

VerA

An initiative against school drop-out

Mission

VerA¹ is an initiative of Senior Experten Service (SES)² aimed at students, especially of vocational schools, to prevent them from leaving studies and, in general, aimed at anyone who wants to (re)enter in the working world.

The needs to which VerA responds derive from situations whose main manifestations are:

- breaking of training contracts,
- qualifications that are not compatible with the needs of companies,
- scarce company training initiatives,
- ignorance about the world of work,
- immaturity and unrealistic expectations,
- poor assistance from families or schools.

Partners and funding

The project partners are the Associations of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, the German Confederation of Chambers of Skilled Crafts and the German Confederation of Liberal Professions.

The funds are (mainly) provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and by the aforementioned associations.

Activity

VerA is a national mentoring program that helps potential workers complete their training and prepare for working life. The peculiar characteristic of VerA is that every user is supported by a personal mentor; they jointly decide the duration, the form and the content of the support.

The typical commitment is 2-4 hours per week.

Young people and their needs

VerA supports apprentices and people who want to improve or complete their professional preparation or need a socio-behavioral help; most of the requests are related to training in specific subjects (~ 43.5% 0), on behavior or resolution of conflicts or personal problems (~ 24.3%) and on knowledge of German language (8.7%).

40% of requesting people is woman.

Accessing VerA

Support can be requested via the VerA website, by email or telephone. VerA is present with its own stands in the fairs and organize presentations in professional schools.

The contract between the applicant and the expert is carried out by the Chamber of Commerce which is also the validating entity of the expert - applicant assignment.

Experts and their training

The SES volunteer experts involved in the VerA project are about 2500, 17% are women; they are retired workers who want to make their professional skills available. The training consists of a two-day seminar and regular SES meetings to share experiences.

For each award the expert receives a contribution of € 50 per month.

1 **Verhinderung von Ausbildungsabbrüchen**", i.e. prevention of training breakups.

2 See paragraph Senior Experten Service (SES) above

The management of VerA

VerA is managed in Bonn by 30 people, including 12 volunteers Senior Expert; moreover, there are 82 coordinators (volunteers) in the nation.

For each assignment, VerA has an annual contribution of € 400.

Results

From 2009 to today, there have been over 10,000 requests for mentoring, in particular in 2017 there are 3970 assignments, of which 1795 continuations of the previous year.

The system is effective, over 80% of assignments reach their goal; it should also be noted that the evaluation of the users of various aspects of training is very positive (complete agreements ~ 78%).

Problems

Recruitment of experts and how to bring out the needs of young people.

Applicability hypothesis

VerA has an annual budget of about € 1.5 million and a multi-year experience, its applicability needs an experimental phase which, however, has a cost of € 800-1000 per mentored person.

The implementation must be based largely on volunteering but should also rely on a structured organization, below the salient features of the project:

- territorial scope Turin and (province),
- one or more associations of Seniors,
- one or more associations operating in the social,
- Chamber of Crafts, Trade and Industrial Union,
- organization in professional schools.

With a goal of assisting 100 people for six months, the cost can be estimated at € 40-50,000.

References

Senior Experten Service (SES)

SES is a German organization of experienced senior volunteers whose purpose is the sharing our skills and professionalism in Germany and abroad. In Germany, SES mainly operates with the VerA project. It has a pool of over 12,000 experts; the management activities are carried out by about 170 people, half volunteers and half salaried.

VerA site

<http://vera.ses-bonn.de/>

[http://vera.ses-](http://vera.ses-bonn.de/fileadmin/redaktion/downloadbereich/VerA_infoblatt_24.11.2017_english.pdf)

[bonn.de/fileadmin/redaktion/downloadbereich/VerA_infoblatt_24.11.2017_english.pdf](http://vera.ses-bonn.de/fileadmin/redaktion/downloadbereich/VerA_infoblatt_24.11.2017_english.pdf)