

Designing and delivering pre-apprenticeships

JOBLINGE
Germany



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Case study summary

JOBLINGE aims to enable disadvantaged young people aged 15-25 to find an apprenticeship or job and in so doing, lead a self-determined life. The programme targets young people who are unlikely to find employment on their own. The programme has worked with more than 7,000 participants to date and currently has over 1,800 places each year. Almost all participants are referred to the programme by job centres and local employment agencies.

This case study specifically highlights best practice in how mentoring and personalised support can contribute to inclusive and high-quality pre-apprenticeships. JOBLINGE apply different approaches to personalised and one-to-one support for young people whilst they are on a pre-apprenticeship programme

The design of this programme, particularly its approach to mentoring provides useful learning about ensuring young people are ready to engage in pre-apprenticeships, leading to good outcomes and successful apprenticeship matches.

Key programme details

- JOBLINGE is a six-month, full-time programme which participants attend all day Monday to Friday.
- Referrals from job centres are compulsory (with sanctions for non-attendance). Nonetheless, many participants report that the professional nature of the programme and high ambitions for each young person is motivational and helps them to engage
- The programme follows a clear, defined structure which encompasses five stages including 1. Admission, 2. Orientation, 3. Practical experience 4. Trial, and 5. Vocational training – follow up. Each phase is underpinned by a clear set of aims and objectives and has unique benefits for young people.
- Mentors meet weekly with participants, providing encouragement as they progress through each stage of the programme. This helps to motivate young people, and reduce the chances of them dropping out, in the face of any challenges they encounter at home
- JOBLINGE works in partnership with an extensive network of approximately 2,400 businesses and the level of engagement and close relationship with companies is undoubtedly a core element in the success of the programme.
- The cost per participant of each pre-apprenticeship, on the traditional programme, is €5,900

Country context

Despite relatively low rates of young people not in education, training or employment compared to other European countries (2017: Germany 6.3%, EU average 14.3%)¹, Germany has more than half a million young people who are unemployed, or in measures delivered through the 'school-to-work' transition system, and a record level of unfilled apprenticeships; 43,000 of the 547,000 apprenticeships in 2015/16 remaining unfilled (an increase of 4.5% on the year before)². Less qualified young people, particularly those without a vocational degree, have much higher unemployment rates than those more highly qualified. Access to vocational training is therefore key to future employment prospects.

Due to demographic changes, a range of industries and sectors are facing a skills shortage; a shortfall of 5m skilled workers is forecast by 2025³. At the same time, Germany has encountered new challenges in integrating large numbers of refugees into the labour market. Around 32% of 300,000 new entrants in the school-to-work system in 2016 did not have German citizenship and currently around 120,000 refugees under 25 are seeking jobs⁴.

Dual vocational education and training is viewed by many as central to the strength of the German

economy and the quality of German vocational training is internationally recognised.

In the dual system, students acquire the practical experience and skills needed for their chosen occupation in the workplace, for part of the week, and attend vocational school for the remaining days. Apprenticeships are part of the formal education system, helping to integrate young people into the labour market; apprentices successfully completing their final exams leave with a nationally recognised certificate for their profession and many go on to be offered employment by the company that provided the apprenticeship. The curriculum is overseen by federal government, trade unions and industry organisations.

Young people leaving school at 16 with a lower secondary school qualification or less are likely to enter the VET system in 'transition system' programmes and schemes, which do not provide full vocational training. Although this system receives substantial public funding, in the main through job centres, there is concern that it is too often fragmented and insufficiently focused on outcomes and value for money (funding is allocated on a per participant basis). As a result, young people can be sent from one programme to another with little realistic prospect of making the transition to the regular VET system.

The pre-apprenticeship at JOBLINGE

JOBLINGE was created in 2007 when Boston Consulting Group (BCG), a worldwide management consultancy, and BMW's Eberhard von Kuenheim Foundation came together to develop a project to better prepare low qualified and disadvantaged young people for the job market. Following the pilot phase, both organisations continue to support JOBLINGE in a number of ways including with financial support, as supervisory board members, as mentors or trainers for young people and through enabling access to their networks and contacts.

The programme is co-financed through public funding and private donations (total budget approximately €11.4m in 2017; €3.6m donations, €7.7m public funding⁵). Ongoing costs are largely funded by the public sector. Depending on the location, this can include funding from the job centre, employment agencies, local municipalities or federal state funding.

JOBLINGE has 30 locations nationwide, with plans to expand, and employs approximately 180 staff (FTE). To extend the reach of the programme as widely as possible, JOBLINGE is organised as a social franchise system in which

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tipslmg0&plugin=1>

² 2017, Report on Vocational Education and Training, Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

³ Boston Consulting Group

⁴ May 2017, Job market migration monitor: People in the context of flight migration

⁵ 2016, JOBLINGE Annual Report and Impact Report

the different locations work as franchisees with a national umbrella organisation as the “franchisor.” Local not-for-profit stock corporations (gACs) allow shareholding and ensure professional implementation of the programme, for example measurable targets, quality standards, defined responsibilities and consistent processes. Each gAC consists of a pro bono supervisory board (decision makers from business, local government and the community), a pro bono director and a salaried staff team - a leader and assistant, youth and mentor co-ordinators, a company co-ordinator and apprenticeship supporters.

The gACs are supported by the umbrella organisation (JOBLINGE e.V.) which handles for example, organisational development, finance, marketing and communication and programme development. The umbrella organisation is financed exclusively through private fundraising.

JOBLINGE aims to enable disadvantaged young people to find an apprenticeship or job and in so doing, lead a self-determined life. The programme is targeted at young people aged 15-25 who are unlikely to find employment on their own. Young people participating in the programme;

- face multiple barriers to accessing an apprenticeship
- have experienced an average of three years in the school-to-work system
- are, on average, over 20 years old (mainly 19 – 22)
- around 50% have a lower secondary school degree or less
- 56% are from a migrant background or are recently arrived young refugees
- over 70% are from families in receipt of social welfare
- 66% are male

The programme has worked with more than 7,000 participants to date and currently has over 1,800 places each year. Almost all participants are referred to the programme by job centres and local employment agencies.

A second programme, JOBLINGE Kompass, is aimed at young refugees, 18-25, who have recently arrived in Germany and have insufficient German language skills to take part in the main programme. The goal is early and sustained entry to the primary labour market with work as the key to a successful integration and a way to acquire the language and educational requirements needed to progress to vocational training.

Kompass incorporates the same elements as the main JOBLINGE programme, with the addition of basic and industry related language courses and on the job language training. Unlike the main JOBLINGE programme, Kompass participants also complete work placements before undertaking vocational training. Currently, the programme has around 800 participants (85% male) and 30 staff.

JOBLINGE describes its success as building on ‘four pillars’; practical experience from the start of the programme, personal support through one-on-one mentoring, joint local commitment from the public and private sectors and volunteers and the entrepreneurial approach demonstrated through its stock company/social franchise structure.

The cost per participant of each pre-apprenticeship, on the traditional programme, is €5,900⁶

Model of delivery

JOBLINGE is a six-month, full-time pre-apprenticeship programme which participants attend all day Monday to Friday. In each location, there are four group starts per year, each with around twenty participants.

The programme has an educational approach that promotes independence, by encouraging participants to take responsibility for themselves - young people ‘earn’ their apprenticeship through their own efforts. Whilst they are closely supervised and supported throughout the programme, by JOBLINGE staff and volunteers, the initiative is also designed to challenge young people and has high expectations of them, both in what they can achieve and in preparing them for the actuality of work being a full-time job in a professional environment.

“Our participants should never become consumers of a programme – we have to challenge, motivate and activate them so that they also contribute something themselves, trust in themselves and have to apply themselves, but also know they are not alone.” **Chief Operating Officer, JOBLINGE (2016 Annual Report and Impact Report)**

Referrals from job centres are compulsory (with sanctions for non-attendance). Nonetheless, many participants report that the professional nature of the programme and high ambitions for each young person make it stand out from other programmes they have been referred to. Participants describe feeling motivated and valued at Joblinge *“pushed to come, in a good way!”* and report that they are taken seriously compared to other schemes where they had felt they were *“just there to listen.”*

⁶ Joblinge, 2017

One young person, when comparing JOBLINGE to previous learning experiences commented that at school *"the pressure is to get good grades, here the pressure is to learn."* Young people also value the contributions of JOBLINGE staff and volunteers, suggesting they could *"teach us a lot"* compared to staff on other programmes.

Programme stages

The diagram below shows how participants progress, step-by-step through the programme to 'earn' their apprenticeship.

1. Admission

Following an information workshop where JOBLINGE staff explain the pre-apprenticeship programme, young people are 'tested' through completion of voluntary work on a two-day charitable project, typically at a local kindergarten. During these activities, staff informally assess young people's suitability for, and commitment to, joining the programme. This might be demonstrated through consistently arriving on

time for work or the ability to work with others in a team, for example. In addition, the Youth Co-ordinator holds an interview with each young person to find out about them, their lives and why they want to start at JOBLINGE. At the end of the project, staff meet to decide which young people can join the programme.

The admission phase is designed both to motivate participants to earn their place at JOBLINGE, by starting the programme with a positive, successful experience and at the same time, to provide opportunity for JOBLINGE staff to get to know the young people and for participants to develop trust in programme staff.

This stage is also designed to initiate a change in perspective, in which participants turn from recipients of help into contributors to the community.

"...if you want to really have a change, then you have to reach them emotionally, and then you have to do something they do not expect ... So, they are not the victim, so to speak, anymore, who

eyes of participants compared to other schemes they have been directed to attend. Because young people positively value the programme, they are more likely to remain engaged and achieve good outcomes.

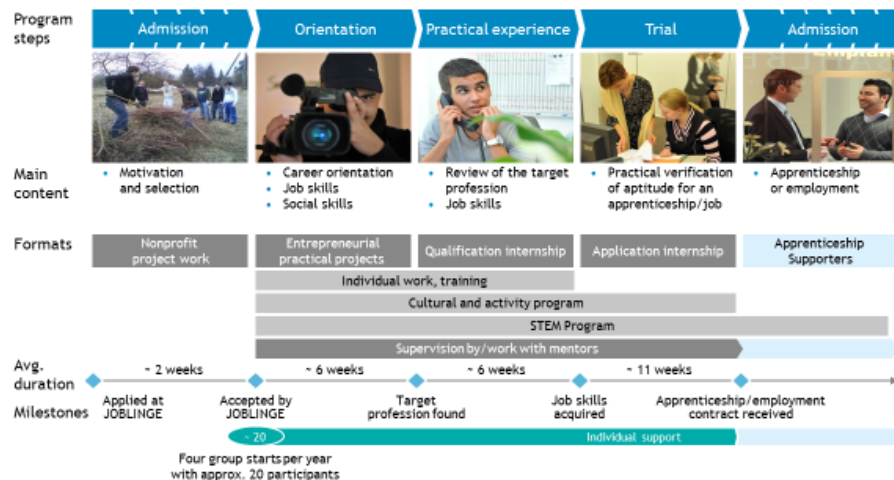
"I think a very important part of this initial phase is that it's not granted for them that they are with us...It's much more worthwhile for them to be in Joblinge, because they worked for it, and it was not automatic...They could have failed, yes? So, they have to decide, "Do I want to be a part of it for half a year, full-time job, every day, or would I like to stay at home..." **Company Co-ordinator, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

2. Orientation

The goal of the orientation phase is to prepare young people for the start of their working life and enable them to acquire the necessary professional and social skills (and in Kompass, basic language skills) needed for successful progression to an apprenticeship.

The focus is on vocational orientation, including deciding on preferred professions. Participants attend numerous company presentations and workshops, including on-site visits to companies and have repeated one-to-one discussions with JOBLINGE staff to allow them to get to know as much as possible about each young person and address any underlying issues that may affect their ability to find work.

"I tell them...that they have to trust us somehow... Whatever happened in their past, it is important that they tell me about it, because those are the [reasons] why they don't have an apprenticeship yet. That works well because they are very open." **Youth Co-ordinator, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**



gets help, but they first need to do something and work... they become active and they feel what it feels like when they have done something meaningful." **Deputy Regional Manager, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

JOBLINGE find that because young people decide to actively participate in the programme, it has a very different value in the

At the same time, a cultural and activity programme provides a variety of practical projects, for example joining a creative writing or theatre workshop for a week, and then working in a small group to create a stage play and perform it to an audience. These activities are designed to allow young people to discover their interests and recognise their own strengths and talents, but also to push them out of their comfort zone;

“to broaden their horizons, and to strengthen their self-confidence, and to also put an emphasis on communication, and how to deal with difficult situations, and to be able to succeed in an environment that is not very common to them. Also, to present themselves in a good way, and in a way, they didn't think of themselves...” **Deputy Regional Manager, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

Essential employability skills, such as preparing CVs, writing applications, and job interviews are also an important part of the orientation phase.

Young people receiving an apprenticeship or offer of employment at this stage may leave the programme early. These places remain vacant in order to maintain the existing dynamic of the group and ensure that they continue to work together effectively.

3. Practical experience

In the practical phase, participants gain work experience in one of JOBLINGE's partner companies. Young people are encouraged to try things out, to find out about day to day work in their identified professions and industries and revisit their preferred options if needed.

“if we have some ideas about what a [young person] would like to do, and what he can do, then we will look together, or sometimes only me, sometimes [him]. Everyone has to look which companies offer these jobs...then we phone them up and ask, “are you still looking...and is there a possibility to give him an internship?” **Company Co-ordinator, Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

These closely supervised 'qualification internships' allow participants to try out their new skills in the workplace and to prove themselves to potential future employers; in the absence of school qualifications, obtaining a good internship certificate can help to convince employers to give a young person a chance. Some participants might go into their first qualification internship with clear ideas about their chosen career and quickly receive an apprenticeship offer. Others use this phase to try out multiple internships in different industries.

During this stage the participants still come to the JOBLINGE location at least once a week to reflect on how their internships are going, in one-to-one talks with staff and as a group. Participants are helped with any challenges they encounter during the internship, and discuss together, ways to solve problems, enabling them to learn from and have a positive experience of their work placement.

“It's very important for the group that they will see each other again, not that everybody's on his own, so they stay in contact... we need the feedback from them, and we give them the feedback that we get [from companies] ...If there's some things they could do better, we will teach them, we will talk to them.” **Company Co-ordinator, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

4. Trial

Following the practical phase, young people progress to the trial phase. During this phase, participants continue to be closely supported whilst completing a three-month 'application internship' with a partner company. If this probationary period goes well and the participant and company are a good match, they will generally be offered an apprenticeship.

In the Kompass programme, language training, designed together with the companies, is continued during the practical phase and language skills are reinforced in practical work experience.

5. Vocational training – Follow-up

Although participants are no longer part of the pre-apprenticeship programme once they have taken up an apprenticeship, the follow-up phase is designed to ensure that young people successfully complete their vocational training. Each young person is allocated a dedicated Apprenticeship Supporter who remains in contact via WhatsApp, email and phone calls to check everything is going well. Alongside this, a rolling programme of workshops for apprentices on specific topics such as communication and learning to study, as well as crisis intervention measures if problems occur, help to prevent drop outs.

Apprenticeship supporters are also a point of contact for the companies providing the placement, providing reassurance that support is there should they encounter any problems.

"It's a very important thing for the companies, too. Maybe it's sometimes, that's the reason why they say, 'okay, I give you this apprenticeship', because there's a possibility of the apprenticeship and support afterwards." **Company Co-ordinator, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

JOBLINGE has recently started to offer training for employers, for example on issues that might arise when working with their target group, especially for those working with refugees. Further training is being developed for other stakeholders, for example tutors and job centre staff.

One to one mentoring

In addition to the individual support provided by JOBLINGE staff, from week 2 each participant is matched with their own personal volunteer mentor. Mentors share their professional and life experience, acting as a role model and source of support to the young person for the duration of the pre-apprenticeship programme.

Mentors meet weekly with participants, providing encouragement as they progress through each stage of the programme. This helps to motivate young people, and reduce the chances of them dropping out, in the face of any challenges they encounter at home, in their wider lives or during an internship, for example. The mentor acts as confidant, coach and role model guiding the participant through the program and helping to deal with any issues that arise. Having access to someone who cares and listens is often a new experience for the youths, and these personal relationships are crucial as the participants strive to understand and overcome their past struggles.

"I think it's a really great asset, because it's so special for the participants to have one mentor of

their own. The mentors never have two mentees, they just have one. So, they meet once a week... they hardly know anybody successfully working... they just know pedagogues, teachers and Jobcentre employees who are talking to them. So, if there's somebody who's just sitting there once a week for one hour, it's very special and valuable to them." **Deputy Regional Manager, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main**

Mentors, currently numbering 1700, are professionally trained and supervised and are mainly recruited from partner companies, helping to maintain employer buy-in to the programme. A growing number of partners have started to use JOBLINGE mentoring as part of their employee development programmes, adding to the long-term sustainability of the mentoring "pillar" of JOBLINGE.

JOBLINGE STEM programme

JOBLINGE see themselves as a learning organisation, always looking to develop new initiatives and projects in response to changes in employers' needs and the wider environment, to continually improve the programme for participants.

2017 saw the introduction of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) project, with the support of J.P. Morgan. The STEM programme is a permanent part of the overall pre-apprenticeship programme, designed to prepare and equip JOBLINGE participants for technical occupations. The programme, in which all

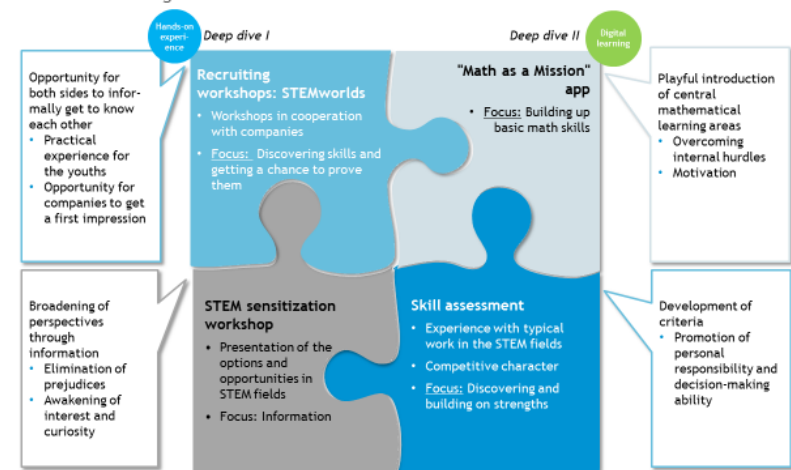
JOBLINGE's young people take part, aims to place 35% of participants in STEM fields across Germany.

Although the STEM sector in Germany is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers, JOBLINGE's young people face a range of barriers to entering the sector, including lack of basic skills, especially in maths, failure of recruitment tests or in vocational school, lack of self-confidence, insufficient knowledge of STEM professions and not least, perceptions amongst STEM employers that the JOBLINGE target group is insufficiently educated to work in the field. By developing the STEM programme JOBLINGE is providing targeted pre-apprenticeship opportunities in sectors where there are current and long-term opportunities for sustainable and high-quality employment.

To help to build bridges between potential apprentices and companies, STEMWorld Workshops, developed with STEM experts and employers, provide opportunity for the two groups to get to know each other informally.

Comprehensive professional orientation in the STEM fields

Four interlocking factors



The workshops take place on-site at partner companies to give young people practical experience of STEM occupations. Observation evaluation tools and self-assessment by participants help to identify potential candidates.

Maths embedded in STEM curriculum

Recognising that numeracy is essential for almost all vocational training, but in particular for STEM occupations, the programme places a particular emphasis on improving maths skills. Results for the first group of participants are not yet available but the programme target is for 75% of participants to improve their maths scores by 25% over the course of the programme. This approach has been tested successfully in JOBLINGE's Frankfurt pre-apprenticeship programme and will be rolled out nationwide later in the year.

Digital learning

In partnership with BMW, JOBLINGE have developed a mobile phone app, "Maths as a Mission", to support participants to improve their maths skills 'in a playful manner'. The app is comprised of a comic story and a game, with difficulty levels linked to playable characters. The app is introduced during the orientation phase and effectiveness is measured with pre and follow-up tests. Alongside this, the Mathe4Joblinge project, supported by J.P. Morgan, aims to improve digital and maths skills of participants on the pre-apprenticeship programme through the use of e-learning modules (**bettermarks**) and is again tested at the start, middle and end of the JOBLINGE programme.

Partnerships

JOBLINGE works in partnership with an extensive network of approximately 2,400 businesses and the level of engagement and close relationship with companies is undoubtedly a core element in the success of the programme. Employers are involved in the programme in a variety of ways, as providers of pre-apprenticeship internships and apprenticeships, as mentors, through financial support and on supervisory boards for example.

Premium partners including BMW, J.P. Morgan, KPMG, Porsche and Commerzbank amongst others, provide long term sponsorship and support the programme to expand and develop, introducing new initiatives such as Kompass.

The involvement of businesses on the local gAC boards, including high profile companies, helps to open the door to other employers. This was particularly important in the early days of the programme, although today the success of the initiative means that JOBLINGE itself can be the door-opener. Nonetheless, recruitment of new employers is an ongoing process.

Although contracts exist between JOBLINGE and partner companies, the key to working together successfully is developing a relationship with the employer. The Company Co-ordinator takes time to explain the aims of the pre-apprenticeship programme to potential new employers and maintains close contact throughout the course of an internship, so companies are confident that support is there should any problems arise.

"I think it's a win-win situation for everyone...The company has the possibility to see them working for two, three or four weeks. Everything is safe."

Company Co-ordinator, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main

JOBLINGE find that once an employer has taken on a young person who is a good match for the company, they are usually keen to recruit more young people from the programme.

"Generally, so having had a good experience with an apprentice from JOBLINGE, when those kind of applications now come, and they know where they are coming from, they are much more open-minded about it. I'm not sure it would work otherwise."

Employer Mentor, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main

In return, employers benefit from access to new target groups and well prepared, skilled and committed workers.

"I think that often, those guys are especially loyal because they know they have been given a shot, a chance, so they really want to hang in there..."

Apprenticeship Supporter, JOBLINGE Frankfurt Rhine-Main

Most employers offer young people employment in the company once they have completed their apprenticeship.

Outside of the Federal Employment Agency and Job Centres who refer young people to their pre-apprenticeship programme, JOBLINGE is also supported by more than 50 public sponsors at a European, national, state and municipal level.

Outcomes for young people

JOBLINGE aims to ensure the long-term placement of as many young people as possible in the primary labour market. Success is measured through two main outcome indicators, the placement rate and the sustainability rate (the number of former participants who are still in their apprenticeship or job six months after starting).

In 2016, 75% of participants across all JOBLINGE locations, were placed in the primary vocational training or job market (average 72% since 2008, Kompass 61%) with a sustainability rate of 86% (average 84% since 2009).

In total 3747 participants⁷, on the traditional programme, have been placed since 2008. Of these, 81% have gone on to an apprenticeship, 11% have gone into employment in the primary job market and 8% went on to attend vocational school.

The proportion of programme places filled, participation in the training modules and the internship rate are also tracked.

Online satisfaction surveys provide opportunity for participants, partner companies and volunteers to feedback on the programme and are used to inform changes in design or delivery as appropriate.

Although not formally measured, JOBLINGE emphasises that success is also demonstrated through the personal development of individuals during the relatively short duration of the programme, enabling young people to lead an independent, self-determined life and become active members of society. Mentors also report significant personal enrichment and development through their involvement in the programme.

Best practice – key success factors

- Individualised support in the form of mentoring helps to motivate young people, identify challenges early and reduce the chances of them dropping out.
- Having an initial preparation phase is important in motivating participants. It enables them to start with a positive, successful experience and at the same time, allows staff to get to know young people on an individual basis
- Providing an 'Apprenticeship Supporter' who remains in contact with young people when they complete the programme ensures young people are supported to complete their vocational training. This also provides reassurance to employers that support is available if they have any problems.
- Strong employer engagement and support helps to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme and facilitates a wide range of quality pre-apprenticeship internships and apprenticeship opportunities.

⁷ Joblinge, April 2018