



European Construction Sector Observatory

Policy measure fact sheet Germany

Startklar für Ausbildung
(Ready for Apprenticeship)

Thematic Objective 2

March 2016

Implementing body:	Lehrbauhof Berlin - Berufsförderungswerk der Fachgemeinschaft Bau Berlin und Brandenburg gemeinnützige GmbH / Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Integration und Frauen
Key features & Objectives:	To enhance the readiness of unemployed youth by helping them improve professional and social competences needed in the regional construction sector
Implementation date:	2013-2018
Targeted beneficiaries:	Unemployed (16-25 but also older) persons interested in working in the construction sector in the Berlin-Brandenburg area
Targeted sub-sectors:	Vocational education support services
Budget (EUR):	Approx. €365.000 (2014) Approx. €365.000 (2015)

In a nutshell

The construction industry in Berlin and Brandenburg is running out of young talent. Growing numbers of companies from Berlin and Brandenburg are finding it difficult to fill their apprenticeship positions with qualified applicants. Fewer and fewer young people are pursuing employment in the construction sector. In 2013 for example, 160 apprentices started construction training in Berlin compared to 258 in 2001¹. In parallel, a high number of secondary school graduates have either not found a training institution or have abandoned their first apprenticeship, or are unemployed for other reasons. To ensure that the regional construction industry has a skilled workforce in the future and to help the unemployed to gain insights into the diverse professions available in the industry, a partnership of multiple regional building industry federations² launched a vocational education programme called 'Startklar für Ausbildung' ('Ready for Apprenticeship').

'Startklar für Ausbildung' is a 6-month regional vocational education programme that is acting as a transition training management scheme between school education and vocational education training. The programme is designed to help unemployed young people in the federal state of Berlin-Brandenburg to gain an insight into the varied construction sector professions and job profiles, using a range of tools and materials. The intention is to stimulate the interest of the young unemployed, to

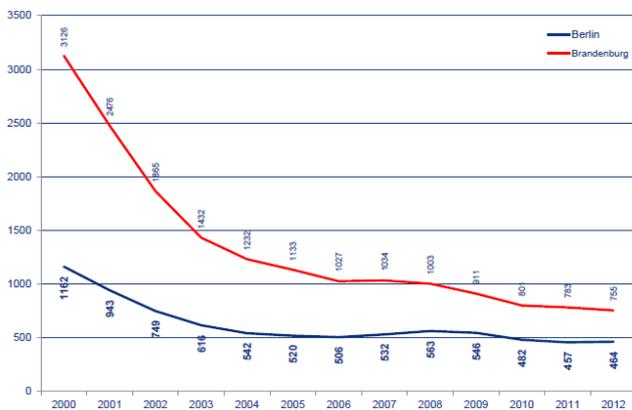
encourage them to consider and pursue a career path in the construction industry and to provide them with some of the key competences they will need to succeed in the industry. Specialised and dedicated coaches provide trainees on the programme with tailored skills training and coaching. Once a trainee has successfully completed their training, they are then helped to secure a professional apprenticeship in a construction company.

The programme initially began as a pilot scheme, but it has been continued due to its high success rate. Since its start, the programme has helped 55 trainees to secure apprenticeships in construction companies. The success rate for securing trainee apprenticeships is approximately 43%, whereas comparable measures implemented by job centres have an average success rate of 25%, according to estimations from the vocational training centre (Baulehrhof Berlin). Indeed, by reducing the drop-out/dismissal rate in vocational education, the programme has also managed to help make public spending on apprenticeships more efficient. The success of the programme was confirmed by an **evaluation study**³ carried out after the first year of the initiative. The initiative has been widely welcomed by local industry, beneficiaries and government. Beyond 2018, following the final year of subsidy through the Social Support Fund of the Berlin Building Industry, it appears likely that the initiative will be continued in a similar form to the *Berufsstart Bau* initiative at federal level.

General description

The initiative was launched in 2013 with the first release starting in October of the same year. An important prerequisite was a legislative change adopted in 2013 allowing leave and wage Equalization funds of the German building industry to finance the pilot project in support of vocational education and training.⁴ The initiative is the result of a close alliance between three key organisations: the professional association for workers of the construction industry in Berlin-Brandenburg⁵, the Construction Federation Berlin-Brandenburg and the Industrial Trade Union Building Agriculture Environment (IG BAU). The initiative was motivated by a consensus that the steady decline of vocational education students in the field of construction in the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg since 2000 needed a concerted response.

Figure 1: Construction sector apprentices in Berlin/Brandenburg



Source: Konartzki (2014)

In pursuit of the long term goal of securing a skilled workforce for the future, the primary objective of the initiative is to attract and train unemployed young people between the ages of 16 and 25 in the Berlin-Brandenburg region. Older persons are also targeted as a secondary objective. In addition, the programme has a series of specific objectives:

- To improve the image of the regional construction industry;
- To provide educational counselling to construction companies to help to enhance training quality, capabilities and capacity;
- Localisation, response and recovery of a young target group including development of training and operational maturity;
- Helping trainees to secure occupational apprenticeships in the construction industry;
- Educational counselling for adolescents to help them become skilled workers in the construction industry;
- Lowering the dropout rate in education;
- Effective management for transitioning young people from school into training, and from training into professional apprenticeships in companies with the help of job coaches.

The project sees itself as an intermediary management scheme between potential apprentices and training companies in the construction industry. During the 6-month programme, trainees receive professional career advice as well as mentoring from specialised job coaches with socio-pedagogical training, in order to make the transition from school to vocational education and training as smooth as possible. In addition to developing professional competences, the coaching also prioritises important social skills that are needed in any professional employment, e.g. punctuality, reliability, etc.

The initiative follows a structured approach to preparing young people for vocational training in the construction industry. The approach is made up of two phases: a project phase and a transition phase, combining practical experience which can be gained through multiple internships with personalised qualification advice and mentoring.

Project phase:

- Analysis of the labour market;
- Elaboration of individual documentation (exploring career interests, preparing applications);
- Practical exercises / internships in modules comprising building construction, interior work and civil engineering;
- Special classes in mini-groups to develop basic competences in reading, writing and maths, as well as social competences.

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Transition phase:

- Researching suitable and available training positions;
- Interview preparation;
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Transition into a company.

Training is hosted at the Construction Training Centre run by the Professional Association of Construction Workers in Berlin-Brandenburg. At the training centre, trainees can gain an insight into 12 different construction sector vocations, including bricklaying; carpentry; road building; wood and structure protection work; tile, slab and mosaic laying; masonry; stucco plastering; drywall installation; concrete and steel reinforced concrete construction; piping construction; duct building; foundation/underground engineering and track laying.

The financing of the initiative is split into three parts – the primary part of the initiative is covered by the Social Support Fund of the Berlin Building Industry (Sozialkasse des Berliner Baugewerbes) and the Senate of Employment, Integration and Women. In Brandenburg, the initiative was launched under the title *Berufsstart Bau*⁶, a related initiative run by the Federal Social Fund of the Construction Industry (SOKA-BAU).⁷

Table 1: Overview of grant application filed for “Startklar für Ausbildung” in 2014

	Organisation	Fund allocation
Main funding	Sozialkasse des Berliner Baugewerbes	€419.525,64
Qualification advice	Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Integration und Frauen	€69.965,76
Mentoring apprentices	Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Integration und Frauen	€86.000,00

Source: Konartzki (2014)

Achieved or expected results

As a pilot programme implemented in two 6-month intervals, the initiative has proven very successful and was therefore prolonged for two further years. However, legislation limits financing through the Social Fund of the German building industry to 5 years.

The evaluation study report showed that both the learning and support facilities within the project as well as external conditions and competence and behavioural input conditions have had significant impact on the examined vocational education apprenticeships. In addition, a survey carried out in the evaluation study came to the conclusion that the target group’s perception was positive throughout all surveyed participants.⁸

After the pilot year (October 2013 to September 2014), 27 participants were successfully transitioned into vocational apprenticeships in the construction industry. In the second year, 28 participants were successfully transferred into apprenticeships. Thus far, the programme is demonstrating a successful transition rate of well over 40%, which is significantly higher than comparable programmes run by job centres (25% on average)⁹.

Table 2: Drop-out, dismissal and successful mediation rates

	Drop-out rate	Dismissal rate	Mediated successfully
Release 1	16,6 %	36,1 %	41,7 %
Release 2	14,8 %	40,7 %	44,4 %
Release 3	22,9 %	38,7 %	51,4 %

Release 4	16,6 %	37 %	58 %
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Source: Technische Universität Berlin (2014); Lehrbauhof Berlin (2015). Internal periodic reports for Startklar für Ausbildung

By reducing drop-out and dismissal rates, helped by the tailored coaching, mentoring, and social and construction skills training provided to programme participants, greater efficiency can be achieved in public spending. An average of €8.000 per vocational apprentice is lost when an apprenticeship is not completed. By investing in the prevention of apprenticeships drop-outs or dismissals, significant cost savings can be achieved. For example, by reducing failure rates, costs of up to €43.000 can be saved¹⁰.

Perspectives and lessons learned

“Startklar für Ausbildung” has been well received by all involved regional stakeholders. The successful results of the first 4 releases, together with the fifth release that is currently being implemented, show that both the funding institutions and the initiator are satisfied by the preliminary outputs to date¹¹.

From the **perspective of the regional building industry federations that are implementing the initiative**, an important first lesson is that cooperation between job centre coaching, offered by socio-pedagogically skilled staff, and the Vocational Training Institute, which understands the needs and reality of the construction sector better than governmental agencies, is proving to be a successful approach. Moreover, broad and effective communication and dissemination of the training model among construction businesses is regarded as major key to success.

From a **beneficiary (trainee) perspective**, the first lesson to be learned is that the personalised, tailored approach of the initiative is helping to make construction sector professions more attractive to unemployed young people. Participants (trainees) are really benefiting from the programme: they are gaining insights into the different professions in the construction industry; they are receiving tailored training from construction teachers/supervisors; and their individual strengths and weaknesses are being assessed with the support of supervisors and job coaches¹². Trainees particularly valued the programme’s personalised approach to competence coaching and mentoring. Social competences and virtues, e.g. punctuality, reliability, etc., are considered to be both vital and rigorously applied to ensure that only those candidates that have proven themselves to be committed are recommended for vocational and educational training¹³.

From a **beneficiary and industry (training company) perspective**, one lesson learnt is that the supporting role of the Vocational Training Institute is proving to be very beneficial to companies that provide apprenticeships¹⁴. Effective pre-selection of candidates, coupled with professional and socio-pedagogical competence coaching and mentoring, is helping to reduce the financial risk that companies face when hiring new apprentices. This is particularly true for small companies.

From a **government perspective**, the main lesson learned from the initiative is that the provision of targeted, personalised coaching and support to unemployed young people is helping to make the construction sector more attractive to young people, is helping young people to make more informed choices, and is providing valuable additional support to apprentice hosting companies. The Berlin Senate for Employment, Integration and Women confirms that the support provided is helping to build an understanding that the success of their trainees is also dependent on their ability to adapt to the specific needs of the trainees¹⁵.

All stakeholders agree that an action-orientated, concerted approach driven by multiple stakeholders is needed to address the skills shortage in the construction industry. The initiator plans to firmly establish the vocational education support programme beyond the limited financing period. Furthermore, the initiator is striving to more closely align the programme with other vocational education support measures, e.g. “Berufsstart Bau”. Given the success of the programme to date and the programme being run by SOKABAU, it is likely that this initiative will be extended and/or transferred to other German regions in the future¹⁶.

Comparison with other analytical sources

This Policy Fact Sheet concurs with the Country Fact Sheet 2016 on Germany¹⁷:

- Key issues and barriers in the construction sector – skills shortage;
- Current Status & National Strategy to meet Construction 2020 Objectives – TO 2 – Skills.

Endnotes

- ¹ Press release “Regionale Bauwirtschaft startet eigene Qualifizierungsinitiative” 11/12/2013: <https://www.berlin.de/sen/aif/ueber-uns/presse/2013/pressemitteilung.156025.php>
- ² This partnership is composed of Bauindustrieverband Berlin-Brandenburg, die Fachgemeinschaft Bau Berlin und Brandenburg und die Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt (IG BAU) Berlin-Brandenburg.
- ³ <http://www.ibi.tu-berlin.de/projekte/aktuelle-projekte/172-evaluation-des-modellprojekts-startklar-fuer-ausbildung>
- ⁴ In accordance to § 18 of the collective wage agreement of the building industry (German: Tarifvertrag über die Berufsbildung im Baugewerbe (BBTV)).
- ⁵ Precisely, the organisation is called: Fachgemeinschaft Bau Berlin und Brandenburg.
- ⁶ http://www.soka-bau.de/soka-bau_2011/desktop/de/Arbeitgeber/Berufsausbildung/Pilotprojekt/
- ⁷ *Berufsstart Bau* is based on the same decision on the collective wage agreement but was drawn up by the Federal Social Fund of the Construction Industry (SOKA-BAU) in Wiesbaden.
- ⁸ Non-published Evaluation Report: Technische Universität Berlin (2014). Institut für Berufliche Bildung und Arbeitslehre Fachgebiet Fachdidaktik Bau- und Landschaftsgestaltung in Zusammenarbeit mit IBI – Institut für Bildung in der Informationsgesellschaft GmbH Modellprojekt Startklar für Ausbildung Abschlussbericht Begleitung und Evaluation der Pilotphase
- ⁹ Konartzki (2014). Startklar für Ausbildung“. Pilotprojekt zur Ausbildungsreifeförderung auf dem Lehrbauhof | Berlin
- ¹⁰ The cost savings are calculated on the basis of average costs of providing vocational education and training in the region of Berlin-Brandenburg. Source: Konartzki (2014). According to data from SOKABAU for region of Berlin. In: Startklar für Ausbildung“. Pilotprojekt zur Ausbildungsreifeförderung auf dem Lehrbauhof | Berlin.
- ¹¹ Non-published Evaluation Report: Technische Universität Berlin (2014). Institut für Berufliche Bildung und Arbeitslehre Fachgebiet Fachdidaktik Bau- und Landschaftsgestaltung in Zusammenarbeit mit IBI – Institut für Bildung in der Informationsgesellschaft GmbH Modellprojekt Startklar für Ausbildung Abschlussbericht Begleitung und Evaluation der Pilotphase.

- ¹² Press article appeared in Berliner Woche under the title "Lehrbauhof bereitet Jugendliche auf Ausbildung vor". Accessed December 2, 2015: <http://www.berliner-woche.de/marienfelde/sonstiges/lehrbauhof-bereitet-jugendliche-auf-ausbildung-vor-d39757.html>
- ¹³ Konartzki (2014). Startklar für Ausbildung". Pilotprojekt zur Ausbildungsreifeförderung auf dem Lehrbauhof | Berlin
- ¹⁴ Konartzki (2014). Startklar für Ausbildung". Pilotprojekt zur Ausbildungsreifeförderung auf dem Lehrbauhof | Berlin
- ¹⁵ Based on insights gained by e-mail enquiries from the Senate for Employment, Integration and Women.
- ¹⁶ Based on interview with a representative of Lehrbauhof Berlin, the primary executing organisation of the initiative.
- ¹⁷ European Construction Sector Observatory, Country Fact Sheet Germany, March 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction/observatory/index_en.htm