

# Routes to inclusive vocational education and training



**URSULA BYLINSKI**

Dr., Research associate in the "Quality, Sustainability and Permeability" Division at BiBB

**The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by Germany in 2009, has focused attention on the topic of inclusion both in educational policy and academic research terms. The aim of inclusion is to secure the societal participation of everyone regardless of individual disposition. This article examines the background to the concept of inclusion and presents implications for vocational education and training. Taking risks of exclusion as its starting point, it goes on to outline possible approaches towards the development of inclusion strategies at various action levels.**

## Education and work as a basis for societal participation

Article 24 of the UN Convention includes the *rights of persons with disabilities to education* and the assurance of access to vocational education and training on the basis of equal opportunity. In order to realise this, the States Parties seek to "ensure an inclusive education system at all levels" (Paragraph 1). The *right to work and employment* of persons with disabilities is enshrined in Article 27. One of the principles of the Convention is to remove the negative view of disability and individual attribution of deficit and instead to focus attention on contextual factors which hinder or prevent people's equal participation.

## From heterogeneity to diversity – difference as a benefit and as a resource

The programme of the German UNESCO Commission (2009) formulates "Education for All" as a universal objective: All young people and adults should receive learning opportunities and the same chances to access high-quality education. This involves aligning the educational system to the learning requirements of learners rather than integrating learners into an existing system. This means that adaptations to structure and content are necessary across all educational areas, including in vocational education and training.

Beginning with the assumption that learning in heterogeneous groups is viewed as the basis for inclusive development, the perspective is being expanded to recognise difference, to identify such difference as a benefit and to perceive it as a resource for individual and reciprocal learning (cf. SONNTAG/VEBER 2014, p. 288).

## Inclusion as expanded integration – a firm foundation in regulatory structures

Whereas integration was based on the "principle of normalisation" (FRÜHAUF 2012, p. 16) and has thus led to the emergence of a multitude of special needs education concepts and learning venues, the intention of inclusion is to move beyond special measures to provide a firm foundation and security within social regulatory structures (cf. *ibid.* p. 21). HINZ (2012, p. 33) characterises inclusion as "turning against dichotomous ideas, each of which constructs two categories: Germans and foreigners, men and women, disabled and non-disabled, rich and poor etc." As a consequence, inclusion takes individuals themselves as the starting point of pedagogical intervention, not the belonging to one particular group or a certain characteristic. Whereas *inclusion* is emphasised as a new key concept in disability policy, *integration* remains the main guiding concept in the field of migration (cf. WANSING/WESTPHAL 2014, p. 18). This indicates a fear that the *concept of inclusion* could lead to the "dilution" of specific problem areas. For this reason, a major challenge for the design of vocational education and training processes consists in developing educational structures and provision that open up the same opportunities to everyone whilst securing the *necessary specific individual support and assistance*.

## Vocational education and training of disabled and disadvantaged young people

The foundations of vocational education and training are the Vocational Training Act (BBlG) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO). The stipulated objective is the acquisition of *employability skills*.

### Statutory vocational education and training provisions for “special groups of persons”

The *vocational education and training of disabled persons* is enshrined within the BBiG (§§ 64–67) and the HwO (§§ 42k–n). It is also included in German Social Security Code III (Participation in working life, § 112 SGB). The aim is for disabled persons to be trained in occupations approved by the state (§ 64 BBiG/§ 42k HwO). At the same time, there is the possibility of a so-called compensation for disadvantage (§ 65 BBiG/§ 42l HwO), which relates to aspects such as the time structure of training or the use of aids. There is also an opportunity for the vocational training of disabled persons to be delivered in accordance with separate training regulations put in place by the competent bodies (§ 66 BBiG/§ 42m HwO). These (special) training courses for “professional practitioners” feature a reduced amount of theory and are predominantly used for the training of young people with learning difficulties who are seldom categorised as being severely disabled (cf. BIBB 2013, p. 210). The courses are mostly offered by vocational training centres, and only a small proportion is company-based. Regulations relating to the *vocational education and training of “young people who require support”* (§ 78 SGB III) – this includes young people with learning difficulties and young people suffering from social disadvantage – are exclusively governed by Social Security Code (SGB), in particular by SGB III (promotion of VET) as well as by SGB II (occupational integration) and by SGB VIII (youth social work).

### Funding system for vocational rehabilitation and for supporting VET for disadvantaged young people

Since the end of the 1960’s, a differentiating, and also separating, funding system has been in place to integrate young people affected by exclusion into vocational education and training processes. Although alignment to the characteristics of *disability* and *disadvantage* represents a necessary initial prerequisite, the learning groups feature a heterogeneous composition.

If we monitor the initial integration of pupils with special educational needs, it is conspicuous that only a small proportion enters regular vocational education and training following attendance of a school for pupils with learning difficulties (cf. NIEHAUS/KAUL 2012, p. 52). Because 76.3 of these young people nationally are not in possession of a lower secondary school leaving certificate (cf. KLEMM 2010, p. 45), many progress to a measure within the transitional sector, to specific rehabilitation support schemes or to educational and training provision for disadvantaged young people (cf. NIEHAUS/KAUL 2012, p. 53).

There is also the supposition that not all young people trained in occupations for disabled persons actually ex-

hibit a disability (cf. GERICKE/FLEMMING 2013, p. 8).<sup>1</sup> It is noticeable that the proportion of such persons is higher in East Germany than in West Germany (4.4 % opposed to 1.7 %, cf. *ibid.* p. 7). The highest levels of this were reached in 2005, when the situation on the training market in East Germany was exceptionally tight. Higher rates of contract dissolution in occupations for persons with disabilities as compared to the recognised training occupations (cf. Autorengruppe 2014, p. 183) and the fact that their usability on the labour market has not been demonstrated mean that these (special) training occupations are increasingly being subjected to scrutiny (cf. e. g. EULER/SEVERING 2014). Because of the shortage of training places, young people (so-called “labour-market-disadvantaged persons”) have ended up in measures aimed at providing VET support for disadvantaged young people. The result was a fragmented funding and support system lacking in transparency and with different areas of responsibility (cf. BIBB 2013, p. 254).

### Disability and disadvantage as a social category

According to KANTER (1977, p. 106), persons are considered as having *learning difficulties* if they have a “serious, extensive and long-standing impairment to learning and thereby exhibit significant deviation from the norm in terms of performance and behaviour.” By way of contrast, disadvantaged young people are deemed to have an *impediment to learning* (SGB III) and are ascribed individual and social disadvantages. They include persons “who, according to existing access regulations, have a low chance of successfully applying for dual vocational education and training because they are not in possession of the *personal, social* and *organisational resources* which facilitate progression to a VET place” (ULRICH 2011, p. 6). In practice, assignment is characterised by uncertainties due to the fact that there are differing views as to what constitutes disability (cf. ENGRUBER/RÜTZEL 2014).

The terms learning difficulties and impediment to learning are thus revealed to be a relative parameter value which is tied in with the cultural context. The special educational perspective takes societally relevant (action) situations as its basis and places the primary emphasis on the social dimension. As a consequence, the focus needs to be on looking at the different societal barriers which cause people to enter situations of disability and disadvantage and hinder societal participation (cf. LINDMEIER/LINDMEIER 2012, p. 10).

<sup>1</sup> The situation of disabled persons vis-à-vis dual vocational education and training pursuant to the BBiG/HwO cannot be adequately presented in statistical surveys because the Vocational Education and Training Statistics do not collect any information on the personal characteristic of disability (cf. GERICKE/FLEMMING 2013, p. 2).

Table  
Structuring of inclusive vocational education and training

Development of concepts for the professionalisation of (company based) training staff for inclusive vocational education and training	<p><b>Level I</b></p> <p>Development of inclusive educational structures (in a regional context)</p>	<p>e. g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory and analysis, educational monitoring aligned towards inclusion</li> <li>• <b>Networking</b> of education, teaching and support and of control mechanisms (local government coordination)</li> <li>• Support structures (e.g. regional education offices, inclusion remit for the chambers)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Level II</b></p> <p>Development of inclusive (company-based) organisational forms</p>	<p>e. g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive cultures, inclusive structures and inclusive practices as reciprocal dimensions</li> <li>• Firm structural, organisational and cultural establishment of inclusive values in all VET institutions</li> <li>• <b>New forms of cooperation</b> between the stakeholders involved, e.g. companies, vocational schools, training service providers, vocational training centres</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Level III</b></p> <p>Development of inclusive training concepts</p>	<p>e. g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Flexibilisation</b> of access and training routes</li> <li>• Shortening and extension of period of training and part-time vocational education and training</li> <li>• Recognition of (partial) qualifications</li> <li>• Abandonment of separated (special) training routes in favour of inclusive training settings in heterogeneous learning groups, giving priority to the company-based context</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Level IV</b></p> <p>Development of inclusive learning arrangements</p>	<p>e. g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"Pedagogy of diversity"</b> (appreciation of difference)</li> <li>• Didactics of inner differentiation (PRENGEL 2014)</li> <li>• Inclusive methods in learning contexts (REICH 2014)</li> </ul>

**Exclusion risks and development of inclusion strategies**

The findings of both the National Education Reports (since 2006) and of the Reports on Vocational Education and Training indicate considerable exclusion risks. Selection processes take place at all transitions within the educational system. They are particularly marked at the transition from school to vocational education and training in accordance with prior school learning, gender, migrant background or nationality and region (cf. Autorengruppe 2012, p. 103).

To this extent, the route to inclusive VET requires a general pedagogical and educational policy strategy (cf. Dt. UNESCO-Kommission 2009, p. 8) and thus necessitates change processes at the system and structural level. The emphasis needs to be on investigating risks of exclusion in order to develop a basis for inclusion strategies.

*The objective of inclusive vocational education and training is to open up routes and options to recognised vocational education and training and to the world of work for all (young) people. In order to achieve this, the legal foundations need to be exploited, adapted and further developed in all fields*

*of activity and inclusive vocational education and training needs to be established at various system levels.*

**Expansion of differentiated vocational education and training**

*Individual and flexible educational, support and funding provision which creates connectivity and permeability is of particular relevance to inclusive vocational education and training. Designing educational processes in a way that is aligned towards the individual means conceptualising pedagogical intervention in a way that is based on the young person and realising this via networking or cooperation between the institutions and education professionals. Individualisation requires extensive flexibilisation of educational and training provision in order to be able to address aspects such as different life situations and different (learning) prerequisites. Permeability within and between the individual segments is crucial in terms of facilitating entry to and exit from vocational education and training processes at any time. This means linking educational opportunities in terms of content, providing credit for periods of training*

and imparting usable (partial) qualifications. VET policy has an important design role to play in this regard.

### Further development of tried and tested funding and support instruments

Inclusive vocational education and training requires the further development of tried and tested support and funding provision. *VET at extra-company institutions* can be structured in different ways and combined with company-based vocational education and training (e.g. in the form of shared training, integrative training or cooperative training).<sup>2</sup> *Training support measures* should be available to all young people who need them. Assisted training offers a supplementary form of provision. Its particular characteristic is that both young people and companies providing training can be offered individual support in line with their requirements in equal measure. The concept of *career entry support* has also proved its worth. *Individual educational and training support* should be offered to all young people in need of specific help or assistance.

The fact that each support measure is based on individual case examination and measures-related financing is demonstrated to be an insoluble paradox of *inclusive education within the VET system*. By way of contrast, educational and training provision that is “independent” of such constraints and is aligned towards individual (learning) requirements would avoid labelling and stigmatisation.

### Structuring at different system levels

Routes to inclusive vocational education and training require structuring at various levels of the VET system (cf. Table). In order to support young people in entering an occupation and the world of work, biography-oriented educational management in conjunction with cooperation between regional stakeholders and their activities is of significance in terms of establishing connectivity between various “phases of education”. The efficient bundling of resources requires control mechanisms (local government coordination), networking structures (regional transition management) and the bringing together of various judicial areas. The Hamburg model of Youth Employment Agencies (cf. Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg et al. 2013) is a good example of how an overall system of training, education and support can emerge.

With regard to the development of *differentiated training concepts*, both the BBiG and the HwO currently already

provide opportunities via such vehicles as time flexibilisation, as implemented in the “Third Way” in North-Rhine Westphalia. Integrative vocational education and training at extra-company institutions enables trainees to obtain a qualification in a recognised training occupation by acquiring employability skills in the form of training modules and within the scope of an extended period of training (of up to five years). *Part-time vocational education and training* (§ 8 BBiG/§ 27 HwO) could also be combined with language modules or therapy provision.

With regard to issues of the development of inclusive organisational forms, the Inclusion Index (BOBAN/HINZ 2003) becomes significant by dint of the fact that an inclusive culture within the institution is deemed to be a bedrock for inclusion.

At the level of *inclusive learning arrangements*, PRENGEL (2014, pp. 34 f.) sees the didactics of inner differentiation as the central part of of inclusive practice and develops the relationship level. REICH (2014) differentiates on the basis of a constructivist didactic system and adopts a holistic view, which provides for comprehensive support and support diagnostics, new forms of assessment and advice and a changed learning environment (cf. *ibid.* p. 51).

### Firm establishment of professionalisation concepts

The professionalism of staff in companies, at vocational schools and at training services providers has a key role in the structuring of inclusive vocational education and training at all levels (cf. BUCHMANN/BYLINSKI 2013). The basis here is an *inclusive stance* that recognises individual differences and views as a benefit. Empirical studies show that an addition of knowledge and the handling of instruments are not sufficient for professional action. The *personal, social and emotional competences* and the *approach and attitude* of the pedagogical specialists are crucial (cf. BYLINSKI 2014). Dealing with one’s own person needs to be an integral component of initial, advanced and continuing training (*ibid.*). Alongside this, there needs to be a focus on working to bring about a changed understanding on the part of the professionals which is based on networking, exchange and the integration of external competences (cf. Dt. UNESCO-Kommission 2014, p. 2). For trainers in particular, new forms of continuing training should be developed which are more closely linked in with the company context and which include (possible) cooperation partners.

### Steps along the route to inclusive vocational education and training

Inclusive vocational education and training requires the further development of educational and training structures and appropriate structuring of training practice, i. e.

<sup>2</sup> Federal states (such as Hamburg) which have begun to reform the transitional system in recent years have made a training guarantee for young people unable to progress to company-based training an important component of a new framework concept.

changes across all areas of activity (vocational training preparation and VET) and across all system levels (region, institution, training concept, learning arrangements). Educational policy guidelines for inclusion form a necessary framework. The development of inclusion strategies in conjunction with specific stages of implementation and the provision of resources form part of this. This will enable the emergence of a (vocational) education system in which diversity is used as an opportunity. Recognition and appreciation of individual differences requires a shift in perspective in society, in the institutions and on behalf of education and training professionals to view inequality and heterogeneity as a benefit and as a basis for further development. ◀

---

#### Literature

- AUTORENGRUPPE: Bildung in Deutschland 2012. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zur kulturellen Bildung im Lebenslauf. Bielefeld 2012
- AUTORENGRUPPE: Bildung in Deutschland 2014. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zur Bildung von Menschen mit Behinderungen. Bielefeld 2014
- BIBB: Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2013. Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung. Bonn 2013
- BOBAN, I.; HINZ, A.: Index für Inklusion. Lernen und Teilhabe in der Schule der Vielfalt entwickeln. Halle-Wittenberg 2003
- BUCHMANN, U.; BYLINSKI, U.: Ausbildung und Professionalisierung von Fachkräften für eine inklusive Berufsbildung. In: DÖBERT, H.; WEISHAUPT, H. (Eds.): Inklusive Bildung professionell gestalten. Situationsanalyse und Handlungsempfehlungen. Münster et al. 2013, pp. 147–202
- BYLINSKI, U.: Gestaltung individueller Wege in den Beruf. Eine Herausforderung an die pädagogische Professionalität. Bielefeld 2014
- DT. UNESCO-KOMMISSION: Inklusion: Leitlinien für die Bildungspolitik. Paris 2009
- DT. UNESCO-KOMMISSION: Bonner Erklärung zur inklusiven Bildung in Deutschland, verabschiedet von den Teilnehmenden des Gipfels "Inklusion – Die Zukunft der Bildung" am 20. März 2014 in Bonn. Bonn 2014
- ENGGROBER, R.; RÜTZEL, J.: Berufsausbildung junger Menschen mit Behinderung: eine repräsentative Befragung von Betrieben. Gütersloh 2014
- EULER, D.; SEVERING, E.: Inklusion in der beruflichen Bildung. Daten, Fakten, offene Fragen. Gütersloh 2014
- FREIE UND HANSESTADT HAMBURG U. A. (Hrsg.): Jede und jeder wird gebraucht. Ein Jahr Jugendberufsagentur. Hamburg 2013
- FRÜHAUF, T.: Von der Integration zur Inklusion – ein Überblick. In: HINZ, A.; KÖRNER, I.; NIEHOFF, U. (Eds.): Von der Integration zur Inklusion. Grundlagen – Perspektiven – Praxis. Marburg 2012, pp. 11–32
- GERICKE, N.; FLEMMING, S.: Menschen mit Behinderungen im Spiegel der Berufsbildungsstatistik – Grenzen und Möglichkeiten. Bonn 2013
- HINZ, A.: Inklusion – historische Entwicklungslinien und internationale Kontexte. In: HINZ, A.; KÖRNER, I.; NIEHOFF, U. (Eds.): Von der Integration zur Inklusion. Grundlagen – Perspektiven – Praxis. Marburg 2012, pp. 33–52
- KANTER, G.: Lerngestörten- und Lernbehindertenpädagogik. In: BACH, H. (Ed.): Sonderpädagogik im Grundriß. Berlin 1977, pp. 105–112
- KLEMM, K.: Gemeinsam lernen. Inklusion leben. Status quo und Herausforderungen inklusiver Bildung in Deutschland. Bertelsmann Stiftung. Gütersloh 2010
- LINDMEIER, B.; LINDMEIER, C.: Pädagogik bei Behinderung und Benachteiligung. Vol. 1 – Grundlagen. Stuttgart 2012
- NIEHAUS, M.; KAUL, T.: Zugangswege junger Menschen mit Behinderungen in Ausbildung und Beruf (Berufsbildungsforschung, Band 14). Bonn, Berlin 2012
- PRENGEL, A.: Inklusive Bildung: Daten, Fakten, offene Fragen. In: HÄCKER, T.; WALM, M. (Eds.): Inklusion als Entwicklung – Konsequenzen für Schule und Lehrerbildung. Bad Heilbrunn 2014, pp. 27–46
- REICH, K.: Inklusive Didaktik. Bausteine für eine inklusive Schule. Weinheim 2014
- SONNTAG, M.; VEBER, M.: Die Arbeit in multiprofessionellen Teams als Herausforderung und Chance – ein Dialog über den Tellerrand. In: Erziehung und Unterricht. Österreichische Pädagogische Zeitschrift 164 (2014) 3–4, pp. 288–296
- ULRICH, J. G. (Ed.): Übergangsvorgänge von Jugendlichen aus Risikogruppen. Aktuelle Ergebnisse aus der BA/BIBB-Bewerberbefragung 2010. In: bwp@Spezial 5 (2011), pp. 1–21
- WANSING, G.; WESTPHAL, M.: Behinderung und Migration. Kategorien und theoretische Perspektiven. In: WANSING, G.; WESTPHAL, M. (Eds.): Behinderung und Migration. Inklusion, Diversität, Intersektionalität. Wiesbaden 2014, pp. 17–47
- Translation from the German original (published in BWP 2/2015):  
 Martin Stuart Kelsey, Global SprachTeam, Berlin