

AUSTRIA

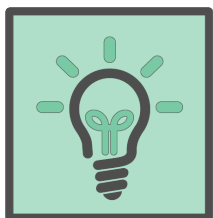
Population: **8,474,000** | Income Level: **High-Income** | Policy Decisions: **All Levels** | Level of Career Development Initiatives on Scale of 1-5: **4**

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Please describe how technologies are CURRENTLY used to support workforce preparation, placement, and development policies for young people in your country.

There are various technology approaches in Austria related to different areas of career development; career guidance, workforce preparation, policies for young people and other age groups, depending both on the tasks and targets of the provision and the actors, who deliver services and career development support using ICT.

For example, in the schools, the personal contact in guidance and counseling is the preferred approach.

In curriculum-based classrooms, educational and vocational orientation, additional individual career counseling by school counselors is utilized.

ICT is used to support these services, through school board web-sites and additional services from national, provincial, local and institutional providers. The websites contain information about educational pathways, further vocational training, and includes tests and self-checks concerning individual interests, personal competences and attitudes.

In higher education, a nation-wide structure of counseling centers and services exists, for universities, universities of applied sciences, and additional student organizations. All of these services are combined with ICT services for easy access to all. School and Higher Education cooperate, also using ICT, in a program and service for study guidance and counselings (www.18.plus.at) at the interface between school and higher education.

Top 3 Barriers for Youth Employment:

1. Lack of basic education skills.
2. Lack of motivation, or disengagement from youth.
3. Lack of early access and insight into the real working life.

In the area of adult education and further training (in each of the nine provinces) a portal exists containing all offers on courses, seminars and further training opportunities for adults; a common Austrian portal is currently in development.

These services are an effective tool used in combination with personal services for guidance and counseling. A powerful ICT service offers the Austrian Public Employment Service PES (AMS). All relevant services and offers of PES in Austria are supported by digital information tools, like "Job room", youth guidance portals, counseling service accesses via Internet etc.

In regional Career Counseling Centers ("BIZ") ICT based services are available, interest tests, information of thousands of educational and vocational training pathways etc. ICT services are provided by many governmental and private actors, at the national, provincial and institutional levels.

How does the use of technology connect with existing structures or provisions of career guidance?

Most of the relevant areas for career guidance and career development ICT tools and services are not stand-alone instruments, but as a part of a integrated approach of provision, combining individual, face to face, group settings etc. with ICT support. Or allow for easy access to client via ICT and give clients the opportunity to find easy access to providers.

What are the challenges your country faces related to Emerging Technologies?

The most challenging task in use of ICT tools in career guidance and career development, especially for youth, is to find a consistent approach for an integrated ICT services. It would need to combine the necessary complexity and multiple dimensions of available information with an approach of easy access, ease of use, that appropriately fits the potential user.

A second aspect is to find a way to combine face-to-face, individual, group settings of career guidance and development services with additional support services like job fairs, workshops, and virtual services such as; telephone and e-mail counseling, chat rooms, and access to career guidance information via the Internet.

The third challenge is to keep the balance between personal and virtual services, to avoid the pressure of budget, to substitute personal services by ICT tools, but to build up and continue integrated systems and services using all necessary ways of communication, contacts for counseling, individual, innovative, ICT.



WHY ROI MATTERS

Please describe how the value and impact of policies for workforce preparation, workforce placement, and development of young people is assessed (if at all) in your country.

Depending on the respective background of areas or institutions where workforce preparation, placement or development of young people happen, the assessment procedures work in different ways.

In school, for example, career guidance is documented in a qualitative way, depending on the special conditions of different school types. Some schools evaluate the pathways of their graduates within a overall quality assurance concept, including the aspect, what is the role and impact of guidance for successful (or not) further educational and occupational pathways of their graduates, but this is not a common standard.

A common standard is a statistic approach, within the so called "educational documentation act", a quite detailed quantitative assessment at national level -- all schools are included in this process. However, there is no connection to the qualitative impact of career guidance and career development within this statistical documentation process.

In Public Employment Service (PES), career development and career guidance are topics of high relevance, and are deeply documented and assessed, especially concerning apprenticeship dual education.

PES is responsible for many career development services and these are assessed and evaluated in detail.

Overall surveys of career development services and their effects are taken regularly. But, mostly they are more statistical and quantitative assessments and documentation and not a survey about effectiveness of guidance and counseling effects in a qualitative way.

How is the value of career guidance provision in supporting such policies measured?

A recent approach measuring the value of career guidance provision for youth is the "Analysis of the Career Development Items in PISA 2012 ..." published as ELGPN Research Paper No.1 in the end of 2014.

For Austria, this is the first time a reflection about the impacts and effects of career guidance from the point of view of users was evaluated in an overall approach.

Until now, discussions and interpretations of these results has not happened, but, it should. It is a great interest of Austria, to share these discussions with other interested partners and nations.

What are the challenges your country faces related to measuring Return on Investment (ROI)?

Austria make some initial efforts in the past few years to improve the awareness and the procedures concerning evaluating and measuring outcomes and effects of education in general and particularly in guidance and career development.

Educational standards, comparable quality levels of exams (Zentralmatura¹) are elements of these efforts as well as the active contribution and use of expertise concerning evidence and measuring of effects within ELGPN – European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network at national and provincial level in Austria. It is a challenge and an interest to continue and to improve this process, and to learn from countries who have longer and more awareness and experience in this topic.

Major Challenges:

1. To improve systems, structures, and services
2. To make services more effective and consistent
3. To make systems more user-oriented



ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Please describe the formal and informal roles and mechanisms that employers play/participate in to support workforce preparation, workforce placement, and development of young people in your country.

The most important formal, and substantial, role of employers, companies and enterprises for workforce preparation, workforce placement and development of young people to support the talent pipeline is the vocational education approach of dual education – apprenticeship.

About 42% of young people in the age between 15 and 20 years in Austria are in a vocational education and training pathway in dual education – apprenticeship, based on national vocational education act, contracted with a company.

About 200 occupational profiles exist; industry, handicraft, commercial, service, tourism... binding for companies. Apprentices are obliged to attend the vocational school, around two month a year. Companies pay for apprentices (“Lehrlingsentschädigung”). Apprentice training on average lasts about three years.

Employers are responsible for fulfilling the occupational profile and for quality of training in the company. The performance of transition processes initial education to working life and the status of youth employment in Austria is strongly depending on this element of Austrian education system and of involvement of employers in workforce preparation, more: to take responsibility to educate the next generation of skilled persons in their branch by their own.

To prepare young people in school for further vocational education and training pathways some school types – particularly the pre-vocational school “Polytechnische Schule” – have a program for in-company-practice for students, which is evaluated as the most effective method to find a good correspondence between the interests and potentials of young people and the needs and demands of employers. But, this method of preparation for young people is not possible in all sectors of school in the same way.

In addition, there are lots of connections between education system and employers, beginning in compulsory school. This gives young people the

opportunity to access to “early work experience” in companies within a career guidance process. In upper secondary vocational schools, companies are members of the board of trustees, and most of these school types have within their curriculum a compulsory in-company-practice during the school life time.

A great variety of programs and projects give schools, students, teachers, enterprises and other partners the opportunity to cooperate together in a more informal way, often supported by social partner organizations like Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Industry.

What policies exist, if any, to support employer engagement? Please refer to occupational and labor market information, work experience, interventions in education and training institutions, and career guidance.

An overall policy approach in Austria is to create an atmosphere of dialogue between the government and the social partners – both employers and employees organizations – concerning education and employment.

Many initiatives are based on this common approach, but of course, not always in an only consensual way. However, there is an overall awareness that education is a necessary preparation for young people to enter the world of work. This helps to meet the labor demands and is a base for joint policies, programs and projects concerning these topics.

A main policy is the overall commitment concerning the National Vocational Education Act, including the “Inclusive Vocational Training”.

Although there is a high continuity over decades in dual apprenticeship education, the involvement of companies and employers in career development is changing. Primarily, depending on trade cycles and the unique situations of various companies and enterprises.

Policy approaches react on that and create programs for support of companies for apprentice education. There are different possible policy strategies, financial grant, support services, additional social or educational activities.

What are the challenges your country faces related to Engaging Employers?

The main challenge is to keep the willingness of employers to invest in education of young people – at the level of enterprises as well at the awareness of whole branches, sectors of business and working life in general.



ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

A challenge is to find strategies, policies and programs to give all young people early access to real places of world of work – this is only possible in real enterprises and companies. Additionally, an aim should be to give teachers the opportunity for insight in companies. In-company-practice for teachers could support strongly an practice-orientated preparation process for young people into working life. Austria has some quite effective experiences in this area, but, Austria is highly interested to find out interesting practice from other countries concerning this topic.



INTEGRATED POLICIES: CREATING SYSTEMS THAT WORK

Please describe how policies for workforce preparation (including entrepreneurship) and workforce placement are integrated or coordinated, if at all, in your country. Who and/or what is driving the integration or coordination? How are local communities and public service users involved, if at all, in those policies?

As a member of European Union, Austria was obliged to develop a National Reform Program that contains the relevant Austrian approaches for education, employment, and, implicit, for workforce development.

The overall driving actor is the government, with the mainly responsible Federal Ministries for Education, for Economics and for Employment and Social affairs, with changing responsibilities and roles during the periods.

Since 2011, a backbone to this mission, is the “National Strategy of Lifelong Learning for Austria”. It combines policy targets for employment and social affairs, while career development, workforce preparation, and entrepreneurship, are integrated elements of this strategy. All concerned Ministries, social partners, and actors at national levels are involved in this strategy process.

This strategy is connected with indicators and benchmarks, and a committed yearly reporting procedure to the National government, so a high

binding component is implemented in this process.

Nevertheless, it is important, to ensure that real effects and consequences out of the strategy process influence the areas of education, employment, workforce preparation, and career development.

Austria is interested to discuss this transfer process from strategy to reality. Austria brings also own experiences in this area into the common discussion process.

To what extent do these sectors coordinate such policy or program initiatives? To what extent do they include career guidance/advice/information provision? How useful and efficient are these to support the policy initiatives?

With the incentive of the OECD Project “Career Guidance Policies” 2000-2003 and the outcomes a strong initiative in Austria was taken. Based on the reflections in the OECD Policy Review a National process started to bring together all relevant actors at national level, with impact also on provincial, local, and institutional levels.

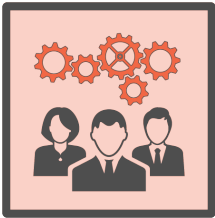
The effect was, in a strong continuity, a national co-ordination Forum for Lifelong Guidance, a continuous program of national and regional conferences to bring together the community of career guidance and development, and to improve regulations and training programs, professionalism at national and provincial level, with Pedagogical Universities and others.

The most important effect is the involvement of a community of people, who are working on career development in different fields and from various approaches. Starting in early childhood education to higher education and further training, in order to find a common awareness of process-orientated career development throughout an individuals lifetime, under different conditions, and to find a common language– even in the own mother tongue – in areas of education, employment, social affairs, concerning support of smooth and successful pathway of young people

What are the challenges your country faces related to Integrated Policies: Creating Systems that work?

The main challenges are to keep the strength of the education, transition, and employment systems, and international relations... particularly the vocational education system, in apprenticeships and in schools.

- To improve the quality of basic education in schools, combined with better insight into real working life, in time.



INTEGRATED POLICIES: CREATING SYSTEMS THAT WORK

- To strengthen the professionalism of the staff in guidance and counseling.
- To implement career guidance and career development as a accepted interdisciplinary academic topic, integrating all other relevant issues.
- To improve procedures and processes to check, evaluate and to measure effects and outcomes of policies and programs to workforce development, career guidance and counseling, as a part of a quality approach in education and employment policy.
- To find resources and finances to support development and strengthening career development programs.
- To convince the overall policy and politics to do this

2015 International Symposium Goal:

“Learn and share how to deal with issues in career development, recognition, and use of talents, support of youth on their way from initial education into working life”



ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Are there any other unique challenges within your country to which you would like to draw attention?

The following questions and challenges are high priority for Austria. We want to share experiences with countries who have the same or similar issues on their agenda.

- School and education performance and outcomes differ between regions, urban or rural, population, social aspects, migration background and other criteria and influence factors.
- Schools that work under similar conditions differ significant in performance and learning outcomes, in all categories of social background, population conditions or other influence factors
- To improve the learning outcomes at all levels those criteria should be identified, what causes the

differences in learning performance ? What is the “secret” of high performing schools? Also, under worse conditions, in relation to others?

- How can we give support to those schools who work under difficult conditions. Austria intends to develop a system to allocate resources depending on needs and demands based on social indicators. *(Austria is interested in the experiences of other countries who have already implemented similar programs.)*
- This topic is highly relevant for transition processes between initial education and working life, concerning the needs and demands of employers concerning the competences of applicants for apprenticeship and employment
- To find measures and procedures to improve competences of young people regarding their preferred occupational education and training pathways is an interest of Austria in career development.



Are there any additional examples of successful programs or policies you would like to share? Please provide references or links to any key reports that have discussed career development in your country.

Austria has worked many years on strategic and operative programs concerning Career development and Lifelong Guidance, at national, regional, local level, with intensive use of outcomes and products out of European and transnational co-operation e.g. in ELGPN and ICCDPP.

Examples of successful policies and programs:

- The development of a Lifelong Guidance Strategy as the first part of a National Lifelong Learning Strategy <http://www.lifelongguidance.at>
- The establishment of a National Lifelong Guidance Forum | <http://erwachsenenbildung.at/themen/bildungsberatung/governance/llg-forum.php>
- The decision of the National Government about a National Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Austria | https://www.bmbf.gv.at/ministerium/vp/2011/llarbeitspapier_ebook_gross_20916.pdf?4dtiae (most of the information is in German...)
- And particularly strategies to special challenges in the area of Youth Policy, like Early School Leavers | https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/schulabbruch_eslstrategie_24401.pdf?4dzgm2 https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/esl_bericht_time_out_1_21306.pdf?4dzgm2
- An asset of the Austrian policy to engage employers into youth education is the concept of apprenticeship, including the preparation in school – especially in pre-vocational schools – and the program of “inclusive apprenticeship”.
- For information regarding apprenticeships in Austria | http://www.bmwf.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/LehrlingsUndBerufsausbildung/Documents/NEU_HP_Apprenticeship.pdf

What is the extent and nature of government funding to support these developments? From which sources and for what purposes (distinguishing system development, system maintenance, and service delivery)? Where possible, please quantify the government funding provided.

This topic in Austria is quite diverse. Depending on the federal structure of the Republic Austria, the complex administration structures at several levels a clear picture about funding for career development is given for specific programs and policies, not yet for the whole approach of Career development, Lifelong Guidance, Youth transition from initial education to world of work.

First steps for more transparency were made within ELGPN in the last period, that should continue.

Become a catalyst for change.

Join policy-makers and international career development experts in creating world-wide opportunity equality for youth and adults.

The International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) works to promote policy sharing and knowledge transfer in the career development sectors of education and employment. By participating in ICCDPP, you'll gain the insights and knowledge needed to serve as a catalyst for career development policy changes needed around the world.

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