

■ VET and Employment-related Mobility and Migration

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Preface

This report provides an overview of the **state of research** in the following four **areas of vocational education and training (VET)**:

- (a) the benefits of VET
- (b) VET and employment-related mobility and migration
- (c) governance of the VET system
- (d) labour market groups at risk

Each chapter first of all analyses **relevant research questions and challenges** in Austria before presenting and discussing the **main findings** of available research projects. In the final **synopsis**, conclusions are drawn from research findings and implications for further research work demonstrated. A **summary** preceding each chapter enables readers to gain a quick overview of the content.

The **selection** of these four topics is closely linked with current educational policy debates on VET in Austria, which have been triggered not least by European developments. The topic of “governance”, for example, has regained importance due to activities in connection with the development of a lifelong learning strategy. Debates related to creating and implementing a national qualifications framework and a European credit point transfer system have again put the subject of “employment-related mobility and migration” increasingly on the educational policy agenda. Precisely because of the diversity of VET programmes, the promotion of equality of opportunity in VET and the implementation of measures for groups disadvantaged on the labour market are central topics in Austria, like the benefits of VET.

One **reason** why VET plays a major role in Austrian research is its high relevance in the **Austrian education landscape**. This is shown, on the one hand, by the high attractiveness of VET programmes for young people: some 80% of all pupils who have completed compulsory schooling opt for a VET path. On the other hand, the major significance of VET can also be seen in the diversity of programmes. A pronounced differentiation both in the school-based and in the dual VET sector ensures that every young person is able to optimally develop their strengths and talents. The success of the Austrian VET system is reflected in the low youth unemployment rate and the international recognition of Austrian skilled workers.

This report has been prepared by **authors** from the 3s research laboratory and the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS). For **coordination and editing** the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (ibw) was responsible. Valuable feedback and useful comments were submitted by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK), in particular Ms Sonja Lengauer, for which all people involved in this report would like to extend their thanks at this point.

This report is part of a series of country reports on national research priorities in the field of VET in the EU member states, Norway and Iceland (*National VET Research Report*). It was drawn up within the framework of ReferNet – the reference and information network of Cedefop (<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/refernet/index.aspx>).

To complement this report, information about the Austrian VET system can be found in the report *VET in Europe. Country Report Austria*. Additional information about VET policy is included in the *VET Policy Report*.

Sabine Tritscher-Archan

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VET and Employment-related Mobility and Migration

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Most key contributions about migration and integration research in Austria are supplied by non-university research. They focus on the themes of citizenship, diversity and equality. In applied research, however, there is still a clear concentration on “deficits”, both in relation to groups of people with a migration background as well as with regard to the concept of integration as an adjustment process in the “host country”. The unsatisfactory data availability makes analyses very difficult, but over the past few years this has improved due to surveys of both a quantitative and a qualitative nature and integration into international research projects. Current research projects indicate that migrants and people with a migration background are greatly disadvantaged in the Austrian education and training system. But this does not apply equally to all groups of migrants. In connection with the identification of reasons for disadvantages, emphasis is laid on the importance of explanations linking individual, group, and state-institutional levels. Decisive for educational and professional careers are socioeconomic factors. Studies reveal a strongly bipolar education structure of migrants: they frequently have either very low or very high formal qualifications. Migrants with higher formal qualifications are, however, frequently debarred from the Austrian labour market, i.e. their qualifications are not sufficiently taken into account or not recognised and thus are not put to good use. Migrants are also underrepresented in general and vocational CET. As well as a lack of information and socioeconomic reasons, the perception that there are few opportunities on the labour market hamper migrants’ motivation to take part in CET. Young migrants are a key focus of research on migration, education/training and the labour market. It is noted that this group is considerably disadvantaged in terms of information and counselling on education and training as well as career guidance, and a range of measures to improve the situation are recommended. Studies on the willingness to be mobile demonstrate that it is surprisingly pronounced among Austrian pupils but is very often not implemented due to practical barriers. To reduce barriers to mobility, work on transparency instruments has been ongoing for some years, the implementation of which is being examined for the Austrian context.

1. National research issues and goals

1.1. Overview

This report deals with the themes of VET and employment in connection with mobility and migration. Due to the focus of the screened research literature from Austria, the aspect of migration is very much in the foreground. By way of an introduction, in a meta-perspective, migration and integration research itself will be the theme. In this connection, research literature will be referred to. The terms migrant and migration background will be explained and the group of people addressed in the Austrian context described. Against the background of the approaches and institutional integration of migration research and of the data available for research, the research issues and outcomes for the fields of VET, migration and mobility

of relevance for Austria will then be outlined in Section 2. The key themes in this context are: educational disadvantage, qualification structure and deskilling, CET, young migrants at the interface of training and job-hunting, and European transparency instruments to promote training-related and professional mobility. In analogy to the screened research priorities, this report focuses on qualification aspects of employment-related migration to Austria and the education/training structure and employment opportunities of descendants of migrants. It must be noted here that the topic of migration is in almost all cases linked with the theme of integration. The screened literature, however, does not include any consistent concept of “integration” nor a uniform definition of the term “integration”¹.

1.2. Migration research in Austria

In Austria, migration and integration research forms part of a very broad institutional environment (from political science and history to economics, pedagogy and law) but represents a marginalised research area in all disciplines. The interdisciplinarity required for this theme – it is stated – is little appreciated in most academic disciplines and frequently dismissed as dubious (Bauböck and Perchinig, 2003). Despite its problems in becoming accepted, this research field is relatively fruitful in Austria. The – mostly – non-university research institutions active in this field are very successful and creative in the acquisition of third-party funds. In a current study (Fassmann et al., 2009), a total of 60 representatives from relevant research institutions were questioned about institutional integration, questions and financing in the field of migration and integration research. The initial hypothesis was that migration and integration research is a young discipline based on application-oriented contract research, which itself is controlled by current issues of political relevance². The surprising outcome was that as many as 118 of 243 projects in the period between 2003 and 2008 were to a certain extent self-defined projects that had been registered with the Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Promotion (FWF), European Research Council (ERC) or European Union (EU).

In Austrian migration research, the clear focus is on the themes of citizenship, diversity and equality. In applied research, however, there is still an obvious concentration on “deficits”, both in relation to groups of people as well as the concept of integration as an adjustment process in the “host country”. In addition, Austrian migration research is very strongly oriented towards individual migrants, overlooking their integration into social networks and their (e.g. supportive, action-controlling) role in migration and integration. In this connection it would be necessary to extend the paradigm (Bauböck and Perchinig, 2003). In a current

¹) In many cases, the living conditions of migrants, particularly those from third countries, is characterised by a precarious occupational status, low household income and high threat of poverty, discrimination on the housing market, lack of social and political participation as well as additional socio-structural disparities (Fassmann and Reeger, 2007). In this connection, integration is discussed, without however being able to indicate a measure of when it is reached. Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher title their contribution to the 2009 National Report on Education for Austria “Migration - Interculturalism - Multilingualism” and note that no satisfactory integration concept exists to date in scientific discussion and therefore do not use this term either. According to them, this applies to the school sector in particular (Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher, 2009).

²) This issue is particularly significant against the background of the legal and discursive allocation of immigrants to a temporary status which still partly characterises political debates in Austria (cf. Çinar, 2004; John, 2004; about the migration policy pursued in Austria since 1945 cf. Gächter, 2008). This view has consequences for commissioned research themes and considerations related to educational planning.

contribution about the Austrian education system, when considering the topic of disadvantages of schoolchildren with a migration background, great emphasis is laid on the importance of linking the micro-, meso- and macro-levels (i.e. the individual, group and state-institutional levels) (Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher, 2009).

1.3. Definition of migrant, migration background

The concept of migrant can be defined as a person who changes his or her place of residence by crossing an international or national border. A person can immigrate or emigrate. *In sensu stricto* a person can only be termed a migrant as long as the migration procedure is still ongoing. With the establishment of a new permanent place of residence in the target country, the term migrant proves to be imprecise, because from that time onwards the person is no longer a migrant but someone with a migration background (Fassmann, 2008). But these terms are not always used in this sense in the screened literature. The non-standardised use of terms is mainly the result of the difficult data availability, which will be discussed in more detail in the following. In this report, where relevant research findings are presented and analysed, the use of terms (the reference to specific groups of people) as used in the respective case is explained.

As of 1st January 2008 a total of 1.38 million inhabitants of Austria, or approximately 17.3% of the Austrian population, had a migration background (Austrian Integration Fund et al., 2009). Due to the growing number of naturalised migrants, the characteristic of migration background has replaced that of foreign citizenship in recent years. Until 2001 official statistics only distinguished – on the basis of citizenship – between Austrians and foreigners. Since 2001 the place of birth has also been surveyed, which has led to a slight improvement of the available data for research on this topic. Austrian official statistics define people as having a migration background who either have a foreign nationality or were born abroad or both. People born outside Austria are termed first generation whereas those born in Austria with immigrant parents are second generation. Not identifiable and thus uncounted remains the second (and third) generation with an Austrian citizenship (Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher, 2009). Overall, Austria ranks in the upper middle range of the EU-27 with a share of more than 17% of the resident population having a migration background.

Some 40% of people with a foreign citizenship and/or their place of birth abroad come from another EU member state or Switzerland. Approximately 46% of immigrants in Austria come from another European state, particularly from the successor states of ex-Yugoslavia and Turkey. The population with a foreign citizenship and/or place of birth abroad is regionally concentrated in conurbations; in 2008 some 32.9% of this group lived in the federal capital Vienna (Austrian Integration Fund / Österreichischer Integrationsfonds et al., 2009).

1.4. Data availability

The analysed literature concurs that there is a lack of relevant empirical data. Authors especially criticise the fact that official statistics in Austria are still largely geared towards the criterion of “citizenship” and that therefore there is hardly any data on migration and different groups of migrants (cf. 1.3). Thanks to the EU’s influence, however, data availability is improving slowly (e.g. a survey on the country of birth was included in the 2001 census). But as far as people attending state-financed courses while being unemployed are concerned, statistics still only differentiate between Austrians and foreigners (on the basis of nationality)

(Sprung, 2008). As a result of the lack of longitudinal data, generation processes cannot be taken into account (Latcheva, 2006). Small samples prevent complex multi-dimensional approaches. In many cases, any connections between the country of origin, gender, age or generation, ethnic origin, social positioning, educational attainment, time of immigration and naturalisation are underexposed. It is stated, however, that the lack of useful empirical data is also an expression of a lack of theory development and that to date too few initiatives have been taken to improve official surveys (Bauböck and Perchinig, 2003). Meanwhile, with projects such as “PROMINSTAT”³ (Kraler et al., 2009), “LIMITS”⁴ (Latcheva et al., 2006) and “TIES”⁵ (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2008), Austria is already involved in several international projects that aim to generate, analyse and standardise migration-related data.

2. Main research results

2.1. Participation in education and educational disadvantage of people with a migration background in the Austrian education system

Austrian research projects on VET and migration are not very numerous. They focus on young people with a migration background at the interface between (initial) education and the labour market (cf. 2.4). The following analysis also includes studies treating the topic of educational participation and disadvantages in the entire education system (e.g. language acquisition, nursery school, primary school, etc.). The causes and conditions for (later) participation and disadvantages in VET and on the labour market thus become easier to grasp.

On the basis of available data it has to date only been possible, and only to a limited extent, to analyse the impact of people’s origin on their participation in education and educational success. As mentioned by Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher (2009), school statistics traditionally only differentiated by the criterion of citizenship (which enables data to be collected only on those individuals with a migration background who do not have Austrian citizenship, cf. 1.4 on data availability), which is of marginal help only. Since 1993, factsheets published by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK) have also included figures and percentages of pupils with first languages other than German broken down by federal provinces and school types. But there is little transparency concerning the

³) “PROMINSTAT – Promoting Quantitative Comparative Research in the Field of Migration and Integration in Europe” (<http://prominostat.eu>; <http://www.emn.at>).

⁴) “LIMITS – Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in European Cities: Life-Courses and Quality of Life in a World of Limitations” (<http://limits.zsi.at/default.htm>).

⁵) “TIES – The Integration of the European Second Generation” (<http://www.tiesproject.eu>): As hardly any informative country comparisons in the field of integration exist due to different datasets and differences in immigration law (e.g. invisibility of descendants of immigrants with nationality), this project collects data by conducting own surveys and carries out statistical analyses on the social mobility of descendants of immigrants. These analyses are supplemented by qualitative interviews.

multilingualism of people whose mother tongue is not German⁶. Since the entry into force of the Education Documentation Act 2002 (*Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz*), surveys have examined the languages used in everyday life. These surveys will in future lead to a detailed breakdown by individual languages (BMUKK, 2008), as in the relevant groups with a migration background there is a much larger diversity of spoken languages and higher flexibility in the use of languages depending on context and biographical stage than assumed (this means that findings on an individual's origin cannot simply be obtained by asking *one* question about the first language). In this connection, Brizić (2007) speaks of the “secret life of languages” and also puts the usefulness of the criterion of first language into perspective by establishing a connection to the language and minority policy of the country of origin of parents of children with a migration background. Many immigrants come from minorities of their countries of origin. Any discrimination in the acquisition of their actual first language have, according to Brizić, a negative impact on their descendants' language acquisition. In addition, due to a lack of surveys of the actual first language to be promoted (e.g. Kurdish), language promotion for children with relevant needs would focus on promoting a country's “official language” (e.g. Turkish) and would therefore fail its purpose (about the language and language teaching policy pursued in Austria cf. also BMUKK et al. 2007; BMUKK and BMWF 2008).

On account of the complex data availability and non-standardised use of terms, analyses to date have therefore focused on participation in education and training programmes. With the international comparative surveys of OECD (PISA, PIRLS) representative data are now also available on school achievements, enabling a more detailed analysis⁷ (Wroblewski, 2006; Unterwurzacher, 2009). Findings on the educational disadvantages of children with a migration background at schools are mainly based on the outcomes of the PISA survey and reveal that a migration background has a negative effect on school success (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2007a). Also in Austria, children from immigrant families are concentrated within school categories with a low performance level (children speaking Turkish and Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian are overrepresented at special schools, lower secondary schools and prevocational schools but underrepresented at higher-level general education schools and VET colleges); the selection process that leads to that situation occurs very early (about selective access to higher educational institutions, cf. Lassnigg et al., 2005). However, different groups of origin demonstrate completely different patterns as regards educational participation (Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher, 2009). Young people who speak an eastern European language at home, for example, are overrepresented at secondary academic schools compared to German-speaking pupils. But as far as the following generations' social mobility is concerned, slightly positive developments in the sense of increasing educational participation can also be observed at higher school forms (Weiss and Unterwurzacher, 2007). But in Austria this applies least for the educational success of groups from the traditional recruitment states Turkey and ex-Yugoslavia. In their study, the authors speak of the “heritage of guest labour” and explore the dominating effect of the parents' socioeconomic status

⁶) Those pupils with a migration background who mainly speak German at home are however not covered by this feature (e.g. pupils from Germany or Alto Adige). Pupils who are members of an autochthonous Austrian minority could be counted as pupils with a migration background. In addition, everyday life of bilingual people is characterised in particular by the fact that they change their language depending on their interlocutor (e.g. they use German with their siblings and the language of origin with their parents).

⁷) As opposed to Austrian statistics, these surveys also collect data on the feature of the parents' country of birth.

and/or cultural capital⁸ on the course of school careers (about the topic of social mobility, cf. also Biffl and Bock-Schappelwein, 2003; Herzog-Punzenberger, 2007b; Schlögl, 2009a).

Explanations as regards the disadvantage of pupils with a migration background are discussed in Herzog-Punzenberger and Unterwurzacher (2009). As well as stating reasons that refer to the individual level (the duration of stay in the country of immigration, nursery school attendance, language skills, learning motivation), the authors treat family, group of origin, neighbourhood and school context (e.g. unfavourable composition of school classes) as influencing criteria. In addition, they underline the high significance of the social and state-institutional levels (school systems, welfare state types, immigration and integration policy). But the two authors underline that the explanatory theories which are most informative are those which take several of the mentioned factors at the various levels into account. Other studies focus on language promotion for adults and language policy (e.g. Blaschitz et al., 2007; Blaschitz and de Cillia, 2008; de Cillia, 2003 and 2007).

2.2. Qualification structure of migrants and deskilling

In Austria, the topics of migration and immigration are strongly linked with discussions on the demand for qualified labour and the presence of unemployment⁹. The majority of migrants come to Austria for reasons related to employment. In an above-average number of cases, people from former Yugoslavia and Turkey hold jobs with few entitlements, whereas immigrants from the EU-15, particularly Germany, mainly hold jobs that are well paid and also prestigious (Fassmann and Reeger, 2007). Studies reveal the pronounced bipolar education structure of immigrants¹⁰ in Austria (Gächter, 2007): on the one hand, in comparison to the total population, more immigrants hold a compulsory school qualification as their highest educational attainment (41% vs. 28%). Therefore, they represent a large group among the low-qualified. On the other hand, however, immigrants more frequently also have an upper secondary school-leaving certificate or a degree from an HE institution than the population overall: in absolute figures these are 27% vs. 23%, according to data of the 2005 Labour Force Survey (Gächter and Stadler, 2007). The subject of highly qualified people immigrating to Austria is at the centre of a study by Bock-Schappelwein et al. (2008), whereas the aspect of demand for higher qualifications on the Austrian labour market is dealt with by Biffl and Simonitsch (2008).

In connection with the use of educational qualifications, Gächter (2007) demonstrates that the formal qualifications of immigrants in Austria are not sufficiently understood or made use of. The risk of becoming unemployed despite boasting medium or higher qualifications or having

⁸) Based on 2006 PIRLS data it can be demonstrated that for Austria the availability of cultural capital is a major indicator to explain differences in performance (Unterwurzacher, 2009). The cultural capital was mapped by using two indicators, namely: (1) the availability of cultural resources (number of books and children's books available in the household) and (2) the number of learning aids, the presence of a computer, desk, own books and daily papers.

⁹) From 1993 onwards, the quota allocation has become the main instrument of Austrian immigration policies. Among other measures, sub-quotas for "key workers" have been defined from 1996. The Law governing the employment of foreign workers (*Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz*) defines a "key worker" as a person who "has a higher education qualification or completed a *Fachhochschule* programme or any other especially recognised training" and "exerts considerable influence on the company's management (executive)". Employment needs to contribute "to creating new jobs or securing existing jobs" and "result in a transfer of investment capital to Austria" (cf. Austrian Federal Chancellery, 2007).

¹⁰) This term refers to people who have immigrated to Austria, are born abroad and have also acquired their qualification there.

to take on unskilled or semiskilled jobs is clearly higher for people who have acquired an educational qualification abroad than for those qualified in Austria (unemployment rate: 3.3% among Austrians, 8.8% among non-Austrians in the first quarter of 2008 according to the labour force concept, Statistics Austria)¹¹. This failure to make use of school and vocational qualifications held by immigrants has in recent years become an issue under a wide range of keywords, including “brain waste”, “brain abuse”, “devaluation of immigrant labour”, “unrecognised learning”. In 2001, some 39% of working immigrants (with the term “immigrants” referring either to people born abroad or foreign nationals) who had a qualification above compulsory schooling were employed in jobs that either had nothing to do with their learned profession or for which they were overqualified, while just 19% of Austrians were employed in jobs that were below their qualification level at that time (Gächter, 2006). It can, therefore, be safely assumed that a large qualification and competence pool is going to waste or will be lost. Deskilling also implies the loss of skills obtained in the past if they cannot be used. In addition, provisions regarding nostrification of qualifications acquired according to foreign legislation are extremely restrictive. There are no institutions in Austria that are in a position to examine and certify the presence of vocational knowledge and know-how in an objective and unbiased way (cf. further below, footnote 24). These institutions would not only be useful for employees who have acquired qualifications abroad but also for those who are working in a profession other than their learned one (Gächter and Stadler, 2007).

A slightly different picture of migrants’ qualification and matching on the labour market emerges from the study conducted by Schneeberger (2005), who explores the connections of structural change, education and employability in times of increasing unemployment and also focuses on immigrants from non-EU-countries. Over a period of 20 years, the number of foreigners from non-EU-countries who have not completed any training pathway increased from 115,018 (1981) to 192,878 in 2001. In the past, people with this low qualification level met a certain demand on the labour market. In Schneeberger’s opinion, this situation is now different in that employment opportunities for the low-qualified have undergone drastic changes both quantitatively and qualitatively: the number of jobs in this sector has drastically declined and the prerequisites to exercise simple professional activities have increased.

2.3. Migrants in Adult Learning/Continuing Education and Training

In principle, immigrants are dramatically underrepresented as participants in adult learning (ALE) and vocational education and training (VET). A survey by Statistics Austria on lifelong learning in Austria (2003 Microcensus) shows that the participation of people with a foreign citizenship is clearly below the participation of Austrians: whereas 22% of Austrian employees have taken part in non-formal CET measures, the relevant percentage among employees with a foreign citizenship is only 17%. In this context, immigrants from former Yugoslavia and Turkey are comparatively less frequently active in CET: only 12% of them

¹¹) Nevertheless it needs to be considered that a higher percentage of immigrated women and men who have stayed in this country for a long time have taken on the Austrian citizenship. They have naturalised in particular if they have been successful in finding a place in Austria, feel at home here and have also been able to take the step into the middle-income bracket. This fact distorts statistics, however, which are based on the feature of citizenship, because it no longer covers successful immigrants but rather only those who have been here for a shorter period (Fassmann and Reeger, 2007).

stated that they had attended courses in the past twelve months¹². In the foreground of current CET practice in the field of migration are courses geared towards so-called “integration” processes, mainly aiming at language acquisition and basic knowledge of the host country’s systems and legislation. This, however, tends to conceal the fact in debates that ALE would also offer people guidance and assistance in difficult circumstances (as for instance caused by migration, cf. Sprung, 2008). The subject of migration as a challenge for the entire ALE sector and the new tasks for the education system in an immigrants’ society are treated by Ahlheim (2006) and by Plutzar and Kerschhofer-Puhalo (forthcoming).

What are the causes for low CET participation by migrants? According to Sprung (2008), the lack of language skills, legal aspects or experiences of discrimination act as barriers in access to CET. She also points towards socioeconomic factors that exert – as is generally known – an influence on CET participation. These factors include school qualification, employment, age, nationality, gender, social origin or occupational status. Higher formal qualification, for example, correlates with greater CET participation (Schneeberger and Mayr, 2004). This does not seem to be the case, however, if a person takes on or has to take on an employment for which he/she is overqualified. The accompanying devaluation of vocational qualifications acts as an obstacle to CET motivation. The higher the deskilling, the lower the course participation (Gächter and Stadler 2007). CET participation on the one hand depends on available resources (time, money, information), on the other on opportunities expected from using the skills acquired through CET (Schneeberger and Mayr, 2004). In the light of the findings on deskilling as quoted above, it can be assumed that such benefit expectations are possibly very negative among migrants (Sprung, 2008).

Data collection by education and training providers is extremely fragmentary and criteria such as migration background or citizenship are rarely surveyed. For the large segment of (partly compulsory) German language courses in Austria, for example, there exist no systematic surveys regarding scope or participant structure (Sprung, 2008). For Austria there exists to date only one relevant, evaluative survey conducted among 42 Viennese adult learning institutions that provides information about selected aspects (Pohn-Weidinger and Reinprecht, 2005). Due to a lack of relevant documentation systems, however, much of the data and information provided by the questioned institutions are estimates by their management. An increasing participation by migrants was observed in 43% of organisations. The study revealed a clear concentration of participants with migration background in particular segments: language courses come first, followed by electronic data processing courses. CVET is mostly only offered at the lowest qualification level. Demand for not directly vocationally oriented education and training programmes (e.g. in the field of health and physical exercise) among people with a migration background is low. Questioned institutions perceive migrants as a market potential to some extent and/or to date no relevant specific analyses of needs or potential have been conducted (Sprung, 2008).

Findings that are related to the vocational qualification of people with a migration background are provided by the evaluation of a measure of Public Employment Service (AMS) Upper Austria. Since 2007, vocationally qualifying courses have been offered for people with a

¹²) This survey defines CET measures as all types of vocational and private courses, also including German and integration courses, which have been legally mandatory since 2003 for members of third countries due to the so-called “Integration Agreement” (cf. Federal Ministry of the Interior, n.d.).

migration background (independent of their citizenship and the generation to which they belong; course participants in the period under study were between 15 and 57 years old)¹³. The evaluation of this measure (Stadlmayr et al., 2008) demonstrated that vocationally qualifying courses can constitute a major step towards integrating people with a migration background – not only in employment but particularly also due to their enhanced language competence (courses are supported by interpreters and combined with German classes) and thanks to their gained (self-)confidence in “society as such”. But it has also become clear that the target group of “people with a migration background” is not homogeneous. The share of people unable to cope with (subject-related and/or linguistic) demands was estimated at 40%, the percentage of underchallenged at 12%. The placement rate three months after the end of courses was surprisingly high with 55% of course participants compared to 49% for all AMS courses, but this is mainly attributable to men and fairly seldom in occupational fields that can be associated with the course content¹⁴. The fact that placement in appropriate employment relationships is not very successful is due to manifold causes: keywords to be mentioned by way of example in this context are deskilling, gender-specific segregation (of the labour market in general) and discrimination.

One research project on a training programme for qualified immigrants who want to work in the ALE sector (Sprung, 2007 and 2009) has shown that being able to deal with experiences of discrimination and deskilling was essential for participants to break out of the deskilling spiral. As their qualifications and competences are not recognised and therefore not used, this increases the probability that these are lost and the individuals concerned will not find any work that is in line with their actual qualification level. 80% of the 16 participants in the “Leuchtturm” project of the Vienna Integration House found appropriate employment within one and a half years of completion of the course (Sprung and Pilch-Ortega, n.d.). It was also possible to develop and appreciate the participants’ migration experience as a relevant, informally acquired competence. Sprung (2008) perceives new impulses for the immigrants’ educational participation in the encouragement of the lifelong learning (LLL) concept, e.g. as regards the recognition of qualifications, skills and competences¹⁵. In addition, the concept of “developing citizenship”, which has been encouraged by the EU in connection with the LLL strategy, could offer the prospect of highlighting and harnessing the potential and opportunities of “migration societies”. This would mean that the perspective is expanded – from focusing on individual immigrants to observing reciprocity between majority and minority societies.

¹³) In Austria, people who attend state-financed courses while unemployed are statistically broken down into Austrians and foreigners. In its reply to a query, AMS specified an average share of 16% of foreigners in all training participants in 2007 (Sprung 2008). AMS measures for people with a migration background focus on immigrant youths.

¹⁴) In the course year 2007/2008, 337 people with a migration background took part in such measures. The majority of participants were men. The major part of courses can be assigned to technical occupations (metal, electronics, CNC) and therefore also largely addresses male immigrants. In the course segment “building cleaning services”, however, only women enrolled.

¹⁵) Some institutions and initiatives in Austria enable informally acquired skills and competences to be recognised via so-called “competence balances” or “competence portfolios” (incl. the Ring of Austrian Adult Education Associations, Linz Adult Education Centre, Tyrol Centre for the Future, the project “YOU can!” (Bauer, 2008) etc.). One provision of the association “migrare” (www.migration.at) is particularly geared to migrants: the “competence profile according to CH-Q for immigrants” (here CH-Q stands for “qualification opportunity” and is a Swiss qualification programme related to professional careers). The Counselling Centre for Migrants in Vienna has set up a recognition and CET counselling office for new immigrants in Vienna.

2.4. Immigrant young people at the interface of education/training and job hunting

This section mainly aims to present studies that have been commissioned by AMS and focus on the living and educational situation as well as labour market opportunities of immigrant young people and/or young people with a migration background and the significance of counselling in this connection.

The findings of a study on educational careers, qualifications and competences of 20- to 24-year-olds without any upper secondary qualifications (Dornmayr et al., 2006) enable a differentiated analysis of the situation of these young people and show possible needs for needs for action and scenarios to reduce the dropout rate in the Austrian education system. The study also points to the connection between VET and labour market opportunities: the unemployment rate of people whose highest educational attainment was completion of compulsory schooling was 16.4% in 2005, whereas for people who boasted another upper secondary qualification (apprenticeship, VET school, VET college, secondary academic school, university, *Fachhochschule*, post-secondary VET school) it was no more than 7%. Foreigners are strongly overrepresented in terms of non-completion of upper secondary qualifications. Whereas among 20- to 24-year-olds with Austrian citizenship the share of (exclusive) compulsory school graduates is as low as 13%, the relevant percentage among those with a non-Austrian nationality is 47%.¹⁶

One central part of this study by Dornmayr et al. is the analysis of competences of 20 to 24 year-olds without a qualification at upper secondary level, which - as the authors argue - is not only important for assessing this group's labour market opportunities but also for promoting these individuals' strengths, which usually leads to more success, more joy and higher motivation than fighting their weaknesses. The survey shows clearly that 20 to 24 year-olds who have no qualification at upper secondary level have acquired a number of formal qualifications and boast a range of informally acquired competences. Even when analysing only the abilities reflected by school subjects, their strengths clearly exceed their weaknesses. Many failures by young people in training are due to individual weaknesses, as - according to the study authors - the Austrian education system focuses mainly on generally preventing weaknesses rather than on the particular promotion of individual strengths and resources.

As well as the individuals' strengths and weaknesses, the issue of usability of resources and support provisions is also very important. This aspect is emphasised in a study on the need for education and counselling of young people with a migration background towards the end of compulsory schooling (Wieser et al., 2008). This study maintains that particularly young people with a migration background frequently have to render "self-placement performances" and - apart from tasks such as representing their own interests vis-à-vis school-related instances - specify their educational and career objectives themselves. This difficulty is

¹⁶) It is noted, however, that 77% of all questioned 20-to-24-year-olds (with or without Austrian citizenship) without any qualification at upper secondary level have at least started a (formal) training programme at upper secondary level after compulsory schooling. The proportion of those who have not taken up any school-based programme after compulsory schooling is particularly high among non-German mother tongue women (50%). Almost half of all interviewees have furthermore attended various non-formal VET and CET courses. The number of real dropouts is distributed in almost equal parts to the dual system (32%) and the sector of intermediate and higher-level schools (31%).

compounded here by the parents' lack of social capital – that is linked with a low formal education level – (about the connection of social capital and labour market opportunities, cf. also Wallace 2007) as well as by lacking knowledge of and contacts with (counselling) institutions and companies, by insufficient knowledge of the education and training system, and by lacking language skills. Discrepancies between career aspirations and the opportunities to realise them, which can result from the above-mentioned circumstances, were studied by Dichatschek et al. (2005) in a group of immigrant young people from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia. The connection of citizenship and opportunities in the labour market for the second generation of recruitment groups is treated by Herzog-Punzenberger (2007c); the employment experiences made by two immigrant generations are studied comparatively by Gregoritsch et al. (2007); findings on the training and labour market situation of migrants in the province of Tyrol can be found in Esclamada et al. (2006).

Based on the analysis of the living conditions of young people with a migration background, all the above-mentioned studies conclude that there is a great need for educational counselling and career guidance. Contrary to the statement of needs, Dornmayr et al. (2006) find drastic deficits in this field: 45% of interviewees with German mother tongue and compulsory schooling as highest educational attainment were provided with educational counselling at school, as opposed to only 14% of interviewees with a mother tongue other than German (about the immigrants' search for work and career guidance, cf. also Kostera, 2009). Therefore the following is recommended: the recognition and further development of informally acquired competences; the focus on promoting strengths; comprehensive and high-quality educational and career counselling that reaches all young people at an early stage (incl. career guidance); special services for immigrants; as well as the extension and further development of innovative training schemes and forms of learning for all young people. Among other measures, Wieser et al. (2008) recommend the establishment of gender-sensitive counselling; parent-related activities; strengthening of the counsellors' intercultural competence; recruitment of counsellors with a migration background. Mentoring by people with a migration background who have been successful on the labour market and/or in higher learning programmes is considered by the authors as another useful measure that could identify new prospects beyond traditional career choices and lead to strengthening young people by the use of role models.

In terms of qualification options and measures for young people with a migration background, Heckl et al. (2007) advocate – apart from the possibility of adults to acquire lower secondary school qualifications (cf. Steiner et al., 2007) – putting well-founded VET in the form of apprenticeship training at the centre of the AMS's counselling practice¹⁷. In addition, it should still be possible to complete an apprenticeship in course form, and short-time skilled workers' programmes¹⁸ for young adults (aged 18 or above) should be extended to other occupational areas (Heckl et al., 2007). Schneeberger (2005) also recommends that more far-reaching efforts be undertaken in the creation of simple entrance training in the services

¹⁷) Against the background of the emerging skilled workers' shortage and the perceivable educational behaviour (immigrants are strongly overrepresented in lower secondary schools and prevocational schools, which frequently lead to apprenticeship training), the study authors postulate that the classic skilled worker of the future will be an immigrant. However, the issue of equality of opportunity compared to youths with no migration background should be discussed in this connection.

¹⁸) This measure enables young adults to complete an apprenticeship without being taught together with 15-year-old vocational school students.

sector. Training programmes for young adults with or without a migration background are also becoming more important to prepare them for taking apprenticeship-leave exams, considering particularly those competences that have been acquired informally abroad or in Austria. Due to frequently existing previous knowledge and professional experiences, their recognition in final exams represents one major aspect. As many as 10% of apprenticeship-leave exams are taken in the framework of second-chance education.

Possible measures that do not focus on young people but on issues that codetermine the demand for labour are listed in Heckl et al. (2007): AMS should increasingly convince companies that young people with a migration background are also given an opportunity on the labour market. The immigrants' multilingualism and intercultural competence as well as cultural diversity in the company should be put forward to raise the companies' awareness. In addition, it is important to address the growing number of entrepreneurs with a migration background as potential employers. Above all these companies should be won as training providers. This issue is at the focus of a study on entrepreneurship among people with a migration background (Schmid et al, 2006). In this context, the following is recommended: target group-specific support and counselling; involvement of the different ethnic groups' social networks; training for multipliers; as well as networking with established structures.

The (possible) employment of adults with an East and Southeast European migration background as workers for internationally active Viennese companies was analysed in another study (Mandl et al., 2005). There exists a certain imbalance between the companies' requirements and the relevant group's average qualification level. But there is also a relatively small highly qualified group of people of the first and second generation of immigrants in Vienna, which has to fight against the stigma of "cheap labour, low qualification". People with a migration background who are substantially co-designing the internationalisation activities of Viennese companies at present have successfully overcome the challenge of neither losing connection to their and/or their parents' country of origin nor of failing to connect with their (new) home country, and they are also conscious of their abilities (language skills and knowledge of the respective cultures and mentalities). Here also it would be beneficial to create transparency on the labour market and/or support the recruitment and matching process between companies and job-seekers.

2.5. Mobility in VET – European transparency instruments

Mobility and the willingness to be mobile are the subject of an empirical study (a survey among pupils and teachers) about the Austrian school graduates' attitude and knowledge level about the subject of international business (Schmid, 2006). Relevant trends in apprenticeship training have also been surveyed (expert interviews). The survey reveals a surprisingly high agreement on the pupils' willingness to be mobile in the future. To date only a few of the questioned teachers (10-20%) have made professional experiences abroad (a semester at a university abroad; a work placement spent abroad; teaching activity abroad). To date, exchange projects for students are already relatively important in secondary academic schools (AHSs). Approximately one third of teachers at AHSs and VET colleges (BHSs) have taken part in at least one EU-funded project in the education system. At VET schools (BMSs), this value is clearly lower (about 20%). In apprenticeship training it can be seen that the number of work placements abroad, e.g. under Leonardo projects, has declined sharply in the period under observation (2000-2005): apart from the major organisational efforts required, other main reasons mentioned for this decline in the number of work placements abroad include the

comparative lack of willingness on the part of companies, which often rate the period as the loss of a full worker, and on the part of apprentices, who already within Austria show a lack of willingness to be mobile and rate many target countries as not very attractive.¹⁹ The consequences of taking part in mobility measures that are funded by European education programmes are, in any event, valued as positive by all of them: The majority (87.5%) of coordinators of mobility measures (work placements) within the framework of Leonardo da Vinci who were interviewed in another study (Gutknecht-Gmeiner and Klimmer, 2007) stated that participants were able to see a lot of benefit from their stay abroad. The consequences of participation were primarily related to personal development, but many participants could also learn new things in subject-specific and linguistic respects (cf. also Burtscher, 2004; Klimmer, 2009).

In a study about the willingness to be mobile in the medico-technical assistance area (Lachmayr, 2008), graduates and trainees assess work, training and CET abroad as positive to neutral. To date, only a few have spent a longer time abroad of at least two months' duration (7.9% of trainees and 7.5% of graduates). General interest in training or CET abroad can be found in about three quarters of interviewees. However, one possible obstacle to accepting a job abroad is for a large number of those interested in staying abroad (63.7%) that training programmes abroad would not be recognised as equivalent. Where pupils are interested in becoming mobile, the main problem consists in the crediting and/or recognition of qualifications.

To reduce barriers to mobility, work on transparency instruments has been ongoing in Europe for some years, the implementation of which is also being examined for the Austrian context. One study, for example, analyses the conditions stimulating and inhibiting the implementation of the ECVET scheme in the Austrian IVET system, particularly pointing to the necessity of orienting qualifications as well as teaching and training curricula more strongly towards learning outcomes (Luomi-Messerer and Tritscher-Archan, 2007 and 2008). The issue of the transparent description of qualifications is at the centre of several studies conducted in the context of European projects. On the one hand, they focus on methods to describe competence developments (identified on the basis of empirically studied occupational activities) in relation to work processes (Luomi-Messerer and Markowitsch, 2006; Markowitsch et al., 2006 and 2008) or the analyses of existing ontologies to describe skills and competences in terms of developing an International Standard Classification for Skills and Competences (Markowitsch and Plaimauer, 2008; 2009). Another topic of research projects is the implementation of the EQF (Lassnigg et al., 2006; Markowitsch et al., 2006) and the development of the NQF in Austria: in Austria, research has from the start been included into the NQF development process and always underlined its significance for the overall process. In early 2009 an anthology was published that includes a selection of such research assignments completed in 2007 and 2008 which have followed the development process of the NQF in Austria (Markowitsch, 2009a). The anthology comprises contributions that have been written in the course of international projects with Austrian participation – TransEQFrame (Hanf et al., 2009), HE-Leo (Cendon and Prager, 2009) – and attempt to draw lessons from the neighbouring countries' developments for the national development (Luomi-

¹⁹) In a recent survey among apprentices, over 50% of interviewees expressed their interest in completing a work placement period in another EU country; some 16% would like to use this opportunity to work in another EU country for some time (Beke, 2009).

Messerer et al., 2007a,b,c and 2009). The results or interim results of the studies on learning-outcome orientation in Austrian education sub-systems (Lassnigg and Vogtenhuber, 2007 and 2009 – the two authors identify a not very far-reaching learning-outcome orientation in the studied educational sub-systems), on the creation of a typology of qualifications (Markowitsch, 2009b), and on non-formal and informal learning (Schneeberger et al., 2007 and 2009) were directly integrated into the proposal for the Austrian NQF. Some studies refer to statistical data, e.g. in the comparison of the EQF with existing educational reference frameworks (Schneeberger, 2007 and 2009; cf. also Schneeberger, 2006). In addition, studies can be mentioned that tested the possible referencing of existing qualifications to the NQF on the basis of the EQF descriptors in pilot projects using some specific sectors – construction (Tritscher-Archan, 2008 and 2009), tourism (Luomi-Messerer and Lengauer, 2009), and healthcare (Schlögl, 2009b).

3. Conclusions and implications for further research projects

The subject of “migration - interculturalism - multilingualism” plays a marginal role in the research landscape in this combination of terms. The lack of basic research – which is, among other factors, due to the complex data availability – particularly on the subject of multilingualism (ambiguous criterion of first language, language use in everyday life, etc.) is leading to problems for applied research. Gender-specific differences related to educational behaviour and career choice, as well as the situation of cross-entrants from foreign education systems (“interrupted educational biographies”) are underexposed.

Effectiveness, efficiency and equal opportunities could be analytical categories for educational policy debates. The relationship between input (resources used) and output (e.g. completed education programmes) and/or outcome (e.g. learning outcome) cannot really be analysed based on existing findings and currently available data. Overall, additional research to generate necessary data and the linking of quantitative and qualitative research is required, as well as a stronger networking within the Austrian research landscape.

Migrants are frequently debarred from the labour market. It should be analysed how qualifications and informally acquired competences of people of working age without Austrian citizenship can be surveyed appropriately; how the high level of deskilling of migrants could be prevented and a higher qualification of the low-skilled (young people and adults) could be achieved.

The interaction of policy-makers, educational politics and labour market protagonists should be examined (e.g. to obtain information about how relevant research findings might have a stronger impact on political decision-making), the causes for educational disadvantage or deskilling should be explored at macrosocial level, and a well-founded debate about concepts of integration should be held. In this connection it needs to be considered that the – often mentioned – orientation towards “migrants” as a target group is fiction: people with a migration background are a very heterogeneous target group. In addition, the goal is not to direct a deficit-oriented view on individual migrants, but rather to transform the entire education and training system; it is important that the growing linguistic and cultural diversity be recognised by the entire society, that a lifelong learning strategy be implemented that offers orientation and support to all people in “migration societies”; and that the varied discrimination mechanisms be reduced.

The focus of research on migration, education and the labour market is on low-qualified young people with a migration background. It is now necessary to extend this focus to adults and highly qualified individuals. There are hardly any findings about highly qualified migrants, although the analysis of “success stories” would probably provide hints about conditions that stimulate and inhibit educational participation and professional careers.

It should also be explored what effects the implementation of the European transparency instruments has on increasing mobility in VET and the labour market as well as, in particular, the situation of migrants (making qualifications visible, usability of competences on the labour market). This requires a systematic collection of figures on participation and stimulating and inhibiting aspects related to mobility in VET.

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List of acronyms

Abbreviation	German term	English term/explanation
abf-austria	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Berufsbildungsforschung	Austrian Working Group on VET Research
AHS	allgemeinbildende höhere Schule	Secondary academic school (higher general education school) – junior cycle and senior cycle
ALE	Erwachsenenbildung	adult learning
AMS	Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich	Public Employment Service Austria
ARQA-VET	Österreichische Referenzstelle für Qualität in der Berufsbildung	Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
BAG	Berufsausbildungsgesetz	Vocational Training Act
BBAB	Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat	Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
BFI	Berufsförderungsinstitut	Vocational Training Institute
BHS	Berufsbildende höhere Schule	VET college
BIC	Berufsinformationscomputer	database containing career information, job descriptions etc.
bifie	Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des Bildungswesens	Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Education System
BildokG	Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz	Education Documentation Act
BIZ	Berufsinformationszentrum	Career guidance centre
BMF	Bundesministerium für Finanzen	Federal Ministry of Finance
BMG	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit	Federal Ministry for Health
BMHS	Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen	VET schools and colleges
BMLFUW	Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft	Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
BMS	Berufsbildende mittlere Schule	VET school
BMASK	Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection

BMUKK	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur	Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
BMWFJ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend	Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth
BRP	Berufsreifeprüfung	examination providing access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- and four-year full-time VET schools
CET	Weiterbildung	continuing education and training
CVET	berufliche Weiterbildung	continuing vocational education and training
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
ECHP	European Community Household Panel	European Community Household Panel
ECVET	Europäisches Lernkreditsystem	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EQR / EQF	Europäischer Qualifikationsrahmen	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	Europäischer Sozialfonds	European Social Fund
EU-SILC	Gemeinschaftsstatistiken über Einkommen und Lebensbedingungen	Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FH	Fachhochschule	university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation
FHR	Fachhochschulrat	Fachhochschule Council
FHStG	Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz	Fachhochschule Studies Act
GE	Allgemeinbildung	general education
GewO	Gewerbeordnung	Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act
HE	Hochschulbildung	higher education
IHS	Institut für Höhere Studien	Institute for Advanced Studies
IBA	Integrative Berufsausbildung	integrative vocational education and training, integrative VET
ibw	Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft	Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education	International Standard Classification of Education
IVET	berufliche Erstausbildung	initial vocational education and training

JASG	Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz	Youth Training Guarantee Act
KEBÖ	Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs	Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions
LAP	Lehrabschlussprüfung	apprenticeship-leave examination
LBAB	Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat	Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
LFI	Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut	Institute for further education in rural areas
LFS	Labour Force Survey	Labour Force Survey
LLG	Lifelong Guidance	Lifelong guidance
LLL	Lebenslanges Lernen	Lifelong learning
MZ	Mikrozensus	microcensus
NEC	Nationales Europass Zentrum	National Europass Centre
NQR / NQF	Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation für wirtschaftliche Ko- operation und Entwicklung	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ÖGB	Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund	Austrian Trade Union Federation
öibf	Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung	Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training
PTS	Polytechnische Schule	prevocational school
SBP	Studienberechtigungsprüfung	higher education entrance examination
SchOG	Schulorganisationsgesetz	School Organisation Act
SchUG	Schulunterrichtsgesetz	School Education Act
VET	Berufsbildung	vocational education and training
WB	(berufliche) Weiterbildung	continuing (vocational) education and training

