertenpolitik zwischen Beschäftigung und Versorgung. Ein internationaler Vergleich. Frankfurt/ New York: Campus Verlag

Grammenos, S. (2003): Illness, Disability and Social Inclusion. Brussels: Centre for European Social and Economic Policy (CESEP). Online: <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/pubdocs/2003/35/en/1/ef0335en.pdf> : 108

Bergeskog, A., ‘Labour Market Policies, strategies and statistics for people with disabilities: A cross-national comparison’, Uppsala: IFAU – Office of the Labour Market Policy Evaluation, Working Paper 2001:13. <http://www.ifau.se/upload/pdf/se/2001/wp01-13.pdf>

Thornton, P./ Lunt, N. (1997): Employment Policies for Disabled People in Eighteen Countries: A Review. University of York: Social Policy Research Unit.

Samoy, E./ Waterplas, L. (1997): Sheltered Employment in five member states of the Council of Europe: Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.



Even though there is no representative statistical data, the author is not familiar with any indicators to suggest that certain sectors are more or less involved than others. The IBA evaluation, for example, indicates that 83% of people going through the programme are placed in the 15 most popular apprenticeship sectors. From a gender perspective the criticism may be made that for people with disabilities the occupational segregation in “male” and “female” employment sectors is much more entrenched than for the general population.

There is no statistical data about the average amount of hours worked by people with disabilities in comparison to non-disabled persons. Certainly a key problem for people with disabilities when obtaining a job is the well-known “benefit trap”, which can be found in most European countries that have financial benefit systems for people with disabilities. Compared to other countries, disability-related benefits in Austria are diverse and mainly not granted by one single authority. In combination, this system of “patchwork” benefits, each with different additional earning regulations, represents for many people an amount of money which is hard to obtain through competitive work in the open labour market. Additionally, the procedures for regaining access to these benefits after an unsuccessful employment attempt are not nationally regulated. In Vienna, representatives from several responsible official authorities have met in the Working group “Reinsurance” (Arbeitskreis Rückversicherung, URL: http://faktori.wuk.at:8000/faktori/infos/ak_rueckversicherung/Rueckversicherung_Stand_Sept2008.pdf) to produce accessible guidelines for regaining the benefits. On a national level several NGOs are currently seeking a solution.

Again there is no statistical data available on public and private sector employment. The employment obligations regulated in the DEA are not fulfilled by private sector employers. In 2007 from 16,459 companies with an employment obligation, 3,744 companies (22.7%) fulfilled or exceeded their employment quotas. Public sector employment has, by 2008, reached its employment obligation quota (Bundessozialamt Geschäftsbericht 2008).

No statistical data is available concerning the number of people in training ‘placements’ as opposed to ‘real’ paid jobs.

Statistical data is also not available concerning work in the social economy and social firms.

Supported employment

The development of the concept of Supported Employment in Austria, in the author’s opinion, is symptomatic of the development of the support system for people with disabilities.



The Arbeitsassistenz – being the Austrian Version of Supported Employment – has operated in Austria since 1992 and has received considerable development aid by the ESF since the entry of Austria in the European Union in 1995. In 1999 the Arbeitsassistenz was legally anchored as the only support tool within the DEA, and in 2001 it was awarded the European Best Practice example in the annual Peer Review programme. With the implementation of the “Employment Offensive” the former holistic approach of the Arbeitsassistenz was split up into different measures. Consequently, elements that once were part of the Arbeitsassistenz (and are part of the Supported Employment concept) became separate programmes (such as Clearing and Job Coaching). Following evaluation of the Arbeitsassistenz and country-wide implementation (with considerable regional differences), 2003 saw the beginning of an increased debate about quality issues after a dramatic increase in the placement quotas set by the funding authorities. Arbeitsassistenz, even in official statements by political representatives (Koenig 2007), is now considered to be a support and placement mechanism for people with disabilities perceived as “Jobready”, which stands in diametrical opposition to the concept of Supported Employment. In actual practice, Arbeitsassistenz has moved far away from the concept of Supported Employment.



PART TWO: SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

2.1 Reasonable accommodation in the workplace

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer protection has set up a web-based Internet site with details about available assistive technological devices (Handynet database: URL: <http://handynet-oesterreich.bmsg.gv.at>). Workplace adaptations can be funded through the Compensation Tax Fund and must be applied for at the respective regional office of the Federal Welfare Office.

The legislative basis for the introduction of Personal Assistance at the workplace has been in force in Austria (again after large-scale political campaigning by disability rights organisations) since the beginning of 2004. These guidelines aim at securing a qualitative as well as a quantitative increase of participation in the general labour market or for vocational training of those people with disabilities who need personal support to structure their working lives in an independent and autonomous way. In 2004, the Federal Government provided € 3 millions in the framework of a package for economic growth. However, again there is no individual legal right to Personal Assistance. By 2004 about 150 people were using PA (Brozek 2004)¹³. Personal Assistance is organised by organisations run by and for people with disabilities that have evolved out of the disability rights movement such as the “Wiener Assistenz Genossenschaft” in Vienna (WAG: URL: <http://www.wag.or.at>) or the Independent Living Initiative in Innsbruck (SLI: URL: <http://www.selbstbestimmt-leben.net>). The Personal Assistance support model in Austria is currently not available to people with intellectual disabilities.

Except for the Integrative Vocational training programme, through which job descriptions can be adapted to fit the qualification competences of the individual with disabilities, employment contracts are firmly in the hands of the Social Partnership (labor and trade union representatives) and these are arranged every year in the collective bargaining agreement for every economic sector. Labor union representatives in particular are still very reluctant when it comes to creating flexible employment or wage formats for people with disabilities because they have concerns about the undermining of employment rights.

2.2 Other activation policies

Financial Incentives to work are paid for by both by the Public Employment Service and the Federal Welfare Office, and in some provinces by the respective social departments according to a subsidiary principle. The main financial tools are Integration Incentives (usually granted for three years) with a decreasing amount of subsidy being paid each year (in 2005 there were 4,141 Integration Incentives) and wage subsidy incentives to balance the work loss performance of disabled people (in 2008 there were 16,135 wage subsidy incentives). Both financial incentive tools are modelled on the logic of decreasing payment.

In Austria the Clearing Programme is mainly associated with these respective activation measures. In 2004 Clearing was part of the Peer Review for Social Inclusion Programme of the EU (URL: <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2004/clearing-assistance-for-young-people-with-special-needs-in-their-transition-from-school-to-working-life>). Clearing operates directly at the interface between school and employment as well as the respective support programmes. The Clearing programme was evaluated in 2006 (see the research section).

In 2008, 8,635 Mobility subsidies were granted by the Federal Welfare Office to help with transport to work.

¹³ Brozek, Dorothea (2004): Guidelines to promote personal assistance at the workplace. <http://www.independentliving.org/docs7/brozek200409b.html>



In 2004 the Integrative Vocational training (IBA) was introduced to close the qualification gap for people with disabilities. Legally, it expanded Austria's model of "Dual apprenticeship Qualification" (company and vocational school), and is offered in two ways:

A part qualification apprenticeship ("Teilqualifizierungslehre") – for people with cognitive disabilities who can not achieve a full job description.

A prolonged apprenticeship ("Verlängerte Lehre") – for people who need more time to achieve a full apprenticeship.

Both formats are accompanied by a vocational qualification assistance ("Berufsausbildungsassistenz") offered by NGO's. Due to different labour market conditions in the provinces of Austria (with rural areas having a stronger tradition of providing apprenticeship positions) and service providers with different integration philosophies, we currently see two forms of execution – either in the "classical" format where the apprentice works in a company and attends a vocational school, or in "out of the job" working sites plus vocational school. The effects of the (IBA) have been subject to two national and one regional evaluation described in the research section.

2.3 One example of best practice

At this point the author would like to comment on two specific regional programmes aimed at people with disabilities with high support needs, who under the current legislative situation are classified as "incapable to work".

The first "good practice" programme is SPAGAT located in the province of Vorarlberg and run by the Institute for Social Services (Institut für Sozialdienste IFS: <http://www.ifs.at/spagat.html>). SPAGAT started as an EU project in 1997 initiated by a group of parents whose children had attended integrative schools and who did not want integration to end after school was finished. Within a three year pilot project all of the eight project participants were integrated into the general labour market in paid jobs with respective social security benefits. Today SPAGAT is a general programme for all young people with disabilities in Vorarlberg (who have been taught according to the curriculum for "severely disabled") at the transition from school to work, thus allowing freedom of choice between an occupation in a sheltered workshop or supported employment in the open labour market. The central methods of the SPAGAT programme are "Person Centred Planning" with the setting up of "circles of support" and the establishment of mentors in the companies. The internationally acclaimed standards of Supported Employment serve as quality parameters of the work of SPAGAT. Work places are tailored around the individual's competences and possible fields of work activity in the companies. To date, about 140 people with severe disabilities have found sustainable employment. In 2007 SPAGAT extended its programme to people who do not aspire to work and employment, by offering to arrange "Integrative Week structure" This involves planning with and setting up specific integrated weekly activities for the individual. A major factor in the success of SPAGAT is the (nearly) perfect funding arrangements from the Vorarlberg provincial government. Wage subsidies are paid to the companies in a non-bureaucratic way to meet the full extent of performance loss, both for the wages of the employee with disability and for the working time invested by the mentors. Additionally, SPAGAT is able to accompany its customers as long as it is needed to achieve sustainable employment, or in some cases even to develop new career opportunities. These conditions of work are unique in Austria. So far the concept of SPAGAT has been transferred to the region "Alto Adige" in Italy but not as yet to other Austrian provinces. There are several descriptive reports (e.g.. Niedermair 2004)¹⁴ and a qualitative evaluation about the work of SPAGAT (which may be obtained from DSA Elisabeth Tschann from the IFS).

¹⁴ Niedermair, Claudia (2004): „Ich möchte arbeiten“. Eingliederung von Jugendlichen mit schwerer Behinderung in den regionalen Arbeitsmarkt in Österreich. In: Geistige Behinderung, 1, S.66 – 79



A second good practice example is the project “Chancenforum” run by the organisation AUTARK in Carinthia (URL: http://www.autark.co.at/autark_integrationsfachdienst/arbeit_und_qualifizierung/-Chancenforum/Index.php). The project “Chancenforum” is part of the strategy within the new Carinthian development plan for the future of support services for people with disabilities (Bedarfs- und Entwicklungsplan der Behindertenhilfe in Kärnten). People with disabilities who, also because of the severity of their disability, were sent to a sheltered workshop now have the opportunity of being employed on a regular, part-time basis (so that they do not lose all of the disability benefits) by AUTARK. The Carinthian government pays the same amount of money, compared to a placement in a sheltered workshop, to the service provider who now acts as the person’s employer. As soon as the employment contract is set up AUTARK functions as a leasing company looking for placement opportunities in the open labour market. The companies involved do not have to pay for the work done by the disabled worker but take full responsibility in providing meaningful work opportunities within their companies in integrative settings. In 2008, 50 people with disabilities were employed through the Chancenforum programme. An evaluation is currently in progress.



PART THREE: SUMMARY INFORMATION

3.1 Conclusions and recommendations (summary)

The Austrian system of vocational integration and employment-related support is composed of a highly differentiated system of various mainly short term support measures, most of which were introduced following the implementation of the Austrian government's "Employment Offensive" in 2001. Following a steady widening of possible target groups, many of these (short term) support measures are now aimed towards people with disabilities who are perceived as "job-ready". For people with higher support needs, for the most part sheltered workshop facilities are the only option. Various commissioned research reports and evaluations have been conducted in the field, mainly by non- university based research institutes. Still we are largely lacking a critical discourse about the employment situation of people with disabilities in Austria as well as valid and sufficiently explanatory data to produce reliable analysis on whether and for whom the current system is and is not working. Therefore more research is needed. This can situation can mainly be attributed to the complex interface of responsibilities (e.g.. different definitions of disability and access criteria by the diverse players involved) within the Austrian legislative system. One central recommendation for positive change would be the removal of legal passages that result in unequal opportunities, such as the paragraph regarding "capability of work", especially in light of imminent ratification of the UN Convention. Positive changes especially need to occur in the diverse "federal disability laws" where the perspective should be focussed on standardisation and an increase in opportunities in de-institutionalised settings. Internationally acclaimed and evidence based support tools such as "Supported Employment", "Person centred Planning" and "Personal Assistance" must be more widely adopted. Additionally, within the political policy making process there should be more transparency and solid participation of Self Advocacy Organisations which so far either have not occurred at all or have been tokenistic.



3.2 References

Important websites:

Government bodies on a National Level
Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
<http://www.bmask.gv.at>

Ministry of Economics
<http://www.bmwfj.gv.at>

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/enfr/index.xml>

Federal Welfare Office
<http://www.bundessozialamt.gv.at>

Public Employment Service
<http://www.ams.at>

Government bodies on regional level (Social Departements of the provinces)

Vienna Social Fund (Fonds Soziales Wien)
<http://www.fsw.at>

Social Department of the province Government of Vorarlberg
http://www.vorarlberg.at/vorarlberg/gesellschaft_soziales/soziales/integrations-behinderten/kontakt/behindertenhilfe.htm

Social Department of the province Government of Tyrolia
<http://www.tirol.gv.at/themen/gesellschaft-und-soziales/soziales>

Social Department of the province Government of Carinthia
<http://www.verwaltung.ktn.gv.at>

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<http://www.salzburg.gv.at/themen/gs/soziales.htm>

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<http://www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at>

Social Department of the province Government of Lower Austria
<http://www.noel.gv.at/Gesellschaft-Soziales/Behinderte.html>

Social Department of the province Government of Burgenland
<http://www.burgenland.gv.at/gesundheit-soziales/gesundheit>

Official Information Sites and Umbrella Organisations

Information Site: Work and Disability by the Austrian Social Partnership
<http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at>



Handynet Database for assistive technology
<http://handynet-oesterreich.bmsg.gv.at>

Database for vocational support programmes for people with disabilities
<http://www.wegweiser.bmsg.gv.at/>

Umbrella Organisation Vocational Integration Austria (Dachverband berufliche Integration Österreich DABEI)
<http://www.dabei-austria.at>

Austrian Working Group on Rehabilitation (Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation ÖAR)
<http://www.oeaar.or.at/>

Territorial Employment Programme Austria (TEP)
<http://www.pakte.at>

Research Organisation who have conducted research about the employment situation of people with disabilities in Austria

Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education at the University of Vienna
<http://bildungswissenschaft.univie.ac.at/fe3/home/?L=2>

SORA - Institute for Social Research and Analysis
<http://www.sora.at/index.html>

KMU – Research
<http://www.kmuforschung.ac.at/>

IBE – Institute for vocational and Adult education
<http://www.ibe.co.at/web/index.htm>

European Centre for welfare and social research
<http://www.euro.centre.org/>

Institute for labour market services and research
<http://www.ifa-steiermark.at/>

Socio economic Research Institut
<http://www.sfs-research.at/>

ABIF – Analysis, Consultancy and Research
<http://www.abif.at/einstieg.asp>

Institute SOFIA
<http://www.institut-sofia.at>

LandR Social Research:
<http://www.lrsocialresearch.at/>

Solution – Social Research and Development
<http://www.solution.co.at/>

Queraum – Institut for culture and social research
<http://www.queraum.org/>



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Annex 1: quantitative data on the employment of disabled people

Year: 2008	Absolute? (N)	Percentage (%)	Change (from previous year)
Disability rate	94.383 (2008) ¹⁵ – Average number of People with legal SD status in working age in 2008		+ 759
	1.000.000 ¹⁶ - People with permanent mobility impairments	13%	
	318.000 - People with permanent visual Impairment	3,9%	
	202.000 -People with permanent hearing Impairment	2,5%	
	205.000 - People with permanent mental Impairment	2,5%	
	85.000 - People with permanent intellectual Impairment	1%	
	63.000 -People with permanent speech Impairment	0,8%	
	580.000 -People with permanent multiple Impairments	7%	
Employment rate of disabled people	64.126 ¹⁷ (2008) Based upon people with legal SD status	68,17	+877 (+1,02%)

¹⁵ Source: BMASK 2008

¹⁶ All of the following: Source: Mircocensus 2008

¹⁷ Source: BMASK 2008

Activity rate of disabled people		57% (52% employed, 5% unemployed) ¹⁸	
Inactivity rate of disabled people	31.263 (2008) ¹⁹ 34.817 (Aug. 2009)	14,7% ²⁰ 43% ²¹	- 129 (2007) + 3.425 (2007)
Employment in open labour market	64.126 <i>people with legal SD status</i>	1,8% ²² Percentage of total work force potential	
Employment in sheltered workshop	Approx. 1.500 in Sheltered Employment (Wage model) Approx. 19.000 Sheltered Workshop (Therapeutic model) mainly people with Intellectual disabilities under the respective competence of the federal states		
Reason for leaving the labour market due to disability or long standing health problem	No Data	No Data	

Year:	% Permanent	% Temporary
Permanent contracts vs. short term contracts	No Data	No Data

Year:	% Full-time	% Part-time
Full time vs. part time jobs	No Data	No Data

Year:	Public sector	Private sector	(e.g. comment or give % employers meeting obligations?)
Fulfilment of employment quota (if it exists)	100% ²³	22,7% ²⁴	

¹⁸ Source: Mircocensus 2008

¹⁹ Source: Unemployed people with health related placement restrictions registered at the Labour Market Service (AMS)

²⁰ Percentage of total amount of unemployed people 2008

²¹ People with Impairments based on the 2008 microcensus

²² Source: BMASK 2008: own calculation

²³ BMASK 2009: Report on the Situation of people with Disabilities in Austria 2008

²⁴ Information by the BMASK 2009



<p>Participation in training of disabled people</p>	<p>2.993 persons with disability currently in qualification programmes²⁵</p>	<p>(e.g. comment or give number of people participating in vocational or work-related employment)</p>
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²⁵ Information by the BMASK 2009



Annex 2: 2008-9 laws and policies on the employment of disabled people

Name of law:	
Date of entering into force:	
Objective:	
Impact assessment (positive/negative):	

Name of law:	
Date of entering into force:	
Objective:	
Impact assessment (positive/negative):	

Name of law:	
Date of entering into force:	
Objective:	
Impact assessment (positive/negative):	



Annex 3: 2008-9 research/evaluation on the employment of disabled people

<p>Publication details (author, date, title, etc):</p>	<p>Eglseer, Thomas / Lechner, Ferdinand / Riesenfelder, Andreas et. al. (February 2008): Evaluation of the “Employment Offensive” 2004-2006 – revised Final Report.</p> <p>Language: German</p> <p>Online: http://www.lrsocialresearch.at/files/eb_final_eval_beschaefigungs_offensive_bmsk.pdf</p>
<p>Key findings from the research:</p>	<p>The research was the second evaluation of the overall effects of the Government’s Employment Offensive for people with disabilities, which was originally launched in 2001, covering the period 2004-2006. The evaluation drew on a variety of data sources employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, including follow up data from participants from a range of project categories. The projects funded under the Employment Offensive can be clustered in four categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation Projects 2. Employment Projects 3. Personal Assistance Projects 4. Qualification Projects. <p>During the observation period there was an increase in Consultation projects (from 33% to 40%) and qualification projects were predominant : about 44% in 2006 . The number of support cases increased in the observation period by 48%, with a significant increase in participants in projects with the goal of direct integration in the labour market.</p> <p>Concerning the age distribution in 2006, of a total 48.583 support cases (though not identical with persons being supported) 39,3 % of people were under the age of 25, 36,4% between 25 and 44 and 24,3% above 45 years. The gender distribution shows an over representation of men: about 60% men and 40% women.</p> <p>The distribution of types of disability during the observation period was as follows (includes people with more than one disability assignment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with a physical disability (N= 15751) 32% People with a mental disability (N= 8595) 18% People with an intellectual disability (N= 8652) 18,1% People with a visual impairment (N = 1968) 4,1% People with a hearing impairment (N = 4770) 10% People with learning disability and/or social /emotional problems (18551) 38,7% People with Special Educational Needs (N = 13394) 28% <p>The distribution of average support time in the project categories (18,86 hours in Consultation projects, 136,87 hours in Employment projects, 103,16 hours in Qualification projects and 48,25 hours in Personal Assistance projects) shows that most projects provided short term support (under ½ a year). As a result about 1/3 of supported participants underwent at least two or more support measures. There was no data published indicating for which groups this model was more or less successful.</p>
	<p>Follow up chains were analysed for the various support programmes with the aim of direct labour market integration. After three half year periods following leaving a programme:</p>

	<p>57% of participants from the “Arbeitsassistentz” (Austrian Supported Employment) were predominantly in employment or in an apprenticeship</p> <p>51% of participants from Consultation and “Empowerment” projects were predominantly in employment or in an apprenticeship</p> <p>32,1% of Qualification projects were predominantly in employment</p> <p>62% of people who received monetary support predominantly issued as short term wage subsidies 62% were predominantly employed.</p> <p>Several support chains such as Consultation followed by Supported Employment, or Supported Employment followed by monetary subsidies even achieved higher employment rates.</p>
Comment or assessment:	<p>The Evaluation provides very detailed information about the overall structure and undoubted efficiency of the diverse projects carried out with the Employment Offensive programme. Still many questions remain unanswered as the study basically provides descriptive information on diverse and highly aggregated variable sets of data. Cross variable comparisons especially focussing on more detailed participant characteristics (such as type of disability, gender, age, support needs, initial qualification, migration, etc.) with the effects of the support programmes remains rare and could not be replicated . This problem must though be attributed to the very low standards of availability of sufficiently explanatory data in Austria. Detailed predictions concerning which groups of disabled people the current system is working and respectively not working for cannot be made on the basis of the (published parts of the) revised final evaluation report.</p>
Publication details (author, date, title, etc):	<p>Fischlmayer, Eva / Stadlmayer, Martina (April 2009): Evaluation of the Vocational Qualification Assistance in Upper Austria.</p> <p><i>Language: German</i></p> <p>Online:</p> <p>http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/Evaluierung%20der%20BerufsausbildungsassistentzOOE_07Mai2009.pdf</p>
Key findings from the research:	<p>This regionally focused evaluation (Upper Austria) focussed on the work of the Vocational Qualification Assistance, analysed follow up data of successful leavers and drop outs of the Integrative Vocational Qualification programmes (IBA = Integrative Berufsausbildung) and carried out interviews and group discussions with relevant stake holders. Even though regionally focussed, this research provides positive evidence on the effects of the programme as the national evaluation of the IBA (published in 2006) could not work with follow up data as the IBA had only been in progress by the end of 2003. The results of the study show that having completed the IBA programme reduces by three times the probability of being employed only in the unskilled labour sector, increases the short term employment participation rate (69% successful leavers vs. 38% drop outs) as well as average monthly income.</p>
Comment or assessment:	<p>The research provides positive evidence on the efficiency of integrative qualification programmes in the transition period. Several challenges still remain: the success of the programme</p>

	<p>shows strong differences especially in terms of qualifications being carried out in companies vs. qualifications being carried out in specialised institutions. No research analysing follow up data comparing these two groups has yet been carried out. Creaming effects also pose another significant challenge, as government regulations concerning the IBA have deliberately expanded its definition of disability. This must be seen in the light of the government's stated plan of providing every young person with an opportunity for a qualification . One result is the overrepresentation of young people with a migration background (especially in urban areas) in this programme originally designed for school leavers with Special Education Needs. This has led to a under representation of people with intellectual disabilities in the IBA programme in certain regions, who in the development period of the IBA were one the major target groups. Another challenge must be seen in missing long term support programmes. As the research shows the long term employment participation rate of successful leavers decreases two years after leaving the programme from 68% to 54% thus almost matching the rate of drop outs with a participation rate of 49%, though with a higher average income.</p>
<p>Publication details (author, date, title, etc):</p>	<p>Lechner, Ferdinand / Riesenfelder, Andreas et. al. (September 2007): Good Practice of not for profit work force secondment programmes for persons with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Language: German</i></p> <p>Online: http://www.lrsocialresearch.at/files/endbericht_gakue_fuer_mmb_l&r_sozialforschung.pdf</p>
<p>Key findings from the research:</p>	<p>Based on an analysis of 5 active Projects for work force secondment in Austria the career development of 854 persons who had been active as temporary workers was followed up. Additionally qualitative interviews were conducted with temporary workers with disability as well as with members of the management of the projects. In terms of labour market integration about two thirds of the members were predominantly employed 1,5 years after leaving the project. The high increase in the level of employment was not varying based on type or severity of the disability thus the instrument seems to be successful in achieving individually matched work opportunities.</p>
<p>Comment or assessment:</p>	<p>The research took a close look at an instrument of active labour market politics for people with disabilities on which the government is currently putting a strong emphasis via the so called pilot project "Disability Flexicurity". Through this project, employees with a disability will be leased to companies without resulting in an administrative effort for the companies and to temporarily set aside dismissal protection as the employees with disabilities are employed via work force secondment projects. However concerns about this current emphasis relate to current creaming practices (as in other projects) as primarily people with the highest potential of being quickly placed are chosen.</p>