



Independent national experts network in the area of adult education/adult skills

Full Country Report – Germany

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1.0 COUNTRY OVERVIEW

1.1 Trends for the entire population

1.1.1 Employment rate – entire population

Table 1.1: Evolution of employment rate - national average (2010-2016) compared to EU data

Geographical area	Years										Targets	
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	EU 2020	National 2020	
EU-28 average	:	67.9	68.6	68.6	68.4	68.4	69.2	70	71	75% of the 20-64 year-olds in employment	77	
Member State	68.7	69.4	75	76.5	76.9	77.3	77.7	78	78.7			

Source: Employment rates by age and educational attainment level (%) Eurostat code *lfsa_ergaed*, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the average employment rate of the population (ISCED all levels) aged 20 to 64 in a given Member State over the period 2000-2016 to EU targets and average, including the EU2020 target, national 2020 targets and the average EU employment rate for 2016.

-Comparison to EU2020 target:

Germany met the EU-2020 target of 75% in 2010, the figure in 2016 was 78.7% and is still on the rise.

-Comparison to National 2020 target:

The national target of 77% has already been reached (as of 2013) and exceeded. The rate was 77.3% in 2013 and stood at 78.7% in 2016.

Comparison between 2016 national data and the EU-28 average for 2016:

With a rate of 78.7% Germany's employment rate is above the EU average (71% in 2016). Whilst both rates are increasing, the rise in Germany is much steeper compared to the EU average figure.

-Evolution over time:

Germany's employment rate has increased by ten percentage points since the turn of the century from 68.7% in 2000 to 78.7% in 2016. The latter figure is 7.7 percentage points above the EU average, which has increased by 3 percentage points between 2005 and 2016. Thus, Germany's employment rate increased much faster than the EU average.

Several factors have contributed to this development; the key factors include the successive increase of the retirement age to 67 as well as demographic change. In addition, economic conditions are also supportive. It remains to be seen, however, what the effect of the reform of retirement regulations will be, allowing people to retire if they are 63 years old and have worked for about 45 years, prior to retirement.

1.1.2 Participation rate – entire population

Table 1.2: Evolution of participation rate in education and training - national average (2010-2016) compared to EU data

Geographical area	Years									Targets	
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	EU 2020	National 2020
EU-28 average	:	9.6	9.3	9.1	9.2	10.7	10.8	10.7	10.8		
Member State: Germany	5.2	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.9	8	8.1	8.5	15% of adults in lifelong learning (LLL)	

Source: Participation rate in education and training by sex and age (%), Eurostat code *trng_lfse_01*, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 to EU data over the period 2000-2016.

-Comparison to EU2020 target

Germany's participation rate of 8.5% in 2016 – though increasing for the last few years – is still below the EU target of 15% for 2020. It seems unlikely that Germany will meet the target, unless the figures rise much faster in the years to come.

-Comparison between 2016 national data and the EU-28 average for 2016.

While the EU average participation rate is at 10.8%, the German figure of 8.5% is still well below the EU average, even though the increase is slightly higher in recent years than the EU average rate.

-Evolution over time:

The participation rate in adult learning according to LFS has increased from 5.2% in 2000 to 8.5% in 2016. The major share of increase can be observed between 2000 and 2005. Increase over the ten years up until 2015 has been rather slow. Only the most recent figures indicate a slightly stronger advancement compared to previous years.

An interesting question concerns who or what has been driving this positive development over the last 3 to 4 years. Available statistical data on funding volumes indicate a sharp drop between 2012 and 2013, which is, however, at least to some extent due to changes in statistical accounting practices. Since then, funding increased by about 11% from EUR 4.2bn to 4.7bn. As funding volumes of the Federal Employment Agency increased by roughly 20%, this may be an important key driver. The data presented below on participation rates of low qualified adults support this argument.

1.2 Trends for low qualified adults

1.2.1 Share of low qualified adults

Table 1.3: Share of low-qualified adults (ISCED 0-2) – national data (2010-2016) compared to EU-28 average 2016

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	30.6	27.3	26.6	25.8	24.8	24.1	23.5	23
Member State	18.7	16.9	13.9	13.4	13.4	13.3	13.1	13.2	13.5

Source: Population by educational attainment level, sex and age (%), Eurostat edat_ifse_03, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: this table compares the percentage of the population with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) in 2016 to the EU-28 average for 2016 and the period 2000-2016.

-Comparison to EU-28 average

The share of the low qualified in Germany was at 13.5% in 2016, compared to 23% at the EU average. While the EU rate has decreased over the last few years, the German rate has increased in the recent past, in contrast to previous years, which may be due to high immigration to Germany.

-Evolution over time

The national rate of low qualified has decreased for most years since the turn of the century. The year 2000 saw the highest figure of 18.7% before it dropped to 13.9% in 2010. Since then, advancement has been modest and has reached the lowest rate "ever" of 13.1% in 2014. Over the last 3 years, there has been a slight increase (13.2% in 2015 and 13.5% in 2016), which is possibly due to support for the incoming refugees.

Very recent and still ongoing research undertaken by the country expert indicates that those who are in employment and were unemployed during the last 12 months prior to the survey (AES 2011) show significantly higher participation rates in adult learning than those who were not unemployed during that time (Cristobal/Dohmen 2017, forthcoming). This result is based on multivariate analysis and stable over several different models.

1.2.2 *Employment rate of low skilled adults*

Table 1.4: Employment rates of low skilled adults (ISCED 0-2) – national data (2010-2016) compared to EU-28 average 2016

Geographical area	Years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	55.7	53.8	53.4	52.7	52	52.6	53.2	54.3
Member State	51.5	51.7	55.4	56.7	57.6	58.1	58	58.7	59.5

Source: Employment rates by age and educational attainment level (%) Eurostat code lfsa_ergaed, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the employment rates of those with low qualifications (ISCED levels 0-2) to the EU average over the period 2010-2016.

-Comparison to EU-28 average:

With an employment rate of 59.5% in 2016, Germany's figure is more than five percentage points above the EU average of 54.3%.

-Evolution over time

The employment rate of low-skilled adults in Germany has increased from 51.5% in 2000 to 59.5% in 2016. This figure has increased over the last eleven years from 51.7% in 2005 to its recent level of almost 60%, whilst almost no increase can be seen for the first five years from 2000 to 2005. This development is particularly interesting when compared to the development of the EU average, which has only improved over the last four years since 2013. Between 2005 and 2013, the EU average rate has even decreased. As a result, whereas Germany's employment rate of low skilled adults has been below EU average in 2005, it was higher already in 2010 and the difference has increased steadily, particularly because of a positive development in Germany, but also because of the poor relative development in Europe.

The difference in patterns raises the question, what the causes are for the positive development in Germany. Although there is some discussion on the impact of the so-called Hartz reforms in 2005, it seems likely that they have played a positive role in this regard. A large issue is probably the changes in the role and policy of the Federal Employment Agency. It is unclear, whether so-called mini-jobs may have also had a positive effect.

1.2.3 Participation rate of low skilled adults

Table 1.5: Participation rate of low skilled adults – EU average in comparison to national average

Geographical area	years								
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28 average	:	3.7	3.9	4	3.9	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.2
Member State	1.9	2.6	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.7

Source: Participation rate in education and training by sex and educational attainment (%), Eurostat code and trng_lfse_03, last updated 25 April 2017.

Explanatory note: This table compares the participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 with low qualification levels (ISCED levels 0-2) to EU data and over the period 2000-2016.

-Comparison to EU-28 average:

Low-skilled adults in Germany participate below EU average rates in adult learning (3.7% in 2016 compared to 4.2% for the EU-28 average). While the development at national level has been positive for most of the time, especially in recent years, the EU average has decreased in recent years, which has led to a slight reduction of the gap. The lower participation rate of low-skilled adults cannot explain the overall gap in participation rates, since the difference here is slightly less than for all adults, both in absolute and relative terms.

-Evolution over time:

The national participation rate increased consistently between 2000 and 2016, apart from a fluctuation in 2013 (decrease from 3.2% in 2013 to 3.1% in 2012). At the national level, there was a notable increase from 3.1% to 3.7% (2013 to 2017), while EU average rates have declined by 0.3 percentage points over the same period.

As was already the case for the employment rates of low-skilled adults, the pattern concerning the participation in adult learning of this sub-group also differs between national and EU level. The participation rate of low-skilled adults in the EU increased – with one exception - between 2005 and 2013/14 before dropping again slightly. Meanwhile, in Germany the rates increased substantially over the last couple of years, as well as for the period since 2000. A small drop can be observed for 2013 compared to 2012. As the level is particularly high in 2016, this raises the question what was the role of the Federal Employment Agency and/or the training of refugees and other migrants in this regard.

As already indicated above, it seems very likely that increased efforts of the Federal Employment Agency contributed to this positive development in Germany, particularly over the last few years.

2.0 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ADULT LEARNING SYSTEM

2.1 Main features and a concise summary of historic development

The German adult education system is very complex and heterogeneous and varies from adult learning sector to sector; there is no overarching legislation and regulation. The following bullet points briefly summarise some core aspects of the four major strands:

- **Company-related training** is provided by the companies themselves or through private providers. It is unregulated as far as public rules and regulations are concerned, and is instead driven by the companies and their associations and agencies. The funding is based on company contributions and a small number of training funds, public support is via tax incentives on the federal level and complemented by grants in some of the 16 states (Dohmen 2016c, 2016d; Dohmen/Orr/Wrobel 2016).
- **Vocational adult education** is also a more or less private responsibility, even though some strands are regulated, such as, for example, the so-called Aufstiegsfortbildungen (advanced vocational further training for master craftsmen and similar levels of (formal) qualification). The funding comes mostly from private sources, with some public co-funding through tax incentives but also loans and grants from the federal as well as state level for those in employment and often limited to certain target groups, which vary from state to state (see below; Dohmen 2016c, 2016d; Dohmen/Orr/Wrobel 2016).
- **General adult learning** is provided in most states through publicly supply-side funded organisations, such as the Volkshochschulen (Folk high schools/Adult education centres) and similar institutions run, for example, by the trade unions. These institutions are, among others, responsible for political education and co-financed through fees from the participants, project funding etc. However, some public funding is also available for formal learning in relation to basic qualifications through federal and state governments as well as through the Federal Employment Agency.
- **Vocational further education and re-qualification for the unemployed** is a major responsibility of the Federal Employment Agency with some co-funding from the Federal as well as State Ministries of Labour.

Almost all parts of adult learning are non-formal, even though some programmes, such as "Aufstiegsfortbildungen" or second chance programmes, for example, lead to formal qualifications, as they are often run by providers which are not part of the (publicly regulated) education system.

Summarising the core elements, there is neither an overarching regulatory framework nor a comprehensive funding system. As far as funding is concerned, one may distinguish between general adult education and vocational training. General adult education is largely state regulated and receives some form of supply-side funding, even though this has often changed from input-orientation to some form of indicator-based funding. Regulations and funding vary across the 16 states. Apart from this state regulation for general adult learning, public regulations are limited to those parts, receiving public funding, i.e. from

the Federal Employment Agency or through grants and/or loans. In this case, regulations concern the vocational orientation of the programmes as well as certain quality standards that are to be upheld by the institutions or programmes.

Most adult learning is in-company training that every second employee participates in (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2016), while only one in eight adults participates in general (non-vocational) adult learning and only one in ten in vocational programmes.

Almost 60% of those working in the adult learning sector are self-employed and freelancers, only 25% are regularly employed, either as civil servants (3%) or employees; 16% are labelled as "others" (Autorengruppe Bildungsbericht 2016).

Looking at the size of certain sectors of adult education, and in particular the sectors leading to formal qualifications, Table 2.1 indicates that some 618,000 people aged 20+ are enrolled in tracks leading to formal lower or upper secondary degrees. However, almost 482,000 are between 20 and 24 years of age and must not necessarily be engaged in adult learning, rather than in initial education, for various reasons. A more detailed breakdown indicates that the vast majority is in their early 20s (20 years: 35%; 21 years: 25%; 22 years: 17%, 23 years: 12% and 24 years: 9%).

A closer look at the school type indicates that almost 50,700 people are in schools aiming to provide second-chance education, i.e. heading for a formal qualification, as the following sections will show.

Table 2.1 Number of participants in formal education and training by level of education and age

	Age 20-24	Age 25+	Total
Level of education (i.e. basic, vocational, higher)			
Primary	0	0	0
Lower secondary	26,431	6,149	32,580
Upper secondary	481,857	103,745	585,602
Post-secondary non-tertiary education		144,315	
Short-cycle tertiary education		215	
Bachelor's or equivalent level		648,473	
Master's or equivalent level		570,485	
Doctoral or equivalent level		193,000	

Source: Eurostat, Eurostat database table "Pupils and students enrolled by education level, sex and age (educ_uoe_enra02)", accessed 2017.08.21

2.2 Provision

The following topics concerning various forms of adult learning provision are to some extent overlapping and may thus not be clear-cut in any case. Moreover, the terms are also used differently in different segments of the adult education sector. Therefore, the term "qualification" is used in connection to formal degrees and graduation, while the term "skills" is used more generally, and is limited to pathways which do not lead to formal degrees. Furthermore, the distinction between Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and other forms of adult learning for the low or unqualified is also not necessarily clear-cut, which relates to the distinction between vocational education and training and adult learning.

Before answering the more detailed questions, a brief overview of available information on adult learning providers in Germany may prove useful. Three different data sources present some information on the provision, however, it is unclear to what extent they present a comprehensive or even full picture.

First of all, in 2008 DIE published a study called "Weiterbildungskataster", which aimed to identify a comprehensive overview on adult learning provision in Germany, based on different sources, such as meta and special data bases (e.g. Kursnet (www.kursnet.arbeitsagentur.de) and InfoWeb Weiterbildung (www.iwwb.de)), memberships in associations etc. (Dietrich/Schade/Behrendorf 2008). In total, they identified 16,841 adult learning providers.¹ Accounting also for branches of larger providers, which often were not listed separately in the sources - the project identified 7,250 branches, not listed explicitly - the total number of adult learning providers was estimated at around 25,000 (ibid.). The following table provides an overview on the structure, focussing on those providers participating in this study.

Table 2.2: Structural information on adult learning providers according to Weiterbildungskataster (2008)

	Number	Share
Private provider (Private Anbieter)	6.833	41,4%
Folk highschoools (Volkshochschulen)	3.897	23,6%
Institutions of clubs and associations (Einrichtungen eines anderen Vereins oder Verbands)	1.248	7,6%
Institutions of employer federations, chambers of commerce etc. (Einrichtungen der Wirtschaft (Arbeitgeber, Kammern etc.))	860	5,2%
Institutions of churches, religeous organisations (Einrichtungen der Kirchen, eines konfessionellen Verbands)	640	3,9%

¹ Another 8.958 providers listed in one of the data sources stated they were either no learning provider, could not be reached under their registered address or did not respond to the request. Moreover, the authors assume that the total number of adult learning providers is even higher, because some may not be listed in such data bases, e.g. because they offer services to special clients (e.g. as individual trainers) or deliver learning services, although stating they do not do (Dietrich/Schade/Bernsdorf 2008).

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Other public institutions: municipalities, libraries, museums (Andere öffentliche Einrichtungen, z.B. Gemeinde, Bücherei, Museum)	634	3,8%
Individual, self-employed full-time trainers with own supply (Selbstständiger hauptberuflicher Trainer mit eigenen Angeboten)	492	3,0%
General or vocational education schools (Allgemeinbildende oder berufliche Schule)	489	3,0%
University/University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule/Universität, Fachhochschule)	396	2,4%
Institutions of Trade unions (Einrichtung der Gewerkschaften (z.B. Arbeit und Leben))	320	1,9%
Institutions of political parties or foundations (Einrichtung einer politischen Partei oder Stiftung)	103	0,6%
Other (Sonstiges)	608	3,7%
Total	16.520	100,0%

The vast majority of providers are private companies (41%, comprising for profit and not for profit provision – see below), followed by adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) (24%). The remaining one third spreads across a heterogeneous group, of which those from associations and clubs as well as institutions from employers and chambers etc. form the largest sub-groups.

Looking at the fields of activity, the vast majority offers either only professional training (56%) or professional and general (non-professional) adult learning (37%), whereas 6% deliver only non-professional or general, political and culturally oriented programmes (ibid.).

In 2009/10, the Federal Statistical Office (2013) aimed to gather a comprehensive overview of adult learning provision in Germany, based on the company register. 47,798 companies providing such services were identified, of which 14,000 were approached. As another 1,000 companies were drawn from another selection criteria, in total 15,000 adult learning providers were selected for the survey. However, 2,577 companies (17.2%) could not be reached, due to false addresses and inability to identify their present location. Another 3,357 companies (22.4%) stated that they do not provide adult learning services or mentioned other reasons, and 6,687 (44.6%) did not respond to the request. In the end, only 1,624 questionnaires were returned, which is 11% in relation to the full sample of institutions contacted.

The vast majority of those who responded are micro enterprises with only 1 employee, another 21% have less than 100 employees and only 4% are larger providers. The answers concerning other questions is scattered and incomplete and does not allow to draw any conclusions.

The third source is the so-called WBmonitor (Further education monitor) which is conducted annually since the early 2000s with different foci and a sample size of up to

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1,860 providers (2016), though with large differences from year to year – in general, it appears that the sample size is growing, though not necessarily representative. As referenced by the previous paras, based on the study of the Federal Statistical Office (2013), comprehensive information on the size and structure of adult learning providers is not yet available.

According to the WBmonitor 2015 (Ambos/Koscheck/Martin 2016), the overall structure according to ownership is more or less constant and consists of 30% private-for-profit and 16% private-not-for-profit, 15% are owned by a heterogenous group of large societal organisations (e.g. churches, political parties, trade unions, foundations, an association or a club (Verein)). 11.5% are so-called "Volkshochschulen" – adult education centres – (although their ownership structures vary to some extent across states) and 10% belong to either Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Manufacturing, guilds (Innungen) or professional associations (Berufsverbände). The remaining 18% belong to a heterogeneous group of other providers.

The overview on statistical information on adult learning provision indicates that the overall level of information is limited for different reasons: (1) Despite various attempts and sources, it is difficult to assess to what extent the available information is comprehensive and valid or not, although the pictures from the four sources are somewhat conclusive and arrive at similar structural indications. (2) More detailed data on provision in terms of programmes offered, number of participants in various sub-groups of provision etc. is restricted to some specific groups of adult learning providers, and particularly focussing public provision or publicly financed provision, which relates particularly to general, political and cultural adult learning. Key sources are the Volkshochschulstatistik (statistics on adult learning centres) and Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund (joint statistics of further education) covering different sub-groups of providers, organised in various associations. (3) Some overarching data on participation is also provided through the Federal Statistical Office in its "Weiterbildungsstatistik" ("Further education statistics"), based on different sources. (4) Finally, two surveys among participants (Adult Education Survey and Mikro census²) provide information on overall participation patterns.

Before starting the review of the provision according to different criteria, it seems appropriate to start with some background information to understand the importance of the provision of basic skills and qualifications: According to OECD (2013, 2016; OECD 2013, 2016; Rammstedt et al. 2013), presenting the result of the PIAAC 2012-study (PIAAC - Programme on International Assessment of Adult Competences), almost 20% - and possibly up to 40% – of adults and according to PISA 2015 18% of 15 year-olds are considered functionally illiterate.³ Around 7.5m people in Germany are considered

² The Micro census (Mikrozensus) is the one of the most comprehensive surveys in Germany, conducted every year among 1% of the population, which forms also the basis for the information on adult learning in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of the European Union. In addition to the four-weeks-period considered in the LFS, the Micro census also includes information on participation throughout the last 12 months prior to the survey. Yet, due to statistical differences, the 12-months-figures of the Micro census and AES divert quite substantially – while the figure of the AES is at around 50% for the age group 25 to 64 years, the MC arrives at around 13%.

³ The share of the adult population that is considered „functionally illiterate“ depends on the particular definition and breadth of the concept. If following a narrow concept, i.e. accounting only for those up to level one, the share is at about 17.5% (OECD 2016a), if applying a broader approach, that includes also those having serious

functionally illiterate according to the so-called "Level one" study. This amounts to 14.5% of adults aged 18 to 64.

In addition, in 2012, 2.7m people (3.8% of Germany's population) of those aged 15+ did not possess any school qualifications (those in education and training were not counted). In total, 10m people (14.3% of the population) did not have a vocational qualification. The number of people aged 25-34 years without a vocational qualification amounts to 1.5m. There are significant discrepancies between those with and without migrant background, with reasonable differences across diverse groups of migrants and across age.

Unsurprisingly, both labour market participation and unemployment rates are highly dependent on education and, in particular, vocational qualifications. While labour market participation increases with the level of qualification, unemployment rates decrease.

2.2.1 Helps adults improve their Basic Skills

As mentioned above, the term "skills" is used in relation to pathways and adult learning not leading to formal qualifications. Germany has several ways to provide basic skills for those without basic education or skills, particularly for those who do not manage to enter successfully into upper secondary education, which comprises general and vocational tracks (dual apprenticeships as well as school-based VET). Every year almost 50,000 young people leave lower secondary education without a formal qualification (Caritas 2016). This share of early school leavers without formal qualification varies substantially across the 16 German states, and ranges from 4.2% in Hesse to 9.9% in Saxonia-Anhalt. Although, statistically, one out of three of these young people manage to enter successfully into a VET pathway (Dohmen 2014), e.g. the dual system, every year, more than 250,000 young people enter into the so-called "Übergangssystem" ("transition system"). One fourth of entrants possess no basic qualification, another 48% graduated with the lower qualification from lower secondary education. Although most "freshmen" are young people, a certain share may be aged 25+, e.g. because they repeatedly participated in this track.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that on average a quarter of those entering the dual system drop out for different reasons, whereas many re-start an apprenticeship the following year in another trade and/or company. The share of drop-outs from dual VET varies according to pre-qualifications: the rate of those who dropped out of lower secondary education is the highest at 38%, while one third of those who graduated from lower secondary education with the lowest qualification ("Hauptschulabschluss") drop out, and 29% of those with the higher lower secondary education qualification ("Realschulabschluss") (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2016).

Basic skills can be addressed through a variety of providers and programmes, for many of which no overarching and comprehensive statistical data is available. Moreover, it is often

difficulties in reading and writing, even though formally not functionally illiterate, the share increases by another 26% to 43.5% (Nickel 2014).

difficult to distinguish precisely between various intentions of adult learning, because statistics are grouped by topic rather than intention.

With regard to the distinction between skills and qualification-oriented adult learning, the vast majority is skills-oriented. According to Adult Education Survey (AES), approximately 3.4% of adults who were engaged in formal adult education during the last 12 months were focused on achieving qualifications (Bilger/Strauß 2017)⁴; 88% of participation was not related to qualification achievement. Yet, there are two different notions: firstly, in the broadest sense of the notion “skills” one may argue that all this training may be skills-oriented; while, secondly, if one aims to distinguish between knowledge and skills, at least some training is knowledge-oriented and some skills-directed. For example, while language learning is skills-oriented, adult learning on health, political or cultural topics may be more knowledge-oriented, although the distinction is not necessarily clear-cut, but dependent on the particular course, seminar, or workshop. A workshop on acting or rhetoric is skills-oriented, which may also apply to health-related topics that aim to change behaviour etc.

More in-depth statistics provided by the “Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund” distinguish between the following areas: politics/society, family/gender/generation, religion/ethics, nature/environment, culture/design, health, languages, work/vocational/professional, and basic education/qualification. Unfortunately, further breakdowns concern only selected forms (e.g. single course with utmost 3 hours of instruction) and do not allow further insights about which courses are skills-oriented.

To the extent possible, a closer look at the following table, provided by the “Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund”, indicates that more than 40% of supply, measured by hours of instruction, concerns languages and 17% are health-related. Compared to 2005, the number of hours for languages as well as for basic education/qualification increased, at the costs of almost all other areas.

Table 2.3 Hours of education 2005, 2015 comparison

	2005	2015
Nature, environment	0,6%	0,4%
Culture, designing	12,4%	10,4%
Health	16,9%	17,1%
Languages	33,9%	41,6%
Work, vocational	15,2%	10,0%
Basic education, qualification	7,9%	8,6%
Other	13,1%	11,9%
Total	100,0%	100,0%
Remark: data may not necessarily fully comparable		
Source: Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund 2015		

⁴ The report mentions a share of 11% participating in formal education, of which are 69% in initial education. Of the remaining 23% are in continuing education, 8% did not specify whether it was initial or continuing education. Here, the assumption is that all are in continuing adult education.

In addition, the VHS statistics provide more specific data for the adult learning centres. Table 2.4 provides some figures concerning basic skills/education programmes and shows that there are around 77,000 occupancies (63% of the area's total) in these courses. The average duration of such non-qualification programmes varies from 20 in mathematics to 103 hours in overarching courses, highlighting that many are really oriented towards basic skills. However, as the course programme is not organised on an annual or semi-annual basis, the total number of hours may be higher.

Table 2.4 Participation (occupancies⁵) in basic skills/education VHS-programmes

Programme/thematic area	Courses		Teaching hours		Occupancies	
6.00 overarching programmes/courses	2.260	19,2 %	232.548	18,4 %	21.996	18,2 %
6.07 Alphabetisation/Basic education (Alphabetisierung/Elementarbildung)	4.214	35,7 %	251.070	19,9 %	36.776	30,4 %
6.08 Maths (Rechnen/Mathematik)	2.252	19,1 %	45.681	3,6%	18.420	15,2 %
Total (incl. qualification-oriented programmes)	11.794	100%	1.261.690	100%	120.964	100%

Source: VHS-Statistics, own translation

2.2.2 Helps adults achieve a Recognised Qualification

According to AES 2016 (Bilger/Strauß 2017), around 3.4% of adults who were engaged in formal adult education during the last 12 months (see above). Germany has several pathways to get a qualification for those without basic or advanced educational or vocational qualifications, particularly for those who do not manage to enter successfully into one of the pathways of upper secondary education, comprising a general and a vocational track (dual apprenticeships as well as school-based VET). However, statistical data on this is scattered and limited, because of the heterogeneity of pathways and options. The following paragraphs summarise the information that could be identified in this regard.

A look at the most recent statistics from the Federal Statistical Office by type of school provides the following figures (see Table 2.5). It highlights that in total 50,681 adults are heading for a higher qualification, whereas the majority – in total 31,000 in Evening Gymnasiums (“Abendgymnasien”) and Kollegs – aims at a higher education entrance examination, while less than 1,000 aim for a lower secondary degree.

⁵ The term “occupancies” is used as participants can enrol in several subsequent programmes or courses, while cannot be identified by the statistic as the same person. Folk high school organise their programmes not on an annual basis, but in semesters or even quarters.

However, these four types of schools are not the only ones leading to additional qualifications for adults.

Table 2.5 Enrolments in second chance education by type of school

	Abendhauptschulen (evening classes aiming at the lower level of lower secondary education)	Abendrealschulen (evening classes aiming at the higher level of lower secondary education)	Abendgymnasien (evening classes aiming at upper secondary education)	Kollegs (full-time schools aiming at upper secondary education)	Total
BW	-	1.287	2.312	418	4.017
BY	-	322	1.001	1.399	2.722
BE	357	842	338	1.970	3.507
BB	-	1.306	336	256	1.898
HB	117	426	427	-	970
HH	147	360	1.015	175	1.697
HE	303	2.005	1.623	592	4.523
MV	-	-	436	-	436
NI	-	-	828	933	1.761
NW	-	10.774	5.840	8.156	24.770
RP	-	-	-	681	681
SL	-	274	171	117	562
SN	-	957	451	764	2.172
ST	-	150	70	319	539
SH	-	-	314	-	314
TH	-	-	-	112	112
Total	924	18.703	15.162	15.892	50.681

According to VHS statistics (adult education centre statistics), 2015 saw 121,000 occupancies, divided among various programmes and qualifications. Not all of these programmes, however, lead to qualifications and instead aim at basic skills. Focussing those aiming at qualifications had some 44,000 occupancies, of which Middle School qualifications made up the largest share. However, the number of individual participants is much lower, as the courses are organised in several periods per year, commonly three to four.

Table 2.6 Occupancies in qualification-oriented VHS-programmes

Programme/thematic area	Courses	Teaching hours	Occupancies
Basic education - school qualifications			
6.01 Lowest school qualification (Hauptschulabschluss)	1.149	264.242	15.972
	9,7%	20,9%	13,2%

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6.02 Middle school qualification (Realschulabschluss)	1.302	11,0%	306.468	24,3%	19.386	16,0%
6.03 Polytechnics (UAS) entrance qualification (FOS-Abschluss)	99	0,8%	19.367	1,5%	1.186	1,0%
6.04 (General) Higher Education Entrance Examination (allg. HS-Reife)	437	3,7%	135.002	10,7%	6.382	5,3%
6.05 Access to higher education without formal HEEE (HS-Zugang ohne Abitur)	43	0,4%	5.516	0,4%	413	0,3%
6.06 Other School qualifications (sonstige Schulabschlüsse)	38	0,3%	1.796	0,1%	433	0,4%
Total (incl. non-qualification oriented courses/programmes)	11.794	100%	1.261.690	100%	120.964	100%

Source: VHS-Statistics, own translation

Finally, a look at the number of graduates from such school-qualification oriented programmes of the VHS might prove useful. According to the most recent data from 2015, almost 8,600 people earned such a qualification, with highest numbers and shares for lower secondary education qualifications. 8% aimed at upper secondary education qualifications to enter the higher education system, while another 2.5% headed towards entry into higher education without the formal qualification. The differences in size between this and previous data should not be misinterpreted as indicating high drop-out or non-completion rates.

Table 2.7 School qualifications

School qualifications		
Lowest lower secondary education qualification (Hauptschulabschluss)	3.922	45,7%
Higher level lower secondary education qualification (Realschulprüfungen/FS-Reife etc.)	3.746	43,7%
Entrance qualification to polytechnics (UAS) (FHS-Reife/FOS-Abschluss)	204	2,4%
General HE entrance qualification (Abitur/allg. HS-Reife)	491	5,7%
access to universities with GHEE-qualification (HS-Zugang ohne Abitur)	211	2,5%
Total	8.574	100,0%

Source: VHS-statistics 2016

Accounting also for other providers, which are covered by the "Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund", the figures on courses, hours and occupancies increase by 20 to 30% compared to VHS-statistics. While the figure on courses for basic education and school qualification rises from 16,808 (VHS) to 19,560 (all providers covered by the "Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund" (+16.4%), the number of hours increases from 1,609,224 to 1,778,056 (+10.5%) and the number of occupancies from 148,935 to 187,019 (+25.6%). The disproportionate increase of the number of occupancies in relation to both other figures – especially in relation to the number of hours – indicates that the focus of the other institutions is more on shorter courses rather than on school qualifications.

Another strand of qualifications concerns advanced vocational training, e.g. to become a master craftsmen, at different levels, e.g. DQF 5, 6 and 7 (comparable ISCED 11), previously these courses were covered under ISCED 5B (ISCED 97). The *Weiterbildungsstatistik* (Further education statistics) of the Federal Statistical Office (2016) highlights that close to 116,000 people were engaged in examinations of advanced professional training in 2015, of which 98,000 were successful.⁶

Moreover, programmes for the unemployed and for job-seekers, financed by the Federal Employment Agency, are likely to aim at getting a qualification. According to data from the Federal Statistical Office (2016), between 38,000 and 53,000 unemployed entered into qualification-oriented programmes during the last five years, while 43,000 to 50,000 exited such measures.⁷

Finally, it is worth mentioning that all data provided should not be added-up as there is some overlap, e.g. qualification programmes for the unemployed run by adult education centres; however, the size of the overlap cannot be assessed here. Yet, the Adult Education Survey 2014 states that 22% of interviewed participants got a qualification (Bilger/Strauß 2015), this figure varies across years between 20 and 24% - however, this does not exclusively concern (continuing) adult learning.

2.2.3 Helps adults develop other knowledge and skills, not for vocational purposes

According to the Adult Education Survey (2014), 17% of all adult learning activities and 24% of its volume is said to be non-vocational (Bilger/Strauß 2015), whereas in-company training accounts for the majority.⁸ In relation to individual adult learning only, non-vocational adult learning accounts for slightly more than half of the adult learning programmes (57% compared to 43%) and slightly less than half of time (47 vs. 53%).

⁶ The numbers may not be identical with total number of participants as such advanced vocational training to become a master craftsmen (or a similar qualification) may be organised in modules, where examinations takes place at the end of this module, i.e. an unknown number of individuals may be counted more than once.

⁷ The figures appear to some extent disparate, as the number of exits seems to be higher than the number of entrants few years earlier. This may be due to differences in the length of the programmes and/or people re-starting it, while not counted as new entrants etc.

⁸ In-company-training accounts for 70% of adult learning measures and for 50% of the time spent. However, it is likely that these figures are too high, as the definition – if learning takes place either during working time or the employer pays at least a part of the costs – seems biased towards in-company training (Dohmen 2013a, 2013b). This would suggest that almost 6% of employees bear the full costs of in-company-training and another 3% partially (Dohmen 2017), which seems rather unlikely.

Controlling for almost 10% of employees, paying themselves for in-company-training, these figures would shift more towards vocational training.

Building upon the other statistical sources, particularly the VHS-statistics (Ambos et al. 2016) and the Weiterbildungsstatistik im Verbund (DIE 2017), the picture will be strongly biased by the orientation of the institutions covered towards non-vocational learning. Based on a narrow understanding of vocational learning, i.e. accounting only for those programmes which are clearly marked as vocational, between 96% and 98% are directed towards non-vocational learning. However, in this case the share of non-vocational learning is underestimated as some language learning may be for vocational purposes and some basic education or even education qualification eventually aim to serve vocational targets, which may also be valid for health and other programmes. Yet, as the individual interests and targets determine whether a programme is related to non-vocational or vocational interests, it is not possible to arrive at more concrete figures in this regard.

Furthermore, one may even argue that the distinction between vocational and non-vocational may be almost completely blurred, since side-effects may exist supporting either non-vocational purposes of vocational adult learning or vice versa.

2.2.4 Facilitates Transition to the Labour Market for unemployed people or those at risk of unemployment (ALMPs)

The key driver for labour market transition is the Federal Employment Agency, which runs several programmes to support the issue. Adult learning can take place in order to either earn a qualification (this topic was touched above) or skills supporting transition.

In addition to the 40,000 to 50,000 entrants into qualification programmes for unemployed, 260,000 to 270,000 enter into ALMP-programmes every year, and a similar number exists from such measures annually (Federal Statistical Office 2016).

Recent research highlights that the transition rates into employment are 20% percentage points higher for women and 12% higher for men, who gained a qualification during their unemployment period, compared to those who did not. However, some news articles stated that also certain non-qualification programmes were supportive in relation to successful transition, e.g. programme management courses.

Without distinction between the two general programmes (qualification-oriented vs. non-qualification oriented), around one third of those entering into a training programme has non-vocational qualification, roughly 10% each, are long-term unemployed, with migrant background and/or below age 25.

However, the AES 2014 highlights that the participation rates of unemployed is below average (32% vs. 50%) (Bilger/Strauß 2015), while our own research, based on multi-variate analyses, arrives at the conclusion that those who were unemployed participate significantly more often in adult learning than others (Cristobal/Dohmen 2017).

2.2.5 *Opens up Higher Education to adults*

Over the last decades, several policies have been established that aim to open up higher education to adults. Two different lines of policies should be distinguished. A first set of policies supports those who did not have the opportunity to take the formal entrance examination; a second group supports the entrance into the higher education system and the study process.

With regard to the first issue, Germany has a long tradition to enable people to arrive at a formal qualification to enter the higher education system. In fact, the so-called "second education pathway" (Zweiter Bildungsweg) was established already in the 1920s. Both full-time and part-time options are available in this regard, commonly financed by the public. The specific name of the school may vary, for example, Abendhauptschule, Abendrealschule, Abendgymnasium [evening classes leading to the lowest school graduation degree, earned after grade 9, or to a lower secondary degree after grade 10⁹ or the higher education entrance examination after grade 13].¹⁰ To some extent, this depends on the pathway, e.g. evening schools, and on the type of degree that it will lead to. In some states, so-called Kollegs are another form, aiming at the same or at least similar goals. For more statistical details see at the beginning of section 2.2, particularly section 2.2.2.

More recently, another approach was adopted that allows people to enter higher education without the formal entrance qualification. The particular target group of this approach includes graduates from the vocational education and training track – which is particularly strong in Germany – who should have the opportunity to enter the higher education system, although they do not possess the formal entrance qualification. The particular role of this group of non-traditional students has increased in recent years, though at a very limited of share of less than 5% of freshmen.

In addition to student support for all students, the Federal Student Assistance Act, two specific funding opportunities exist, which are based on the programme "Support for gifted VET-graduates". This funding programme provides support through different pathways, the further education stipend (Weiterbildungsstipendium) and the advancement stipend (Aufstiegsstipendium). Both address graduates from the VET track whose marks in the final examination were particularly high. Funding amounts to EUR 7,200 over a period of 3 years, another 10% have to be financed by the grantee. The further education stipend provides funding for a very heterogeneous group of professional/vocational further education, from languages to very specific topics in the profession of the individual, including part-time studies.

The advancement stipend supports transition of high-performing VET-graduates to higher education, either in part or in full-time. The monthly funding volume for full-time students is adjusted to the level of the Federal Student Support Act, while part-time students can

⁹ It is difficult to translate these school types precisely into English.

¹⁰ It might be worth to acknowledge that the classical three-tier school system of Haupt-, Realschule and Gymnasium has been replaced in most states by a two-tier system, consistent of Gymnasium and so-called (integrated) Secondary Schools (whereas the concrete name varies from state to state).

get up to EUR 2,400 per year, which is identical with the maximum amount of the further education stipend.

The federal level supports also the stipend system of foundations, which are attached to the political parties, trade unions, employer federations and religious organisations. While most do not pay special attention to non-traditional students, the Hans-Boeckler Foundation does. Funding amounts are equal to the Federal Student Support Act, plus a "book fee" of EUR 300 per months.

As highlighted in section 2.2.2, adult education centres – and possibly also other adult learning providers as well as universities (of applied sciences) – offer special programmes for individuals planning to enter higher education without the formal higher education entrance examination. Universities and, in particular, Universities of Applied Sciences may have their own support programmes for non-traditional students, however, according to the expert's knowledge, no overview or data base on such programmes exist.

2.2.6 Enables adult employees to develop their work-related skills

A huge variety of training providers offer formal and/or non-formal programmes to develop the work-related skills of adult employees, whereas it should be noted that the distinction between work-related and non-work-related skills may be blurred. Especially when it comes to language learning, as well as health and other skills, this will contribute to higher productivity etc., even if it is not immediately related to work.

The AES 2014 indicates that 70% of all adult learning is in-company training and another 13% vocational, while 17% is non-vocational training (Bilger/Strauß 2015).

All 16 states in Germany enacted Laws on further education, which has a strong focus on non-vocational adult learning, even training leave policies commonly allow a week off for learning that may be non-vocational (Dohmen 2017). The concrete regulations may be different, e.g. more open or specific for political adult learning (e.g. in Baden-Wuerttemberg; Dohmen 2017). In addition, some states, where regulations are not fully flexible if non-vocational adult learning is concerned, allow training leaves for civil engagement (e.g. Baden-Wuerttemberg; Dohmen 2017).

2.2.7 Other (if any)

Another question concerns access to adult learning for people with disabilities. According to WBmonitor 2012,¹¹ 80% of learning providers state that their institutions is "accessible for the disabled" ("barrierefrei"), whereas 35% say access is possible without any restriction, the remaining 45% state that access is partially free of barriers (n=1.253). However, the shares vary according to size and ownership of the provider – the share among larger entities is higher than for smaller ones, whereas differences according to ownership are less diverse.

¹¹ https://wbmonitor.bibb.de/downloads/Ergebnisse_20130227.pdf

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A recent survey (WBmonitor 2016 – Ambos/Koscheck/Martin 2017) highlights that adult learning provision is strongly biased in favour of urban areas compared to rural areas. Almost three quarters of providers are located in urban areas, only one fourth in rural, which indicates that adult learning providers are even more urban-oriented than the population (68% live in urban and 32% in rural areas).

Moreover, the structure of adult learning providers according to ownership varies to some extent. The major discrepancies can be observed for private-for-profit (28% of urban and 15% of rural entities) and for public adult education centres (24% of rural and 11% of urban institutions) (ibid.).

3.0 ADULT LEARNING POLICIES

3.1 Context

3.1.1 Distribution of responsibilities regarding adult learning

As already mentioned above, there are four strands of adult learning in Germany. According to the constitution (Grundgesetz), the states are responsible for any political area and action, unless established explicitly otherwise in the constitution. This basic principle is of particular relevance for education and training, where – in general – the federal level can establish neither overall regulations nor get engaged in the funding of educational institutions etc. In 2006, this core principle was reconfirmed and even strengthened. In spite of these overarching and legally established regulations, the federal level has increased its financial contribution to education considerably over the last ten years, commonly based on temporary and fixed-term agreements with the federal states.

With regard to adult education, this implies that the major responsibility lies also with the states. In addition to the issues mentioned already in the previous sections, it is important to know that rules are established particularly at the state level and concern the role, funding and the minimum standards of general adult education through the Volkshochschulen and similar institutions. Only the training of the unemployed as well as the financing of advanced vocational further training are regulated at the federal level. Some very general principles on vocational adult learning are laid down in the Berufsbildungsgesetz (BbiG – Vocational Training Law). In a more general form, the Eurypedia website formulates “The activities of the state in the field of continuing education are, for the most part, restricted to laying down principles and to issuing regulations relating to organisation and financing. Such principles and regulations are enshrined in the legislation of the Federal Government and the Laender. State regulations are aimed at establishing general conditions for the optimum development of the contribution of continuing education to lifelong learning” (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Overview#Adult_Education_and_Lifelong_Learning).

Across national as well as state governments, power is commonly split between the ministries of education for general (non-vocational) adult learning and the ministries of labour and social affairs or economic affairs for vocational adult learning. At the federal level, the Ministry of Education and Research has a role to play in relation to vocational adult learning and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the training of the unemployed and job-seekers. At any level, other line ministries are responsible for professional adult learning/ further education in their specific political area.

Continuing education is offered by municipal institutions, in particular Volkshochschulen, as well as by private institutions, church institutions, the trade unions, the various chambers of industry and commerce, political parties and associations, companies and public authorities, family education centres, academies, Fachschulen, institutions of higher education and distance learning institutions. Radio and television companies also provide ongoing education programmes

(https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Overview#Adult_Education_and_Lifelong_Learning)

Lifelong learning strategy

There is no overarching strategy for lifelong learning in the sense that the federal government has discussed and formally decided upon such a strategy. However, in 2004, the "Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsfoerderung" (BLK 2004¹²), a joint committee of the federal and the state governments, agreed upon a report called "Strategie für Lebenslanges Learning in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" ("Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany"), which is, however, explicitly not "a coherent national strategy" (ibid, p. 5), due to constitutional framework conditions (see below section 4 for more details in this regard).¹³

The only paper that has explicitly been recognised as a national strategy concerns literacy and basic education.¹⁴ The intention of the strategy is to reduce the number of (functionally) illiterate adults through funding for projects and approaches that aim to support basic reading and writing skills. In total, EUR 180m are earmarked for this strategy.

Adult learning policy framework

The German Qualification Framework is the transformation/specification of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) into national regulations and refers to initial – or more general to formal – education. Implicitly, one reference to adult learning/adult skills is made because it states that the formal further training for a master craftsmen qualification is largely equivalent to a DQF-level 6 (comparable to a Bachelor degree), while some forms of training are level 5 and some are even level 7 (equivalent to a Master degree). Most of the responsibility for regulations concerning vocational and company-based training is given to the social partners. This overview indicates that public responsibility for adult education is rather limited and only very few and specific rules and regulations exist.

3.1.2 Major national socio-economic strategies governing the provision of Adult Learning

By and large, adult learning is the responsibility of the 16 states – the national level plays a role if continuing vocational education and training is addressed by the Berufsbildungsgesetz (Law on Vocational (Education and Training – BBiG).

While there is no federal government's strategy on LLL, the Standing Committee of the Ministers of Education and Science discussed and concluded strategies called the "Lifelong learning strategy" in 2004 (KMK 2004) and on Alphabetisation and Basic education (BMBF

¹² Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung, Strategie für Lebenslanges Lernen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Heft Nr. 115, Bonn.

¹³ In the meantime the Bund-Länder-Kommission has been abandoned and to some extent been replaced by the Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (Joint Science Conference).

¹⁴ <https://www.bmbf.de/de/nationale-strategie-fuer-alphabetisierung-und-grundbildung-erwachsener-1373.html> (retrieved on 5. October 2016)

2012); the latter entered into a "Decade of Alphabetisation and Basic Education" (KMK 2017). A brief summary of the former has been presented in the previous section.

The „Agreement over a Joint National Strategy for Alphabetisation and Basic Education of Adults in Germany 2012-2016 ("Vereinbarung über eine gemeinsame nationale Strategie für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener in Deutschland 2012 – 2016") starts with some background information and the need of such a national strategy. Based on the "Level One" study, already mentioned above, there are 57% of functionally illiterate who are employed, 17% unemployed, and 10% working in their household or on parental leave. The political key agreements concern the following:

The participants in the National Strategy:

- Agree the attainment of these objectives to be the joint task of the political, economic and societal spheres;
- Commit to specific tasks in the context of their respective competencies and responsibilities. The measures and activities to implement this National Strategy are illustrated in the following;
- Increase their offerings to avoid and reduce functional illiteracy according to demand and in line with their respective capacities, in order to improve the opportunities for participation of the functional illiterate in their social and economic life.

Regular evaluations and stock-taking are intended for guidance on further action.

In addition, the participants agreed to (1) implement public relation campaigns, (2) accompanying measures in the education system (flankierende Maßnahmen im Bildungssystem), (3) to use already existing instruments in general (Nutzung bestehender Instrumente), and (4) in relation to ALMP (Nutzung arbeitsmarktpolitischer Instrumente), (5) strengthening networks (Stärken von Netzwerken), and, finally, referred (6) to short-term oriented new measures for alphabetisation and basic education of adults („Kurzfristige neue Maßnahmen für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener") and (7) mid-term new measures (Mittelfristige neue Maßnahmen).

With regard to the last two topics, the document mentions explicitly its emphasis on the research and development programme (Workplace related alphabetisation and basic education) ("Forschungs-und Entwicklungsschwerpunkt „Arbeitsplatzorientierte Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung"), which comprised a funding volume of about EUR 20m for the period 2012 to 2014.

The evaluation of this research and development programme "Workplace related alphabetisation and basic education" (Ramboll/HSU Hamburg 2016) listed the following outputs: 35 projects established cooperation with 450 companies, of which medium and larger companies were more actively engaged than small companies, which also goes for firms in urban compared to rural areas. A total number of 9,529 multipliers (inside and outside of companies) were addressed by 591 seminars and workshops. In addition, network and cooperation structures with the Federal Employment Agency, Chambers of Commerce and Industries and similar organisations could be established.

The evaluation arrives at the following conclusion: "Due to the decentralised implementation in singular project regions and the limited number of projects, success in reaching these objectives was limited to only few regions. Only in particular cases, projects succeeded to impact on the federal or state level by approaching the top of regional authorities, the Federal Labour Office and its regional directorates, and umbrella organisations at an early stage and engaging these organisations closely in the project work or even having them initiating the work. In the case of successful projects, this approach was a decisive factor driving project transfer and the project's extensive impact." (ibid. p. 107)

In the light of this situation, the Hans-Boeckler Foundation (2017) criticised that a comprehensive further education strategy would be missing and demanded its development and conclusion. Particularly those who are most in need of adult learning/further education would not be reached properly.

3.2 Adult learning policy framework

3.2.1 A summary of major developments/ changes since 2010

To provide a slightly broader picture, this section starts with some major reforms taking place during the last 15 years and then focuses on reforms during the last 12 months.

Over the last ten years, both federal and state governments have taken several initiatives in order to strengthen the adult education sector and to increase participation rates. In most cases, this was approached by introducing various, mostly demand-driven funding models to support individuals and/or companies aiming to increase participation rates in adult learning.

The Employment Agency's funding approach underwent a complete overhaul halfway through the last decade, when the so-called Hartz reforms were introduced. Aiming to improve effectiveness, supply-side funding was abandoned and a demand-driven voucher scheme was introduced instead. Additionally, in light of the economic and financial crisis, another instrument, WeGebAU – Weiterbildung Geringqualifizierter und beschäftigter älterer Arbeitnehmer in Unternehmen, ("Further education of low qualified and older employees in companies"), was introduced and expanded.

- **Latest policy changes**

In September 2015, the federal government announced the decade of basic education and alphabetisation. This initiative aims to enhance the reading and writing skills of the illiterate and provides funding of up to EUR 180m to support projects, course concepts etc.

Almost simultaneously, refugee numbers increased considerably and – according to very recent figures¹⁵ – a total of 0.9m refugees came to Germany in 2015; in 2016, another

¹⁵ See Press Release of the Minister of the Interior "Bundesinnenminister de Maizière gibt aktuelle Flüchtlingszahlen bekannt" (30. September 2016)

221,000 refugees were counted until 21. September 2016 (source see footnote 15).¹⁶ In order to provide language learning, in particular, and training opportunities various measures were taken and programmes established. The number of so-called language and integration programmes was raised and additional funds were provided.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research launched a phone-based Information and Guidance Hotline in early 2015, where individuals can get support with regard to selecting suitable programmes and courses, funding etc.

In July 2016, the federal parliament concluded a so-called "Arbeitslosenversicherungsschutz- und Weiterbildungsstärkungsgesetz – AWStG", aiming to enhance the conditions of unemployed people engaged in further education and to improve their guidance and funding conditions. The target group consists of the long-term unemployed and people who face difficulties integrating into the labour market because of certain barriers (e.g. health, social deficiencies etc.) and those without vocational qualifications. The variety of measures and programmes for these groups has been broadened. However, looking at the funding volumes linked to the various options provided through this law, it appears that the actual target group is limited. These funding amounts will increase from EUR 70m in 2017 to EUR 220m in 2019. Even when accounting for these funds in the overall funding volumes, the overall funding level remains below the levels of previous years.

Two more states, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Thuringia, implemented legal entitlements for training leave in 2015, which means that training leave regulations now exist in 14 out of 16 states. The only exemptions are Bavaria and Saxony. A social partner agreement on training leave policies was concluded in early 2015 in the metal and electrical industries, allowing employees to reduce the working time for adult learning, whereas the salary is reduced only under-proportionately (Koppelberg 2015; Dohmen 2016d).

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that much attention is paid to learning and training opportunities for refugees.

- **Major reforms between 2013 and 2015**

In light of the new ESF regulations and requests from the Commission to align the federal and state level funding instrument more coherently, the federal level has changed its regulations of the "training premia" in mid-2014, followed by subsequent changes at state level until mid-2016, as a present (preliminary) analysis suggests (Dohmen/Orr/Wrobel 2016). This review indicates that a total number of more than 70 grant funding instruments exists in Germany. An analysis of this adult learning funding "system" in 2015

(<http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2016/09/asylsuchende-2015.html>, retrieved: 5. October 2016). This figure now replaces the number of 1.1m, which was for long considered the most appropriate estimate. Obviously, it contained a relevant number of double counts as well as people that moved either further to other European destinations or returned to their home country.

¹⁶ For completeness, it should be mentioned that another 900,000 ("non-refugee") migrants moved to Germany from Europe and other more developed countries, while, at the same time, approximately 900,000 people emigrated from Germany to other countries. These figures result in a net immigration of 900,000 people to Germany, a figure which is almost identical with the number of refugees.

concluded that the federal and state level instruments, funded through the ESF, cannot be considered a system nor are they coherent (Dohmen 2016c, 2016d).

Trade unions as well as (many members of) the Social Democrats have requested the introduction of a “Law on Further Education”, which has also been suggested by the Experts Commission on the Financing of Lifelong Learning (Expertenkommission “Finanzierung Lebenslangen Lernens” 2004), but has not been implemented yet, due to strong opposition by the employer federations and conservative parties and governments. Some issues, which are also discussed in other political contexts, concern the required time and financing of adult learning, professionalisation etc.

Ultimately, the “Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training 2015–2018” was established between the Federal Government, the Federal Employment Agency and the social partners in late 2014. In fact, it “only” replaces the previous “National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany (Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung und Fachkräftenachwuchs in Deutschland – Training Pact)”. Despite its name, the major focus is on vocational education and training. It is, therefore, mentioned for completeness.

- **Relationship with the four priorities of the European agenda for adult learning 2015-2020**

The previous section indicates that recent reforms are very limited; the following paragraphs review these developments in the context of the priority areas of the European agenda.

Governance: As far as we could establish, no (major) changes have been undertaken or are intended in the foreseeable future in relation to ensuring coherence between adult learning and other policy areas. Even the transition from the former funding period (2006-2013) to the present one has not resulted in coherence of the federal funding model and the states’ funding instruments, despite the request from the Commission. Only very few states employ funding regulations that are complementary to the federal regulations, there is still some overlap.

Supply and take up: Two policies may contribute to increasing supply – firstly, the national strategy on literacy and basic skills, which aims to provide additional learning opportunities for (functionally) illiterate adults. Secondly, the federal initiative to establish phone services for information, advice and guidance. It is currently too early to assess the impact of these policies. Funding schemes of the federal as well as state governments were implemented in 2014 and 2015 in relation to the new ESF funding period, either replacing or extending the previous regulations; in some cases this step was used to re-structure and/or re-arrange the regulations and target groups. It is, however, too early to analyse the impact of these regulations on take-up numbers.¹⁷

¹⁷ A detailed stock-taking and data collection exercise of the funding schemes, their regulations and take-up rates is foreseen for the coming months. First results may be published in December 2016 or early 2017.

Flexibility and access: Germany belongs to a group of countries, where work-place learning is already taking place at relatively high levels, and claims are made repeatedly that request the launch of a legal right to adult learning as part of a 'Law on Further Education', but it does not appear that this law will be implemented over the coming years. It also appears that ICT is not yet significantly on the agenda, despite references commonly made to it by politicians and provider representatives.

The same applies to the recognition of prior learning, where providers do not seem very supportive. This would potentially help the low-qualified to overcome their possible reluctance to engage with adult learning and second chance education.

One area, though, that receives particular attention concerns refugees, as already mentioned above.

Quality: As far as envisaged, policies in this context have neither taken place in the recent past nor are they intended for the foreseeable future.

- **Policy goals and priorities**

Two major priorities concern the (functionally) illiterate and those with limited reading and writing skills and to establish a phone-based information, advice and guidance system. There are also some hints that the federal government is planning to increase take-up rates of its funding model, the training premia, and is obviously thinking about extending its funding model into the future, i.e. beyond 2019. Analysing and identifying suitable models and funding regulations is part of the Terms of Reference for the evaluation of the present scheme.

A quick scan of policy goals and priorities at state level did not reveal any additional insight in this regard.

Another aspect that should be mentioned here concerns the learning opportunities for refugees, which is obviously very high on the agenda. A brief overview in this regard is presented below as part of the investment and efficiency considerations in section 5 and 5.4, in particular.

The following quotation from the Eurypedia-website¹⁸ highlights the rather general notion and policy concept:

"With regard to the further development of the sector of continuing education within the scope of lifelong learning, the aim is to provide a foundation for the individual to:

- develop willingness for lifelong learning

¹⁸

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Developments_and_Current_Policy_Priorities, retrieved on 6. October 2016.

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- acquire the competences necessary for lifelong learning
- use institutionalised as well as new possibilities for learning in his or her life and work

Guiding ideas are:

- reinforcement of self-responsibility and self-guidance
- redress of unequal opportunities
- cooperation between providers and recipients of education
- reinforcement of the relations between all sectors of education.

3.2.2 Main legislative act(s) governing the provision of adult learning

As mentioned above, the federal level has limited legislative responsibility in relation to adult learning, limited to vocational education and training as well as for the unemployed. The remaining responsibility lies with the states, which have introduced laws of further education, covering non-vocational adult learning, particularly for general, political and cultural adult learning.

SGB II and SGB III (Social security code – books no. II and III¹⁹)– regulate Initial and Continuing Vocational Education and Training for job-seekers with different pre-conditions and pre-qualifications. For those without a formal qualification, it regulates the principles of support to gain a formal qualification or a higher formal qualification. SGB III regulates VET for the unemployed. The distinction may look somewhat artificial: the latter concerns those receiving unemployment benefits, which is usually ensured for a period of up to one year (which requires that the unemployed person has been in employment for at least two years prior to entering into unemployment), while the former concerns those, who are no longer recipients of unemployment benefits, rather than are entitled to basic social welfare allowance.

BBiG – Federal Law on Vocational Education and Training regulates the principles of initial and continuing VET and covers thus also the key regulations for professional further education in relation to certain areas of advancement qualifications, such as master craftsmen.

AFBG – Law on Financial support for advanced professional qualification (e.g. master craftsmen programmes): this law regulates the personal and programme requirements which are to be fulfilled in order to be entitled to receive public grants and loans (whereas the loans are provided by KfW banking group – the federal government covers also the costs of interest subsidies during the training period).

¹⁹ Some years ago, laws regulating different aspects of social security and social legislation, more in general, have been brought under one overarching formal "rule", which was then called "Sozialgesetzbuch" and simply numbered I to XII so far. For example, SGB III refers to the law previously called "Arbeitsförderungsgesetz" (Employment Promotion Act), while SGB II comprises the "Grundsicherung für Arbeitssuchende" (Basic Social Security for Job-seekers)

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The Federal Training Assistance Act (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz - BAföG) – establishes the pre-requirement and conditions of financial support on relation to university education in particular and to school and (school-based) vocational education and training.

Further education laws (Weiterbildungsgesetze der Länder) are established in all 16 states, regulate the requirements of adult learning institutions which are to be fulfilled to become officially recognised as institution according to this law. Normally, this concerns certain areas of adult learning, which are covered by the law, quality assurance issues and possible financial implications. The laws may also regulate additional aspects.

14 out of 16 states have concluded laws on training leave, regulating the specific nature of programmes, e.g. vocational and/or non-vocational, political, supporting civil engagement, etc., the duration of the leave and other pre-conditions of the institution or programme to be met and the groups of BMBF Pressemitteilung 194/2007 (27.9.2007): "Unser Ziel ist es, die Beteiligung der Bevölkerung an Weiterbildung bis zum Jahr 2015 von 41 auf 50 Prozent zu steigern" employees covered by the law.

In addition to the legal acts, the federal level as well as the states operate via regulations, which do not have the same status as a law, and or funding programmes. With regard to adult learning, such programmes concern modalities of funding programmes for individual support as well as for programme or project related measures. For example, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has established funding regulations for development projects targeting (functionally) illiterate people in relation to the "Decade on Alphabetisation and Basic Education" as well as in support of opening up higher education for non-traditional students, for research projects on Innovation in Further Education, as well as for the training vouchers etc. The states act on a similar basis, e.g. establishing Lifelong Learning Networks or their funding regulations for training vouchers or ALMP-programmes etc.

3.2.3 *Main strategy(-ies)*

3.2.4 *Main implementing act(s)*

3.3 National quantitative policy targets

Table 3.1 Targets linked to Adult Learning in broader economic policies/LLL strategies/framework or implementing act

General information		Progress toward target		
Target (target figure and date to be achieved by)	Adoption date (e.g. 31/03/2018)	Initial value (at date of adoption)	Current value	Summary of progress against target
Adult learning participation rate of 50% (according to AES)	27/09/2007	43%	50% (2016)	For 18/19-64-year-olds, the target quote of 50% was reached in 2014. Participation has been relatively stable since and amounted to 50% in 2016 (Bilger/Strauß 2017). For those aged 25-64, the rate is still below the benchmark

3.4 Quality assurance

A Europe-wide study on quality in the adult learning sector placed Germany amongst the countries with a fragmented quality system for non-formal learning and with quality systems in place for formal learning (Broeks/Buiskool 2013). In more detail, the following regulations apply:

- Distance Learning Protection Law [Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz (FernUSG)] for distance and e-learning
- The Social Code Book III [Sozialgesetzbuch III - SGB III] includes the Recognition and Certification Ordinance [Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung (AZWV)] for continuous vocational education and training (CVET) in the field of the Federal Employment Agency

3.5 Future policy developments

As already mentioned in the previous section, the funding of adult learning is part of the Terms of Reference of the evaluation of the federal funding scheme, and the training

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premium. According to our knowledge, there are no major reforms or policy plans in the states in relation to the four pillars of the European agenda.

A quick scan of policy goals and priorities at state level did not reveal any additional insight in this regard.

4.0 INVESTMENT IN ADULT LEARNING SYSTEMS

4.1 Total investment in adult learning and change over time

4.2 Public national investment

In terms of national funds, available and reliable statistical information on spending for adult learning is limited and not up-to-date. The most recent figures from the Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016a) report a total expenditure of EUR 13.6bn in 2013, of which EUR 9.9bn were spent by employers and individuals and EUR 3.7bn by the public purse. Yet, according to Behringer/Gnahs/Schönfeld (2013), based on data from AES 2012, direct expenses for participation and examination fees and learning materials add up to EUR 7,3bn. A survey of the Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft (IW) reports a figure of EUR 33,5bn for in-company training in 2013 (Seyda/Werner 2014), including direct costs of EUR 15,8bn; the remaining EUR 17.8bn are opportunity costs of foregone production. Furthermore, a BIBB publication (BIBB 2014) mentions public spending of about EUR 4.9bn for 2012 (and EUR 4.4bn for 2015, planning figures; BIBB 2016), though not all can completely be attributed to adult learning, as funding data cannot always be separated out to initial or further education. In total, these figures amount to EUR 28.0bn, instead of EUR 13.6bn as stated by the Federal Statistical Office. It should be noted, however, that public spending has decreased over the last years. The Employment Agency's spending figures dropped from EUR 4.1bn (2010) to EUR 2.1bn (2015) and that of the state from EUR 3.4bn (2010), which was an exception, though, to EUR 2.3bn (2015).

According to a newspaper article from the Süddeutsche Zeitung²⁰, the current federal budget allocates EUR 559 million for integration classes for refugees, of which only EUR 262 million had been spent by August. In 2017, the federal government is planning to increase this budget allocation to EUR 610 million. Following this article, funding is not a problem in terms of meeting demand, but in terms of the availability of a sufficient number of qualified staff. The government is hoping that the increase in hourly wages from EUR 23 to 35 in July this year will help improve the situation.

²⁰ Bielicki, Jan (2016), Mehr Angebot, noch mehr Nachfrage, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 23.09.2016, S. 5.

Table 4.1 Breakdown of public national investment

Title of public investment source	Source of funding	Amount of funding	Targeted number of participants	Targeted level of provision	Start/end date
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Public funding for Adult learning	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	may include funding for initial VET
Federal level	1,26	1,18	1,08	1,07	1,02	1,08	
Federal Ministry of Education and Research	0,49	0,50	0,49	0,48	0,42	0,48	
Internationale Exchange	0,011	0,012	0,013	0,009	0,011	0,013	x
Innovation and struktural development	0,101	0,091	0,086	0,074	0,094	0,114	x
Federal Institute of VET (BIBB)	0,028	0,03	0,034	0,038	0,041	0,042	x
Funding for talented VET-graduates	0,039	0,042	0,044	0,046	0,046	0,049	x
Financial support for advancement VET Advancement CVET stipend (Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderung (AFBG))	0,17	0,167	0,174	0,182	0,184	0,213	
Further education and lifelong learning (Weiterbildung und lebenslanges Lernen)	0,06	0,077	0,060	0,051	0,045	0,045	
Student support for students in further VET (BAföG für Schüler in Fachschulklassen mit abgeschlossener Berufsbildung)	0,083	0,081	0,081	0,08	k.A.	k.A.	

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Federal Ministry of Economic Affairir	0,02	0,03	0,03	0,03	0,03	0,03	
VET for training centres of the „Mittelstand“	0,024	0,028	0,029	0,03	0,03	0,029	
Berufliche Bildung für den Mittelstand - Fortbildungseinrichtungen							
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	0,75	0,66	0,56	0,56	0,56	0,57	
Support for disabled people			k.A. *)	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	x
Leistungen für Menschen mit Behinderung							
a) subsidies to the costs of CVET (Zuschüsse zu den Kosten beruflicher Weiterbildung für behinderte Menschen)	0,023	0,019	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	
b) Cost of participation for measures to support the participation of disabled people in employment (SGB II) (Teilnahmekosten für Maßnahmen zur Teilhabe behinderter Menschen am Arbeitsleben)	0,076	0,065	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	k.A. *)	
Förderung der beruflichen Weiterbildung im SGB II)	0,645	0,572	0,558	0,558	0,563	0,568	x
Wage subsidies for CVET of unqualified and potentially unemployed people (Zuschüsse zum Arbeitsentgelt bei beruflicher WB ungelernter und von Arbeitslosigkeit bedrohter Arbeitnehmer (AEZ-WB))	0,001	0	0	0,001	0,001	0,002	x
States	1,35	1,41	1,26	1,29	1,28	1,34	
Vocational schools (Fachschulen)	0,697	0,725	0,688	0,696	0,716	0,732	x

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Student support for students in vocational schools having graduated from VET (BAföG für Schüler in Fachschulklassen mit abgeschlossener Berufsbildung)	0,04 5	0,04 4	0,04 4	0,04 3	k.A.	k.A.	
Advancement CVET stipend (Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderung (AFBG))	0,04 8	0,05 3	0,04 9	0,05 1	0,05 2	0,06	
Adult Education Centres (Volkshochschulen)	0,14 9	0,15 3	0,04 1	0,03 6	k.A.	k.A.	
here: working area Work-life (Programmbereich Arbeit – Leben)	0,01 1	0,01 9	k.A.	k.A.	k.A.	k.A.	
Other Adult Learning (Sonstige Weiterbildung (FKZ 153))	0,29 3	0,29 3	0,32 1	0,33 4	0,38 6	0,41 8	x
Teacher Education Institutes (Einrichtungen der Lehrerfortbildung (FKZ 155))	0,10 2	0,12 4	0,11 4	0,12 8	0,12 3	0,13	
Training voucher programmes etc. of the states (Weiterbildungsprogramme der Länder)	-		-	-	-	-	
Municipalities and „Zweckverbände“	0,27 5	0,28 9	0	0	0	0	
Adult Education Centres (Volkshochschulen)	0,19 8	0,20 0	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	
here: working area Work-life (davon: Programmbereich Arbeit – Leben)	0,01 4	0,02 5	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	
Other Adult Learning Sonstige Weiterbildung (FKZ 153)	0,06 3	0,06 4	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	k.A. (**)	x
Federal Employment Agency	3,77	3,44	1,87	2,06	2,13	2,25	
VET-relevant programmes of disabled			0				
a) further education	0,17 9	0,17 9	k.A. (*)	k.A. (*)	k.A. (*)	k.A. (*)	
b) expenses, which cannot be distinguished between initial and further VET	1,80 6	1,74 7	k.A. (*)	k.A. (*)	k.A. (*)	k.A. (*)	x

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Vocational CVET	0,82 4	0,67 4	0,85 7	1,02 3	1,06 8	1,14 9	
Wage subsidies for employed participants in CVET (e.g. WeGebAU)	0,07 3	0,06 6	0,07 7				
Unemployment benefits during CVET	0,87 7	0,77 1	0,93 5	1,03 4	1,06	1,09 3	
Support for Youth housing	-	-	0,00 1	0,00 1	0,00 1	0,00 3	x
Wage subsidies, co-financed through ESF (Aus Mitteln des ESF mitfinanzierte ergänzende Qualifizierungsangebote bei Bezug von Kurzarbeitergeld, Saison-Kurzarbeitergeld oder Transfer-Kurzarbeitergeld)	0,01 1	0,00 4	0,00 3	0,00 3	0,00 0	- 0,00 0	

Quelle: BIBB 2014; ab 2013 (Ist): BIBB 2016, BIBB 2017

*) In Angaben/Übersicht nicht mehr enthalten BIBB-Datenreport 2016

4.3 EU support via structural funds (primarily ESF)

4.3.1 Structural fund support planned as part of 2014-2020 financial framework

According to data on financial support provided to Member States between 2014-2020 (made available to the European Commission from Operational Programmes for the ESF in July 2016) the planned EU financial support for the investment priority most directly focused on adult learning (i.e. Investment priority 10.3 – Enhancing access to lifelong learning) amounts to EUR 558 million.

4.3.2 EU support via structural funds (primarily ESF) provided as part of 2007-2013 financial framework

As already mentioned above, most newly established funding schemes for adult learning, are financed through the structural funds.

4.4 Effectiveness of investment

An efficiency analysis has to link funding figures and instruments with output or even outcome data, such as, for example, participant numbers etc. Given the limited empirical data and evidence on which this analysis could be built upon, efficiency assessment is not easy. However, the following paragraphs try to provide some analyses in this regard on data that is readily available.

A first starting point for an efficiency analysis is the development of the participation rates at national level as well as at state level. The figures, as presented in table 1.4, indicate some changes over the last (almost) ten years. Summarising the changes in participation rates, an increase can be observed between 2007 and 2008 or 2009 (and sometimes even a bit longer, depending on the state), which is at least partially due to additional funding by the Federal Employment Agency and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the context of the financial and economic crisis.

As table 1.4 shows, the participation rate was approximately one percentage point higher in 2008 than in 2007 and remained almost stable until 2011; however, from 2012 onwards, figures dropped to levels that were even lower than the starting figures in 2007. The patterns in the states vary a lot and there is, until today, no overarching and conclusive pattern and analysis that explain these differences and, in particular, the development of participation rates across states.²¹ The following section is a first exercise in this regard, based on our own preliminary analyses and studies.

According to our knowledge, the most comprehensive data on funding instruments and take-up numbers stems from Dohmen (2016c, 2016d). According to his figures, the highest level of participation in voucher systems on national level was reached in 2011 with 140,000 to 150,000 participants. In 2007, North Rhine-Westphalia alone accounted for 132,500 participants in the Training Voucher NRW programme (at the time, this was the only model across all 16 states and at the federal level). Up until 2014, this programme, targeting individuals and SMEs at the same time, was by far the largest scheme – the only exception concerns the year 2011, when the federal training premium reached its all-time high of about 95,500 vouchers issued. The other instruments showed take-up figures of up to 5,000 (Dohmen 2016c, 2016d). In relation to the total number of employed people (approximately 40m), who are the core target group in principal, this amounts to less than 0.5%. Even when accounting for the fact, that all these instruments commonly addressed only certain groups of employees – the only exception is the training voucher in Brandenburg – the impact of these interventions is limited. As far as we could establish, there is no evidence that these instruments contributed significantly to an increase in participation rates in adult learning, even though both LFS and AES data indicate a moderate increase in adult learning participation of individuals (see table 1.4).

²¹ Answering this question is, though, part of an ongoing project on “Macro-economic and regional effects of costs, funding and benefits of further education”, lasting from 10/2015-9/2018. A paper, comparing the regional impact of funding schemes in Germany (and Austria) is scheduled for the next few months. Thus, results will be available in an 2017 update of this analysis.

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This impression is confirmed by a recent survey, showing that, on average, in Germany around 1.5% of participants in adult learning are reported by training providers as using the federal training premia and a similar share is reported for the state instruments on average (Ambos/Koschek/Martin 2016). Nevertheless, 6.3% of the participants in North Rhine-Westphalia are funded by the NRW training cheque, and 3 to 5% of participants in Hesse are funded through the state's training cheque. In Brandenburg and Hamburg, 1 to 3% of participants are funded by the states' instruments (no specific figures are published). Figures for Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate are between 0.5 to 1%, and less than 0.5% for the remaining states.

Another analysis, linking data from various sources (Dohmen 2016e), despite not providing empirical evidence of a relationship between funding instruments and participation rates, indicates that a parallel development can be observed. Funding figures as well as participation rates are decreasing, seemingly in quite a similar manner. Yet, in order to arrive at a more complete picture, data on the use of funding instruments at the state and the federal level would have to be considered jointly and for all 16 states and all approximately 65 to 70 state-level instruments (Dohmen/Orr/Wrobel 2016). The analysis by Martin et al. (2015) suggests that a combination of multiple factors account for the variances, including training supply.²²

It is equally difficult to assess the policies of the Federal Employment Agency. The number of participants in the two core programmes, the voucher scheme as well as WeGebAu – 211,000 and 21,000, respectively – are much lower than in previous years. One might argue that unemployment rates decreased considerably over the last ten years, but it appears that this is only part of the explanation. Individuals and training providers mention that the preparedness to support the unemployed differs from Jobcentre to Jobcentre and agency to agency, respectively. A crucial issue is that there is no established common assessment procedure, but instead any single "Sachbearbeiter/in" of the Employment Agency can decide themselves, taking into account the unemployed person and the labour market situation. Usually, support is to some extent limited to a set of occupations, which are assumed to provide a basis for future employment. There are some rumours that the increase in employment numbers and the reduction of unemployment figures were not achieved because of the policy of the Employment Agency. And yet in spite of this, it seems likely that neither one nor the other view provides the full picture.

Another critical issue is that the number of long-term unemployed persons has been almost stable for some time and that the enhancement of formal qualifications is not very dynamic. However, in a study undertaken several years ago, we identified that the share of formally qualified persons has increased among all age groups between 1996 and 2006, especially when looking at people aged 50 and above (Dohmen 2010).

In light of this huge number of funding instruments, it seems plausible to raise some concerns regarding their impact on participation rates. National level participation rates,

²² In addition, it might be worth to mention that training leave policies receive much attention, although their visible impact is rather limited with participation rates of utmost 1%, apart from Bremen where figures of up to 5% were provided (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung 2008), which is in line with international findings (Cedefop 2012b; FIBS/DIE 2013).

according to the LFS, vary within very small margins and do not exceed 8.1%. This was in 2008, when the NRW training voucher was the only new public funding instrument; the Micro census data (see table 1.4) reveals a temporary, but not a sustainable increase in general, but also in the 16 states. Only the AES data indicates a modest increase from 45% in 2007 to 49% in 2011 and to 51% in 2014.²³

Based on the European CVTS, the share of companies providing training opportunities for their employees increased from 69% (2005) to 73% (2010), while the share of employees participating in company provided training rose from 30% to 39%. The IAB-Betriebspanel confirms an increase in the provision of in-company training (Janssen/Leber 2015).

Overall, one might conclude that public investment is to some extent not very efficient, particularly with regard to the programmes established with European funds over the last decade, whereas private investment may have over-compensated the falls in public spending. However, the bulk of reduced public spending is due to the Employment Agency. This may raise some concerns about the (insufficient) investment in adult learning for unemployed people.

Participation rates increased even in the context of shrinking public investments. In this case, less public funding would not have much affected the participation rates. However, this is particularly due to increasing company-investment in adult learning, while participation rates in individual adult learning are on the decrease.

A major initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research is "Basic Education and Alphabetisation" addressing 7.5m functionally illiterate and another 2.3m illiterate persons (www.bmbf.de/de/nationale-strategie-fuer-alphabetisierung-und-grundbildung-erwachsener-1373.html; retrieved: 11.9.2016). For this initiative EUR 180m are earmarked to be spent over the next ten years in order to support a number of projects aiming to reduce these figures. It remains to be seen whether this approach is really suitable to help the target group, some doubts appear justified, based on the experience of previous or other similar approaches. Other countries, such as, for example, Austria invest far more money and are still not in a position to address these needs fully. In contrast, the number of people addressed so far is yet too small to make a real impact.

Further education for migrants remains problematic. In spite of efforts by national and state governments as well as responsible agencies, particularly the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) and the Federal Employment Agency, it is obvious that progress is rather slow. Core bottlenecks are rules and regulations, insufficient funding and a limited number of training providers and teachers. In addition, pay is not attractive for teachers, particularly with regard to the working conditions and other factors. First of all, refugees are only entitled to a language programme once they are registered and an assessment of their status has been made

²³ Furthermore, looking at the average duration of adult learning, a modest decrease from 140 to 125 hours per adult on average can be observed – which is also the case in other countries with increasing participation rates (FiBS/DIE 2013) . The decrease is mainly due to less time spent in formal programmes (-159 hours). Furthermore, AES data reveal a trade-off between a lower level of participation in formal adult learning and an increase in non-formal adult learning, overcompensating the decrease in the participation rates in formal education.

and they have gained refugee or asylum seeker status. Secondly, the number of accredited training providers, even though requirements for accreditation were relaxed, is too limited, as is the number of teachers. Thirdly, financial conditions to operate as a training provider are not attractive. Initially, EUR 2.56 per migrant and training hour were granted; whereas teachers were, according to the regulations, to be paid at least EUR 20 per hour of teaching (no complementary payments for preparation and follow-up etc.). Thus, a minimum of seven participants are needed to recoup the fee rates of the teachers alone. This does account for room rental, electricity, administration, and other overheads. However, the upper ceiling for recruitment is 20 participants and, under certain circumstances even 25. These figures are far too high to allow for high quality language learning, which is even more important, as the groups are commonly extremely heterogeneous, covering university graduates on the one hand and people with almost no education on the other.

In 2016, there were some improvements in funding. A EUR 35 minimum payment for teachers was introduced in addition to EUR 4.14 per migrant and training hour. However, now 9 participants are necessary to run classes cost covering. As far as we could establish no data is available on the total number of refugees participating in such programmes so far; there is, however, some rumour that many could not participate for a number of reasons. According to our knowledge, no evaluation has taken place in recent times, i.e. this year and in relation to the high numbers of refugees over the last 12 months, however, concerns about the quality of the programmes as well as the providers are raised from time to time.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING POLICY

The previous information and data indicate that only limited progress in terms of participation rates has been made, which may also be due to rather limited political activity.

Major initiatives concern changes in the regulation of funding instruments at the federal and state level, which took place over the last two years, whereas some states appear to have introduced new instruments. However, it is not yet possible to analyse the impact these regulatory changes have had or will have in the future. The increase in the funding amount for “Aufstiegsfortbildungen” (advanced training programmes to become a master craftsman) may lead to higher beneficiary numbers, whereas no evidence on its overall impact is available.

The initiatives to combat functional illiteracy are limited, and are likely to have a rather small impact. Training opportunities for low and unqualified people cater for small numbers. This is also valid for funding programmes of the Federal Employment Agency. It remains to be seen, whether the expansion of the WeGebAU programme, which is now generally open to employees of SMEs, and not only to unqualified or older people, will lead to higher beneficiary figures.

No policies can be observed in relation to governance and supply of adult learning, take-up figures of funding instruments are in line with participation rates according to the LFS and Micro census, respectively, but not with the AES figures. This discrepancy may be due to the role of in-company training in the latter, which is the only adult learning sector with increasing participation rates.

Digitalisation in adult learning is not significantly on the agenda in Germany, particularly as far as publicly provided or organised ALE is concerned, although it is not a new topic, if eLearning is considered the starting point for digitalisation, while it is more of a concern for in-company training. Strikingly enough, the German Association of Folk High Schools has developed an online tool to combat (functional) illiteracy, raising the question of why and how the target groups, which have limited access to computers anyway, should use such a tool that requires reading skills. However, this is just a personal remark.

The following sub-sections assess the existing policy through the lens of the six key success factors for effective adult learning policy that have been identified in a recent study:²⁴

- Improve learners’ disposition towards learning
- Increase employers’ investment in learning
- Improve equality of access for all
- Deliver learning that meets the needs of employers and learners

²⁴ Key success factors, indicating the strength of evidence (available in all EU languages): <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-tool/key-success-factors>; Study “An in-depth analysis of adult learning policies and their effectiveness in Europe” by EC (2015): <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/final-report-20150817-en.pdf>

- Deliver high quality adult learning
- Co-ordinate an effective lifelong learning policy

5.1 Develop learners' interest in learning

Learners interest in learning can be addressed by policy means that develop attractive and suitable learning options or that reduce/remove barriers to participation.

With regard the first point, the state is involved mainly in framework legislation and regulation, rather than in the provision of adult learning itself, except in the case of adult education centres, where the local government may be involved in the governing board, but not in day-to-day management. Therefore, major policies concern the provision of a sufficient funding volume, which, however, has come under pressure, due to the fiscal situation of (most) municipalities and states. Thus, over the last decades, core funding for publicly-financed adult learning, and adult education centres in particular, has been reduced and replaced by more project and temporary funding as well as revenues from participants (e.g. Dohmen 2005).

Key barriers for non-participation in adult learning are time constraints and (too) high costs, in combination with insufficient public co-funding – apart from the largest “barrier” by far, i.e. the non-perceived need for adult learning, neither for private nor for professional reasons (Kuwon/Seidel 2012;). According to our knowledge, federal or state level policies in order to remove barriers have been limited in recent years. Two states introduced training leave regulations in 2015, Thuringia and Baden-Wuerttemberg, and the federal level modified its co-funding voucher, the training premia (Bildungsprämie), to be used not only for vocational training but also for basic education.

In addition, enhanced training leave regulations were included in the social partnership agreement of the metal and electronic industries.

5.2 Increase employers' investment in learning

A key question in this regard is whether public policy can incentivise employers to invest in learning, and if so, through which policies this will be best achieved. Recent years have seen no particular policies in this regard.

An indirect approach may be to so-called WeGebAU programme of the Federal Employment Agency that addresses the low qualified through employer support (see section 4.4). Furthermore, some states, such as, for example, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, have introduced loan facilities for companies that can be used to finance trainings.

5.3 Improve equity of access for all

Concrete political programmes addressing equity and access for all in adult learning are rare. Few exceptions include the project-based funding programmes for alphabetisation

and basic education and the financial support for migrants and refugees. These programmes, however, address and target special needs, rather than equity of access for all.

5.4 Deliver learning that is relevant

In Germany, it is a key responsibility of the learning providers to deliver learning that is relevant, rather than a policy issue. However, the state has organised several workshops, for example, in order to address the particular needs of the functionally illiterate – yet, the so-called expert’s summary (Kruse 2015) highlights that even experts are obviously struggling to provide specific advice in this regard.

5.5 Deliver learning that is of high quality

Whenever public funding for adult learning is foreseen, quality assurance and high quality are a matter of concern. Providers have to verify that their delivery is in line with established standards through so-called “quality seals” and accreditation. However, the seals and standards refer more to formal criteria than real quality of delivery.

5.6 Ensure coherent policy

It is difficult to ensure a coherent policy in Germany, as the responsibility for adult learning is divided between the federal and the state level and among various ministries at each level.

The federal level has some responsibility for CVET, if the BBiG is concerned that regulates the formal qualification in relation to advanced vocational qualifications, i.e. master craftsmen and similar qualifications. In addition to the ministries, the Education as well as the Labour Ministry, the social partners are involved in the regulatory framework. In addition to their political role, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry or of Manufacturing possess directly or indirectly education providers, which are involved in and benefit through the organisation of learning programmes and through organisation of examinations, for which fees have to be paid by participants or employers.

The regulations for adult learning of unemployed and people who may lose their job (so-called people at the risk of becoming unemployed) are laid down in SGB II and SGB III (Social Act II and III), the key agency for operation is the Federal Employment Agency (BA – Bundesagentur für Arbeit). As with the BBiG, the social partners play a major role in the Administrative Council of the BA and bring in their particular interests. Furthermore, the president’s role of the Administrative Council alternates between employer federations and trade unions.

At state level, a similar situation exists. Commonly, education ministries are responsible for individual, non-vocational adult learning, while the Labour ministries are responsible for vocational CVET. and the ministries of higher education for adult learning of universities. Other ministries play a role with regard to adult learning in their specific areas

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– e.g. health ministries in relation to medical and health and care trades, agriculture ministries concerning adult learning in agriculture, etc. Often, ministries and particularly individual ministers are in competition with each other, especially if they do not belong to the same party, e.g. in a coalition government.

The Committee of Ministers of Education and its permanent Secretariat are supposed to function as a coordinating body, which in practice means that papers and policies respond to the lowest level of joint agreements, particularly in fields where strong normative or political interests exist.

As a result, strategy or policy papers are often very generic and do not result a coherent policy framework, particularly as the major responsibility for adult education lies with the laender. In many political fields, which also applies to adult learning,²⁵ by and large, benchmarks at state level are rarely established or restrictions apply, preventing any comparison of data.

In conclusion, it appears that adult learning has not at a very high priority at the moment to arrive at a coherent strategy. This may even be at odds with political statements from some parties and stakeholders, requesting certain, specific policies – which, however, often will not find support from other stakeholders or political parties, not to say, find a majority. From the political perspective of stakeholders and parties, this is not even the worst situation, rather than quite usefu, as everyone can blame the others for preventing any progress.

²⁵ For example, analysis of state level results of the AES as well as the LFS is impossible, because state codes are removed, even from Eurostat data, unless a specific state requests such an analysis.

6.0 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM

6.1 Strengths

A major strength of the adult education system is its present performance. Germany has reached its benchmark of 50% participation in Lifelong Learning even without comprehensive state governance and funding for large parts of the system. State governance is limited to areas of particular interest and concerns minimum standards and/or funding. Given the limited level of public funding, the participation rates appear surprisingly high on the one hand, and very low on the other hand, if focussing on participation rates in individual adult learning. This indicates that in-company training is the major driver, accounting for roughly three quarters of the overall participation (by individuals) and more than half of spending. However, Germany's performance in in-company training is only slightly above the European average and well below the European top countries. As an overall conclusion, the in-company system is working quite well, whereas the participation rates are comparatively low, given that Germany is one of the strongest and most innovative economies in Europe and around the world.

Another positive element is the high level of competences of master craftsmen programmes. According to my knowledge, this strand is working quite well and is considered very attractive. Participants – and their employers – are willing to bear the costs privately. The funding scheme, the Aufstiegsfortbildungsfoerderungsgesetz, is also working quite well. Take-up figures are more or less stable at around 170,000 every year.

As highlighted by some of the indicators presented above, participation rates in adult education are below European average, if they focus particularly (or exclusively) on formal adult education, as does, for example, the LFS, and is above average according to the AES as well as for company-provided training. Thus, overall participation rates are driven by company-provided training as well as by non-formal training, while participation rates are very low for formal adult learning, despite the repeatedly stated importance and relevance of the master craftsmen programmes²⁶. This indicates a biased system, focussing more on those with better formal qualifications, rather than the unqualified and low qualified.

6.2 Weaknesses

The limitations of the adult learning system in Germany become even more pronounced, when looking at the participation rates of the micro census, which are not only based on training during the four weeks prior to the survey but also refer to the last 12 months prior to the survey. These figures remain rather low – as presented in table 1.2 - and are even lower than the participation rate during the last four weeks in many countries, as highlighted in the LFS data. Furthermore, the rates are actually decreasing; this applies more to vocational than to general (non-vocational) adult learning. This is a strong indication that the vocational part of the system in particular is weak, especially

²⁶ The master craftsmen programme is considered very attractive and used to motivate young people to enter the vocational education and training system, rather than the university system.

considering that advanced vocational training for master craftsmen is regarded as positive. It is not really clear, what the driving factors are for this situation; possible factors are limited public funding, particularly for the disadvantaged, i.e. the low and unqualified, the extreme focus on school-like learning settings, limitations in advice and guidance structures etc. The system is driven by the well-educated and caters to the well-educated.

It is therefore not surprising, but rather a logical consequence, that the share of low qualified people remains high – too high from the consultant’s perspective for a country like Germany – and is only decreasing slowly; this applies to initial education as well as to adult education. Almost 20% of 15 year-olds and up to 40% of adults are considered functionally illiterate, according to PISA 2012 and PIAAC 2012 (OECD 2013, Rammstedt et al. 2013).²⁷ This clearly indicates that the education system in general as well as the adult education system in particular do not properly address the needs of the low qualified, while they better address those of the well-educated, which also applies to funding. And if these groups are addressed, the programmes show limited coverage and effectiveness, which may also be due to high shares of school-like programmes, insufficient advice and guidance as well as other accompanying measures.

Another weakness is the complex and obscure funding structure with probably more than 80 funding instruments, 14 training leave regulations etc., of which most are rather small. This complexity is a problem particularly with regard to reaching the low qualified. Another weakness is the lack of funding for more expensive (re-qualification/upgrading) adult learning programmes, apart from the “Aufstiegsfortbildung” and elite vocational training graduates. Of course, tax incentives are available, but cater particularly for the better-off.

The quality of the systems is possibly a problem in the sense that almost 60% of adult educators are freelancers and self-employed, while only one in four is regularly employed. Also, even public funding does not allow for the provision of high quality learning environments. Furthermore, the fee rates for the educators and the working conditions are not very attractive (see above); it remains to be seen whether the increase of fee rates to EUR 35 at least for those teaching in integration classes for migrants/refugees will result in an increased supply of trainers. The need for public savings and superficial economic arguments has likely resulted in deteriorating quality. This does not mean that there is no need for improving efficiency and effectiveness, but raises concerns about the method of approaching this issue.

Another weakness of the adult learning system in general is its strong focus on classroom-based or “school-like” learning activities, which is a barrier of up to 40% of low and unqualified non-participants. Most political initiatives address only one area, i.e. either funding of illiterates or advice and guidance, while not employing system levels or more complex ideas, e.g. combining funding with (career/progress-oriented) advice and guidance and work-based learning etc. Another concern is the strong involvement of

²⁷ The share of the adult population that is considered „functionally illiterate“ depends on the particular definition and breadth of the concept. If following a narrow concept, i.e. accounting only for those up to level one, the share is at about 17.5% (OECD 2016a), if applying a broader approach, that takes into account also those having serious difficulties in reading and writing, even though formally not functionally illiterate, the share increases by another 26% to 43.5% (Nickel 2014).

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training providers and the social partners in the policy process, since they are not very innovative, but cater particularly to specific interests, which leads more or less to stagnation.

7.0 FURTHER POLICY REFORMS AND ORIENTATIONS NEEDED

In the years to come, further education in Germany (as well as in other countries) will have to deal with the following issues: further internationalisation and globalisation, technological change, Industry/Work 4.0 or second machine age, demographic change, skilled labour shortage and social issues (diversity etc.). These developments will remain highly dynamic and occur simultaneously. Each of these developments - and their joint occurrence even more so - result in demands for higher qualification, skills and competencies.

A number of relevant studies (Economix 2013, 2016; BMAS 2015; Prognos 2015; Helmrich/Hummel/Neuber-Pohl 2015; Cedefop 2015; Arntz/Gregory/Zierahn 2016; Landmann/Heumann 2016; Gregory/Salomons/Zierahn 2016; Padur/Zinke 2015; Zika et al. 2015) indicate the need for more highly qualified persons, commonly with tertiary (higher) education qualifications, and a decreasing need for the low qualified, while demand for the medium qualified remains almost unchanged. The impact of the so-called second machine age (advanced manufacturing) or Industry/Work 4.0 as it is called in Germany is not entirely clear and foreseeable (Arntz/Gregory/Zierahn 2016; Gregory/Salomons/Zierahn 2016; Padur/Zinke 2015; Zika et al. 2015; Landmann/Heumann 2016); neither is the impact of recent migration by refugees and non-refugees on demographic development and on the (long-term) supply of skilled and unskilled labour.

Employment rates of the highly and medium qualified population are much higher than those of the low qualified. In contrast, unemployment rates of the low qualified are far higher than those of the medium and particularly of the highly qualified. Participation in the labour market of the low qualified tends to decrease sharply from age 50 onwards and much faster than for the other groups (Dohmen 2015).

While Germany's future demographic development appeared to be more or less clear (lower birth rates resulting in an ageing society, with age cohorts entering the labour market only half as large as retiring cohorts), the strong influx of refugees and other migrants in the recent past is likely to change this picture (IW 2016). As large shares of the refugees are very young (75% are below the age of 30, and more than 50% are probably even below the age of 18), demographic decrease may take place at a much slower rate, or even result in stable numbers.

The migration of refugees places a strong emphasis on education and training as well as on adult learning. Language courses are the absolute minimum requirement for adults, usually complemented by vocational (initial and further) training, either because of lacking formal (vocational) qualifications or because of tailoring skills and competencies to the German labour market. For the time being, information on the level of qualification is still very limited, and is in fact almost non-existent.

The (possibly) large number of low qualified (adult) refugees adds to the large number of low qualified persons among the "core" population, for which basic general as well as vocational training is required in order to ensure their long-term employability. According

to PIAAC, one out of six adults reaches utmost competence level 1 (Rammstedt et al. 2013, see also Grotlüschen/Riekmann 2010), another 20 to 25% are at level 2, and may therefore also be considered functionally illiterate. Thus, up to 40% are functionally illiterate or are close to it. However, a concrete figure is not available.

Between 30% and 40% of the low qualified – hence, a considerable share - state that they would be interested in participating in further education, but either lack the necessary requirements or funding (Dohmen 2016e). Further barriers to their participation involve lacking employers' support, a shortage of training provision, time constraints and lacking information, advice and guidance, to name a few. Yet, in this regard it should be noted that the relevance of barriers as well as the number and the combination of barriers varies a lot across the three ISCED levels 0 to 2 (Dohmen 2016e).

In light of these developments the following priority areas can be identified:

- Adult learning with a focus on improving skills, competencies and qualifications, either upgrading or keeping up-to-date: inter alia, this includes funding options for more costly programmes, e.g. grants and or loans (see Dohmen 2016e for some ideas in this direction).
- Preparation of migrants for the German labour market through language programmes as well as through vocational orientation and qualification: apart from funding this requires the preparation of adult teachers with competencies in teaching German as a second language etc.
- Up-skilling of the low qualified: Policy measures have to address the various barriers of low-qualified at the same time, this calls for more comprehensive approaches, including time related policies (incl. child care option, information, advice and guidance, suitable programmes, which are not school-like, etc.
- Basic education, e.g. alphabetisation on a broad level, rather than small scale action (we assume that some 15bn may be required, though the concrete figure depends on the specific approach).

The adult learning system will need to become far more demand-oriented and more flexible with regard to learning-in-the-workplace (Cedefop 2012c; Dohmen/Cristobal/Yelubayeva 2016). Recent studies increasingly highlight the role of learning-in-the-workplace both in general (Lorenz et al. 2016) and in combination with more formalised adult education (Cedefop 2012c; Dohmen/Cristobal/Yelubayeva 2016).

Although most points are mentioned in one or another policy paper, this does not yet translate into practical policies and strategies. At the moment, the major emphasis is on initial training, rather than on further or adult education.

8.0 SUMMARY

While employment rates are above both the EU and the national benchmark (78.7% compared to 75% and 77% respectively), participation rates in adult learning are far below (8.5%) the European average (10.8%) as well as the benchmark of 15%, if individual adult learning is concerned. The percentage of low qualified adults (25-64) is 13.5% and, thus, almost ten percentage points below the EU average. Due to differing statistical definitions, the figures for the 16 states are not directly comparable. The state level figures vary between 10% and 15% for adult learning over the 12 months prior to the survey (German average 12.3%) and have decreased over the last two years (2012, 2013) for which such data is available.

Whereas in-company training is above average and a driver in terms of meeting the national benchmark of 50% participation over the last 12 months, vocational adult learning and adult learning for disadvantaged groups are bottlenecks. This suggests that the German adult education system is doing relatively well as far as company-provided training and programmes for the better-off are concerned, but has serious and important weaknesses with regard to vocational learning and the low and unqualified.

This is due to the core focus of training provision for companies and self-paying adults, while public financial support for those with limited funds and/or limited initial education is rather scarce. Despite political rhetoric, practical emphasis on these groups is insufficient and public spending has been decreasing over the last years and decades. This is particularly due to funding from the Federal Employment Agency and further changes in light of discussions of the so-called Hartz-Commission in the early 2000s. There are concerns about learning quality and it appears that reforms over the last 10 to 15 year have led to deterioration in quality, even though there was possibly a need to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

The reduced public funding levels contrast with the efforts at national and state level to introduce funding instruments. A recent survey arrives at a figure of more than 80 different instruments, of which some are exclusively focused on adult learning/skills, while others only address adult learning, among other topics. It appears that the number of funding instruments has increased even in recent years.

The formal qualification level has not changed much at the lower levels over the last decades and there are, according to PIAAC, no differences in the competencies between 55 to 64-year-olds and 25 to 34-year-olds. The very recent OECD report Education at a Glance (2016), confirms that the share of unqualified persons has not changed much either.

Reforms and policy orientation in recent years are limited; major issues include a national strategy to combat functional illiteracy with a funding programme of about EUR 180m over a period of ten years, the launch of a phone-based information, advice and guidance system (in addition to already existing guidance structures, particularly at state level and

in relation to the funding instruments) and initiatives to support refugees.²⁸ The re-alignment of the funding schemes can be considered another reform, though more in detail than in general (the funding instruments were established over the last ten years, the changes are needed to respond to the funding regulations of the structural funds).

The core challenges for the future are related to increasing demand for highly skilled labour, stable demand for the medium qualified and shrinking demand for the low qualified, the economic challenge of digitalisation (Internet of Things, advanced manufacturing etc.) and demographic development. It appears that these topics are well placed in political papers, but not yet addressed sufficiently in practice. In fact, there is not much discussion about the practical implications and challenges the adult learning system faces given the challenges ahead, i.e. Work 4.0, Digitalisation, internationalisation as well as the strong influx of refugees.

With regard to CSR and NPCs, the following aspects can be considered as starting points:

- Mobilisation programmes address the low qualified properly in line with their needs, i.e. proper, not school-based programmes
- Sufficient funds and suitable schemes for re-qualification or upgrading (formal) qualifications; this requires funding amounts which are large enough to enter costly programmes (grants and/or loans)
- Programmes to support learning providers to re-arrange their supply in a manner that they can be integrated in the workplace requirements etc.

Future policies should be broader and more comprehensive in addressing particularly the needs of those engaged disproportionately low in adult learning, i.e. on the one hand, this concerns broader policy concepts addressing the various barriers of the target group in a flexible and individual manner. On the other hand, this calls for “concerted action” (konzertierte Aktion) of all stakeholders and, in particular, beneficiaries (federal, state and municipality governments as well as the social insurance system).

²⁸ A so-called “Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training 2015–2018” is almost exclusively focussed on initial vocational education and training, rather than on LLL.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of adopted legal acts, strategies, laws

Name	Date of adoption	Short description of content
Federal Training Assistance Act (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz, BAföG)	1971	This Act establishes the pre-requirement and conditions of financial support on relation to university education in particular and to school and (school-based) vocational education and training.
Law on Financial support for advanced professional qualification Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz (AFBG)	1996	This law regulates the personal and programme requirements which are to be fulfilled to be entitled to receive public grants and loans (whereas the loans are provided by KfW banking group – the federal government covers also the costs of interest subsidies during the training period).
Laws on further education (of the laender) (Weiterbildungsgesetze der Länder)	Various	These laws have been established in all 16 states, regulate the requirements of adult learning institutions which are to be fulfilled to become officially recognised as institution according to this law. Normally, this concerns certain areas of adult learning, which are covered by the law, quality assurance issues and possible financial implications. The laws may also regulate additional aspects.
Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany	2004	Agreed upon by a joint committee of the federal and the state governments (Bund-Laender-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsfoerderung), however, not a coherent national strategy due to constitutional framework conditions.
Law on Vocational Education and Training (Berufsbildungsgesetz, BBiG)	1969 (last change: 2005)	While responsibilities for adult learning generally lie with the 16 German states, the national level plays a role if continuing vocational education and training is addressed by the BBiG.
Agreement over a Joint National Strategy for Alphabetisation and Basic Education of Adults in Germany 2012-2016	2012	A joint national strategy agreed upon by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Standing Conference of Education Ministers, intended to address the (functionally) illiterate, the unemployed and the low-qualified.
Arbeitslosenversicherungsschutz- und Weiterbildungsstärkungsgesetz (AWStG)	2016	This law, concluded by the German federal government, aims to enhance the conditions of

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		unemployed people engaged in further education and to improve their guidance and funding conditions.
Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training 2015–2018	2014	Focused mainly on vocational education and training, this alliance was established between the Federal Government, the Federal Employment Agency and the social partners to replace the previous “National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany”.
Distance Learning Protection Law (Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz, FernUSG)	1977	This law regulates distance and e-learning in Germany.
Social Code Book III (Sozialgesetzbuch III, SGB III)	1998	The SGB III includes the Recognition and Certification Ordinance [Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung (AZWV)] for continuous vocational education and training (CVET) in the field of the Federal Employment Agency.

Annex 2: Inventory of policy interventions

Name of intervention	Source (with hyperlink)	Budget	Outputs	Which of the 6 building blocks for successful adult learning policies does it target? (tick all relevant)						Further details/description (purpose, duration, responsible entity etc.)
				Fosters learners' interest in	Employers' investment in	Improve equity of access for all	Learning that is relevant	High quality learning	Coherent policy	
Further education stipend	https://www.sbb-stipendien.de/weiterbildungsstipendium.html	EUR 7,200 over a period of 3 years per grantee (another 10% must be financed by the grantee)	For individuals: increased income			x				Funding programme by the Federal Ministry of Education and

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(Weiterbildungsstipendium)										Research, it provides funding for a very heterogeneous group of professional/vocational further education, from languages to very specific topics in the profession of the individual, including part-time studies
Advancement stipend (Aufstiegsstipendium)	https://www.sbb-stipendien.de/aufstiegsstipendium.html	Monthly funding volumes: - Full-time students: amount adjusted to level of BAföG	For individuals: increased income			x				Funding programme by the Federal Ministry of Education and

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		- Part-time students: up to EUR 2,400 per year (identical to maximum amount of further education stipend)								Research, it supports transition of high-performing VET-graduates to higher education, either in part or in full-time.
Training leave policies (Bildungsurlaub)	http://www.bildungsurlaub.de/home.html	n.a.	For individuals: increased employability For employers: productivity, innovation For community: civic and social participation	x						Individual regulations in the Germany states, training leave commonly allow a week off for learning that may be non-vocational, and sometimes cultural

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