

Making Strategic Co-Operation Work: The Youth Employment Agencies in Germany



YouConnect

Gut vernetzt. Besser beraten.

The BA Is Present on Every Level of Government...



Employees: 97.000
Offices: 1,000

National level
Germany

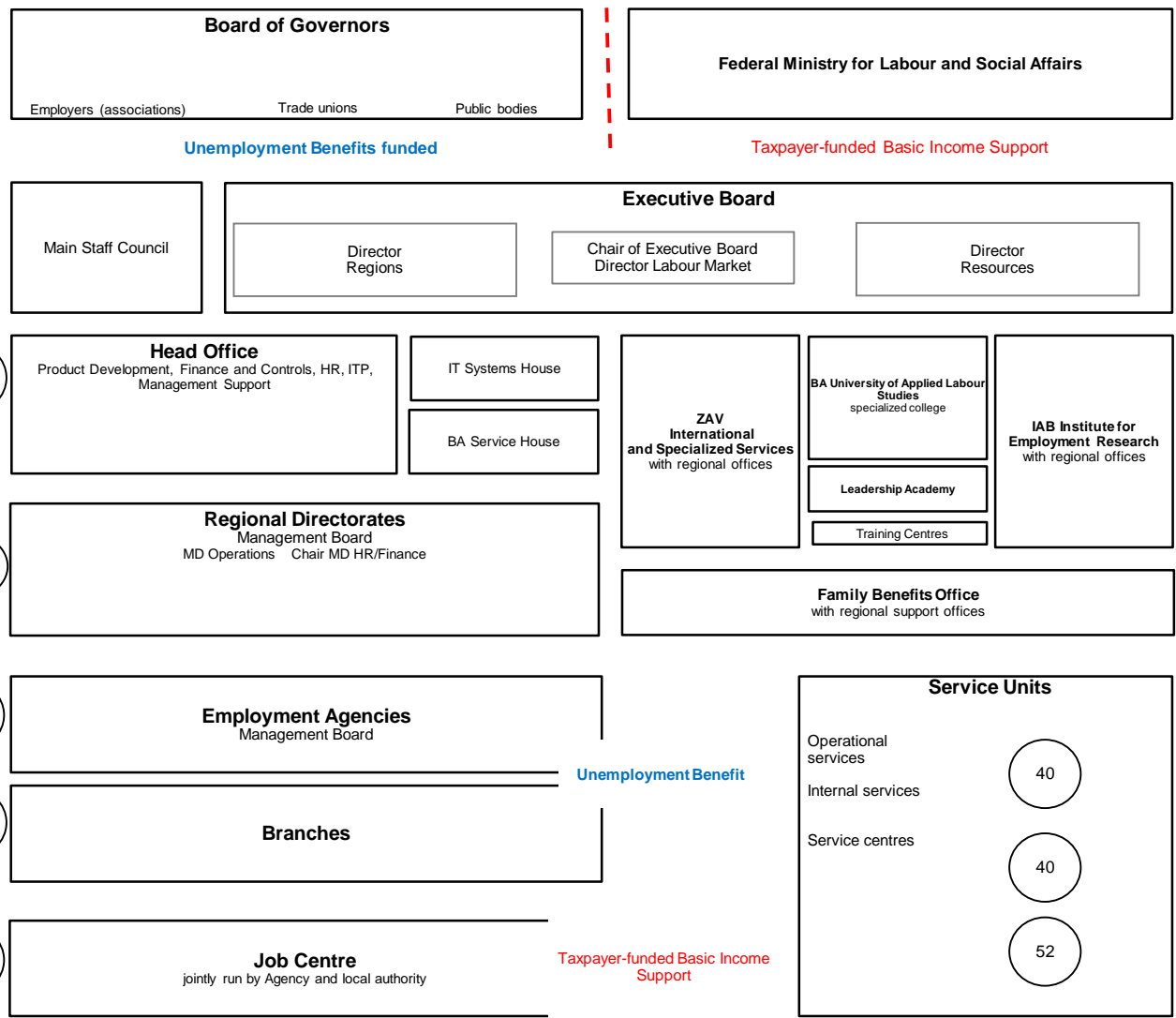


State level
16 states



Local level

ca. 400 districts and cities



....But the Youth Support System in Germany Is Very Fragmented, Impairing Service Delivery and Performance

Responsibilities are complex due to constitutional assignments of responsibilities in a federal system:

- Vocational Guidance: **Employment Agencies (BA)**
- Jobseekers allowance: **Employment Agencies (BA)**
- Basic Income Support: **Jobcentres** (300 joint agencies, 100 locally run offices on county/municipality level)
- Job and training placement: Employment Agencies and / or Jobcentres
- Support of vocational training including vocational rehabilitation aid: Employment Agencies or Jobcentres
- General youth welfare including social work care: **Youth welfare offices** (counties, communities)
- „Responsible Entities“ for vocational education regulations and recognition of vocational training: **Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of the Crafts** (self-governed on regional level) or state agencies (> 1400!)
- **Schools**: Complex and diverse structure depending on state („Länder“) policy, public schools are run by state or local authorities. No central databases for students.
- **Universities** and colleges are self-governed under EU, federal and state regulations and state oversight.

Youth support programmes are often run **isolated** from other support systems, leading to poor **overall performance** („NEETS“ rates), high **dropout rates** as well as **intransparent structures** for clients as well as **insufficient data** for evaluating programmes and tracking the integration process from an individual perspective.

Co-operation with schools and universities / colleges arbitrary and often not satisfactory, leading to discrimination of young clients from **minorities and socially challenged groups** trying to reach higher education and output of **skilled workers** at the „second threshold“ too small to meet demand

* NEETS: young persons Not in Education, Employment, Training or School

The Solution: Jugendberufsagenturen (JBA) “Youth Employment Agencies” – In a Nutshell

A JBA is a loose **joint venture** of parts of some or all local and federal authorities responsible for the labour market integration of young people.

It combines all youth support services in a new entity without founding a new authority, based on a **voluntary strategic partnership** between local Employment Agencies, Jobcentres and local government offices **on county / municipality level**.

Located ideally under **one roof** , facilitating a **one-stop-shop experience** for clients.

Full-time assigned specialists of all services can work hand in hand developing individual solutions for each single client, delivering individual **case management** instead of standardised target group support. Partners can combine the various instruments in their respective responsibility for every single case, addressing the specific challenges of each client.

Mutual **data exchange** enables experts to track and trace the individual integration process throughout each stage or episode of support. The project “**YouConnect**” provides a universal tool to facilitate this exchange on a local level and on a voluntary basis. A nationwide, mandatory **common database** for youth support, however, has not been agreed to till now, as resistance from some stakeholders is too strong

Critical Success Factors: Results From an Independent Study („Deutscher Verein“)

Successful JBAs...

- 1) Follow a common cause („Leitmotif“) which gives orientation to all partners and a common motivation to act (*usually when caseloads are high, esp. in larger municipalities*)
- 2) Allow partners to co-operate locally and on a level playing field (no-one should dominate, no central interference in local decision-making, no overly formalised framework)
- 3) Include schools and further networking partners (independent welfare organizations, chambers, employers' organisations, juvenile courts / parole offices etc)
- 4) Focus on the individual client, not „target groups“
- 5) Provide a one-stop-shop service under one roof
- 6) Agree on a set of KPIs and a management-by-objectives approach to performance management (*that is highly controversial in some regions*)
- 7) Harmonize procedures and routines of case management and application processes
- 8) Facilitate mutual transparency between partner organisations regarding the respective support structures, resources, responsibilities and limitations
- 9) Work together in creating a common database while maintaining maximum data protection