Majority of German youths see good opportunities in apprenticeship market

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The mood on the German apprenticeship market has improved appreciably. However, many young people with low school qualifications see their chances of securing an apprenticeship as poor. It remains to be seen whether the apprenticeship guarantee passed recently by the German federal government will be able to help.

Gütersloh, 30 August 2023. Almost three quarters of young people in Germany (72%) see their opportunities on the apprenticeship market as good to very good. This emerges from a representative survey of German youth commissioned by the Bertelsmann Stiftung. Just 16% rated their chances as poor or rather poor. This means that a turning point has been passed in Germany at the start of the new education year, after many young people had in recent years seen their chances of securing an apprenticeship as limited following the coronavirus pandemic. Among young people with low school qualifications, however, more than a quarter (26%) expressed the view that their prospects for an apprenticeship were currently poor to rather poor.

As far as the availability of apprenticeships is concerned, the estimates are more pessimistic: Only a little more than half of those surveyed see the number as adequate. Despite the fact that numerous apprenticeships have not been taken up, more than a quarter believe that there are too few vacancies. Only one in 10 think that there are too many apprenticeship vacancies. “Linking up young people with companies must be done much better,” says Clemens Wieland, Bertelsmann Stiftung expert for professional training. He notes that there is great general interest in apprenticeships, with three quarters of the young people surveyed aiming for one or at least seeing them as an option.

Improved Support for NEETs

Guidance in selecting the right occupation remains a major problem. As many as 55% of the young people surveyed say they have difficulty finding their way through the information thicket. Almost a third of those with previous experience in looking for an apprenticeship would like more support. “Especially those young people who experience difficulty in finding an apprenticeship vacancy need individual and constant guidance,” Wieland says. This applies the more so, given the increased number of young people characterised as NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training), he believes. In 2022, the number of NEETs in Germany was put at 564,000 young people aged between 15 and 24 years.

Wieland sees the apprenticeship guarantee passed this year by the German government as basically an “important signal”. But the expert adds: “Looking at the core idea of the apprenticeship guarantee – offering young people whose applications have been turned down a guaranteed apprenticeship option – the law is still far behind the Austrian model that served as a role model.”

Additional information:

The iconkids & youth institute surveyed 1,694 representative young people between the ages of 14 and 25 in Germany during June 2023.

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