

2020 SNAPSHOT

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OVERVIEW

Germany has a strong economy and relatively low unemployment compared with most of Europe. Yet in some regions, relatively high numbers of young people fail to successfully transition from school to work. Consider this fact: The latest figures show that only 9 percent of 15- to 29-year-olds in Germany are not in employment, education or training (NEET), but among the most vulnerable young people those figures are often much higher.¹ Further analysis reveals that young people with low literacy and numeracy skills who fail to earn a secondary degree are almost seven times more likely to become NEET than those young people with high literacy and numeracy skills who matriculate to postsecondary education.² The data show these school-to-work transitions are particularly challenging for young people from families who depend on public welfare, for those whose parents have only minimal education, and for young migrants and refugees.³ For example, NEET rates for migrants and refugees are three times higher than for students born in Germany.⁴

To address this challenge, PHINEO, a think tank and non-profit consultancy focused on supporting effective societal engagement, launched the Zukunftsträger initiative in late 2018 to identify approaches that help vulnerable young people receive training to compete for the skilled jobs of the 21st century.⁵ PHINEO launched the effort with support from the JPMorgan Chase & Co. New Skills for Youth initiative, in partnership with a host of other funders from throughout Germany.

EDUCATION IN GERMANY

In Germany, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture⁶ sets general laws and administrative regulations for educational institutions and vocational schools, school administration, vocational training, higher education and teacher training.⁷ The ministry is also responsible for archives and libraries, music schools, children's and youth art schools, museums, theaters and orchestras, as well as the promotion of sports, including financial support for the construction and renovation of sports facilities.⁸ However, states have the bulk of authority over education policy.

The German education system is divided into the following levels:

- **Early childhood education** includes children from birth to age 6 in day care centers and kindergarten.
- **Primary education** includes children from age 6 through grade four in primary schools (grundschule) or special needs schools (förderschule).
- **Secondary level I education** includes two tracks. One track is three years of a lower secondary program at lower secondary schools (hauptschule), comprehensive schools (gesamtschule) or special needs schools (förderschule), which leads to a **lower secondary school certificate (hauptschulabschluss)**. The second track is four years of a lower secondary program at upper secondary schools (gymnasium), intermediate secondary schools (realschule) or comprehensive schools (gesamtschule), which leads to an **intermediate secondary school certificate (realschulabschluss)**.
- **Secondary level II education** includes two tracks. Upper secondary education programs with vocational orientation at fachschulen are two to three years and lead to entrance qualifications for advanced technical colleges/universities of applied science (fachabitur). Upper secondary education programs at gymnasium are two to three years and lead to university entrance qualifications (abitur).
- **Tertiary-level education includes** two tracks. **Advanced vocational qualifications** include technician (facharbeiter), intermediate-level commercial clerk (fachwirt) or master-level craftsman (meister). **Higher education (university-level) qualifications** include bachelor's programs for three to four years, master's programs for two years and Ph.D. programs.
- **Adult learning and retraining** includes continuing vocational education training for employees and retraining for the unemployed and other vulnerable groups.⁹

Education is compulsory in Germany from age 6 through ninth grade, although some states require students to continue through 10th grade.¹⁰ On-site vocational training is usually the next step for students following compulsory education.¹¹

JPMORGAN CHASE NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH INITIATIVE

Launched in 2016, New Skills for Youth¹² is a \$75 million, five-year global initiative aimed at transforming how cities and states ensure that young people are career ready. The overarching goals of the initiative are to:

- Dramatically increase the number of students who successfully complete career pathways that begin in secondary school and culminate in postsecondary degrees or credentials tied to high-wage, high-demand jobs; and
- Catalyze transformational approaches to the design and delivery of programs and policies to increase students' career readiness and disseminate lessons learned around the world.

This snapshot is part of a series documenting the progress of the local investments from across the globe that aim to identify and implement the most promising ideas in career education, with a special focus on communities with the greatest needs.

THE ZUKUNFTSTRÄGER INITIATIVE

The New Skills for Youth investment is providing PHINEO with an opportunity to scale efforts to improve transitions from school to work for the most vulnerable young people in Germany. The goals of the initiative are to:


- **Assist young people in making successful transitions from school into careers;**
- **Help organizations that actively assist young people in making those transitions work better together through collective impact; and**
- **Generate knowledge about collective impact — including how it works and conditions for success — and make that information available so other stakeholders can benefit from the knowledge and improve collaboration.**

PHINEO is in year one of a four-year initiative and has primarily focused on developing a project plan for implementing the three goals simultaneously, with an official launch set for 2020 once all of the participating communities have been identified. PHINEO's goal is to identify four communities that already have the seeds of collective impact; PHINEO has identified two of the four so far, **Leipzig** and the **Rhine-Neckar Region**. Each community will have a lead backbone organization (similar to an intermediary) that works directly with PHINEO around the three goals of the initiative. In December 2019, Urban Souls e.V.¹³ and EDUCATION Y¹⁴ were announced as the backbone organizations for the city of Leipzig and the Rhine-Neckar Region, respectively.

PHINEO is using two approaches to identify the four communities. The first is to connect with organizations

that have already done collective impact work to help them identify potential backbone organizations and funders. In Leipzig, PHINEO had a relationship with a trusted funding partner that had started a collective impact project for a slightly different focus area. The two organizations decided to collaborate on the Zukunftsträger initiative, and the funder brought the backbone organization, Urban Souls e.V., along with them. The other main strategy has been to use a call for proposals. The proposals are broadly intended to identify how organizations cooperate with other organizations within the community to gauge their commitment to and experience with collective impact. In the Rhine-Neckar Region, PHINEO used a call for proposals to identify and select EDUCATION Y.

Two elements of PHINEO's Zukunftsträger initiative stand out in the early stages of planning and implementation: the importance of changing mindsets about the value of collective impact and the importance of adapting to local context and need.



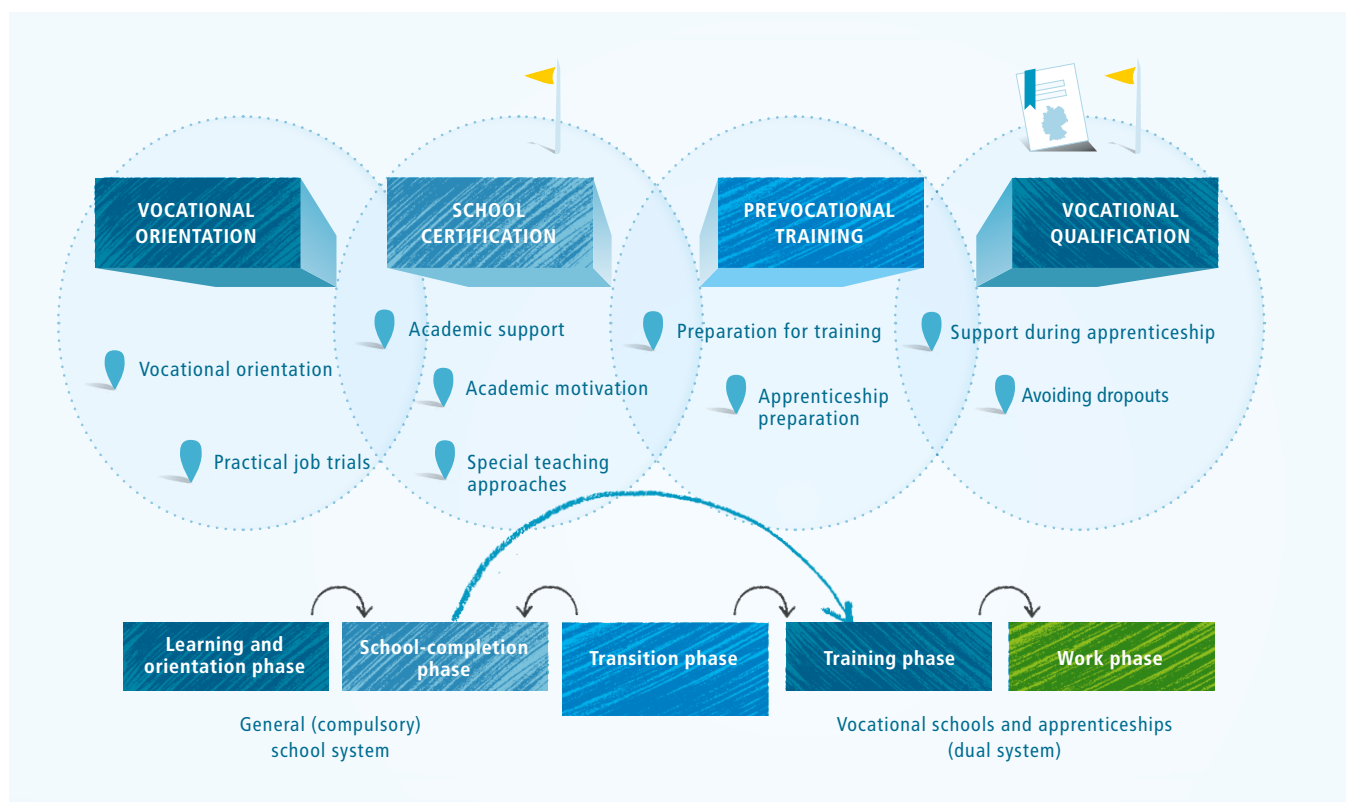
“There are so many organizations that insist on working on more or less the same problem, and sometimes they don't even know that they are working at the same school. What happens when we bring them together? Then they are not just initiatives working in silos; they are working together.”

—Collective Impact Funder



FOSTERING SUCCESSFUL CAREER PATHWAYS: POINTS OF TRANSITION AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Four key transition points present challenges for students as they try to move from school to the workplace: making the right career choice, finishing school, becoming career ready, and completing a vocational/training program. To ensure that students successfully navigate these transitions, the Zukunftsträger initiative will focus its supports on orientation, motivation, skill development and personal support for students.



Source: PHINEO¹⁵

Changing Mindsets About the Value of Collective Impact

Historically, collective impact has not been the go-to strategy for tackling social problems in Germany; it is not easy to collaborate, especially with a focus on impact rather than information sharing. But PHINEO is trying to help organizations better understand the potential of working together collectively versus operating solo. For example, a lot of organizations have programs that care for young people, but one might work on job training, another on self-confidence, and another on keeping students in school. This direct service approach is limited in terms of scale, particularly when funding dries up. The idea be-

hind collective impact is that if these organizations work together, they can have greater impact and sustainability. PHINEO's goal is to empower and enable local networks and organizations that are actively assisting young people in a community to come together to develop a shared vision so that all of the stakeholders are working collaboratively and cohesively toward common goals.

This task is not easy; it requires a significant shift in the mindset of a host of stakeholders, including government, foundations, providers, educators and students. In the very early phases of identifying the four communities to partner with, PHINEO is finding that many stakeholders are reluctant and wary. Communication has been key to

identifying the two backbone organizations for Leipzig and the Rhine-Neckar Region and to getting funders on board to support the effort. PHINEO developed simple talking points about the value of collective impact and uses them to explain the concept. PHINEO has found that engaging stakeholders entails helping them see themselves in collective impact, as well as the broader value. The next step is supporting stakeholders to reflect on their own behavior to strengthen their intention to act in the best interest of the whole, not just their individual program.

Adapting to Local Context and Need

PHINEO recognizes the importance of being flexible and adapting to the landscape and needs of individual communities. That effort starts with identifying a strong local backbone organization that knows what is needed in the community and has the right relationships with stakeholders. Finding a good balance between a shared vision and goals that everybody commits to and individualizing to the specifics of the region, the interests of funders, and the strengths of the non-profits involved is a challenge. It requires communication and engagement, helping partners to see themselves and their place within the broader vision.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

In 2011, an article in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* introduced the concept of collective impact as a strategy for cross-sector collaboration to address complex social and environmental challenges in communities. The call for collective impact was a response to decades of failed attempts at systemic education reform from a host of stakeholders often operating in isolation: teachers, parents, administrators, non-profits, business leaders, policymakers and philanthropists. The five conditions for collective impact include:

- Community aspirations;
- Strategic learning;
- Higher-leverage activities;
- Inclusive community engagement; and
- Containers for change.

PHINEO and a host of other organizations have published toolkits to help guide non-profits through the steps for planning and implementing collective impact projects. PHINEO's toolkit focuses users on results: Results at the level of services and products are outputs, results at the level of the target groups are outcomes, and results at the societal level are impacts.

The toolkit guides users through three phases in detail: planning, analyzing and improving. Planning involves understanding the need and context and setting goals. Analyzing involves identifying data to gauge impact and then collecting and analyzing the data. Improving involves making adjustments to strategies based on data analysis and sharing results with stakeholders.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



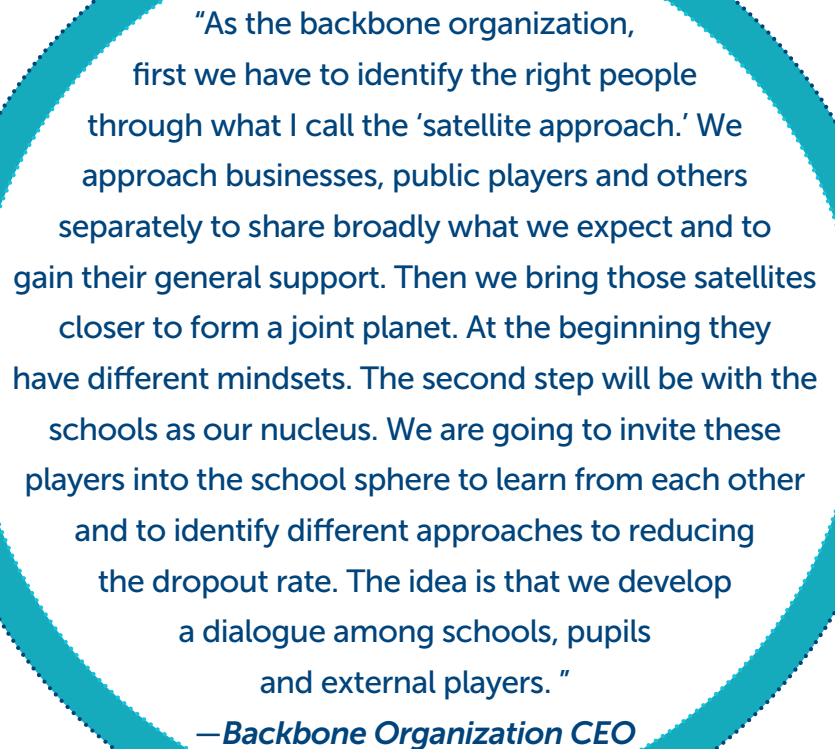
Source: PHINEO²⁰

An effective backbone organization is well positioned to identify and bring relevant community-based stakeholders to the table to build support for crafting a shared vision for helping students transition from school to work. The backbone organization can also help bridge the gap between the broader shared goal of the Zukunftsträger initiative to assist young people in making successful transitions from school into a career and more specific community-based goals, such as reducing the dropout rate or improving relationships between teachers and students, that fall underneath that shared goal.

The backbone organization in each community will serve as the facilitator and coordinator for the collective impact effort, keeping everyone on track and helping to tackle common challenges. Often partners meet with each other to discuss a shared vision, yet when they all go out and work in the field on their own projects, in different institutions, it is easy to fall into old patterns of behavior and focus on the daily business of their own organization.

For example, prior to participating in a collective impact effort, organizations tend to make independent decisions about which schools to partner with to deliver programming and services. But as part of a collective impact effort, the backbone organization helps organizations decide together which schools in the community are the most strategic based on the shared vision. The coordinator helps to take a holistic approach, with an eye toward the broader, shared vision of the Zukunftsträger initiative, as well as the community-based goals.

The backbone organization also leads both formal and informal communication efforts on the ground one on one and in groups. Informal communication, for example,



“As the backbone organization, first we have to identify the right people through what I call the ‘satellite approach.’ We approach businesses, public players and others separately to share broadly what we expect and to gain their general support. Then we bring those satellites closer to form a joint planet. At the beginning they have different mindsets. The second step will be with the schools as our nucleus. We are going to invite these players into the school sphere to learn from each other and to identify different approaches to reducing the dropout rate. The idea is that we develop a dialogue among schools, pupils and external players. ”
—Backbone Organization CEO

includes the early stages of crafting a vision, sharing it with individual stakeholders, and then adapting it to fit interests. Eventually, the backbone organization will move to formal convenings with community partners and regular communication of goals and activities across partners based on need. As the initiative rolls out, the backbone organization will continue to ensure that key supporters are on board with the vision and implementation plan through one-on-one and group communication, as needed.

LOOKING FORWARD

PHINEO is focused on identifying two additional sites and backbone organizations to join Leipzig and the Rhine-Neckar Region in the Zukunftsträger initiative. Simultaneously, PHINEO is beginning work with the two

backbone organizations in Leipzig and the Rhine-Neckar Region to develop project plans to identify stakeholders and funders and craft a shared vision for improving school-to-work transitions for young people within each region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ <https://data.oecd.org/youthinac/youth-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet.htm>
- ² https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/soc_glance-2016-4-en.pdf?expires=1577034721&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=3943956D556815EF-20CE176C96BA4CB0
- ³ PHINEO. *Jobs ahead: Effective approaches and projects in the transitions from school to work*. Available for download in English at: <https://www.phineo.org/publikationen/seite-3#filter>
- ⁴ European Commission. *The youth guarantee country by country: Germany 2018*.
- ⁵ For more information about PHINEO, see <https://www.phineo.org/phineo>.
- ⁶ For more information about the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, see <https://www.bmbf.de/en/index.html>.
- ⁷ <https://www.government-mv.de/The-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education%2C-Science-and-Culture/>
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ PHINEO. *Jobs ahead: Effective approaches and projects in the transitions from school to work*. Available for download in English at: <https://www.phineo.org/publikationen/seite-3#filter>.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² For more information about New Skills for Youth, see <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/news/stories/newskillsforyouth.htm>.
- ¹³ For more information about Urban Souls e.V., see <http://www.urban-souls.de>.
- ¹⁴ For more information about EDUCATION Y, see www.education-y.de.
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- ¹⁶ https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact; <https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org>
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Events/Multi-Day%20Events/Community%20Change%20Institute%20-%20CCI/2016%20CCI%20Toronto/CCI_Publications/Collective%20Impact%203.0%20Liz%20Weaver%20Mark%20Cabaj%20Paper.pdf
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