



United Nations  
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International Centre  
for Technical and Vocational  
Education and Training

## JAMBA - Young Single Mothers in Vocational Training

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

**Implementing Organization:** The German state of Hesse  
**Funding Organizations:** Government of The Federal Republic of Germany,  
The European Social Fund (ESF)

### CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The education and training market lacks opportunities for young women who do not stick to the socially prescribed route of school, training, and children (Paul-Kohlhoff, 2002). Even with high motivation and suitable schooling conditions, young mothers have barriers in their search for vocational training places due to their responsibilities in bringing up their children. On the other hand, poor education results in lack of life opportunities and participation in society. The JAMBA programme that was conducted throughout the German state of Hesse aimed at occupational integration of this group of people. Young mothers are encouraged and supported to take an in-company training course and companies are encouraged to take them as trainees. Without this support, they would face being excluded from vocational qualifications (Zybell, 2003).

### DESCRIPTION AND AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

The initiative began as a pilot project by the Ministry of Economics, Transportation, Urban and Regional Development in 1998. It aimed at improving the opportunities or labour market intergration of a specific group that is disadvantaged in terms of participating in dual training programmes in Germany. The programme was designed to enhance single parents' independence by offering them qualification-based technical and vocational education and training or re-training through a qualified occupation. It's important new feature was to give young single mothers the opportunity to take part in an in-company training programme that would take up less time than the usual programmes. This part-time training was reduced with the training time of 25% compared with the standard vocational training. From 2000 onwards this pilot project has been followed by a regular programme.

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### CONTENTS

- 1 Programme Overview  
Context and Background  
Description and Aims of the Programme
- 2 Implementation:  
Approaches and Methodologies  
Funding  
Participants  
Learning and Training
- 3 Monitoring and Evaluation  
Impact
- 4 Contact  
References

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## IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

### Funding

Between 2000-2007, the programme was co-financed by the state and The European Social Fund (ESF). Since 2008, the programme “Company-training for single parents” has been financed from the federal budget through social security organisations in accordance with the federal Second Book of Social Code (SGB II). In addition, public employment services have been called upon to take part in financing. Social service providers’ task is to facilitate the integration of single parents into training and working and to provide adequate financial assistance. Many project supporters are promoting higher operating subsidies for the small companies in order to increase their ability to offer apprenticeships.

### Participants

In recent years, around 160 places for education and training have been approved annually in the programme. An age limitation (up to 27 years) was introduced due to an increased demand from older applicants. Recruitment of the participants occurs mostly during self-organised information events, by distribution of flyers, through publications and verbal propaganda, and by allocation through social services providers. Training positions are provided in private companies but different types of position are searched for single mothers who are not (yet) ready for a company-based apprenticeship.

The evaluation study in 2008 included 840 single parents (one male) whose age varied between 16 and 38 years. Most of them were between 20 and 25 years (76%) old. In all, 85% of the programme participants had a single child at the beginning of the training. More than a half (53%) of them had a secondary school certificate, 38% had an intermediate certificate, and 7% of them had qualifications for higher education. Only 3% of them had no qualifications. 66% of the participants were unemployed and received social security benefits while 32% were unemployed but did not get benefits. 73% of the participants had their child in a kindergarden or day-care centre, 42% of them had family support, and 27% had a day-care mother. Only for 2% of them the company provided a child-care support.

### Learning and Training

The programme offers three possibilities for company-training: full time training, part-time training without extended education, and part-time training with extended education. In some cases the remuneration is reduced to 75% for part-time training. In other cases it remains the same as for full-time training. Project supporters work together with companies and vocational colleges during the training. An important task of project supporters is to act as mediators in case of problems or conflicts between the training company and the trainee. The cooperation between the project supporters and vocational schools is taking place on an irregular basis and mostly only when needed, for example, to attend problems with performance in school (42%) or when conflicts arise (27%). A significant factor for the success of the programme is the support of professional social pedagogues of project supporters – at first in the preparatory phase for up to five months before and then after a successful admission into an apprenticeship for the entire time of the vocational training.

The preparatory phase of the programme is important for attaining an apprenticeship. At this phase, training in making applications for company internships are offered for women while also funding and child-care issues are clarified. Sharing experience in a group of women in the same life-situation helps to stimulate motivation especially for very young mothers who feel overstrained by the necessary reorganisation of their everyday life. In cases where single mothers are not (yet) ready for a company-based apprenticeship, a different type of training position is searched for them.

19 out of 20 project supporters offer both specified and general training occupations. The training consists of 68 different occupations. Most commonly selected occupations for traineeship are office-based occupations, para-medical occupations, and occupations in retail and sales. Single parents are often the only trainees in the company. Of them, 41% are trained in very small companies (under 10 employees), 27% in small companies (10 – 99 employees), and 17% in medium sized or big companies.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The evaluations of the programme have been carried out by the Technical University of Darmstadt. Monitoring of the pilot project assessed the ability of the vocational training system to integrate „weaker people“ into the system. During the four years of academic support, the sample comprised two groups each involving 50 young mothers and 80 companies. The results indicated that the traditional structure of the dual vocational training system could not respond to individual patterns of action and orientation (Paul & Zybelle, 2007). Accordingly, the JAMBA project produced insights and provided an important stimulus for increasing the flexibility of the existing vocational training system.

The 2008 evaluation of the programme was attended by 30 out of 34 project promoters and 840 single parents. In all, 3 out of 4 trainees were very satisfied (40%) or satisfied (35%) with the quality of their training. 42% of them described their working climate as good and encouraging, while 21% were not willing to work for the same company after their training. 46% of the participants were trained in their desired occupation, while 21% indicated that they were not working in their desired occupation. The results indicated significance of social pedagogues for the success of the programme. Moreover, sharing experience and successful solutions of problems were considered important especially for young women and their motivation. Improved child-care options were suggested to increase the trainees participation in labour market.

On the other hand, 55% of the project supporters were content and 35% of them quite content with the cooperation with the training companies. Instead, the cooperation between the project supporters and vocational schools occurred only when needed, for example, during problems with school performances (42%) or arising conflicts (27%). Moreover, even though small companies were the main providers of the apprenticeships, they faced difficulties due to the requirements in the financial bonus for training places. Problematic working hours in hotel and restaurants (38%), retail and sales (27%) and paramedical occupations (12%) also caused some difficulties for the training.

## IMPACT

Most of the supported single parents graduate successfully from their training programmes. The number of people who do not finish their vocational training is relatively low. A significant proportion of participants graduate with a reduction of working time to a part-time training. More than a half of the graduates (56%) became employed directly after finishing their apprenticeship. 28% of the participants were unemployed after their apprenticeship while 15% of them were incapable to become employed for other reasons (mostly due to pregnancy or parenting duties). The percentage of employed graduates increased considerably after another six months. Evaluation of the training model indicated that single parents were socially isolated. But, after getting social and organisational competences during their apprenticeship, they became highly motivated workers.

Another study of the JAMBA project showed that skilled work gave a new direction and more structure to the young mothers' life. After training, they saw themselves as active participants with new frameworks of reference that changed their scope for action and self-definition (Paul & Zybelle, 2007). The young mothers also successfully developed a distinctive vocational identity. The majority of the project participants could no longer imagine not being employed.



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