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Apprenticeship Training at a Glance

Structural Data, Trends and Perspectives (Edition 2009)

The public shows continuing interest in information about apprenticeship training, with long-term developments being presented on the basis of key aspects. This information requirement is met by the periodical publication of the *ibw* which comes out under the title “Apprenticeship Training at a Glance”.

Two thirds of apprentices are male, one third is female

In late 2008, almost 132,000 young people were in an apprenticeship programme, with over 120,200 or 91 % in the various *Crafts, Trade and Services* segments. In 2007, 34 % of all apprentices were female; their share has remained largely constant since the 1970s.

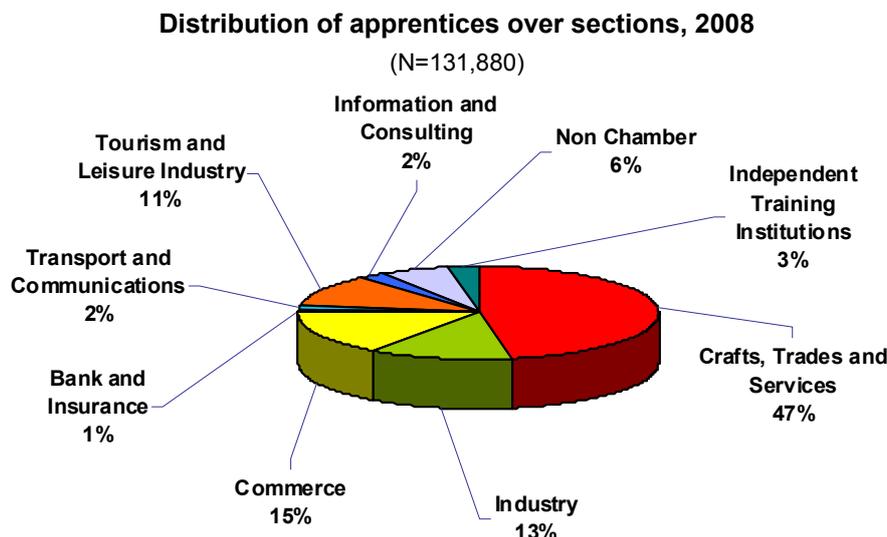
Training by sections

47 % of apprentices are trained in the largest training section, viz. *Crafts, Trade and Services* (see GRAPH 1).

As can be expected, this predominance applies even slightly more to the distribution of training enterprises: 55 % of more than 39,600 training enterprises are active in this section.

The second largest training section is *Commerce* with fast 20,000 apprentices, followed by *Industry* (ca. 17,100), and the *Tourism and Leisure Industry* section with around 14,500 apprentices. The *Information und Consulting* section, which was introduced in 2002, boasted as many as over 3,200 apprentices in 2008.

GRAPH 1.



Source: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Apprenticeship Statistics

Strongest route after completion of compulsory schooling

Apprenticeship training is the by far strongest training route in Austria both when analysing input (students in the tenth grade), with more than 40 % of school-atten-

ding youth, and even to a greater degree when analysing output. Without the specific integration and skilling options provided by dual training in training enterprises and part-time vocational schools, the share of young

adults without vocational qualification would be estimated more than 20 %.

As can be expected, the share of apprentices (students at part-time vocational school) is even higher by far among male than among female youth, which is due to gender-specific occupational preferences: With a total rate of more than 49 %, the provinces Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Upper Austria, Salzburg and Styria come to 50 and more % of male students in the tenth grade.

Differences by provinces

The available data material shows that apprenticeship training has taken different courses of development in the various provinces. In the distribution of young people in the first year of post-compulsory education, pronounced differences between the provinces can be observed, which are due *inter alia* to predominant economic and occupational structures. In Salzburg, Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Upper Austria and Styria, for example, the rate is more than 40 % of schoolchildren in the tenth grade, whereas this share is partly clearly lower in Carinthia, Lower Austria, Vienna and Burgenland.

Age of apprenticeship beginners

In Germany and other countries (such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland etc.), apprenticeship beginners are older than in Austria. In the year 2008, 72 % of Austrian apprentices at the standard age of 15/16 were in their first year, with pronounced differences between the sections. The age of apprenticeship beginners constitutes a significant variable for the initial vocational education and training (IVET) routes' system development.

Young people with immigration background

The share of foreigners among apprentices is some 7 %. This share has been declining since the mid-1990s. But the variable of their *citizenship* constitutes only one hint for the share of young people with a migration background. Another relevant indicator is their mother tongue. Also regarding this indicator however, the share of youth with migration background in dual VET was only slightly above 8 %. What becomes clear here is the difference between Vienna and the other provinces (some 29 to 4 %). The contribution of apprenticeship training to the integration of young immigrants is hence more pronounced in Vienna.

The apprenticeship post market and problems of transition

Late September is the time that problems on the apprenticeship post market emerge, if any. The theoretical gap of apprenticeship posts clearly narrowed in late September 2007 as compared to 2003 and then widened again.

In addition it can be noted that the number of apprenticeship posts that are offered but cannot be filled increased from some 2,900 in 2002 to about 4,200.

The introduction of integrative vocational training has proven a success, with the number of participants rising from 1,940 in 2005 to over 3,900 in 2008.

Distribution by apprenticeship occupations

In late 2008, the 50 most popular apprenticeships or apprenticeship combinations (i.e. double training programmes) accounted for some 82 % of training relationships.

The by far most frequently chosen apprenticeship is the (in itself differentiated) occupation "retail trade services" (i.e. "retail trade services specialising in general services" plus retail trade services with different specialisations) with almost 15,200 apprentices, followed by "office assistant", "motor vehicle engineering", "hairdresser and wigmaker (stylist)", "cook" and "electrical installations engineering".

By combining all apprenticeship occupations into four domains it is possible to make the structures and structural changes visible. In the segment of *technical and trade apprenticeships* (53 % of training relationships), a relative decline in training relationships as against 1994 can be observed. *Office and commerce* combine one quarter of all training relationships; *tourism, food & beverages, and personal services* one fifth. The *ICT* occupations make more than 3,700 training relationships in 2008.

Training by company size

The breakdown of apprenticeship figures by company size shows clearly that apprenticeship training has a pronounced SME focus: Almost 70 % of apprentices are trained in companies with fewer than 50 employees; firms with between 50 and below 500 employees account for 25 %, and 6.5 % receive their training in large enterprises.

Number of apprentices per training provider (viz. "apprentices' density")

In 2008, in all of Austria, nearly 50 % of training enterprises provided training to one apprentice, another fifth of all training enterprises trained 2 apprentices, and 30 % of all training enterprises have three or more apprentices. The share of training enterprises with one apprentice is above average in the two sections *Commerce* and *Transport and Traffic* with almost 60 % respectively, which is only exceeded by the *Information and Consulting* section (67 %).

Apprenticeship rates by sections, sectors and economic sections

Pursuant to the chamber classification, there was a spread of the rate of apprentices in the workforce in 2008 (as of December) of between 1.2 % (*Bank and Insurance*) and 9.3 % (*Crafts, Trade and Services*). Apprenticeship rates for *Industry* were 3.9 %, for *Commerce* 5.7 %, and for the *Tourism and Leisure Industry section* 5.3 %.

Ratio between apprentices and the economically active population with an apprenticeship diploma

In this context it is also revealing to analyse the ratio between apprentices and apprenticeship graduates in the sectors and economic sections. Whereas the number of apprentices across all sectors amounts to 7.4 % of the number of apprenticeship graduates, the percentage in the services sector is 6.8 % and in the secondary sector (material goods production, construction, energy/water, mining) nearly 9 %.

The individual services sectors present different "skilled workers reproduction figures". Above-average ratios can be noted for the *hotel and restaurant industry* (12 %), the *provision of other personal services*, and the economic section *commerce, repair of motor vehicles, personal and household goods* - this trend is even more pronounced when disaggregating further. In the sections *transport and communications* as well as *public administration and social security*, below-average reproduction rates of skilled workers with an apprenticeship certificate can be found.

Output of dual training with impact on the labour market

It can be assumed that by the age of 20, students mostly have completed the VET programmes they are attending. According to the latest census, 45.5 % of the economically active population aged between 20 and 24 had an apprenticeship certificate, 13.5 % had successfully completed a VET school (BMS), and 15.3 % a VET college (BHS) or a post-secondary course in VET. This means that – when analysing output with impact on the labour market – the dual training system is the quantitatively by far strongest qualification route.

Due to more pronounced interest in dual training or the occupations accessible via this route among male young people, also output of apprenticeship training is clearly higher among them: Among 20-to-24-year-old men in gainful employment, the rate is at nearly 57 %, among women at 33 %.

Apprenticeship graduates in the employment system

According to the microcensus, 40 % of all 4.2 million Austrians in employment had an apprenticeship certificate in 2007. This share was 49 % among men and 30 % among women.

When differentiating by economic sections or occupational groups, significant differences become visible that manifest the focuses of apprenticeship training.

Labour market indicators

The unemployment rate among apprenticeship graduates is 5 percentage points lower than among people who have not completed a VET path. In 2008, the unemployment rate among apprenticeship graduates was 3.2 %, and hence clearly below the average of 3.8 %, as well as below the unemployment rate of graduates of secondary schools (AHS) (see GRAPH 2).

The apprenticeship graduates' duration of unemployment was an average of 94 days in 2008, whereas the average duration for all educational categories was clearly higher with 103 days.

The relationship between vacancies (as published in the print media) and registered unemployed over the year is more favourable for apprenticeship graduates than for graduates of BMS, BHS, AHS and university-related institutions.

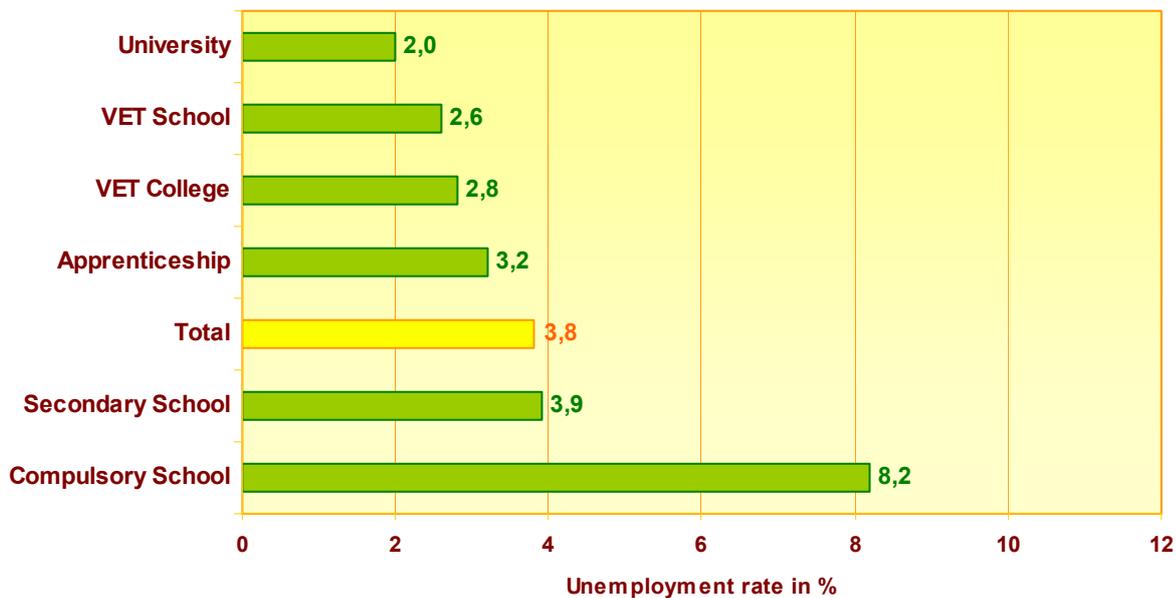
Negative presentations of the labour market situation of apprenticeship graduates as they are sometimes published in the media are based on a misinterpretation of statistical material, in that the number of unemployed people by formal educational attainment is analysed without taking into account the high share of apprenticeship graduates among the economically active population. Under that perspective, merely the distribution of registered unemployment by formal educational attainment forms the basis, whereas the perspective substantiated from the viewpoint of educational economics¹ is the qualification specific share of unemployed in the economically active population.

From the "gap of apprenticeship posts" to the "training guarantee"

These two catchwords mark the beginning and current state of a stage of problems the field of VET policy. In response to the problems of transition following completion of 9-year compulsory schooling, political stakeholders at the competent ministries, social partners and in the provinces have developed and implemented major approaches and made considerable funds (the training premium, the Blum bonus² and many other measures)³ available since 1996. With the approaches of the integrative vocational training and other support mea-

GRAPH 2.

Unemployment rate by formal educational attainment, 2008, in %



Source: Statistics Austria, 2008 Labour Force Survey

asures (such as short courses or "coaching for apprentices") there are already new resources/devices in action.

Due to the occupations' structural changes, changing conditions in which people grow up, migration, and the objective of general inclusion in education following compulsory schooling – which goal has been envisaged since the 1990s – novel challenges are coming to the fore at the point of transition from compulsory school to employment via education and training⁴, the structural dimension of which is increasingly being perceived. Particularly regarding the concept of the "training guarantee until the age of 18", far-reaching possibilities for measures and structural adjustments can now be discussed openly. With the social partners' document "Labour Market – Future 2010" and the "New subsidisation of apprenticeship posts", major measures to safeguard a sufficient number of training places and assure the quality of dual training have been introduced into discussions.⁵

Due to changes of relevant laws (see Federal Law Gazette, 82nd BG, year 2008, 26.06.2008) the basis for a longer-term safeguarding of dual training and accompanying VET research was laid.

Outlook for VET-routes

Analyses about the medium-term prospects of dual vocational training that refer to national and European data were added. Not only the economy's structural change but also changing social expectations of education and

European comparisons, transparency instruments (EC-VET and EQF), and benchmarks trigger a pressure to change. Labour market-related arguments (demand) as well as arguments related to social inclusion ("everybody" should be able to participate in a VET programme) and equal opportunities (permeability of dual training into the tertiary education system) overlap in the educational policy discourse and call for new high quality answers. For that reason, the analyses' occasional character was not dispensed with.

¹ Whether within the meaning of the filter theory or the human capital theory, cf. Williams, Gareth L.: The Economic Approach. In: Burton R. Clark (ed.): Perspectives in Higher Education, Berkeley - Los Angeles - London, 1987.

² Cf.: www.egon-blum.at.

³ Cf. Wagner-Pinter, Michael: Rejuvenating the Austrian apprenticeship system, in: European Commission: European Employment Observatory Review: Spring 2005, Luxembourg, 2006. Downloadable document at: http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/resources/reviews/-spring_rvw_05_en.pdf, 23-08-2006.

⁴ Cf. Schneeberger, Arthur: Lehrlingsausbildung in Österreich: Trends - Probleme - Perspektiven. In: Prager, Jens U., Wieland, Clemens: Duales Ausbildungssystem – Quo vadis? Berufliche Bildung auf neuen Wegen, Gütersloh, 2007, p. 94ff.

⁵ Cf. ÖGB, AK, WKO, LK: Arbeitsmarkt – Zukunft 2010, Vorschläge der Sozialpartner für ein Maßnahmenpaket zur Deckung des Fachkräftebedarfs und zur Jugendbeschäftigung, Wien, 2. Oktober 2007, p. 4ff.

The entire study can be obtained from ibw in a printed form (ibw-Forschungsbericht Nr. 149, ISBN 978-3-902742-02-5) or [online](#).