



INFORMATION SHEET

ON

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

in AUSTRIA



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1. The socio-economic situation of young people

1.1 Please inform which groups of the young people are perceived as being socially excluded. What are the main factors for being socially excluded as a young person in your country?

In Austria social exclusion of young people refer, as described from the European Union, to the inability to fully take part in economic, social and cultural life. Social exclusion is understood as a multi dimensional concept influenced by different variables such as poverty, disease, unemployment, disabilities and handicaps, migration and ethnic background or regional disadvantages. The combination of several of these variables increases the risk of social exclusion. Concerning the fully participation in social life discrimination – regarding lifestyles, sexual and gender orientation, political attitudes or religious believes – can become relevant.

The risk for young people of being socially excluded refers to personal factors like unemployment, any form of disability and handicap as well as diseases or addictions, and all forms of experienced discrimination. But beside those variables that are connected to the individual also the family influences the risk of social exclusion. Young people coming from families at risk of poverty, with unemployed parents, with single parents, big families, parents with addictions are also endangered to be socially excluded. Furthermore young people in social care, in foster homes or who experienced familial violence are perceived as at risk for social exclusion.

1.2 Please provide the percentage representing the share of young people (18-24) who are at *risk of poverty* (and/or severely materially deprived and/or living in a household with very low work intensity).

Please compare it to the general population risk of poverty rate. What is the trend in your country – is the rate growing etc.?

According the Eurostat data 18,9 of young people between 15 and 24 (15,9% for aged 15 to 19; and 22,1% for) young people aged 20 to 24 were 2012 at risk of poverty. Over the years before 2012 the percentages did not show a common trend but was more or less stable – showing growth or decrease for maximum of 2%. But the changes from 2010 to 2011 and from 2011 to 2012 was drastic: for the 15 to 24 year olds first a decrease of 3,1% followed by an increase from 14,7 to 18,9 could be seen (for the older age group until 24 the growth for 2012 was more than 7%).

The rate for youth at risk of poverty is quite similar to that of the whole population (no data available for 2012).

1.3 Has an impact of the current financial crisis on young people been observed in your country? Please answer by referring to their access to social rights, discrimination, economic exclusion

In young people's access to the labor market the main impact of the economic crises on young people can be observed in Austria: The unemployment rate of young people between 15 and 24 increased since the crisis and compared to the average population the impact was harder on youth unemployment.

2. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion

2.1 Social subsistence/ protection and health cover for young people living in poverty

Please describe country's social protection provisions for young people living in poverty (list of benefits young people living in poverty are entitled to).

There are no special means targeting young people living in poverty in Austria but the social protection and health systems in Austria cover also young people.

Every person available to the labor market has the right to the so called Means-tested Minimum Income (Bedarfsabhängige Mindestsicherung), which is a new social benefit that combines financial protection with practical support services in order to help people find their way (back) to the employment market. It is seen as a means to counteract poverty in Austria. This Means-tested Minimum Income is independent from the age of the person.

Every Austrian family receives family allowance and tax credits for children until these come to age or even up to the age of 24 if they are in school or in training for an occupation. These social benefits are not related to the income of the parents.

2.2 Measures to meeting the medical care needs of Young people at risk of social exclusion

In Austria all people have the right to a health insurance that covers all medical care – independent if they are employed, unemployed or living of social benefits. The social protection system in Austria is quite complicated regarding the regional and sectoral (depending on the form of profession and of income) structure, which leads to some differences regarding the offers and the available places for special treatment – but not regarding the general concept of benefits.

Young people up to the age of 18 are insured with their parents' (or relatives') health insurance for all kinds of medical care. This holds also if the parents are unemployed or receive social benefits like the means-tested minimum income.

After the age of 18 young people are still insured together with their parents if attending a school, university or training for an occupation.

Special medical care (e.g. for mental problems, addictions) is also covered by the general health insurance but in some cases not the whole amount and not any available treatment.

The most problematic issue concerning medical care for young people at risk of social exclusion is that not always enough places for treatment are available and in some regions special offers for young people are rare.

2.3 Measures to re-engage the young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

The Austrian model of a trainings guarantee for young people is a model of good practice of how to integrate young people again in the labour market. Every young person has the right to either get an offer for a job or a training in maximum 3 month time after they register in the labour office.

2.4 Measures to ensure access to decent housing for young people at risk of social exclusion

There are no special means targeting young people at risk of social exclusion concerning housing – but for children and young people whose parents (or guardians) endanger their well being they can be accommodated in residential care or with foster parents.

2.5 Measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities

In Austria the National Action Plan on Disability 2012 – 2020¹ is the Strategy of the Austrian Federal Government for the Implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention. In this strategy measures for children and young people are highlighted as well.

Main aim is general accessibility for all handicapped people of all public amenities and the protection of discrimination.

The measurements start with check-ups in the Mother-Child Pass scheme when already pregnant women as well as babies and small children are examined to recognize conditions as early as possible to make early support / therapy measures possible.

Social integration of children and young people with disabilities starts in Austria already in Kindergarten where an integrated approach is established. In Schools integrated classes exist already by law since the 1990s. In both cases children with and without disabilities are together.

Also offers in the field of culture and sport will aim on all people with disabilities but special projects are planned for young people with disabilities.

2.6 The contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people

The contribution of youth work to social inclusion of young people can not be overestimated. Youth organizations are open to all young people and provide opportunities for exchange and gaining of experience for them.

Creating access to social rights, to participation in society, to non-formal education for all young people is a main task and is often a part of the self description of youth NGOs. Open youth work (like youth centers, mobile youth work) focus mainly on offers for young people with fewer opportunities. Especially young people with problematic family background, with migration background and economically disadvantaged young people are reached by open youth work, but also offers for young people with disabilities or diseases are targeted.

In the last years youth work provides more and more offers to support young people's access to the labour market through non-formal education but also in supporting the young people in writing CVs and job applications. Also opportunities for making up certificates from the formal education system are offered in some youth NGOs.

To create accessibility and special offers for young people with disabilities is main task in current youth work and especially youth centers have to deal with the coming law on general accessibility to all public buildings and facilities.

¹ The National action plan can be downloaded here:

http://www.bmask.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/7/4/9/CH2092/CMS1359980335644/nap_behinderung-web_2013-01-30_eng.pdf

3. Research on social inclusion

3.1 Is there any national report/ national survey investigating the social exclusion of young people in your country, including issues of discrimination?

There is no national report concerning social exclusion of young people.

Nevertheless national reports on the risk of poverty and also on the situation of people with disabilities exist and can be found on the webpage of the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. In these reports regularly the situation of young people is mentioned too.

In 2010 the Institute for Youth Culture research (jugendkultur.at) made a study on young people on risk of social exclusion.

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are topic of various research and studies of the labour market agency (AMS), the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) and of various universities (e.g. University of Linz).

3.2 Is there any longitudinal research focused on the cumulative nature of disadvantage (taking place across generations of the same family).

N/A

3.3 Apart from national reports and surveys, are you aware of other research that is valuable for understanding the situation of young people (esp. those with fewer opportunities) in the current crisis?.

N/A

4. Examples of policy responses and practices

4.1 What are the relevant initiatives/projects at regional/ national level promoting the social inclusion of young people?

The main initiatives focus on the integration in the labour market where young people do have the training guarantee (see above). Also the projects from the Bundessozialamt called job coaching and youth coaching are relevant regarding young people's access to the labour market. Here coaches are visiting schools to provide information and support for those who are not sure about their further education and training and inform also on the range of possibilities existing. These coaches are also working with (and in) youth centers and youth NGOs.

Various projects exist regarding the inclusion of young people in the labour market in youth work and in the field of non-formal education. As a model of good practice the project Job Ahoi from the open youth work Dornbirn (Vorarlberg) should be mentioned where young unemployed get the chance to work on restoring boats and get paid by hour on the spot. Here the young people can just come by and start working; this approach helps them to reestablish a work attitude and get used to a scheduled day plan.

Another approach for reintegrating young unemployed people are the so called production schools: Here young people who did not find any job or place for an apprenticeship get the chance to learn and work – so they get used to a structured day again, can learn basic skills and get support in applying for a job.

Another initiative for getting young people with fewer opportunities into the labour market is the approach to make the apprenticeship not in the regular employment market but in a special training center. For young people with disabilities or learning problems it is also possible to attend a “part apprenticeship” and make only parts of the training needed for the profession. This enables them to finish a kind of professional training and to find a job afterwards.

Participation of young people in social life and in political decision making are main tasks of youth work and of youth policy initiatives.

The national action plan on disability focuses on the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Furthermore social inclusion is one of the most important topics of youth work and supported by both the Austrian Youth Council and the umbrella organization of open youth work.

4.2 Have young people and civil society organizations been given political and financial support to be involved in the policy making process on social inclusion?

Social inclusion is one of the most important topics of youth work and supported by both the Austrian Youth Council and the umbrella organisation of open youth work. These umbrella organisations receive political and financial support by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth. On the regional level the corresponding umbrella organizations are supported by the regional governments.

Young people’s participation in social and democratic life is supported political on all levels.

Furthermore the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer’s Protection supports various NGOs that work on social inclusion.

4.3 Have youth organisations and other civil society organisations been involved in the development of the policies related to social inclusion of young people

The Austrian Youth Council has to be consulted for any law concerning young people.