5 Governing the vocational education and training system in Germany

The high influx of humanitarian migrants arriving into a host country within a short time frame can challenge the governance of a system. As an integration agenda cuts across different polices, the governance structure of vocational education and training (VET) aiming integration is complex. Governing the system in a coherent and effective manner can therefore be an issue. This chapter identifies two key challenges in Germany: 1) how to ensure policy coherence across education, labour market and social policies; and 2) how to secure co-operation and peer learning across the regions. Policy options in relation to the development of an overarching strategy and the co-ordination of its delivery are proposed. Taking steps to further enhance evidence and data is important in order to inform decision making and identify good practice. Further, opportunity exists to enhance peer learning between the regions on effective and innovative practices.

The complexity in the governance of VET

The governance of VET aiming integration is a complex issue across OECD countries

For the purpose of this study, governance is defined as the formal and informal arrangements that determine how decisions related to the migrant integration through VET are made, who makes them and on what basis (OECD, 2018[1]). Key aspects of governance can be defined through four activities:

- Defining goals and decision making: articulating a common set of principles for society.
- Creating coherence: co-ordination and consistency of policy goals.
- Steering: mechanisms and instruments for attaining goals.
- Accountability: holding key actors responsible for their actions and decisions (Pierre and Peters 2005, as cited in (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]).

The OECD's Skills Strategy (2019[3]) identifies four key building blocks in strengthening the governance of skills systems. These are promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government, engaging stakeholders, building integrated information systems and aligning co-ordinating financing arrangements.

In response to the high influx of migrants arriving into the country within a short time period in 2015-16, numerous measures have been implemented in Germany at the local, regional and federal level by a broad diversity of actors. Unsurprisingly, the issue of integrating migrants involves inherent challenges to governance across OECD countries (OECD, 2018[4]). First, the policy area involves many stakeholders and cuts across traditional policy lines within governments. Responsibilities are often divided and placed across many different ministries and underlying agencies. Integrating migrants through VET involves at least three main broad policy areas which are interlinked: education, labour market and social policy. Further, integration of migrants into society and work is a long term project, which means that it can be difficult to measure effects of policy implementation. Countries also have to a varying degree long-term experiences with migrant integration into the labour market. It can take a long time to equip both migrants and natives with immigrant parents with the skills needed for a sustained integration into the labour market on equal basis as the native population. Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) data show that students with an immigrant background tend to underperform in school (OECD, 2018[5]). In the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), data show that the labour market outcomes of migrants tend to lag behind those of the native-born across the OECD countries (OECD, 2018[6]).

Moreover, education systems have in general become increasingly complex due to a number of developments within society. Information about the performance of education systems is becoming more plentiful, and the focus on individual learner needs has increased. Driven by fast-spaced technological change, the labour market is becoming more dynamic. Because of this complexity, finding the right balance between ensuring a governance system that is responsive towards local needs, while at the same time ensures a unified policy is challenging at the best of times. Regardless of the migrant situation, education governance is an issue receiving increased attention (Burns and Köster, 2016[7]). Although the governance of VET cannot be not separated from the governance of general education, VET systems have some specific features that should be reflected in a governance model. These features are related to the larger number of stakeholders engaged in VET and the need for VET provision to reflect the changing needs of the labour market (Oliver, 2010[8]). Governments with engaged stakeholders in driving coherent policy agendas are more likely to have economic gains compared to governments with uncoordinated and conflicting policies (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

The complexity of governance on the issue of VET and migrants in Germany

The governance structure in Germany involves numerous actors, first at the federal level, further within the 16 *Länder* and then at a local level. As Germany is a federal state the principle of decentralisation and recognition of autonomous *Länder* stands strong. At the federal level, several ministries and underlying agencies hold separate responsibility for policy affecting the integration process of migrants into VET. Stakeholders are involved in the policy making through consultation processes.

The Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) are responsible for setting up the introduction courses that mainly consists of language training for migrants. The Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the Public Employment Services (PES) are responsible for employment measures, including some of the preparatory measures provided within the transition system, including vocational language courses, as well as employment measures for adults. The PES is organised with one federal office, as well as ten regional offices and numerous local agencies.

Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) characterise the governance of education in Germany as highly complex. In the case of VET, governance includes a clear division of responsibilities between the federal and *Länder* level, as well as the extensive involvement of social partners in decision-making processes on, for instance, the development of the system and the content of training regulations and occupational profiles. While such engagement has many strengths, it also presents challenges for strategic leadership.

The German education system is a state-run, predominantly public-sector, legally regulated structure comprising various education institutions. Under the Basic Law, it falls within the sovereignty of the *Länder* and is delivered through a federal structure. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) which regulates apprenticeship training, whereas the *Länder* run the VET schools. The Vocational Training Act sets out the responsibilities of the chambers as bodies overseeing the in-company part of the dual apprenticeship system. Federal training regulations exist for each of the recognised apprenticeship occupations, while the school-based sector is under the responsibility of the *Länder* (Protsch and Solga, 2016[10]), each of which work under wide ranging educational legislation and administration models. As some professions follow a school-based model, the *Länder* are responsible for these. There is in addition a great deal of autonomy in how the *Länder* choose to implement federal policy. This can result in great variation between the 16 *Länder* in implementing the same overall federal initiatives (KMK, 2017[11]). At the local level many actors are involved, such as municipalities, VET schools, employers, and local employment agencies, social partners, private service providers, volunteers and migrant associations.

Challenges can arise in securing consistency in policy and co-operation across the regions

In response to recent significant increase in humanitarian migrants, there has been a proliferation of initiatives. The unprecedented migration situation of 2015-16, effective policy making and implementation has demanded all relevant stakeholders to work together. However, the role of the federal government has always been constrained to setting the regulatory framework and facilitating horizontal and vertical co-ordination (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). Three main challenges arise when looking into how Germany can govern the system, namely: ensuring unity across the three main policy domains (integration, labour market and education), securing evidence to inform policy decisions and secure co-operation and peer learning across the regions.

Ensuring policy coherence

The challenge of ensuring policy coherence

Many measures have in recent years been implemented by a broad range of stakeholders

A great range of measures has been developed and implemented in order to effectively integrate recent arrivals into society and work. Compared to many other countries Germany has developed and implemented measures that are refugee specific (Scholten et al., 2017[12]), although these measures have been small in scope. Germany has responded to the challenge with a combination of existing policy tools and a number of new initiatives, launched by many different public or private stakeholders at different levels. Efforts have been considerable in especially setting up language courses.

This proliferation of initiatives has led to significant variations across *Länder*. One example is seen within the broad variety of preparatory measures, as seen in Chapter 2. Moreover, in addition to measures funded by the federal government or the regional authorities, there have also been many other local measures. German has focused on getting migrants ready for educational opportunities and especially through the transition system. The vision has been to support migrants to be able to participate productively within work-based learning as an entry to full immersion in the labour market. In enhancing VET provision, a number of interventions aimed specifically at enhancing migrant participation have been introduced.

The risk of a complex governance structure can be a lack of co-ordination between stakeholders and overlaps in provision

As many government agencies are involved in policy making and also in providing services to migrants, the risks exist of a lack of co-ordination between important actors, as well as of overlap in measures or services being provided (OECD, 2019[3]). Within the German education system in general, challenges have been identified in a lack of transparency, co-ordination and communication between the many actors involved (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). Risks have been understandably exacerbated by the unprecedented numbers of migrants seeking protection in recent years. Similar challenges in the field of VET are to be expected.

The OECD (2017[13]) has previously argued that co-operation between the authorities being responsible for the recent arrivals in Germany can be enhanced. Responsibilities move between the employment agency and the local job centres when the status of a migrant changes from asylum seeker to refugee, and several studies have pointed out challenges in this regards, which can be linked to lack of co-ordination and duplication of measures provided (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016[14]). There is no consistent solution to this challenge across Germany today, and *Länder* have found different ways of dealing with the problem. The OECD has recommended simplifying these structures by either transferring the responsibility for both groups of migrants to one office or to create one-stop shops (Degler and Liebig, 2017[15]). Other studies have also highlighted the desirability of creating co-ordinating units locally, for instance by establishing a task force consisting of members of employment services, job centres representatives of immigrations offices and social workers from the municipalities. One of these solutions can be seen in North Rhine Westphalia which has created an Integration Point (Box 5.1). For a different target group, some *Länder* have established Youth Employment Agencies in order to increase co-ordination. While variation in practice can suggest measures which are responsive to specific circumstances, they also suggest remedial co-ordinating action that is ad hoc and inconsistent across the country.

A second challenge is linked to a risk of overlap in measures leading to potential inefficiencies in delivery. When several authorities are responsible and involved in the integration process, the lines between these responsibilities can be blurred, especially when migrants are transitioning from one course to the next. One example can be when migrants transition from language courses, which the BAMF are responsible

for, into preparatory measures, which the PES often is responsible for and that also have strong components of language learning. The co-ordination of available measures to recent arrivals is important in order to avoid overlap in the services and to ensure progression and an individualised approach. Opportunity exists to build on the work of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMAG), established in 2016-17, to co-ordinate the federal government's integration policy with the aim of achieving consistency, and to enable networks in between the ministries (BAMF, 2005[16]). The mandate of this group is to formulate recommendations, taking into account the different responsibilities of the federal ministries (BAMF, 2010[17]).

Box 5.1. Integration Points in North Rhine Westphalia

Integration Points are one-stop shops introduced in 2015/2016 in North Rhine Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg in order to centralise, accelerate, and simplify migration services and to avoid overlapping structures. Within these centres, the PES, Jobcenters and municipal agencies – typically migration and social welfare agencies – co-ordinate their services. Some integration points also include partners such as youth agencies, refugee networks, and other civil society organisations.

Integration Points provide counselling services in various languages on topics such as social welfare, assessment of skills and education; recognition of foreign certifications and professions; language courses and professional/educational integration; and job placements.

Source: Degler, E. and T. Liebig (2017[15]), *Finding their Way. Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Germany*, http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Finding-their-Way-Germany.pdf.

The federal strategy on integration covers VET, but it lacks concrete, measurable goals

The German government has over the last decade developed several action plans on the integration of migrants, with elements relevant to VET provision. The latest plan from 2012 describes an impressive range of measures implemented. Within education and VET, four main strategic areas are defined, in addition to four indicators which aim relevant to migrants within the educational provision (Box 5.2). The plan does not, however, include clear, concrete and measureable objectives on what the government aims to achieve with its efforts to integrate migrants through VET. Also, a broad range of measures targeting migrants and VET has been developed in recent years, which can indicate a need to update the strategy. Thränhardt and Weiss (2017[18]) describe the integration policy on a federal level as lacking coherence. The weakness in national strategy can make it more difficult for the proliferation of policy initiatives, managed by multiple federal, regional, local and private administrations to align around a clear and measurable set of objectives. The German authorities are currently working on updating the Federal Action Plan on Integration.

Some of the regional authorities have developed strategies, but this is not the case across the whole of Germany.

New stakeholder groups have arisen but are to a limited degree involved in the policy development

Germany has a great tradition of a close involvement of the social partners in developing VET policies. The opinions of both employers' and employees' organisations are taken seriously and often incorporated into policy. Continuing to build on the great collaboration is one important part in order to govern the system effectively (OECD, 2019[3]). Historically, migrant organisations have played a role in enabling the integration of newcomers in Germany, first with Greek and Italian organisations taking an active role, and

later with Turkish organisations, for instance through establishments of business communities (Liebig, 2007[19]). The OECD team met with two migrants associations working on issues related to migrant rights and ensuring effective integration exists to increase the involvement of new stakeholder groups on a formal level, also at the federal level, when policies are being developed. The argument for stronger engagement of migrant groups in social partner collaboration related to VET is that migrants, particularly new humanitarian migrants, face barriers to entry into VET that are systematically greater than for natives. Structures that enable dialogue at a decision-making level related to better understanding of how barriers are experienced and the likely effect of remedial measures can be expected to improve progression. Engaging groups which represent migrants also enables stronger communication between the leaders of German VET and migrant communities. Success is related to the capacity of all parties to engage.

Box 5.2. Description of latest action plan related to VET and migrants

The Federal Action Plan on Integration (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration, NAP-I) was published in 2012 as a result of the yearly integration summits, where Federation, *Länder*, municipalities, non-governmental actors and migrant organisations have discussed integration since 2006. The objective of the NAP-I is to make integration policies more binding and to make results measurable. The plan intends to formulate concrete goals and define indicators to monitor the success.

The NAP-I is structured in two main parts: the results of policy dialogues held during summits, and contributions from the *Länder*. Both parts cover 11 topics: 1) Early childhood education, 2) Education and VET, 3) Labour market and work, 4) Migrants in public services, 5) Health, 6) Regional integration, 7) Language and integration course, 8) Sport, 9) Civil society and integration, 10) Media, and 11) Culture.

Within topic 2, Education and VET, four strategic areas are defined on federal level:

1. Optimising the framework conditions for equal opportunities regarding access and participation in education, vocational training and further education.
2. Shaping transitions within the educational- and training-systems and enhance the permeability.
3. Enhance individual support; Identify and support the potential of children, adolescents and (young) adults with a migration background.
4. Continue quality assurance; development and diversify educational research; develop educational reporting in Germany.

The *Länder*, represented by the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (KMK), propose a number of strategic goals within the areas 1, 3 and 4 above, including:

- Area 1: Develop teacher training and strengthen intercultural skills; increase the migrant share of teachers and pedagogues; enhance parent participation and activate social networks, strengthen the recognition of foreign qualifications, improve the transition into VET (e.g. through the initiative "'Educational chains'").
- Area 3: Enhance individual support, i.e. increase education levels, avoid school graduates without upper secondary education, enhance linguistic and intercultural skills.
- Area 4: Capture the migration background in statistics; develop skills frameworks.

As indicators to measure the success, the following are mentioned: 1) Number of migrants in the VET system; 2) Enrolment rate of migrants; 3) Migrant apprentices per field; 4) Highest professional degree of migrants.

Policy messages: Taking steps to ensure consistency in policy across policy domains and governance levels

In the ongoing work of updating the Federal Action Plan, include a specific focus on VET as a mechanism for integrating migrants. The strategy should contain long-term measurable objectives and articulate the cross cutting responsibilities of different ministries to make sure that measures are well co-ordinated.

Continue and strengthen efforts to coordinate policy between the Federal ministries and the underlying agencies to ensure the implementation of the revised strategy and facilitate effective information exchange and policy discussion among key stakeholders.

Policy-making should be co-ordinated with stakeholder groups, including bodies representing migrants.

Policy arguments

A coherent and overall strategy can help ensure consistency

UNESCO and ILO (2018[9]) identify employment, migrants and skills as three complex policy domains where it is important to ensure co-ordination and clarity of purpose. In developing policy in this context, challenges need to be identified and discussed in consultation with the main stakeholders. Establishing a strategy and an implementation plan, including indicators and means to verify them are necessary steps in this regard. Where, at a federal level, strategies are designed in ways to cut across the established lines of responsibilities in between ministries and underlying agencies greater consistency in policy can be expected. Important aspects within such strategies include the need to ensure that related policies are aligned and sustainable, set clear targets that are measurable and create mechanisms to adjust policy, in light of experience, as it is being implemented. This requires a plan to collect data and evidence on the effectiveness of the policy, and share it across federal ministries regions. To build trust and legitimacy, it is important that all stakeholders are aligned behind the objectives of a strategy, and especially the regional authorities. In Switzerland, a country with a similar VET system and governance structure as Germany, the federal government together with the regional authorities have established such a strategy. The strategy includes five measureable targets on how to integrate migrants into upper secondary education, including VET, which are directly tied to funding which regions receive in relation to targets being achieved (Box 5.3). The Danish authorities have also set clear measurable general targets on integration policy, and are monitoring the situation closely (Box 5.5).

Box 5.3. The integration agenda in Switzerland

The Swiss confederation introduced a strategy, the Cantonal Integration Programme, in agreement with the 26 cantons in 2014. Before this, the integration of migrants was the responsibility of the cantons. The programme initially covered four years (2014-2017), followed by a second phase to be implemented over 2018-2021. The strategy covers areas such as language learning, including vocational language training and employability measures.

In addition, the Swiss Federal Government (Federal Department of Justice and Police (EJPD) and Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) together with the cantons (Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education - EDK) and social partners agreed on a national strategy to integrate immigrants into general education, the VET system and eventually the labour market. Introduced in 2016 and currently being implemented, the integration agenda incorporates a three-fold increase of the federal funding from CHF 6 000 to 18 000 per person and year (Koordinationsgruppe Integrationsagenda, 2018[20]).

Funding is tied to five clear targets, which cantons are required to meet:

1. All refugees have a basic knowledge of one national language three years after arrival, at least at A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CFER).

2. 80% of refugee children aged 0–4 are able to communicate in the language spoken at their place of residence by the time they start compulsory schooling.

3. Two-thirds of refugees aged 16–25 are in an upper secondary education (including VET) five years after arrival.

4. Half of adult refugees are sustainably integrated in the labour market seven years after arrival.

5. All refugees are familiar with the Swiss way of life and have contact with Swiss people seven years after arrival.

A common challenge facing countries seeking to integrate young migrants is the need to engage multiple stakeholders. This is especially the case in federalist countries. While a federal structure allows for flexible and tailored solutions, risks of significant variation in outcomes and poor peer learning are high. A general framework for integration has historically been underdeveloped in Switzerland (Liebig, Kohls and Krause, 2012[21]). The Integration Agenda addresses this issue by clearly defining the responsibilities between federal agencies (SEM and SERI), involving social partners as well as developing specific frameworks together with the cantons. The approach ensures that the involvement of cantons and social partners, which is a crucial factor of the Swiss governance system, is respected.

Source: Kantonale Integrationsprogramme (2019[22]), *Integration als Verbundaufgabe*, http://www.kip-pic.ch/de/kip.

Current efforts in co-ordinating policy at the federal level and between the Länder can support the implementation of a strategy and promote collaboration across established governance lines

As is now widely accepted, the process of implementing a strategy can be hindered without a co-ordinating mechanism to resolve cross-ministerial issues (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]). In the case of this study, the ministries and agencies involved at a federal level all have strong interest in ensuring that VET provides migrants with the knowledge and skills demanded by employers so enabling integration within economic and social life. To ensure clarity of purpose across policy domains, coordinating mechanisms can ensure unity in policy and adequate implementation processes (OECD, 2017[23]; ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

There are several models of inter-ministerial co-ordination. One model is that one ministry holds a leading or coordinating function for the policy. Another model is to establish a council over the established agencies which consist of the important actors, including stakeholders (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]). Many countries have in recent years set up such councils outside of established structures with a responsibility to set priorities, develop action plans, as well as being involved in the implementation. The OECD (2017[23]) argues that such co-ordination councils should not necessarily be understood as a mechanism to increase centralisation, but rather aim to give support and advice to the work in government within complex horizontal projects.

In Germany, there are two such co-ordinating functions. First, the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (KMK) is designed to enable co-ordination between the *Länder*. Second, in 2016-17 an Inter-ministerial Working Group (IMAG) was established, which aims to co-ordinate policy between the federal ministries. The OECD welcomes these efforts. However, potential exists to further strengthen policy co-ordination between

federal ministers, underlying agencies and the *Länder*, and to deepen the engagement of relevant stakeholders, including the social partners.

Involve new stakeholder groups to keep policy relevant

Although Germany has a well-developed system for engaging experts and social partners within policy development in general terms and VET in particular, the OECD has previously recommended Germany open up consultation processes more systematically to the general public, release impact assessments for public consultations and systematically publish responses to comments from consolations on line (OECD, 2018[24]). The steadily increasing migrant population in Germany over the past decades has created a range of migrant stakeholder groups that work to enable migrant voices to be considered within policy making. Including a broad variety of stakeholders builds consensus and ownership across diverse interests (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]). Considering using the experience and knowledge of such groups can contribute in processes also at a federal level, which can increase the likelihood of building a policy that is relevant to meet the migrants need.

Secure evidence needed to make informed policy decisions

Challenges relating to data and evidence

The culture of experimentation stands strong, but presents challenges for peer learning and continuous improvement

The German approach to integrating migrants has in its initial phases been characterised as innovative (Scholten et al., 2017[12]). The impressive broad range of measures implemented in Germany in the area of integrating migrants through VET creates a unique context. Other countries might learn from the breadth of engagement from stakeholders which has been witnessed in Germany. The country can be seen as a testbed of experimentation welcoming innovative approaches to shared challenges. The approach provides opportunities to test the comparative effectiveness of measures adopted in different *Länder*. However, with local innovation come risks of significant variation in the quality of provision, challenges in maintaining a national, strategic overview of provision and demand for action to enable and ensure peer learning, adapting provision in light of evidence.

Lack of information makes it difficult to distinguish the effectiveness of practice

While German investment in research into VET in general terms is exemplary, the country faces a number of important challenges related to the identification of effective practice with regard to migrant participation Access to reliable information sources, data and evidence is limited on how projects have been implemented and if the desired outcomes are being reached.

First, data on migrants in Germany is not consistently collected. Identifying the migrants' enrolment within preparatory or educational measures presents significant difficulties. There is not one official data source. In order to get an overview of the situation for refugees, six data sources from three different government agencies are needed. This is first Integrated Training Reporting system (iABE) and Training Satistics (*Berufsbildungsstatistik*) from the Federal Statistical Office (DE Statis). Second, statistics on the VET market and applicants to VET (*Ausbildungsmarktstatistik/Bewerberstatistik*), employment statistics (*Beschäftigungsstatistik*) and statistics on assistance measures (*Förderstatistik*) from the PES. And third, statistics on integration courses (*Integrationskursgeschäftsstatistik*) from BAMF. None of these sources were set up to monitor the migrants' movement towards VET qualifications. According to Matthes et al. (2018[25]) three main challenges arise in analysing these data to understand the hurdles faced by refugees: data sources identify different populations; sources do not consistently identify refugees, so

approximations need to be done based on country of origin; and lastly, sources vary as to what is counted, over what time period and at which cut-off date. Identifying natives with immigrant parents is challenging too, because the collection of data varies across *Länder* (Box 5.4). The lack of data is not a new situation. In a review from 2007, the OECD (Liebig, 2007[19]) pointed out that the collection of data on migrants were weak in Germany. Not having clear and consistent datasets on migrants and natives with immigrant parents undermines the making of informed policy decisions and of measuring, and comparing, progress in integration across the country.

Second, opportunity exists as well to improve the monitoring of programme delivery at both federal and regional level. In addition to reliable data sources, evaluations that follow projects can give valuable information so that adjustments in ongoing measures can be done effectively. While recent improvements are acknowledged, Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) point to a lack of culture of evidence-based policy making within education, and especially at the local level where the policy is often implemented.

Box 5.4. Data on natives with immigrant parents in VET

Identifying young natives with immigrant parents in VET statistics is not always possible as school and VET statistics differ across the *Länder*: some record students' citizenship, country of birth and main language spoken at home, others only record one of these characteristics and none ask for parental place of birth. Therefore, in federally centralised data, only citizenship is available as a proxy for children with a migration background.

This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, and more generally, all immigrants and their children who acquired German nationality cannot be accounted for. In Germany, this is a considerable share; in 2016, around half of all migrants and those with immigrant parents are German nationals.

Secondly, the population of natives with immigrant parents is growing and research based on survey data shows that they often struggle in the VET system despite having gone through the German education system. Hurdles they encounter are likely to be different compared to obstacles faced by migrants who arrive as children or as young adults.

As VET statistics do not ask for parental country of birth, specific surveys as well as census data are used to gain a better insight into the situation of natives-born learners with immigrant parents in the VET system. The BIBB and PES regularly conduct surveys among VET applicants (BA/BIBB *Bewerberbefragung*, Survey among VET Applicants) and students (BIBB *Übergangsstudie*, Transition Survey) that allow applicants with a migration background to be identified. However, the survey only captures young people who are registered at the PES as seeking an apprenticeship – and it is estimated that only 70% of young people interested in finding an apprenticeship are registered with the PES. Young people who do not engage with the PES are excluded. This implies that high-performing students are likely to be underrepresented in the survey, but this might also be the case for migrants who lack confidence in engaging. Furthermore, the survey does not ask questions about parental country of birth. Therefore, 'migration background' is defined as being born abroad, having a foreign citizenship or not speaking German as a first language at home (or growing up with two languages). If respondents indicate that they were born in Germany, but fall into the latter two categories, they are considered as "second generation." However, this leaves out natives who have immigrant parents, but grew up speaking only German at home and only hold German nationality. It also conflates the children of economic migrants (often from a European background) and humanitarian migrants.

Policy message: Information, data and evidence are crucial elements in developing mechanisms to identify effective practices

Take steps to improve evidence on the effectiveness of implemented measures. There is a need for better knowledge about what programmes are delivering, putting a stronger focus on evidence and encouraging local initiatives to build in evaluation mechanisms.

Based on this information, successful practices should be rolled out, while ineffective ones should be scaled down. Further, make sure that there is appropriate data available about how the migrants, particularly humanitarian migrants, are performing in the system.

Policy arguments

Evaluation of new approaches can help identify successful projects so that good practice can be shared and scaled up

Burns and Köster (2016[7]) characterise experimentation as implementation of policy on a small scale, with an aim to evaluate its effect and scaling up successful practices. There is great potential to take advantage of the experimentation and innovation in developing policy undertaken over recent years in Germany. Instead of developing policy that is narrowly focused within one context or geographical area, the experimentation that is happening locally should aim to impact the practices also in a broader context and outside of the project's scope. In order to make this happen, evaluation mechanisms should be built into programmes so that decision-makers have access to reliable information on the performance. It should also be the expectation that new initiatives take account of available evidence on the success of comparable programmes (OECD, 2019[3]; ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

The collection of data on migrants should be strengthened and made more coherent to inform policy decisions

There is a need for accurate information sources on migrants across many OECD countries, including in Germany (Jeon, 2019[26]). By identifying both refugees and natives with immigrant parents, and their characteristics, training records and labour market outcomes, it can be easier to identify patterns in ability to engage successfully in VET and so provide help to groups in need. Consequently, data can increase understanding of the specific needs for different groups, for instance in providing extra language training (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007[27]). In England (United Kingdom), where the Department for Education has set a target to increase participation in apprenticeships by 20% by 2020, collecting and analysing detailed data on the migrant background of apprentices informs policy interventions.

As laid out previously, Germany already identifies country of origin as well as the legal status of the migrant, but this is not yet done in a consistent manner. With the responsibility for collecting data spread across the governmental agencies and levels, variability in approaches is significant. This makes it, for instance, challenging to identify the progression of migrants through different preparatory measures and onwards into VET. In order to better inform policy decisions, potential exists to better streamline the data collections for which the PES, BAMF and DE Statistics are responsible. This would contribute to increasing the quality of the evidence and research that is already being collected and allow for more sophisticated monitoring of the success of national policy (Dionisius, Matthes and Neises, 2018[28]).

Ensuring policy co-operation and peer-learning

The challenge of policy co-operation and peer learning across regions

The Länder have established a co-ordinating mechanism to discuss VET policy at the federal level

One way of meeting the need for co-ordination of policy between the *Länder* has been the establishment of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*). The 16 authorities play an important role in policy making and have established this consortium to develop and co-ordinating policy on education across Germany. By finding consensus and co-operation, the objective of the consortium is to formulate joint views and common objectives across the regional authorities. The measures that are subject to co-ordination have shared characteristics and are comparable across the regions. The KMK makes decisions based on resolutions that are supported either unanimously, with a qualified or simple majority. Resolutions have status of policy recommendations, with the commitment of turning it in to law within each region (KMK, 2015[29]; KMK, 2017[11]).

The consortium is also used for consultations between the federal and the regional authorities. KMK consists of several organs and committees. Since responsibility for the dual VET training is shared between the federal and regional authorities, a co-ordinating committee between the two levels of authorities has been established for VET. This committee has dealt with several issues on VET, for instance regulations for the company training and framework curricula for the school-based training (KMK, 2017[11]).

There are challenges with securing policy co-operation and peer learning across regions

The main trend in the governance structure of education across the OECD is decentralising decision making and allowing for greater local autonomy. This trend has led to more complex modes of governance (Burns and Köster, 2016[7]). A decentralised decision-making structure has some significant advantages attached to it. The regions are often closer to issues which help shape the efficacy of educational provision and can therefore be better placed to make decisions that suit the local context. There are large social and economic differences between the regions in Germany in terms of population size and density, GDP per capita, demographic challenges and educational performance measured in PISA (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). The opportunities within VET also differ across the regions. In highly decentralised systems, co-ordination of policy can however be a challenge. Many of the hurdles that the migrants are required to meet when integrating into society and work are the same across geographical areas. While it is sensible to have a certain degree of variation in practice in between regions, there can be challenges in taking advantage of economies of scale and innovative experiences from other regions. Variation can make it more difficult for stakeholders, be they migrants or employers, to understand what provision is in place, to enable coherent progression in learning pathways delivered in different regions and to achieve peer learning across the regional and local structures (Musset et al., 2013[30]).

In Germany, an approach to secure co-operation between the *Länder* on VET was established through an alliance consisting of representatives from employers, trade unions, *Länder* and the PES. The alliance pursued a partnership approach, where the participating representatives regularly assessed agreed objectives, updating them according to ongoing developments in implementation. The alliance was terminated in 2018.

Building sustainability in projects locally can be challenging

In securing policy co-ordination across Germany, the federal level often initiates and funds projects that are implemented locally. Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) studied this approach through the implementation of a BMBF funded project, LvO (*Lernen vor Ort*), which is an example of a policy instrument

aiming at improving the co-ordination between stakeholders in a multilevel structure. This case illustrates the substantial challenges that can occur in implementing federally funded projects locally, notably in terms of building sustainability locally. Even though the project included elements to enforce sustainability, for instance by applicants locally needing to develop plans for how to continue delivery after the conclusion of the project period and external funding ended, several factors interfered in the intention. Busmeyer and Vossiek (2015[2]) highlight the dynamism of local political situations making the availability of local funding sources unpredictable. In any case, with the funding of federal projects often comparatively generous, the local level can have difficulties in upholding and securing the resources to maintain the extent and quality of provision. The funding of projects do not necessarily involve incentives in order for the local level to comply with the initial project plans. Even though many federal funded projects includes the possibility of revoking funding at the end of project periods, this rarely happens. Another challenge found in the study was the lack of willingness from established actors in the system to engage with short-term funded projects because of short duration and thereby lack of sustainability.

During meetings that the OECD team undertook through its three visits to Germany, building sustainability into local projects was brought up as a challenge. In the initial phases of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Germany, there was a pressing need to build up a system that would initiate many projects to meet need within a short time frame. When implementing locally, funding has in many cases been perhaps inevitably short-term. Now, in a more stable delivery environment, opportunity exists to enhance local delivery by nurturing effective provision and sharing lessons learnt on both success and failures.

Policy message: Ensuring policy co-operation and peer-learning

Place greater emphasis on facilitating peer learning across the Länder which can lead to increased effectiveness. The federal level should take responsibility for creating a culture of learning through experience.

Consider revising funding mechanisms for projects locally to ensure sustainability, successful outcomes, innovative practices and value for money.

Policy arguments

The federal level can take a stronger role in facilitating peer learning

In a federal system such as Germany, national governments have limited opportunity to initiate changes at the local level compared to more centralised modes of government, but that is not to say that they cannot influence the quality of local delivery. The role of the federal authorities as a catalyst for new policy and as a provider of resources is an important one. This form of policy leadership, by setting goals, funding projects and monitoring outcomes can drive system-wide impact (Burns and Köster, 2016[7]).

Funding projects that are implemented locally is a commonly used steering mechanism in Germany. Such funding mechanisms provide potential for generating peer learning between municipalities and regions. Such projects are usually set up with a competitive funding scheme, where local actors apply to participate and receive funding. Experiences from successful projects can spread to other areas and thereby the impact of the policy can be greater than the local project (Busemeyer and Vossiek, 2015[2]). This horizontal spread of knowledge between regions depends, however, on solid evidence of programme effectiveness and the existence of appropriate mechanisms to share successful experiences across local or regional layers of government (ILO and UNESCO, 2018[9]).

Using established arenas involving the key stakeholders, for instance the federal and regional authorities and main social partner representatives, to discuss policy, agree on goals and monitor the situation can be a means to enhance peer learning. Peer learning is underpinned by easy access to information on effective practice. The federal level is currently working on the establishment of an integration monitor. The

Länder are already publishing an integration monitor on 51 indicators every two years through the Integration Minister Conference (IntMK). Making this information routinely and easily available for all stakeholders can be expected to significantly underpin enhanced peer-learning.

The Danish authorities, for example, have created a website where the predefined goals on integration are presented, together with data that monitor the progression on the implementation side. The data are presented both nationally and in relation to each municipality (Box 5.5). In this way, good practises locally can be identified easily.

Box 5.5. Monitoring the implementation of the Danish integration strategy

The Danish government has developed an integration strategy which includes nine broad target areas, each consisting of one or several concrete goals for what they want to achieve with its efforts in integration the migrants. Employability, language learning and education are three of these target areas. The authorities closely monitor the implementation of these targets as each one is associated with one or several indicators. The development since 2012, both nationally and in each municipality, are presented on a webpage, the Integration Barometer (The Danish Ministry of Immigration, 2019[31]).

Funding schemes to support sustainability in projects

Linked to the benefits of stronger evaluation culture, there is potential in improving the steering mechanism of policy at a local level through funding arrangements to support sustainability within projects. Many projects at a local level have been funded on a short-term basis. Short-term financing as a main rule can result in loss of competence and fatigue in the sector. After a period of experimentation, there is now potential to create stability by identifying and dedicating longer term funding to programmes which deliver more positive results. With stronger understanding of good practice, longer term project funding can enhance accountability. This requires collaboration in setting goals, indicators and collect relevant data (OECD, 2013[32]; OECD, 2017[33]). Challenges in this regard are linked to understanding what the real effects of measures implemented really are, as well as an excessive focus on a limited set of measureable goals which not necessarily covers the full picture (OECD, 2017[33]). One option to look further into is to incentivise successful projects. The Swiss national authorities have linked part of the funding of the regional authorities to the measureable pre-agreed objectives (Box 5.3). Continuing the close collaboration with employers will be an important mechanism in ensuring that successful projects are sustained.

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