



ANED country report on equality of educational and training opportunities for young disabled people

Country: Austria

Author(s): Dr. Helga Fasching – University of Vienna, Department of Education and Human Development. Research Unit: Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

The information contained in this report was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in May 2010.

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 Equality of educational and training opportunities in European countries with reference to equality for young disabled people.

The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation on equality of educational and training opportunities for young people, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective in education and training, and provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.



Section 1: Executive summary and conclusions

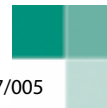
To what extent does the support available in your country meet the standards of the UN Convention?

In spite of efforts targeted at inclusivity and state-funded educational measures, the Austrian educational system is still characterised by selectivity and exclusion – even though the Austrian federal disability equality law 2006 (BGStG, Sec. 8 (3)) contains a declaration of intent stating that state-funded educational measures must be inclusive.

One half (47.42%) of the students with SEN (Special Educational Needs) status or disabilities complete compulsory education in the segregative sector, the other half in integrative settings (52.58%). Due to a lack of legal provisions for inclusion after the eighth grade, especially students with intellectual disabilities drop out of the educational system at a very early stage: either after completing the compulsory education of nine years in integrative settings or by switching to a special school, where they stay for the maximum time allowed of up to twelve school years. While according to legal provisions the parents' wishes regarding the choice between special schools and "inclusion classes" (*Integrationsklassen*) are decisive, studies (Klicpera 2007, Klicpera/Gasteiger-Klicpera 2004) show that in fact expert opinions are valued more highly and parents are persuaded accordingly.

Only a small number of young people with SEN or disabilities manage a direct transition from compulsory school to vocational education or training. The others move on to vocational preparation measures in the segregative sector, provide unskilled labour on the general labour market, or change from school directly to a sheltered workshop or occupational therapy (Fasching/Pinetz 2008, Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, Flieger 1999, Koenig 2009, Pinetz/Koenig 2009).

While, due to a flexibilisation of requirements, the integrative vocational training measure (IBA) enables a considerable number of young people with SEN or disabilities to attend a regular vocational school (*berufsbildende Schule*), parents' associations and evaluation results (Heckl/Dörflinger/Dorr et al. 2008) indicate that this is not at all the case for all young people in question and that the model fails to address a substantial share of the target group. Currently 33.86 % (1,586) of the young people in this training type are still not trained in private businesses offering apprenticeships, but in special training institutions. Moreover, the training standards for integrative vocational training have not yet been harmonised nationwide and the vocational schools still frequently lack adequate infrastructure in terms of staff and material for teaching young people with certain disabilities.



Additionally, the support and assistance measures in the post-school phase need to be improved, especially those for graduates who were taught according to the curriculum for students with severe disabilities and for students with a native language other than German¹.

Austria currently does not provide a legal basis for the inclusion of students with SEN or disabilities in the field of technical and vocational schools and colleges. The practice of inclusive education and training remains almost entirely limited to the field of compulsory education and integrative vocational training in the dual system. On the upper secondary level, in secondary intermediate and higher schools, only sporadic pilot projects exist (Habe 2002, Fasching/Felkendorff 2008, Mayr 2002).

Additionally, the number of university graduates among students with disabilities is vanishingly small (Unger/Wroblewski 2006); further and continuing education is frequently designed in a way that people with disabilities cannot participate equally.

Accordingly, the situation in Austria does not comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which, in Article 24, states that “States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning (...)” (UN Convention 2006). Every person with a disability shall be enabled to reach the highest possible educational level in order to have the opportunity to enter the employment market (UN Convention 2006, articles 24 and 27).

Education and training are and will be the essential foundation to obtain a position on the general employment market and for a self-determined way of shaping one’s life. Young people with an education below the upper secondary level are per se subject to various disadvantages on the employment market. They are considerably more often affected by unemployment, both immediately after completing their education and after intermediate vocational preparation measures.

¹ References: Integrative vocational training:

Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2003: Richtlinien zur Förderung der Berufsausbildungsassistenz im Rahmen der integrativen Berufsausbildung.

http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/2/8/8/CH0292/CMS1220346918410/rl_berufsausbildungsassistenz.pdf (25.05.2010)

Dörflinger, C./Dorr, A./Heckl, E. (2009) Die integrative Berufsausbildung (IBA) in Österreich – Hauptergebnisse der Evaluierung. In: Lassnigg, L. Babel, H./Gruber, E./Markowitsch, J. (Hrsg.): Öffnung von Arbeitsmärkten und Bildungssystemen. Beiträge zur Berufsbildungsforschung. Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: StudienVerlag.

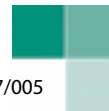
Fischlmayer, E./Stadelmayer, M. (2009). Evaluation of assistants for apprenticeship in Upper Austria. Linz: Public Employment Service Upper Austria (German):

http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/Evaluierung%20der%20BerufsausbildungsassistenzOOE_07Mai2009.pdf (25.05.2010).

Heckl, E./Dörflinger, C./Dorr, A./Klimmer, S. (ibw). (2008): Evaluierung der integrativen Berufsausbildung (IBA). Endbericht. Wien: KMU Forschung (Austrian Institute for SME Research).

Heckl, E., Dorr, A., Dörflinger, C. & Klimmer S. (2006): Integrative Berufsausbildung. Evaluierung von § 8b des Berufsausbildungsgesetzes. Endbericht. Wien: KMU Forschung Austria. Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (ibw).

http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/iba_endbericht.pdf (25.05.2010)



When implementing the UN Convention in Austria, inclusive transition processes from compulsory school to vocational training and work need to be considered.

Recommendations

The statement of the independent monitoring committee on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Austria emphatically suggests a reform of the Austrian educational system on the basis of the principles of human rights. To attain the objective of the Convention, special schools must be abolished, a restructuring of centres of special needs education must take place and the transitions between institutions of education as well as the transition to the employment market must be recorded. A central element of the implementation of inclusive education and the self-determination connected with it is the establishment of disability assistance services².

Central aims of an inclusive educational system are the reduction of obstacles and the thus achieved increase in equality of opportunities. The following improvements can positively support the further development of inclusion:

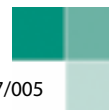
- General implementation of inclusion in compulsory school and in technical and vocational schools and colleges (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen*)
- Improvement of the framework conditions (regarding financial, human resource and material aspects)
- Integration of inclusive core modules in all teacher trainings
- Further education in the field of inclusion for all teaching staff and integration experts (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, Feyerer 2009)
- Comprehensive disability assistance service options in the field of education and training

To overcome obstacles in the field of training and education, the right and principle of inclusion needs to be put into practice. This includes changes and the transformation of structures and strategies with the aim to enable all people with disabilities to take part in a lifelong learning process.

The responsibility therefore lies with the educational systems and educational institutions of the sociopolitical centre. (Statement "Inclusive education").³

² www.monitoringausschuss.at

³ Ibid.



Section 2: Legal and policy context

Inclusion of children and students with SEN⁴ (special educational needs) or disabilities in Austria⁵

In addition to the following items, an overview of the legal context for special needs education is also provided in the European Agency country report for Austria⁶ and, for the general education system, by the Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture⁷.

In 1993, the 15th amendment to School Organisation Act⁸ legally incorporated integration in primary schools. The School Organisation Act stipulates the following: primary school has to offer inclusive primary education in the pre-school classes and in the first four grades for all pupils, giving special consideration to the social integration of disabled children. Educational objectives of the corresponding special school need to be taken into consideration in the education of children with SEN.

In 1996, the transfer of integration efforts into mainstream schools was extended to secondary level I with the 17th amendment to the School Organisation Act. Inclusive pilot projects are expanded to include the 9th grade, e.g. at pre-vocational school.

Integration of mentally and physically disabled children at secondary level II, i.e. in the upper cycles of academic secondary school, medium-level technical and vocational school and secondary technical and vocational college, is incorporated in Austrian law.

Education is compulsory for nine years and starts at the age of 6. Students with SEN may either attend a special school that caters to their needs or be taught in inclusive settings at primary and lower secondary (general and academic) schools. Parents have the right to choose between one of these two organisational formats. Students are taught either according to special needs curricula or according to adapted curricula of primary or general secondary school. In the academic year 2008/09, over 50% of all pupils with special educational needs opted for inclusive settings (integration classes) (EURYDICE 2009, 8, Feyerer 2009, 76). Students with SEN at mainstream schools may progress to the next higher year, if this offers a better opportunity for their overall development. This is decided by the class conference between teachers.

⁴ Special education is targeted at pupils who have been assessed and recognised to be children with special educational needs (SEN). Special educational needs are established if a child is physically or mentally disabled and, as a result, lacks the ability to follow the curricula primary schools, general secondary schools or pre-vocational schools without special educational assistance.

⁵ See also: Buchner/Flieger/Feyerer et al. (2009): The social inclusion and social protection of disabled people in European countries. Country. Austrian Report for ANED (Academic Network of experts on Disability).

⁶ <http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/austria/national-overview/legal-system>

⁷ <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/enfr/school/index.xml>

⁸ <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/recht/gvo/schog.xml>



In the absence of pertaining statutory provisions, instruction in an inclusive setting in the last year (year 9) of compulsory schooling is provided only in pilot projects for the time being. Parental choice for inclusion ends at Year 8.

In 1998, the subject “Vocational Orientation” was legally incorporated as a compulsory exercise in grades 7 and 8, and a preparatory vocational year (enabling pupils to assess their aptitude for a profession) became mandatory at special schools. This course, however, is not only obligatory at special schools, but also at lower secondary school and in the lower grades of schools in general secondary education. This obligatory course is designed to help the students’ to independently decide on an occupation. Since the school year 2000/01, job preparation classes can be established in the 9th grade of special school where students are educated according to the curriculum of the “job preparation year”. There, the adolescents’ already acquired skills are to be broadened to promote their personal development and their theoretical and practical skills in order to facilitate their access to the labour market and increase their chances of finding appropriate employment and living up to the challenges encountered there. Another possibility is the launching of pilot projects for inclusive education at pre-vocational school. Pupils with special educational needs can be educated completely, or to a certain degree, according to the curriculum of the job preparation year (EURYDICE 2008/09, Fasching/Felkendorff 2007).

In 2001, “Clearing”, a support measure from school to work of the Federal Ministry for Work, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, was implemented by the Social Services Office of the federal provinces aiming at strengthening the career opportunities of students with SEN, disabilities and difficulties. Clearing includes counselling, mentoring and assistance for adolescents from 13 up to 24 years of age at the interface between school and the labour market. This provision can be taken voluntarily, free of charge, and is basically available to all young people with disabilities. Its aim is to give adolescents opportunities for a future occupation, and to help them decide how to proceed to be integrated in the labour market. Together with the adolescents, analyses of their interests and capabilities are carried out, and an individual education plan is drafted.

To this end, intensive co-operation with schools, Special Education Centres, parents/legal guardians, and the adolescents is paramount (EURYDICE 2009, Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, Lechner/Riesenfelder/Wetzel et al. 2006).

In 2003, the Modification of the Vocational Training Act⁹ was amended. School integration in Austria received substantial impetus on the vocational upper secondary level, at least in the vocational schools of the dual system, through the introduction of integrative vocational training with partially qualifying apprenticeship, prolongation of the apprenticeship period, and vocational training assistance.

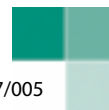
⁹ <http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/LehrlingsUndBerufsausbildung/Documents/BAG.pdf>



Inclusive vocational training is available to the following groups of people:

- persons who had (diagnosed) special educational needs towards the end of their compulsory schooling and who were, at least in part, taught according to the curriculum of special school;
- persons who have not completed general secondary school or who were marked Insufficient in one or more subject(s) during their final year of general secondary school.
- disabled persons as defined by federal and province legislation on the employment of people with disabilities (“Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz”);
- persons who are not likely to find an apprenticeship training place in the near future owing to personal factors (estimations concerning their likelihood of finding a place being based on previous career guidance measures and attempts to find an apprenticeship training place).

Within the framework of inclusive vocational training, apprentices may be given an extra year (or, in exceptional cases, two more years) to complete their training. Alternatively, they may also acquire marketable partial qualifications in one or more apprenticeable trade(s). Inclusive vocational training is supported by the vocational training assistance board (EURYDICE 2009, Heckl/Dörflinger/Dorr et al. 2008 .



Section 3: Evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion in Austria

In Austria there is an astonishing lack of studies on the evidence of outcomes and progress towards inclusion in education and training for young people with SEN or disabilities after compulsory schooling. Statistics Austria publish headline data on compulsory and post-compulsory educational participation and expenditure, although these are not always disaggregated in terms of special needs education or disability¹⁰. Therefore, the author mainly draws on a small number of selected data sources available in Austria. The focus is on data that are gathered on a regular basis and that can be used for monitoring or have already been used in:

School

- National Education Reports (Feyerer 2009)
- National summary sheets on education system in Europe and ongoing reforms (EURYDICE 2009)
- Information Database on Education Systems in Austria (EURYDICE 2008/09)
- International Reports on the prevalence of Special Educational Needs (European Agency SNE data collection 2006/07)
- Report on Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice (European Agency 2003)

Educational and vocational Training / Transition from school to work

- Surveys and statistics on the situation of vocational education and training students (Dörflinger/Dorr/Heckl 2009, Fischlmayer/Stadelmayer 2009, Heckl/Dörflinger/Dorr et al. 2008, Heckl/Dorr/Dörflinger et al. 2006, Steiner 2005, Economic Chamber Austria (Wirtschaftskammer) 2009)
- Evaluation of the Clearing programme – a support measure at the transition from school to work (Lechner/Riesenfelder/Wetzel et al. 2006).
- Cross country research reviews comparing the support measures in the transition period from school to work (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, Wetzel/Wetzel 2002)

University

- Surveys on the situation of university students (Unger/Wroblewski 2007, Wroblewski/Unger/Schilder et al. 2007).

Participation

- Reports on the situation of disabled people and their participation 2008 (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection)
- National employment program for people with disabilities (BABE) 2008-2009 (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection)

¹⁰ http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/index.html



- Annual Report 2008 (Federal Welfare Office)
- Evaluation of the Employment Offensive programme 2004-2006 (Eglseer/Lechner/Riesenfelder et al. 2008)
- Evaluation of various measures for young people with disabilities (Heckl/Dorr/Sheikh et al. 2004).

Compulsory schooling

For compulsory schooling aggregate data on students classified as having SEN (special educational needs) is available according to the educational legal frameworks, resources and allocation practices. In the school year 2006/07, a total of 27,745 students in Austria (3.31%) were classified as having “special educational needs” (SEN). Out of these, 15,589 (56%) were in grades 5 to 8; 9,761 (35%) in grades 0 to 4 and 2,395 (9%) in grade 9. Slightly more than half (52.58%) of these students were taught in inclusive learning environments (1.74%), the others attended special schools (1.57%). It is worth noting that there was very significant variation in the rate of inclusion between different regions of Austria (from 82.37% in Styria to 32.04% in Lower Austria). However, the allocation of resources in the field of special needs education is based on a percentage of 2.7% of an age group, which is why in a number of Austrian provinces latent underfunding can be registered (Feyerer 2009, 76f).

The following summary tables are provided by Statistics Austria for 2008/9¹¹.

School	Austria rich	Bur- gen- country	Carinthia ten	Netherlands Austrian rich	Upper Aus- rich	Salt castle	Steier- mark	Tirol	Pre- arl- mountain	Vienna
Pupils at general compulsory schools in total										
Total schools	604,017	18,227	39,773	117,589	116,408	42,396	80,647	57,531	32,168	99,278
Primary schools	332,210	10,132	21,708	63,739	60,779	22,699	44,679	29,166	17,091	62,217
Secondary Schools	237,989	7327	16,365	46,204	49,555	17,274	32,855	24,746	12,570	31,093
Special needs	13,170	273	748	3869	1440	987	565	1267	1080	2941
Technical Schools	20,648	495	952	3777	4634	1436	2548	2352	1427	3027
Pupils with special educational needs										
All schools	28,236	847	2021	5389	4794	1895	3004	1931	1689	6666
Primary schools	6038	174	417	604	1203	341	1102	330	300	1567
Secondary Schools	8412	369	816	852	2028	534	1216	307	308	1982
Special needs	13,170	273	748	3869	1440	987	565	1267	1080	2941
Technical Schools	616	31	40	64	123	33	121	27	1	176
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs in%										

¹¹http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/formales_bildungswesen/schulen_schulbesuch/029658.html

All schools	4.7	4.6	5.1	4.6	4.1	4.5	3.7	3.4	5.3	6.7
Primary schools	1.8	1.7	1.9	0.9	2.0	1.5	2.5	1.1	1.8	2.5
Secondary Schools	3.5	5.0	5.0	1.8	4.1	3.1	3.7	1.2	2.5	6.4
Special needs	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Technical Schools	3.0	6.3	4.2	1.7	2.7	2.3	4.7	1.1	0.1	5.8

Definitions and allocation practices vary considerably between the country; furthermore, male adolescents and adolescents from certain migrant backgrounds are strongly overrepresented especially in the strongly used SEN categories in compulsory schools (Feyerer 2009, 76ff). Even in Austria, which has a uniform nationwide legislation concerning all types of special educational needs, shows strong regional disparities: overall classification rates of special educational needs vary between 2.58% (Styria) and 4.34% (Vienna) (Feyerer 2009, 77). For example, Feyerer (2009) provides the following table showing gender rates in SEN for the different regions of Austria in 2006/7¹².

	W	V	K	B	Lower Austria	S	OÖ	T	ST	Austria
total	4.34	3.78	3.50	3.40	3.31	3.22	2.90	2.77	2.58	3.31
female	3.48	2.96	2.62	2.65	2.48	2.40	2.22	2.00	1.94	2.53
male	5.15	4.56	4.35	4.12	4.10	4.00	3.55	3.50	3.19	4.05

With a special educational needs classification rate of 7.5%, students with Turkish as a first language are strongly overrepresented in relation to their share of the total population (Feyerer 2009, 81)¹³. The following table (also from Freyerer) indicates the relationship between SEN (SPF), migrant status (MIG) and gender (m/w) in Years 0-9.

	SPF + MIG		SPF Total		% Female		Inclusion-rate		% Post-compulsory school		% Private	
	w	m	w	m	SPF + mig	SPF sep.	SPF + mig	SPFges.	SPF + mig	SPF sep.	SPF + mig	SPF sep.
0-4	976	1,490	3,587	6,174	39.58	36.75	58.03	57.80	0.04	0.12	1.18	2.80
5-8	1,808	2,671	5,758	9,831	40.37	36.94	54.32	53.20	6.25	5.75	0.94	2.65
9	229	342	969	1,426	40.11	40.46	28.02	27.18	75.48	72.73	2.28	6.22
0-9	3,013	4,503	10,314	17,431	40.09	37.17	53.54	52.58	9.47	9.55	1.13	2.65
total	7,516		27,745									

Compared to the lower school grades, at a nationwide rate of 2.46%, the ninth grade shows a considerably lower share of students with special educational needs. Feyerer notes the increase in the number of students entering private schooling which takes place in ninth grade as one possible explanation for this decrease (Feyerer 2009, 78) – an explanation which also sheds light on one of the inherent problems of relying on “public resource-based” data: students who switch to a private school lose their SEN status and are therefore no longer regarded as students with special educational needs, thus disappearing from any resource-based data collection.

¹² <http://www.bifie.at/buch/773/4>

¹³ See also, <http://www.bifie.at/buch/657/1/b/5>



Technical and vocational schools and colleges (from grade 10)

Generally it can be observed that with regard to the integration of students with disabilities no positive developments can be registered for the Austrian upper secondary school level: some of the limited number of pilot projects carried out in Austria at specialised intermediate-level vocational training schools (*Fachschule*), had to be stopped due to unclear preconditions provided by educational law (cf. Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, 81f). Apart from these pilot projects there are hardly any studies investigating this topic. Two short reports about a pilot project at the Weyregg Intermediate-Level Agricultural Vocational Training School and a pilot project at an intermediate-level vocational training school specialised in economics and business in Graz, both of which aimed at integrating students with disabilities, are included in the 2002 anthology "Eine kindgerechte Schule für alle. Beiträge zum 7. Praktikerforum" (cf. Habe 2002, 263f, Mayr 2002, 268f).

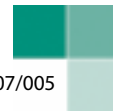
The 2009 national education report for Austria (Feyerer, 79) contains only one table that shows how many students with special educational needs (from grade 10) were integrated in upper secondary schools in the school year 2006/07. In this field it is primarily private education providers (at a three quarter share) that fulfil their responsibility of inclusion. The report breaks down the total number of 83 integrated students into school types, grades and school provider (public/private). However, there is no information on the number of integrated students with disabilities per province and the data do not distinguish between female and male students (Feyerer 2009, 79).

The education report explicitly points out that there is insufficient data regarding the integration of students with SEN in upper secondary schools, which is why these were not included in any further analyses of the education report (cf. Feyerer 2009, 80). Evidently, the available data regarding this issue is very poor; the topic has not been sufficiently investigated. This also shows in how far the educational development of people with disabilities loses relevance after compulsory school, both in educational policies and in research.

Vocational education and training systems

There are approximately 30,000 young people with SEN or disabilities in the phase of life which is relevant for transition, that is, aged between 13 and 23 (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007).

The data available from the various benefit categories do not allow for more precise information on the number of people concerned per age group for two reasons, since on the one hand the counting procedures are too different and on the other hand recipients are counted per type of measure: as this sometimes entails counting the same recipients more than once, no definite conclusions can be drawn regarding the real number of people concerned in the relevant age groups.



In vocational education and training systems there are also aggregate statistics on support programmes; however, these are structured differently and are based on definitions of categories other than the ones applied to compulsory school level (Eglseer/Lechner/Riesenfelder et al.2008).

In general, it is not possible to deduce earlier SEN categories from these data. In many cases, the categories are open for other groups of disadvantaged persons as well, such as young people excluded from the dual system of vocational education due to a lack of apprenticeship positions in the region or due to ethnic discrimination in the labour market. In this respect, the number of disability “benefits” awarded does not only show differences based on gender and migration status, but is also an indicator of regional disparities. In terms of regions, classification rates vary even more than those of special educational needs in secondary education.

Data on integrative vocational training in Austria show similar results (Dörflinger/Dorr/Heckl 2009, Heckl/Dörflinger/Klimmer 2008): In 2009, 2.6% (4,683) of all apprentices in the dual system were trained within an integrative vocational training programme¹⁴; in 2009, the number of IBA apprentices had tripled compared to 2004, the year of the launch. Out of 4,683 IBA apprentices, 3,305 (70.57%) completed the apprenticeship in a prolonged training period and 1,378 (29.42%) attained a partial qualification. However, only 66.14% (3,097) of the young people with training contracts received training in private sector businesses; 33.86% (1,586) were trained in non-company establishments. Earlier data showed the large majority (68%) of those in integrative apprenticeships were male and 26% from a migrant background .

Regional disparities can be identified: almost a third (27%) of integrative training places are offered in Styria, more than a fifth in Upper Austria (22%), and 13% in Vienna.

Furthermore, differences in training places show disparities based on economic structure. In Vienna, 86% of the apprentices who are enrolled in an integrative vocational training programme receive their training in subsidiary training institutions, while in Carinthia, Lower Austria, Vorarlberg and Salzburg integrative apprenticeship places are most commonly found in companies.

¹⁴ Inclusive vocational training is available to the following groups of people:

- persons who had (diagnosed) special educational needs towards the end of their compulsory schooling and who were, at least in part, taught according to the curriculum of special school;
- persons who have not completed general secondary school or who were marked Insufficient in one or more subject(s) during their final year of general secondary school.
- disabled persons as defined by federal and province legislation on the employment of people with disabilities (“Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz”);
- persons who are not likely to find an apprenticeship training place in the near future owing to personal factors (estimations concerning their likelihood of finding a place being based on previous career guidance measures and attempts to find an apprenticeship training place).



The high number of apprentices trained in institutions can be explained by a tight apprenticeship market in urban areas as well as by an unwillingness of the companies to employ young people with a disability. On the other hand, this situation gave rise to the establishment of numerous institutions in Vienna which dispose of the necessary resources, so that, even before the regulations regarding the integrative vocational training came into effect, these institutions already offered qualification programmes to young people with special placement difficulties and are now able to offer an integrative vocational training to their clientele. The target group of the integrative vocational training programme includes not only former SEN students but also young people without a compulsory secondary school diploma, persons with a disability in terms of social law as well as other persons for whom no regular apprenticeship place can be found for “reasons lying within the person him/herself” (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, 2009, Heckl/Dörflinger//Klimmer 2008, Economic Chamber Austria 2009).

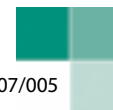
Persons with previous SEN or disability status who either pass the training system without the special support provided according to these criteria, or who drop out before or after accessing vocational education programmes are not considered in any of the resource-based categories and are thus excluded from relevant data collections (Steiner 2005a). In Austria the drop-out rate among 15-16 year-olds was 5.9% in 2002 (Steiner 2005b, 11). An analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of this group shows a significant overrepresentation of people from a migrant background as well as a slight over-representation of women (Steiner 2005b 13ff). Other variables for the composition of this group are also evaluated in the mentioned study – but not the categories “SEN” or “disability”.

Higher education (universities)

Available surveys from the field of higher education are the only more or less regularly submitted data source on the participation of disabled persons in the educational systems that are not based on resources but on self-reports by interviewees (Unger/Wroblewski 2007, Wroblewski/Unger/Schilder et al. 2007). These data provide perhaps the most obvious evidence for the shortcomings of present definitions and statistics concerning disability in childhood and youth.

While in the German-speaking countries a vanishingly small number of young people with special educational needs obtain a Higher Education Entrance Qualification (e.g. Kultusministerkonferenz 2005), in Austria for instance, according to the “Student social survey 2006” (representative survey of 9,000 students at public universities and universities of applied sciences), 0.9% of the students define themselves as “disabled”, a further 12.1% as “chronically ill” and approximately 7.7% as “otherwise health impaired”.

In total, one out of five higher education students indicates some kind of disability, health problem or impairment; 40% of these students (or 8% of all students) feel restricted in their studies; this is twice as many as in the previous survey of 2002.



It can be assumed that many of these impairments could be recognized as disabilities according to the common concepts of disability prevalent in social or antidiscrimination law; an accurate estimate, however, is not possible. The number of men with a disability is slightly higher than that of women; the older the students, the higher the percentage of those who indicate disability: up to 20 years of age the share is 0.8%, over 20 years of age it is 1.5%. Most of the students with disabilities grew up in Lower Austria (1/3), followed by Vorarlberg and Salzburg. The percentage of students with disabilities is especially low in Carinthia, Styria and Tyrol. These regional disparities are likely to be influenced by the regional school systems as well as by the infrastructure of the closest institutions of higher education, which can be either suitable or unsuitable for specific forms of disability (Wroblewski/Unger/Schilder et al. 2007, 14ff.).

The health impairments mentioned most frequently in the Austrian student social survey of 2006 are allergies and respiratory diseases (12%); approximately 5% mention other impairments and visual impairments, approximately 3% report mental health conditions and another 3% indicate chronic diseases. About 1% of the students indicate limited mobility or physical disablement, 0.7% hearing impairments and 0.1% language or speech disorders. Young people under 20 years of age are most frequently affected by visual impairments (7%). Mental health conditions become more common with an increase in age; and chronic diseases especially affect students over the age of 30. The 2006 social survey does not mention any students with intellectual disabilities.

There are no relevant differences in terms of social class. 1/3 of the students concerned name more than one form of impairment. Due to these multiple impairments it is difficult to statistically capture and describe this group; also, on the basis of quantitative data it is not possible to identify the primary and secondary impairments (Wroblewski/Unger/Schilder et al. 2007, 19ff.).

The number of health impaired students in Austria had risen considerably since the previous survey. In the student social survey of 2002 a total of 11.9% of the students was affected by a health impairment; in 2006 the number of students indicating such an impairment had risen to 20.6%. In 2002, a further 7.6% declared having a chronic disease and 3.3% indicated a health impairment other than the ones mentioned. Nevertheless, both in 2002 and in 2006 1% of the students considered themselves as being disabled. The rise in the number indicated disability in the social survey of 2006 as compared to the social survey of 2002 can probably be traced back to a change in the survey method. The social survey of 2002 was done on paper and the students concerned were asked to fill in a four-page supplementary sheet with additional questions. The type of questions aimed at severe health impairments and the way they affected the participant's studies. The social survey of 2006, on the other hand, was published online; the majority of the questions was not visible immediately, which probably increased the students' willingness to participate. Depending on the impairment, filling in a survey on paper or online poses different kinds of difficulties or is not possible at all without aids.

Persons with visual impairments, e.g., have the option to enlarge the letters on a computer screen, which is not possible on paper (Wroblewski/Unger/Schilder et al. 2007, 19).

It is obvious that the aforementioned participation rates in higher education systems cannot be used as output indicators for the effects of special needs education. The mentioned participation rates allow one conclusion: young people whose impairments or chronic illnesses were of little direct relevance for educational structures and teaching processes have attained higher education entrance qualifications in large numbers in the country. Young people with learning difficulties or severely disabled people are excluded from access to higher education and corresponding support.

Conclusion

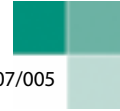
People with disabilities are excluded explicitly or implicitly, in any case by unclear and varying standards, from most national and cross-sectional and longitudinal studies in the relevant research fields (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, 2009, Hörmann 2007, Powell 2006). One consequence of the strongly differing identification and exclusion rates of people with disabilities are negative effects on the validity and cross-national comparability of the results of such studies (OECD 2007, 223). A further consequence of the exclusion of people with disabilities from research is an astonishing lack of comparable data on educational outcomes in students with disabilities (Fasching/Felkendorff 2009). The most recent and, according to a large part of the disability research community, most momentous legal basis for efforts to enhance the knowledge base for answering this question is the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 31 of the Convention explicitly requires State Parties to “undertake to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the present Convention” (UN Convention 2006, Article 31, see also Hendriks 2007).

Concerning the educational and training needs of young people with disabilities after school, it would be interesting to have quantitative national data and long-term studies about the transition process from obligatory school to further education and work. There is a considerable lack of representative micro-longitudinal data that would incorporate educational and support needs during this transition process.

An ongoing research project at the Department of Education and Human Development of the University of Vienna funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) over a period of three years (2008-2011) attempts to gather data on the participation experiences of people with an intellectual impairment diagnosis who are undergoing the transition from school to working life or who are already participating in working life.

The aim of the research project is to reconstruct objectively identifiable as well as subjectively experienced participation in the life history of people with intellectual disability undergoing this transition process as well as their participation experiences on the labour market under special consideration of institutional preconditions in Austria.

For this purpose, a nationwide full-population survey was undertaken in 2009 which is targeted especially at the transition from school to working life on the level of objectively identifiable participation; this survey includes two specifically designed interviewing rounds with school district superintendents and parents at two different points in time. These interviews will gather personal data on the school situation, the educational and transition process as well as the support needs of an entire age group (n=3000) which has been taught either according to the syllabus for severely disabled students or according to the syllabus for general special schools and who will graduate from school at the end of the academic year 2009. In addition, personal data such as data regarding the educational and transition process, information on support needs as well as detailed data on the process of professional integration of persons who have received support by service institutions in the reference year 2008 will be collected by means of a nationwide survey of institutions offering employment market support (such as “Clearing”, a counselling service offered to school leavers with special needs, “Work integration assistance”, aimed at supporting people with disabilities in their integration into the labour market, “Vocational training assistance”, etc.) The focus of the research project, however, is on capturing the subjective perspective of the persons concerned by using methods of participative research with intellectually impaired people and by working with reference groups in the process of validating qualitative research data. For this purpose 20 persons with intellectual impairment will be observed during their transition phase from school to working life in the framework of an explorative two-year qualitative longitudinal study. It is to be expected that the knowledge gain from this research project will be drawn from the first survey of the objectively existing structures of its kind and from the subjectively experienced aspects of participation and exclusion processes of people with intellectual impairments in the transition from school to working life (Biewer/Fasching/Koenig 2009).



Section 4: Types of support for students and trainees (summary points)

Disability issues included in the general curriculum of university training for school teachers

Compulsory general school teachers (primary, secondary general, special and pre-vocational school) are educated at University Colleges of Teacher Education. Teachers at academic secondary schools must complete at least 4.5 years of university studies that end with a diploma. Disability issues are not included in the general curriculum of university training for school teachers.

Programmes of further and continuing education for all areas of career orientation are offered in modules at in-service teacher training colleges for the further education of teachers. By completing a number of further education modules, teachers can obtain an enhanced teaching qualification. In a number of provinces, all of the schools already dispose of at least one teacher with such a certification. The centres for special needs education, which were created in 1993, have a key role in the counselling and support of teachers and parents and in offering material and staff resources to support compulsory education schools in promoting children with SEN, also and especially during the transition from compulsory education to upper secondary level education or to vocational training (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007).

Support to disabled children in mainstream schools

As in special schools, the inclusion of students with SEN in mainstream schools must take account of the fact that students have multiple and different capabilities and interests, which surface during classes in various ways according to the level of their personal development. Teachers and parents have to recognise these differences, pay attention to their effects and utilise them as starting points for the development of individual and differentiating teaching and learning approaches. To cater to the different disabilities and students' individual needs, the application of multi-fold approaches is one of the vital prerequisites for fostering children with special needs. Special teaching and learning materials are utilised depending on the specific type of disability. Individualisation is an important didactic approach implemented by way of "individual remedial programmes". An additional qualified special teacher assists in integration classes with several children with different disabilities. Auxiliary staff members have to be available to assist severely disabled pupils. Instruction principles which are especially important with regard to the support of students with special needs are described in "Teaching Methods and Materials" (EURYDICE 2008/09). The mobile special education service provides support for children and adolescents with diverse disabilities through advisory and support teachers for students with visual and hearing disabilities, behavioural difficulties, speech disabilities, and for children in hospital. This additional service is provided outside the classroom depending on the child's needs.



Support to disabled young people at colleges or universities

Colleges

In order to prepare young people with previous SEN or disabilities for professional life, students may also participate in pilot projects of inclusive training run at vocationally oriented schools, especially at pre-vocational schools and, in some cases, at vocational schools, e.g. for agriculture and for home economics. In classes with an inclusive setting at pre-vocational schools, curricular contents for the preparatory vocational year are applied either partially or in full.

In the field of vocational training, students with SEN or disabilities can choose from one of the following options: commercial school, telecommunications course, or training to become a medical massage therapist or certified massage practitioner (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008).

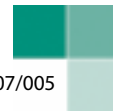
Students of the federal institution for education of the deaf have the option of attending integration classes at a medium-level vocational fashion school or a medium-level secondary school for industrial and commercial painting. Students of the federal institute for the education of the blind are able to train in one the following fields: commercial school, telecommunications course and training leading to qualifications as massage practitioners.

Universities

In its guiding principles, the 2002 Universities Act¹⁵ stipulates special consideration of the needs of students with disabilities. Austrian universities have the autonomous power to decide how to implement these provisions. Investigations show that the universities provide support for students with health, physical, psychological and sensory impairments (Unger/Wroblewski 2006).

Of central importance in this regard is the disabled students' right to special examination methods (§ 59.1). This applies not only to examinations in the specialised subjects concerned and general exams before a board of examiners, but also to end-of-term exams. The dean responsible for the organisation and evaluation of teaching and examining decides whether a different examination method is admissible in case of professional examinations or general exams before a board of examiners. In the case of end-of-term exams the teachers can decide themselves. With regard to these regulations, the cooperation between students, the examiner and the dean is of central importance. It needs to be taken into account that students with disabilities are experts for their own special situation. An adaptation or modification of the examination method is not to be regarded as preferential treatment or as a compromising on performance requirements, but is the only way to provide people with a disability with equal opportunities in their studies.

¹⁵<http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20002128>



Almost all universities offer counselling centres for students with physical and sensory disabilities both through the Austrian Students' Union and through university employees (disability officers). These provide counsel and support to students with disabilities and lobby for favourable study conditions for the disabled. Their tasks are the following:

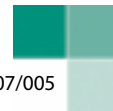
- Provision of counsel and information to disabled and chronically ill students in all matters which affect their studies and are connected with their disability or chronic illness
- Individual assistance in various study situations such as mediation between teacher and student, support in organising individual assistive technologies, support in organising individual and subject-related assistance, special examination conditions
- Lobbying for and working towards disabled-friendly accessibility and facilities in the university building, such as by adding wheelchair spots in the lecture rooms, equipping toilets with a so-called *Euroschlüssel* lock (German for "euro key", a key that offers access to public facilities for disabled people), and contributing to the planning of new buildings and building renovations (BMSK 2008, *Barrierefrei studieren*¹⁶)

In addition to these services, further counselling services can be found online, such as for construction measures or advice for teachers¹⁷. The www.abak.at website is targeted at university graduates. The Uniability association¹⁸ acts as a special interest group for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses. Furthermore, isolated specific teaching services are offered – among them "fortec" (research group for rehabilitation technique) at the Technical University Vienna – and research focus initiatives are launched, such as the Interuniversitarian Institute for Information Systems for the Support of Visually Impaired Students with reading spots for blind and visually impaired persons in the university libraries. The Institute for Translation Studies at Klagenfurt University has set up a working group for sign language and Deaf culture. There, the topics of sign language and Deaf culture, especially in the field of sign language interpretation, have been the main focus of research and teaching since 1990. Since the 2002/03 winter term, this institute offers the first full academic study in sign language interpretation in Austria (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008).

¹⁶ <http://studentpoint.univie.ac.at/>

¹⁷ <http://www.fortec.tuwien.ac.at/bk/>

¹⁸ <http://info.tuwien.ac.at/uniability>



Support in vocational training schemes

In connection with the monetary interventions of the European Social Fund and the objectives of the employment initiative of the federal government (the so-called “disabled persons billion”), innovative support measures have been introduced for people with SEN or disabilities in Austria in the framework of employment market policy regarding professional integration as an alternative to segregative forms of vocational training (reduced professional education in special institutions and occupational therapy) since the mid-1990s (Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008). These offers, which include career orientation, “work assistance” (*Arbeitsassistenz*, aimed at supporting people with disabilities in their integration into the labour market = the Austrian Supported Employment), and integrative vocational training, aim at supporting young people with SEN or disabilities in their direct professional integration process from school to training or employment on the general employment market.

These offers correspond largely with the demands of the UN Convention regarding the provision of active employment market support measures for people with disabilities (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008).

In spite of these developments, segregative forms of vocational training for young people remain in existence. These are fundamentally opposed to the principles of normalisation and integration which serve as disabled policy guidelines for the Austrian federal government and should therefore only be used when participation of the people concerned in normal or, if necessary, flexibilised training forms and in adapted training spots is not possible in spite of adequate efforts (Fasching/Felkendorff 2007).

In recent years, the legislative body has clearly assigned the function of central point of contact and coordination in the field of the existing and newly created services regarding the vocational preparation and participation of young people with SEN or disabilities to the Federal Social Affairs Office and its regional branch offices: they act as the fund-awarding body for resources, projects and benefits as well as a central supervisory body for benefits.

Clearing

Since 2001, the additional resources made available through the employment initiative of the federal government for persons with disabilities (“disabled persons billion”) have allowed for a massive increase in school-independent counselling and support services for young people with SEN or disabilities. A measure named “clearing”, an individualised counselling service which is independent of the schools and does not directly adhere to the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS), has been developed. It takes its starting point in the last or second to last school year of the lower secondary level. “Clearing” includes counselling, assistance, support and diagnostic clarifications.



Central activities, whose completion needs to be proven individually, are the production of interest and aptitude profiles on the basis of diagnostic data, the assessment of a need of further qualification and the development of a career and development plan.

Integrative vocational training

Starting at the beginning of the 2003/04 training year, an amendment of the Vocational Training Law (BAG) created the legal basis for a further integration of students with SEN or disabilities into the dual system. There are two basic forms of integrative vocational training:

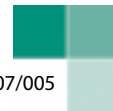
1. Vocational training in a trade profession with an apprenticeship with a prolonged training period (Paragraph 8b (1) BAG): At the beginning, or in the course of, the apprenticeship, an agreement on an apprenticeship contract with a prolonged training period of a maximum of one year or, in exceptional cases, two years can be reached. This model replaces the previous “pre-apprenticeship without completion”.
2. Vocational training, with a training contract, in a partial qualification of a trade profession (Paragraph 8b (2) BAG): Together with the so-called “vocational training assistance” and under inclusion of the school board and the education provider, the contracting parties define the objectives and duration of the integrative vocational training in a training contract and determine the parts of the teacher training that shall be completed. The duration can vary between one and three years. The switch from a partial qualification to an apprenticeship with a prolonged training period or a normal apprenticeship training is made possible through agreements.

Counselling and information

For questions regarding career orientation, young people with SEN or disabilities are supported by state-run (Austrian Public Employment Service, AMS¹⁹; Federal Social Welfare Offices, BSB) and private institutions such as the information services run by the Economic and Labour Chambers which provide counselling and in part also placement services for training and employment. The 60 job information centres (BIZ) of the AMS provide all young people with a selection of information media on occupational profiles, the respective opportunities of employment as well as training and further education paths free of charge. Brochures, information folders, videos and CDs are also offered at no cost. Staff is constantly available for counselling. The internet offer includes information brochures as well as tests and training/employment databases for individual research

In 2002 the AMS developed a vocational training atlas for people with disabilities, which consists of a comprehensive documentation of all training opportunities that are open to people with disabilities, sorted by province and type of training.

¹⁹ www.berufskompas.at



The documentation includes offers that are exclusively targeted at people with disabilities as well as integrative offers and offers that are regularly used by people with disabilities.

In the meantime this atlas has been taken over by the Federal Social Welfare Offices and is presented there as a database²⁰.

This database provides information on projects and measures which aim at qualifying young people with disabilities after compulsory schooling. It shows nationwide offers regarding career orientation, professional qualification, apprenticeship, "work assistance", job coaching, employment projects and career counselling. There is detailed information on every project regarding objectives and contents, project promoters, place, target group, duration and scope.

Adult education

Over the last years, the field of adult education has increasingly addressed the need of education of people with disabilities and has developed respective courses. A greater number of courses are conducted that are specifically designed for certain target groups. The aim is to provide participants with the opportunity to make up, or refresh, school knowledge and with courses regarding personality or vocational training.

Since 2001 the counselling office for integrative education and training (*Beratungsstelle für integrative Bildung*²¹) offers targeted educational counselling services for people with disabilities (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008).

In 2005, the handbook "Inklusive Bildung. Erste Schritte zu einer gemeinsamen Erwachsenenbildung für behinderte und nichtbehinderte Menschen"²² (*Inclusive education: First steps towards shared adult education for disabled and non-disabled people*) was developed in the framework of the "Equal" project Sensi_Tec by the Online Schulungs- und Beratungsges.mbH limited company. In the framework of the EU programmes "Socrates" and "Minerva", projects targeting the participation of disabled people in and through new technologies were developed and funded. An example of this is a project called "mo.bi.le – Modelle der Bildung und des Lernens für Menschen mit Behinderungen"²³ (Models of education and learning for people with disabilities), in which learning materials and the conceptual design of a training programme for adult educators with a focus on computer-aided learning for people with a disability were developed. The research centre for sign language at Klagenfurt University develops CD-ROM courses for sign language teachers.

²⁰ www.basb.gv.at/cms/basb/pdb_start.html

²¹ <http://www.biv-integrativ.at>

²² <http://bidok.uibk.ac.at/library/handbuch-inklusiv.html>

²³ <http://www.biv-integrativ.at/biv.php?s=c100>



Lifelong Learning education and training programme

The Lifelong Learning education and training programme (2007-2013) comprises measures for the promotion of general education and vocational training. The aim of these EU programmes is to increase transnational mobility, to improve access to education and training offers across Europe and to open new opportunities on the employment market. By promoting people with disabilities, the programme contributes to the implementation of the equal opportunities principle (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008, 147).



Section 4a: Financial support

Special education is targeted at pupils who have been assessed and recognised to be children with SEN.

Special educational needs are established if a child is physically or mentally disabled and, as a result, the school lacks the ability to teach the child of primary schools, general secondary schools or pre-vocational schools without special educational assistance.

Compulsory schools

The federal government provides the provinces with fixed funding for each school for additional staff resources for special needs education (for 2.7 percent of all students aged between 6 and 15). But the actual percentage (around 3.5% in the school year 2003/04) is clearly higher. Therefore the resources, especially for integration, are running short. As compensation €24 million for 2008-2010 and €25 million for 2011-2013 are granted to the provinces annually to reduce structural problems because of decreasing numbers of students and in the area of special needs support. This however does not really defuse the whole problem (Feyerer 2009). Like all students in Austria, students with special needs are eligible for support through the following programmes: free transportation (against a nominal fee) and free school books.

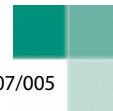
Technical and vocational schools and colleges

In technical and vocational schools and colleges, benefits and additional support measures for inclusion are only offered to people with physical or sensory impairments.

The following measures are provided:

- increased offer in divided lessons (*Teilungstunden*)
- lessons with increased support
- augmented service offer (educational counsellor, assistive technologies counsellor)
- individual support
- support teachers

Students with SEN or disabilities are exempt from limiting regulations (including the amount payable by the beneficiary) in the field of free school transport, travel allowance and book scheme (*Schulbuchaktion*; this scheme provides Austrian students with school books free of charge).



In the framework of the book scheme, specially produced books in large print or Braille can be ordered for visually impaired and blind students who are taught as integrated students or in Federal Institutes for the Blind. In addition, digital teaching learning materials (online supplements to school books) have been developed for these students.

For the 2006/07 academic year the expenditures were as follows:

- for therapeutic learning materials: € 523,913
- for visually impaired, blind students: € 345,155 (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008,142).

Universities

The financial assistance for university education for disabled students was transformed by the amendment of the law on promotion of education (BGBl 2007) in the summer of 2003 and raised to 12%. Depending on the degree of disability, the study grant is increased by amounts which are based on the kind and degree of the disability. The maximum yearly grant was increased by:

- € 1,920 for students with a high degree of visual impairment or students that are dependent on the use of a wheelchair
- € 5,040 for students with a high degree of hearing impairment

There is an additional possibility to extend the benefit duration. When the degree of disability has been determined to be at least 50%, the benefit duration is generally extended by two semesters per phase of studies in addition to the one extra semester available to all students receiving grants (Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection 2008, 144)

Vocational training and integration

Within the governments "employment offensive" and the EQUAL programme – young people with SEN or disabilities at the transition from school-work were identified as one of the two most important target groups for vocational support programmes.

Austria faces the situation of a decreasing number of pupils and a steadily increasing amount of pupils being attributed with a SEN. SEN on the other hand is one of the needed eligibility criteria for accessing post-school support programmes. The following information about the financial support of training opportunities and vocational integration, which has been derived from the annual report 2008 of the Austrian Federal Welfare Offices, can be made available. The following project grants (number of cases) have been made available to support the vocational training and integration of people with disabilities:

- “clearing” (transition from school to work) (6,690)
 - qualification projects (3,913)
 - vocational training assistance (3,555)
 - work assistance (supported employment) (10,319)
 - employment projects (1,407)
 - personal assistance (282)
- (Federal Welfare Office 2008, 12, see also Koenig 2009).

In 2008, 3,920 students with SEN or disabilities took part in an integrative vocational training programme. This corresponds to 2% of the total number of apprentices in Austria (total number: 131,880) (Economic chamber 2009).

The Evaluation of government’s “Employment Offensive for people with disabilities 2004-2006” includes data sources 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. 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 (Eglseer/Lechner/Riesenfelder et al. 2008, Koenig 2009)

(For research results and data about vocational support projects see further: Koenig 2009: The employment situation of people with disabilities in Austria. Country Report for ANED.



Section 4b: Personal assistance, equipment and adaptations

The Austrian support system includes the options of “personal assistance” (assistance in everyday life) and assistance in supporting disabled persons in the field of work and vocational training. Assistance at work is available for people to use in all education and training contexts, not only in employment. The provincial branches of the Austrian federal welfare offices are responsible for providing support in the field of “work and vocational training”. All other areas of life are covered by the respective provincial governments (Brozek 2004).

Self-determined life initiatives and organisations, which have implemented the model of personal assistance, would increasingly like to address the notion of personal budgets.(Sigot/Kocnik 2007). Since April 2008, the City of Vienna has been offering a new service with which people with physical disabilities can finance personal assistance for everyday life. This service is similar to the personal budget and is called “Care allowance supplement for personal assistance” (Vienna Social Fund 2009, 21).

Due to the fact that this opportunity was introduced only recently, there is hardly any experience with this possibility in Austria.

In other European countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain, empirical data show that the personal budget concept has been implemented successfully for years. Germany has only had limited experience with the implementation of the personal budget. Initiatives and organisations fighting for a self-determined life of people with disabilities (for example BIZEPS²⁴) increasingly address this form of funding and organising of support services. The personal budget should be regarded as a necessary innovation for Austria.

Two reports have been published that evaluate personal assistance services and a pilot project on personal budgets in Austria. Both reports emphasise the positive effects such social model-based support services have on the education and work of people with disabilities (Bacher/Pfaffenberger/Pöschko 2008; Mayrhofer/Sutterlüty 2008). (See further Flieger 2009: The implementation of policies supporting independent living for disabled people. Country Report for ANED (Academic Network of experts on Disability)).

²⁴ <http://www.bizeps.or.at>



Vocational training assistance

During an integrative vocational training (both in the form of a partial qualification or an apprenticeship with a prolonged training period), the complete training is accompanied and supported by a specialist for vocational training assistance in the business (or the external institution) and the vocational school. In this role, vocational training assistance has to consider socio-pedagogical, psychological and educational aspects of special support with all persons concerned and help solve any questions that are connected to these issues. In addition, vocational training assistance is responsible for guaranteeing the coordination and networking with vocational schools and school boards of first instance, for supporting trainees and trainers in official matters, providing extensive information on financial support options and intervening in cases of crisis. At the end of the training, the vocational training assistance conducts the final examination of the training together with an expert. Work assistance and job coaches are also available for apprenticeships and employment outside of the integrative vocational training.

The collaboration between vocational counselling, the school and the company providing the vocational training is coordinated according to the case level by staff of the assistance service provider in charge, that is, first by the "clearing" counselling service, and in the course of the training by the vocational training assistance, job coaches and work assistants (Dörflinger/Dorr/Heckl 2009, Fischlmayer/Stadelmayer 2009, Heckl/Dörflinger/Dorr et al. 2008).

Assistance during university studies

For university students, individual support for the respective situation is offered such as, for instance, mediation between teachers and students and support for students in organising special technical aids, personal and subject-specific assistance as well as special examination conditions.

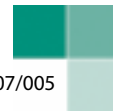
The joint university institute "integrated study, i3s3" at Linz University is a nationwide cooperative of the universities of Linz, Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck and Klagenfurt, and the Vienna University of Technology which supports blind and visually impaired (print disabled) students and graduates in their research and development efforts in the field of specialised information technologies (for blind and visually impaired persons).

This institute also offers unique support measures to disabled students combining scientific research and practical application. Services include:

- Guidance and preparation services for prospective students: information days, special information materials, orientation and mobility on university campuses
- Counselling services and support of students: preparation of all materials for teaching and learning (books, lecture notes, slides, notes on the blackboard); cooperation with publishers and authors to get access to digital versions of materials

- Arrangement of special examination conditions and, if necessary, technical equipment (assistive technologies): Braille displays, speech input/output, screen enlargers, tactile images; education and further training in the use of assistive technologies
- Integration into professional life: career and job information, training of job search skills, traineeships in Austria and abroad (EURYDICE 2009, 2008/09, 478).

Since 1992/93 Austria has very successfully participated in the Erasmus programme. Some 47,000 outgoing students have already benefitted from the possibility of completing a 3 to 12-month study period at an Erasmus partner university, for which they are credited within their degree programmes. No data can be found on the participation of students with disabilities in the Erasmus programme (EURYDICE 2008/09, 532)



Section 5: Evidence of good practice

In Austria, there are two good-practice examples at the department of Education and Human Development at the University of Vienna concerning Inclusion and Participatory Research with intellectual disabilities in higher education²⁵:

1. Research project: “Experiences of participation of persons with an intellectual disability in the transition phase from school to working life and vocation”²⁶

This research project at the Department of Education and Human Development of the University of Vienna (Research Unit: Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Research Team: Gottfried Biewer, Helga Fasching, Oliver Koenig) funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) is examining how intellectually disabled people experience the process of entering and contributing to the working world. In contrast to the few comparable studies – which tend to adopt the perspective of professionals – this project focuses on the actual experiences of the individuals affected.

Besides a first nationwide collection of structural data from the phase of transition from school to working life and of the labour market for persons with an intellectual disability (see page 14: Conclusion), the investigation aims at a reconstruction of the perspective of the target group.

A qualitative longitudinal study with both groups, youths and young adults in the transition phase and persons in working life, analyzes the experiences of participation based on a grounded theory approach. By including persons with intellectual disabilities into the process of interpretation and validation of qualitative data by a reference group, the project contributes to the development of methodology in the area of participatory research.

This research is primarily a long-term study which focuses intensively on the participation experiences of two groups representing different stages in life. One group represents young school-leavers who go through a problematic period of transition before finding a role in the working world that often corresponds neither to expectations nor potential. The second is made up of adults who have rarely been able to gain acceptance on the regular job market and whose working activities are viewed as work and occupational therapy. The participatory research will concentrate predominantly on the data for this long-term study. Disabled people offer their own interpretations of statements made in interviews, and often help to expand the views of the professional researchers in unexpected ways (Biewer, Fasching Koenig 2009).

²⁵ <http://bildungswissenschaft.univie.ac.at/fe3/>

²⁶ <http://www.fwf.ac.at/de/abstracts/abstract.asp?L=D&PROJ=P20021>



2. Inclusive research seminars

People with learning difficulties can usually not be found at universities. This is true everywhere in Austria. Since the winter term 2007/08, Oliver Koenig and Tobias Buchner have been conducting inclusive research seminars at the Department of Education and Human Development of the University of Vienna. In these courses, eight people with learning difficulties take on the role as experts in small research projects which they carry out together with students. These seminars aim to achieve an effect on different levels:

- as methodology seminars in which qualitative methods are examined in theory and in practice from a participative research perspective
- as inclusive university courses: people with learning disabilities take an active part in the university field which so far has only been doing research *on* them and their lifeworlds. Their participation should, however, not be reduced to mere attendance or to a role as guest auditor.
- as an inclusive teaching setting where the participating people with learning difficulties act as teachers in their function as experts for issues concerning themselves or for their life situation
- as research-based teaching: following the theoretical examination of participative research, the findings are to be translated into research practice. Accordingly, the course is also meant to provide room to carry out these first, if small, participative research projects in the German-speaking countries.

These objectives, which are so far unique internationally, call for an appropriate educational design of the course. This concerns both the detailed preparation and planning together with the participating people with disabilities and the conceptualisation of the different didactical pillars of knowledge transfer (e.g. “simple language”, e-learning, research diary, reflexion units, evaluation, media presence, participation at research conferences) (Koenig/Buchner 2009).



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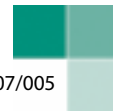
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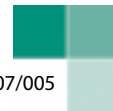
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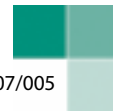
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Important websites

CIS-ONLINE:

<http://www.cisonline.at>

Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education at the University of Vienna

<http://bildungswissenschaft.univie.ac.at/fe3/home/?L=2>

Federal Welfare Office

<http://www.bundessozialamt.gv.at>

Federal Ministry of economics

<http://www.bmwfj.gv.at>

Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

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Vienna Social Fund (Fonds Soziales Wien)

<http://www.fsw.at>

Information Site: Advice and Information

handynet-oesterreich.bmsg.gv.at: Datenbank zu technischen Hilfsmitteln und Dienstleistern

portal.wko.at: Wirtschaftskammer Österreich

www.ams.or.at: Arbeitsmarktservice

www.arbeiterkammer.at: Portal der Bundeskammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte (AK) und der regionalen Arbeiterkammern

www.arbeitundbehinderung.at: Portal der Sozialpartner zur Teilhabe behinderter Menschen am Arbeitsleben

www.ausbildungsberatung.at: Ratgeberliteratur für Schüler/innen und Lehrpersonen für die Gestaltung der Ausbildungsorientierung

www.bab.at/e-qi.html: Forschungs- und Praxisprojekt „Qualitätssicherung in der Integrationsarbeit“

www.behindertenarbeit.at: Berufsverband der Fachkräfte in der Behindertenarbeit

www.berufsinfo.at: Berufsinformation Österreich

www.berufskompass.at: Selbstorientierungsservice des AMS

www.bfi.or.at: Berufsförderungsinstitut (bfi)

www.biv-integrativ.at: Integrativer Bildungsverein für Menschen mit (mehr oder weniger) Behinderung

www.bizeps.or.at: Österreichisches Zentrum für Selbstbestimmtes Leben

www.bmsg.gv.at: Website des BMSG, unter anderem mit vollständiger Dokumentation

der Informationsmaterialien, Forschungsberichte und Richtlinien des BMSG

www.bundessozialamt.gv.at: Website des BSB

www.chance.at: Gründerzentrum für Menschen mit Behinderungen

www.dabei-austria.at: Plattform zum Thema Arbeitsassistenz in Österreich



www.esf.at: Europäischer Sozialfonds (auf Österreich bezogene Projekte)
www.gleichstellung.at: Informationen zum Gleichstellungsrecht, Aktionbündnis „Österreich für Behindertenrechte“
www.oegb.at: Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB)
www.schulpsychologie.at/inforat/: Ratgeber, der an alle Jugendlichen in der 8. Klasse abgegeben wird.