

PREVOCATIONAL TRAINING SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) IN GERMANY

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Abstract

The article presents the analysis of educational situation of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Germany based on the example of Prevocational Training in a Vocational Training Institute. German Federal Law is discussed in the context of Germany Federal States regulations that have their own cultural sovereignty. Systems of special and regular education, performing vocational training and prevocational counselling are discussed in parallel with pupils having special educational needs education and preparation for the labour market relationships. Case of Vocational Training Institute Kirchseeon/Berufsbildungswerk Kirchseeon (BBW Kirchseeon) reflects compatibility of the needs of individual pupils with SEN and possibilities to get into labour market and general state regulations. On this basis, vocational education has the task to find ways for a precisely fitting promotion.

Key words: *students with SEN, vocational/pre-vocational counselling, institution education, legal system of Germany*

Introduction

The integration of vocational education and training is important for giving students with special educational needs the opportunity to access mainstream provision during their education and in their future working life. Curricula should include workplace behaviours, occupational skills and careers awareness, as well as provide work exploration opportunities to help learners with special educational needs identify career interests and be proactive in developing the skills critical to a successful transition (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012).

The agenda of educational policy in Germany implies that all young people should have the possibility to absolve a vocational training successfully or to take up gainful employment. Even young people with special educational needs should achieve this goal. Due to these special educational demands, proposals are offered to those in need for the permanent integration in the working life and society.

“Behind this concept is a particular image of humanity. Every human has multiple skills and talent potentials which can develop or diminish in a lifetime. Young people with special

educational needs often have a set of negative socialisations and learning experiences. In many cases they were confronted with unfavourable parameters under which they could not develop optimally. At the end of their school career and at the entry to adulthood they seem as dropouts or display behavioural problems to people, whose high expectations they cannot meet. In contrary the job integration promotion does not focus on the weaknesses of the young people but on the skills and talents. They believe in the young people and try to build up their trust in their own skills and talents” (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2005).

Vocational counselling is important for all students, but it is especially critical with learning disabilities. Learners with special educational needs should be helped to develop self-awareness skills and to recognise potential roles for themselves in the community. Students with special educational needs should document their future vocational plans and how to develop them through personal vocational portfolios providing evidence of their achievement (Lundine & Smith, 2006).

However, the nature of occupations is changing dramatically. New job creation has been concentrated on knowledge and technology jobs rather than production or extraction jobs. The demand for specific vocational skills has been augmented with a growing need for general skills, including reasoning abilities, general problem-solving skills, and behavioural skills (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2002). As Carnevale & Desrochers (2002) stated, cognitive styles, such as how workers handle success and failure on the job, are also positively related to job success. Occupational and professional skills are also needed. Sitlington, Neubert, & Clark (2010) indicate a number of studies that have found that the transition to employment can be positively affected by the work-based learning programs covered in schools. The authors have found that one of the most effective methods of approaching the knowledge and skills needed by youth with special educational needs in preparation for employment is to focus on three major areas: 1) occupational awareness, 2) employment-related knowledge and skills, and 3) specific occupational knowledge and skills.

Object of the research:

Prevocational training of SEN pupils in Germany: analysis of legal system in the context of education practice

The goal of the research:

To analyze prevocational training of SEN pupils in Germany: in the context of legal system.

Methods of the research: Article is presented by using Method of Public Ethnography. It is a method usually used by researcher who is interested and presents problems of present time in various social areas (human rights, public health, culture, education, etc.) (Borofsky, 2000). Researcher as a qualified and intellectual observer, describe and analyze own experience in the context of public problems. Researcher tries to present report in a way that could be understandable for society. The results of such kind of the research (which hardly could be named as research according to the ordinary criteria that are accepted for social science) often looks like text of publicist genre. This kind of research appears at the end of XX century when social sciences were forced to uncloset to the non-professional audience (Tedlock, 2005).

The possibilities of support for pupils with special educational needs in Germany

Many European countries are implementing inclusive education, but in some countries, such as Germany and Slovakia, learners with special educational needs and the majority of people with learning disabilities are placed into segregated settings (Pohl & Walther, 2007). There is some suggestion that these institutions are an alternative for learners who do not have the opportunity to find a job in the open labour market or find a place in a supported occupation programme. The aim of these programmes is mainly focused on developing vocational skills

(Lifshitz & Klein, 2007). In Germany the Federal States have their own cultural sovereignty. As a cause of this, in Germany "... the support of pupils with SEN excels through a variety of organisations and methods ..." – a fact that was stated and published by the cultural minister's conference (Kultusminister konferenz, 2012). In detail it is stated: "the plurality of the support facilities, experiences with combined classes of pupils with and without disabilities, educational scientific thinking and school political fundamentals in the different Federal States of Germany made clear, that a personal related, individualized point of view of special educational support and integrative education has priority to institutional orientated support. ... In conclusion, pupils with special educational needs can be integrated in grammar schools or learn in special schools" (Kultusminister konferenz, 2012).

"In addition, these goals and developments in the Federal States should be accordant to the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN-BRK) which are mandatory in Germany since 26 March 2009" (Kultusminister konferenz, 2012).

It starts before school-beginning: If the children cannot get the necessary support in other extracurricular institutions (e.g. kindergarten), "... In this case the special schools perform the special educational support, by training and education according to the individual character of the children. The support focus and programs correspond to the particular special school (Bayerisches Gesetz über das Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen, 2000).

Grade 1 and 2, primary level, in schools for special educational needs are called DFK.

"Those are especially for children who start school and cannot participate in the lessons of the regular classes with sufficient performance and could not be supported enough by placing back" (Bayerisches Gesetz über das Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen, 2000). If necessary, those classes can be extended by a form 1A. The basis of those lessons is the curriculum of the elementary schools.

"By taking children in a DFK it should be prevented, that the children are even more impaired in their personal development through constant failure" (Heide-Schule zur Lernförderung)¹.

The main goal is getting qualified pupils back to a public elementary school by targeted measures.

If the pupil is not able to change to regular school, she/he has to visit a remediation schools, which can be formed for special support focus vision, special support focus hearing, special support focus physical and motor development, special support focus intellectual development, special support focus language, special support focus learning, special support focus social and emotional development (according to Para. Art. 20 Bayerisches Gesetz über das Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen, 2000).

For those SEN-pupils, who can visit the regular, local school, a Mobile Special Educational Service (MSD) is possible (accord. to Para. Art. 21 Bayerisches Gesetz über das Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen, 2000). The MSD offers individual counselling and support for children and young people with different support focus in public schools and also for teachers, parents and legal guardians. This service guarantees that pupils with special educational needs can attend their local public school, by bringing the special pedagogues directly to place where the services are needed.

Para. 30a Bayerisches Gesetz über das Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen (2000) regulates the cooperation of schools by the creation of cooperation- and external school classes. With approval from the participating school authorities external classes can be held at general schools, at a remedial school or in remedial classes in a general school. This enables especially intense forms of mutual lessons and joint school life.

¹ Heide-Schule zur Lernförderung. Retrieved from <http://www.heideschuleschwebheim.de/Diagnose-FoerderklassenInfo.html>.

A cooperation class is a class of a general school which admits a group of pupils with special educational needs. In that case the special educational needs should neither qualitatively nor quantitatively be so high that only an education in a remedial school should come into consideration. The purpose of cooperation classes is to lead a group of pupils from a remedial school back to a general school.

“By pooling pupils with (yet present) special educational needs in a general school class the social ties of the pupils from the remedial school stay preserved and furthermore a more efficient usage of mobile special educational services is enabled. Through this close cooperation of the general school and the remedial school especially with the mobile special educational services it is a much targeted special promotion of the appropriate pupils. The basis of the lesson plan in the cooperation classes is the curriculum of the general primary and secondary schools. The pupils with special educational needs attend those lessons too, but they receive additional – or in single cases as an alternative – special educational group promotion” (Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus, 2006).

During the last two school-years counselling by an adviser of Federal Labour Agency, which belongs to “Federal Institute of Agency”, starts. This agency is a governmental organisation, which is responsible for fulfilling the tasks which the established law provides them with. The main tasks for the labour agency are: mediation apprenticeship and jobs, job counselling, support of vocational training, support of further job training, support of job integration of people with disabilities, payment to preserve and create jobs, compensations, for example, unemployment benefit or insolvency benefit.

In context of job counselling, the legal requirements for the agencies to sponsoring a vocational training and support the job integration of a person with disabilities are:

- Sozialgesetzbuch Drittes Buch Arbeitsförderung (2004) III: §§ 1 – 3 und 7 SGB III ff - § 19 SGB III/§ 2 SGB IX – Basis for all decisions and –
- Sozialgesetzbuch Drittes Buch Arbeitsförderung (2004) SGB X: Part I > governing the rehabilitation (for example, the special educational needs), Part II > governing the particularities with people with severe disabilities.

In the sense of § 2 Paragraph 1 SGB IX people are considered “having disabilities”, “if their physical constitution, intellectual ability or mental health are, with high probability, longer than 6 months different from the typical condition for their age and as a cause of this, their participation in society life is impaired. They are considered having disabilities if this impairment is to be expected.”

If a young person has special educational needs or a disability, special help is needed to take part in the working life. The counselling and support is done by the “Rehabilitations-counsellor” (= Job counsellor for people with severe disabilities and pupils with special educational needs). The counselling and support starts in the penultimate class: vocational orientation proposals – additional to the teacher – are supported by school social workers and job entry tutors, school counselling is on behalf of the education plan of the teachers, together with the parents and, if there is consent, there are further helpers; parent-teacher-meetings, school conference and visits to a job information centre. Before entering a measure, aptitude tests, medical assessment and short measures in institutions to assess vocational qualification are performed.

Possibilities for young people with SEN after school

Helping youth with disabilities in transition from school to a quality adult life is a complex task involving the coordination of multiple personnel, agencies, programs, and services. Kochhar-Bryant & Greene (2009) mention The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, in which it is stated that transition services must be a “coordinated set of activities for a

child with a disability that is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post school activities including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported living), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation". However, the authors note that no single agency is capable of offering the vast array of transition services and programs needed by the full range of students with special educational needs and they offer interagency collaboration which could involve the formation of interagency transition teams and the writing of interagency agreements.

In Germany the promotion, as already mentioned, depends on the severity of the disability. Students who require little care are able to start a vocational training in a company. Therefore the companies could get a subsidy from agency of labour or the students may, upon application, receive a care in the form of flanking training assistance. This support includes additional tutoring as well as a social and educational support.

SEN-students, which would be able to start a vocational training, but do not have enough theoretical knowledge at that time, can visit a prevocational year in a Vocational school, where they get good preparation for the following vocational training.

For those SEN-students who need more practical training (for example: they have to improve their motor skills) or develop their personal/social abilities, the visit to a Prevocational Training is adequate.

Which Prevocational Training (with very few, normal or a lot of support) is appropriate for the SEN-students, depends on their abilities/disabilities and will be decided by the adviser of agency of labour after different tests.

In the following, one example of a vocational institute for SEN-students, who need a lot of support, is shown:

Vocational counselling for young people with SEN at the Vocational Training Institute Kirchseeon/Berufsbildungswerk Kirchseeon (BBW Kirchseeon)

Vocational training institutes enable students with severe disabilities like learning difficulties, psychic problems, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impediment, autism, physical disabilities, epilepsy to start a vocational education. These students do not have the opportunity to get a vocational training in a regular company, because their disability is too extensive and they need a lot of support and advancement.

In Germany there are 52 such Institutions, which capacitate young persons with disabilities to finish a vocational training with a diploma like a vocational training² in a regular company.

All measures and vocational trainings have to be financed by the Federal Labour Agency or other sponsors like welfare agencies or insurances.

The Vocational Training Institute Kirchseeon offers a variety of measures:

Vocational training

The vocational training is performed in own workshops, according to the guidelines for vocational education: §5 BBiG (Sozialgesetzbuch Drittes Buch Arbeitsförderung vom III, 2004) /§25 HWO (Handwerksordnung (HandwO) in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung, 1998) "Complete vocational training" and §66 BBiG/42m HWO "Assistant's training". Vocational

² Vocational training normally takes place in companies according to the "Dual System", that means: working in a company, learning professional-practical contents of the occupation and visiting a vocational school for about 10 hours a week. After 2-3,5 years (depending on the occupation) there is a examination by a chamber or agency. There are nearly 380 different occupations in Germany. After the successful examination the apprentices are skilled workers.

training in 24 different occupations in the fields is offered: metal, wood, colour and interior design, printing and paper processing, nutrition, horticulture, car care and store. Participants attend own vocational school with specified curriculum (for SEN-students). Intermediate and final examinations take place at various chambers.

Testing the abilities in one profession (20 days)

By operating appropriate exercises and tests, the skills and necessary requirements for a special vocational education or occupation are checked.

Testing the abilities in different professions (up to 60 days)

The students have to accomplish several tests to get to know the manual, academic, personal and social skills and resources. Practical tests in different professions are performed. The students visit one school class in the nurture vocational school.

Internship/Practical course (during the regular school time on request)

Pupils from special schools are offered to test different workshops, to experience the vocational workaday-life and to collect impressions of their own vocational interests and skills.

For students who cannot commute to the Vocational training institute daily or who wish to obtain additive support in learning for school, for their personal development or in their transition into independence, different forms of living and supervision in boarding houses are offered.

Each student is accompanied by a coordinator, a social pedagogue. Students can attend Special Services like Medical Service and Psychological Service on demand, additionally.

The disabilities of the students are not limited only to the deficient school achievements; most of the pupils are restricted in many cognitive skills, too.

As a result the support has to be all-embracing and on a broad level (e.g. support of social competences, communication skills, life skills, etc.).

With the help of an Individual Training Plan it is possible to record every small development step of the students and work together with him/her on a realistic vocational goal.

Vocational Preparatory Training (VPT)

The Concept of the “Prevocational Training” has been renewed in 2004. The training is funded by Federal Agency of labour for those students, who need a very intensive support in vocational counselling.

Which training is appropriate for SEN-students, depends on their abilities/disabilities. If the restraints are too severe it means: for companies it would be too much effort to deal with SEN-students, there are VTI in Germany with own workshops.

The objectives, tasks and contents of VTT are regulated in the Conception-Paper “Prevocational training activities: “The goal of VPT: Vocational Preparatory Training should prepare for subsequent studies or serve for vocational integration. Preparation and integration to a vocational training is to prefer. If it is not possible to achieve this goal during the preparatory training, the training changes into a preparation for a job” § 61 / § 61 a Sozialgesetzbuch Drittes Buch Arbeitsförderung vom III, 2004.

The main tasks include:

- to give a vocational orientation
- the opportunity of getting tested for suitable jobs according to one’s skills
- guiding while making a career choice
- to impart the students with the necessary knowledge and skills for the initial vocational training (and maybe even graduate) or – if this is (still) not possible –
- to prepare (as sustainable as possible) and integrate the participants for inclusion in the regular labour market.

VPT is a support program for young persons from special schools and secondary schools with learning difficulties, with permanent learning disabilities, with behavioural problems or psychological disorders and for those, who are not able to work at that time or the first attempt of the preparatory training was not successful.

The respective qualification level and the duration of the VPT depends on the individual needs, the integration prospects and possibilities of the participant; it is normally 11 months. For participants exclusively with the aim of starting an employment, a maximum of 18, in exceptional cases to 24 months

The starting of the VPT can be made all over the year.

Procedure of the VPT

The VPT starts with the Analysis of abilities. It is the basis for an individual training plan, covering the technical, methodological, social and personal skills of participants. The students are assigned to different groups. Several tests (Hamet 2, school capacity test) and various cooperation tasks are performed and the individual training plan will be created. This phase lasts 3 weeks.

Next stage is the Elementary Stage. The core element is the Vocational orientation and the choice of vocation. Therefore, the students check different vocational areas according to their interests and abilities in strict accordance to the individual training plan. The advancement of their abilities and skills is organised by appropriate measures. At the end of every checkout there is a statement by the instructor concerning the practical aptitude for a vocational training or activity in this vocational area.

The elementary stage is concluded as soon as the participant has made a vocational decision and if he/she has the necessary personal abilities and skills for starting the vocational training or professional activity.

The institute offers 13 practical test-areas/occupations for students. These are: metal works, industrial bookbinding, carpeting, painting, interior decoration, horticulture, landscaping, car care, baker, sales assistant/bakery, cook, housekeeping, specialist for hotel and restaurant.

Including the Analysis of abilities this phase lasts up to 6 months.

If the aptitude to begin a vocational training or a professional activity could not be achieved after Elementary Stage, this further pre-professional stage, Support Stage, will take place.

Core element is the advancement of professional basic skills of the SEN-student. The student is introduced in one vocational area which is apt to her/his skills. Specific exercises are conducted in order to increase the practical and technical-motor skills. It is an intensively practically preparation for the evident vocational training or professional activity. During this phase, 60% of participants led by an internship in a company to learn about the reality of professional work of the chosen profession.

For the sake of inclusion, it is important that these participants learn to act self-confident in the companies and apply the knowledge they have acquired in the institution, in the companies. With the help of several internships, including during training, the participants gradually lose that fear.

Additionally reflective discussions to develop a positive working and social behaviour of participants are carried out.

This stage ends when the student is able to start a vocational training or start working in a company (without a vocational training).

The duration is up to 5 months.

For participants, who cannot achieve their aim after 11 months, in special cases, the VPT can be extended for 7 months more by the Transition qualification stage. By further advancement

the chances to start a vocational training or for finding an activity on the employment market have to be improved. In the prospective workshop it will be an introduction and practical preparation respectively at the prospective job according to the individual training plan. The duration acts on the individual qualification needs of the participant.

Vocational preparatory training starts with elementary stage, which stages the participant will pass through is a result from the analysis of abilities or the elementary stage. It results from the work order of the benefactor and is obvious from the incorporation proposal (= enrolment).

School attendance

All participants are attending the vocational school for students with special needs. The average size of class is located at around 10 participants. Core themes are the subjects of mathematics, German, technical drawing and social studies. The goals are: to bridge gaps at theory, to reduce existent deficiencies, to create a basic knowledge for the planned subsequent vocational training or professional activity. Participants with adequate abilities do have the opportunity to prepare themselves for a graduation which is on the same level like the secondary school qualification.

Education-attendant

All participants are coached by socio-pedagogical education-attendants. Their tasks are:

- counselling, attendance, crisis intervention, group work, developing the qualification plan in consultation with the participants including updates; they have to organize and supervise the process of vocational decision. The Education-attendant is responsible for the determination of vocational aptitude of the participants; she/he receives important data and information about the participant and gives them to the concerned staff, parents and the authorized specialist counsellor (of the labour agency) and initiates further activities and summarises the results of the different qualification stages to a report.

Advancement and qualification sequences

Vocational orientation, vocational choice and vocational basic skills

The participants get theoretical and practical insights in different professional areas by pedagogically trained instructor/trainer, special pedagogues and education-attendants. They are introduced into requirements of several occupational fields and appropriate practical know-how. Practical assignments and theoretical knowledge is mediated during the different qualification stages, it is figured in the subject-specific technical qualification modules, which are created for the vocational preparatory training.

Working/Fabric Qualification

SEN-students have the opportunity to check their competences at real conditions in the context of practical training in companies, to learn new aspects and get to know the professional daily routines. For participants, who are mature for professional activity, but not able to start a vocational training: initial training at employment (important assistance to be efficient at the subsequent employment).

Application Assistance

The goal is the advancement of the participant's ability to develop a successful, proactive and marketable application activity. It is offered by education-attendants.

Language Training

It is offered for participants with a migrant biography and is advancement in German language. General linguistic as well as professional contents are mediated.

Staff

Participants will be supported by trained and experienced educational professionals:

In the Workshop Area – VPT-Instructors (in the areas of colour and wood, housekeeping, horticulture and metal) and in all other professional areas there are professional trainers who are teaching the students together with trainees in their work shops (the trainers are masters in additional pedagogical training).

In the School – special education school teachers teach the participants in small classes, impart subject matter and give them special courses (advancement in basics like mathematics and German).

In Boarding house – educators and graduate social workers take care of students in different groups.

Medical service – a specialist in occupational medicine and a nurse perform medical analysis for students to check out which occupation they are able to do or to sustain the students when they got ill.

Education-attendants are certified social pedagogues (MA, GSW and MSW) who coach the participants.

Psychologists attend the participants if they need therapeutic care.

Cooperation with the Federal Labour Agency

The expert adviser of rehabilitation of the Federal Labour Agency has to be informed about all important happenings and difficulties during the training. She/he wants to know about long absences and essential changes of planning and is studying the report of the results of education and further planning (written by the Education-attendant at the end of the different phases: Elementary stage, Support stage and Transition qualification stage). Further planning has to be discussed with the expert adviser.

Conclusions

SEN-students need, explained above, a step by step, well structured guidance, a lot of support and continual repetitions in the practical and educational area plus an intensive social pedagogic in some cases additional psychological care and accompaniment.

Whether they can do a vocational training in a company with additional support or visit a Vocational Preparatory Training depends on their disabilities. Inclusion as much as possible is self-evident. For SEN-students with a severe disability, an institution with internal workshops and a close collaboration with the teachers of the special vocational school are necessary. For those SEN-students it is important to enjoy a pleasant learning atmosphere in which they can learn without fear and have the courage to ask questions if there are any uncertainties and have the support of assistants at anytime, so that they never feel helpless.

Of course, the whole topicality of “inclusion” has to be very important for all pedagogues who are working in the field of education.

On the basis of Paragraph 24 of the UN-Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the right to education, equal opportunities are guaranteed.

Among other things, the following goals were established, that “people with disabilities have to develop their personality, their talents and creativity, and their intellectual and physical abilities to a complete elaboration” and that “people with disabilities should not be excluded from general education system as a cause of their disabilities”.

The Contract States assure that appropriate arrangements for the needs of the individual are complied.

In Germany this is guaranteed by:

In spite of a divided education system no pupils are excluded from the general education system. A school change is only done with approval of the young people and their parents.

The admission in a vocational training in an institution like VTI/BBW Kirchseeon is only possible by application of the young people with SEN and their parents. During the measure an important context is to facilitate the student a realistic sight of the working reality. This is done by working and producing goods in the workshops of the institutions, internships in and a close cooperation with companies.

According to “inclusion-efforts” VTI Kirchseeon provides a special measure: an “inter-locked vocational training with Vocational Training Institutes” in which the trainee works in a company for 6 months continuously.

Ultimately the most important aim independently of the membership to a country the supreme maxim of every school, every measure centre and every institution should be:

Finding an individually suitable employment on the regular labour market for every participant with SEN. Common concepts and best practices should be created in the community of the European Union.

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PREVOCATIONAL TRAINING SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) IN GERMANY

Summary

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The nature of occupations is changing dramatically. The demand for specific vocational skills has been augmented with a growing need for general skills, including reasoning abilities, general problem-solving skills, and behavioural skills. The integration of vocational education and training is important for giving students with special educational needs the opportunity to access mainstream provision during their education and in their future working life. All young people should have the possibility to absolve a vocational training successfully or to take up gainful employment. Even young people with special educational needs should achieve this goal. Due to these special educational demands, proposals are offered to those in need for the permanent integration in the working life and society.

The article presents the analysis of educational situation of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Germany based on the example of Prevocational Training in a Vocational Training Institute. The aim of the article is to analyze prevocational training of SEN pupils in Germany: in the context of legal system.

On the basis of Paragraph 24 of the UN-Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the right to education, equal opportunities are guaranteed. Among other things, following goals were established, that “people with disabilities have to develop their personality, their talents and creativity, and their intellectual and physical abilities to a complete elaboration” and that “people with disabilities should not be excluded from general education system as a cause of their disabilities”.

In spite of a divided education system in Germany no pupils are excluded from the general education system. A school change is only done with approval of the young people and their parents. The admission in a vocational training institution is only possible by application of the young people with (SEN) and their parents too.

Prevocational education in a vocational training institution consists of vocational counselling, vocational preparatory training, advancement and qualification sequences and cooperation with the Federal Labour Agency in Germany. Students with SEN also need well structured guidance, a lot of support and continual repetitions in the practical and educational area and an intensive social pedagogic in some cases additional psychological care and accompaniment.

The vocational training institution in Germany offers a variety of measures: vocational training, testing the abilities in one profession, testing the abilities in different professions, internship/practical course (during the regular school time on request). During the measure an important context is to facilitate the student a realistic sight of the working reality. This is done by: testing the students who have to accomplish several tests to get to know the manual, academic, personal and social skills and resources, and working and producing goods in the workshops of the institutions, internships in and a close cooperation with companies.

The most important and ultimate aim of vocational training has to be finding an individually suitable employment on the regular labour market for every participant with SEN. Common concepts and best practices should be created in the community of the European Union.