

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

On this page

1. [Programmes for vulnerable young people](#)
 2. [Funding](#)
 3. [Quality assurance](#)
-

Programmes for vulnerable young people

Most actions fighting social exclusion are taken in the **fields of education, employment and extracurricular youth work**. The main aims generally include protection against discrimination and general accessibility for all handicapped people.

Mother-Child Pass Scheme ([Mutter-Kind Pass](#))

Measures for vulnerable young people initiate before birth, with check-ups in the Mother-Child Pass scheme for pregnant women, babies and young children. Through them, conditions shall be recognized as early as possible in order to foster early support and therapy. The mother-child pass was already in 1974. Since then, the programme has been continuously developed and adapted to the state of medical science and experience. Once a pregnancy has been established, every pregnant woman resident in Austria receives a mother-child pass from her supervising doctor. The passport is used for **preventive health care for pregnant women and infants up to the age of five**. The examinations provided for in the mother-child pass programme are an opportunity for early detection and timely treatment of diseases as well as for checking the child's developmental status.

Free and compulsory kindergarten year ([beitragsfreier Pflichtkindergarten](#))

Austria introduced a free and compulsory year of kindergarten attendance **for children at age five**. Educational work in elementary educational institutions contributes significantly to psychological, cognitive and social development as well as to the achievement of school readiness and **therefore forms the basis for a successful educational career**. In order to remove economic barriers to kindergarten attendance at pre-school age and to give all children the opportunity to participate, an agreement between the federal government and the Länder stipulates that half-day kindergarten attendance (20 hours per week without lunch) is free of charge in the last year before school entry. In return, the federal government contributes 70 million euros per kindergarten year to the resulting additional costs for the Länder and municipalities.

Family allowance and free, quality public education

In order to combat long-term disadvantages for children and youths from households at risk of poverty and the disadvantaged educational opportunities and outcomes that often accompany such situations, Austrian education policy has focused heavily on this target group. The **family allowance** ([Familienbeihilfe](#)) has been raised in recent years. It is staggered by age: for children from age 10 to 18 a monthly payment of € 141 is disbursed, for young adults from 19 up to 24 in ongoing education (e.g. university studies) it amounts to € 165. Families with more than one child are especially supported with increased payments through sibling adjustments. **High-quality public schools and universities are accessible tuition-free.** Furthermore, **study grants** ([Studienbeihilfe](#)) are available for students, if neither they nor their parents can cover their living expenses during their course of studies.

Inclusive schooling ([Integrative schulische Ausbildung](#))

Projects for more inclusive kindergartens and schools have been launched. Inclusive schooling means teaching disabled and non-disabled children together and should already start in kindergarten. In schools, integrated classes exist already by law since the 1990s. In an integrative class, **a reduced number of both disabled and non-disabled pupils are usually taught together in a two-teacher system** (a specialist teacher and a specially trained pedagogue). The children are provided with a common basic and balanced education in social, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects. For children who cannot follow the lessons due to a physical or mental disability, special educational forms of care are offered.

German support classes and courses ([Deutschförderklassen und Deutschförderkurse](#))

Since 2018/19, **pupils who are unable to follow lessons due to insufficient language skills are taught in own German support classes or in German support courses parallel to lessons** in order to ensure equal opportunities and better integration into the class group. The aim of the German support model for exceptional pupils is the **early and intensive learning of the language of instruction** German, so that these pupils can be taught together in class as soon as possible according to the curriculum of the respective type of school and school level.

The allocation to a German language support class or to a German language support course is based on a standardised test procedure that is uniform throughout Austria (Measuring Instrument for Competence Analysis - German). The German support class and the German support course **are usually designed for one semester and can be attended for a maximum of four semesters**. Afterwards, the student must be transferred to regular status.

The model has been **under discussion regarding its advantages and disadvantages in comparison to an early inclusive teaching** of German and non-German speaking children in the same class.

Education until 18 (AusBildung bis 18)

In 2016, the **obligation to follow an education or training up to the age of 18** was introduced. It aims to improve the labour market situation (particularly for migrants), prevent and reduce early school leaving and raise the general level of education. As early school leaving is a risk factor for poverty and social exclusion, it aims to close gaps, establish adequate offers for all young people (esp. low-threshold offers) as well as to advance existing offers.

Job Coaching

Job coaching aims to **support young people (ages 14 to 24) with support needs in the workplace throughout their apprenticeship or traineeship** in the primary labour market. Youths with a current or prospective employment or training relationship or work training receive help in handling difficulties at work and with colleagues, and in learning new steps in their work in order to secure their job. Job coaching is available to all companies that employ people with learning difficulties and disabilities or with mental illnesses, as well as to all work assistance projects and vocational integration facilities in the Vienna area.

'Fit for training' (AusbildungsFit)

'Fit for training' (named production schools until 2020) provides both basic qualification and specialist knowledge in order to **equip students with the skills necessary for their further school education or apprenticeship training**. The one-year programme is an offer that follows on youth coaching. It is designed as a post-maturation project. Young people who lack social competences and cultural techniques should be given the opportunity to acquire basic qualifications and social skills they have missed. AusbildungsFit is offered throughout Austria. The aim is to enable young people to obtain higher qualifications by (re)entering the training sector and thus to participate in the Austrian labour market in the medium term. The offer is available for young people up to the age of 21 or 24, with disabilities or special educational needs, learning disabilities, social or emotional impairments, who want to undergo vocational training, and whose career aspirations seem clear and feasible.

Programmes to foster the occupational participation of people with disabilities (Berufliche Teilhabe von Menschen mit Behinderung)

Occupational participation is one of the central elements for the overall participation of people with disabilities in an inclusive society. The **Nationwide Labour Market Policy Programme for the Disabled (Bundesweites arbeitsmarktpolitisches Behindertenprogramm- BABE - ÖSTERREICH 2014-2017- BEHINDERUNG - AUSBILDUNG - BESCHÄFTIGUNG)** was adopted in 2013. BABE aligned the long-term Austrian strategy to implement the UN Disability Rights Convention embodied in the National Action Plan Disability (Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung) with **labour market policy measures for people with disabilities required for the implementation of the Act on the Employment of Disabled Persons (Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz)**.

With the **inclusion package** ([Inklusionspaket](#)), passed in 2017, the **strengthening of professional participation** and the further development and continuation of existing offers for people with disabilities were maintained as key instruments of disability policy. Particular attention is paid to the sustainability and accuracy of the measures, which shall support both companies the individual directly. For example, **employers can receive support services from the Social Ministry Service when taking on beneficiaries with disabilities**. According to the Act on the Employment of Disabled Persons, all enterprises employing 25 or more persons within Austria are obliged to employ one beneficiary disabled person for every 25 employees. If the employment obligation is not met in full, the company has to pay a compensatory tax per open compulsory position and month. In addition to the employment obligation, the Act also provides for increased protection against dismissal for persons with disabilities. The Social Ministry Service has been offering a **wide range of funding instruments** for years, including various project and individual funding or a combination of both, in order to support professional participation. Qualification projects ([Qualifizierungsprojekte](#)) offer people with disabilities targeted qualification measures to increase their chances of participating in the labour market.

Vocational training assistance ([Berufsausbildungsassistenz](#)) and Work assistance ([Arbeitsassistenz](#))

The vocational training assistance supports young people with disabilities and other placement barriers in the context of vocational training in the form of an extended apprenticeship or partial qualification. Young people are **accompanied throughout their training, both in the company and at school**, and thus training paths are sustainably secured. Similarly, work assistance supports people with disabilities in obtaining and securing jobs. **Companies that want to employ people with disabilities receive support from the employment assistance service** with questions about the legal framework, information about support services and assistance with problems in the company.

Right to an inclusive apprenticeship

Many young people with disabilities and performance problems do not complete their apprenticeship education. Austria introduced accommodations to help young people to successfully conclude their vocational education and training and to receive a qualification. **Special, extended vocational training is offered to disadvantaged young people** ([Lehrverhältnis mit verlängerter Lehrzeit oder Ausbildung mit Teilqualifizierung](#)). The Austrian Vocational Training Act ([Berufsausbildungsgesetz](#)) of 1969 was amended in 2003. In order to make the vocational training system more accessible to young people, including those with disabilities, and to considerably enhance their labour market integration, the possibility of undertaking a prolonged or partial qualification was introduced. The **Austrian inclusive apprenticeship model** is based foremost on company-based vocational training, which is legally indicated to be preferred. The responsible authority is the [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#).

The [Austrian Integration Fund \(Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, ÖIF\)](#)

The Austrian Integration Fund aims at **supporting language, professional and social integration of (young) asylum beneficiaries and (young) migrants** on the basis of their respective rights and obligations. At the same time, ÖIF provides information on the topic to the general population, since successful integration requires a common efforts.

Habibi – the House of Education and Professional Integration is the central site of ÖIF for measures in the areas language, education and employment. It offers **German language classes** (from literacy to B1 level), **job-specific courses** (computer training, job search training, job-specific German language classes), **job centre work** (labour market counselling, support with educational issues), child care groups, and services for businesses.

The Integration Centres of ÖIF throughout the country **counsel immigrants, organise workshops, networking with key players** on all levels of responsibility, implement projects (e.g. mentoring), and provide information on integration and migration.

Individual Support Services shall facilitate the integration process. ÖIF offers starting aid for integration in the form of **financial support in the areas language, education and employment**. This includes financing German language classes (literacy, various levels), supporting professional training and further education (e.g. forklift driving licence, Liese-Prokop-scholarship) or sponsoring school activities (tutoring, etc.). Target groups are recognised refugees, people granted subsidiary protection and third country citizens with specific residence permits.

www.sprachportal.at offers comprehensive services regarding **German language skills. Online exercises** provide good training opportunities supplementing conventional German language classes. The **language hotline** of ÖIF provides personal information about German language classes and support schemes offered by ÖIF.

www.berufsanerkennung.at presents **quick and simple guidance to the right contact point for migrants, who would like to have their professional education recognised** in Austria, and offers comprehensive information on the subject employment and further education.

TOGETHER:AUSTRIA, managed by the ÖIF since 2012, **asks successful migrants ('integration ambassadors') to pay visits to schools, clubs and associations**. Under the motto 'Your Chance!' young people with migration background are to be motivated to recognise education as an opportunity, and to make use of the many career options available.

[Incluso](#)

Austria participated in the collaborative project between seven European partners in its 7th Framework programme of research, funded by the European Union. Incluso provided verifiable proof that **social software tools (ICT) can facilitate social inclusion of marginalized young people**. It showcased potential for future research and development.

Already in 2008, youth centres in Vienna started to use 'Netlog', a social networking platform (terminated in 2015) to stay in contact with their youngsters. By 2009, 20 out of 28 centres had their own Netlog accounts. Since 2010, all centres collected quantitative data on their social networking, including the number of chats per month and the number of (re)comments per months.

Youth Work

Social inclusion is one of the most important topics of youth work and supported by both the Austrian Youth Council and the umbrella organization for open youth work and therefore being discussed in [Chapter 4.7](#) as well as [Chapter 10](#).

Funding

As social inclusion in Austria is a cross-sectoral matter and part of many initiatives (e.g. labour market initiatives), **no budget allocated to inclusive programmes for young people only** could be identified. According to [Statistik Austria](#), in 2019 around 9% of the total expenditure on social benefits in Austria was spent on families/children.

In 2021, a budget of around € 103 million is foreseen for integration ([Integrationsbudget 2021](#)). The funds will mainly go into the expansion of compulsory integration measures for refugees. Priorities include the expansion of compulsory value and orientation courses, promotion of voluntary work, integration of women, parenting courses, and measures against radical political Islam and parallel societies.

EU-funds

With an **ESF budget of around 442 million euros**, social projects in specific thematic areas were funded in Austria **during the 2014-2020 funding period** under the principles of partnership, equality policy, non-discrimination and sustainable development. The ESF contributes to the creation of jobs. It helps people attain educational and training qualifications and to reduce disadvantages on the labour market.

Quality assurance

Depending on the initiative/programme, **different QA measures** apply. As different authorities are responsible for various programmes, the respective authority is responsible for QA. In implementation of the [Youth Check](#), legal initiatives undergo a compulsory check for their impact on young people.