



Booklet for parents - English

LEARNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

Educational and career choice for people
with a migration background

Career guidance counsellors of the WIFIs
and Economic Chambers

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LEARNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

Choosing the right profession or a suitable school is an exciting task for young people. But you as parents also face a big challenge: you have to stand by your child in this choice of career, offering support where it is needed and wanted, but not making decisions for your child.

As a migrant you have become part of a society and culture which in some ways are different and work differently to what you were used to before. This also includes the fact that you and your children have to find your way through an education and training system as well as a working environment that will possibly differ greatly from what you have previously known.

With this publication “Learning for your Future” we would like to help you and your children take another step forward in finding out about career and training paths in your new homeland and using the varied possibilities and opportunities found in vocational training. In Austria there is a very wide choice of education and training paths and professions. In Austria, training is provided in some 260 apprenticeships, and many other jobs can be learned by attending school-based education or an institution of higher learning.

Career choice means deciding on an appropriate occupation and an appropriate education and training path. And this implies, first and foremost, that young people need to know a lot about themselves. It is only in this way that suitable occupations and training tracks can be found.

In this booklet for parents “Learning for your future” we sum up some key information concerning the choice of career and education for you and give you tips on how you can provide your sons and daughters with the best-possible support. Here it is necessary, of course, that you yourself become familiar with the different stages of career choice and the possibilities available in the education system.

As career guidance counsellors at the Economic Chambers and Institutes for Economic Promotion (WIFIs) we want to help you here. You can find our contact addresses on the back of this booklet for parents.

One more thing: a career choice is not unchangeable; reorientation and changing career paths will always be necessary and are becoming ever more important in our fast-moving world. The first career choice is not the big decision in life, it is just about making a good start.

Your team of authors

THE WAY TO THE LABOUR MARKET - IMPORTANT PREREQUISITES

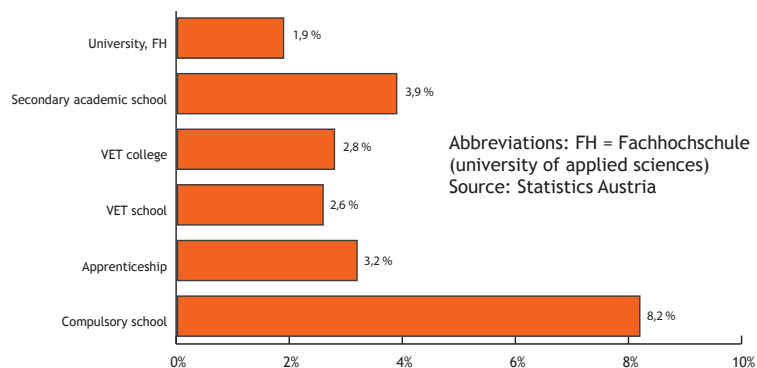
THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPLETING TRAINING AND OBTAINING QUALIFICATIONS

In Austria it is very important for boys and girls to complete the training for the job in which they want to work. They will only get a good job with a comprehensive training background (apprenticeship, school or higher education programme). Their later advancement and career opportunities will also depend on it. A prerequisite for your child's success in the world of work is therefore that he/she acquires a corresponding qualification; by no means should he/she drop out prematurely.



Good compulsory school qualifications are an important prerequisite for further school-based education. Most companies also consider a good compulsory school report as very important when selecting their apprentices. The lower secondary school qualification can also be obtained later, e.g. with external exams at a lower secondary school or with courses at CVET institutions (e.g. at an adult education centre - VHS - or a Vocational Training Institute - bfi).

The **illustration** shows the unemployment rate by formal educational attainment for 2008:



This means, for example, that of 100 people who have completed compulsory schooling at most, an average of 8 people were unemployed in 2008.

LANGUAGE AS A DOOR-OPENER

Command of German in Austria

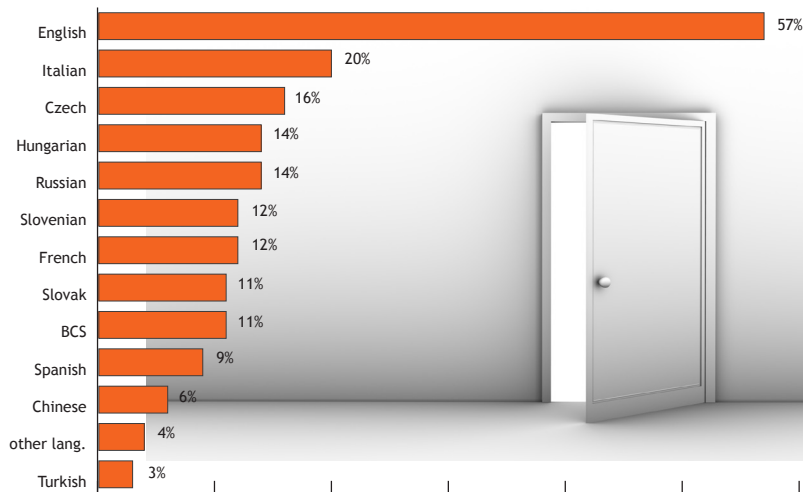
If your child wants to complete a training course or work in Austria, he/she needs to be able to speak German as well as write in German. Only by constant practice is it possible to properly learn a language. Therefore you should encourage your son/daughter to practise the language in their leisure time with their friends and family.

In addition they can improve their command of German by attending a German course. Language courses for beginners and advanced courses are offered by the WIFI as well as many other training institutions.

Foreign language skills in Austria

Command of foreign languages is becoming increasingly important in our globalised world of work. If young people speak German as well as their mother tongue, this may be a major advantage for them. They will then maybe also find it easier to learn other languages. Those who speak several languages will often have excellent career options on the labour market.

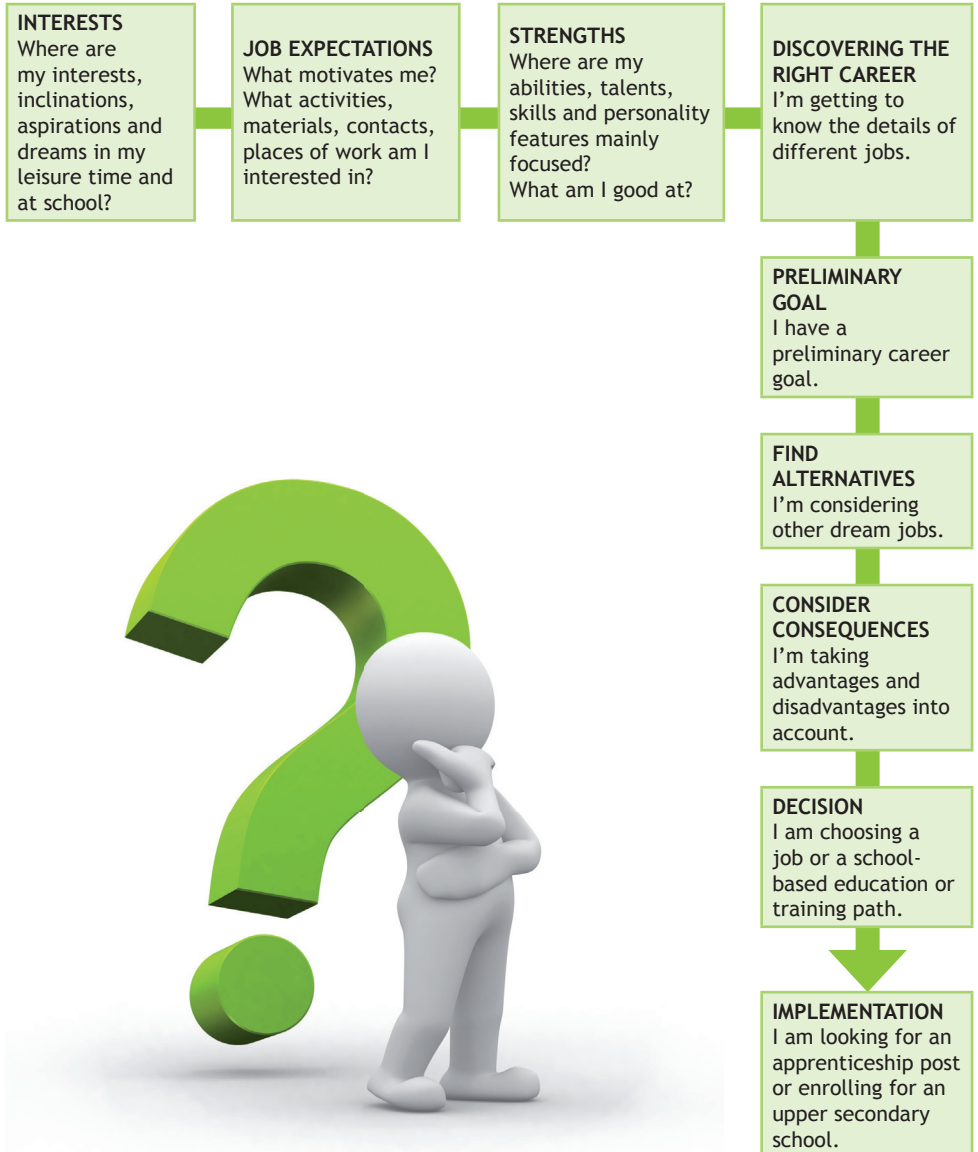
The illustration shows you what languages are particularly important from the viewpoint of Austrian companies:



Abbreviations: BCS = Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian; other lang. = other languages
Source: ibw company survey (n=2.017 surveyed companies), 2006

CAREER CHOICE - SETTING THE COURSE FOR A LIFE PATH

A ROADMAP FOR YOUR CHILD



FINDING THE RIGHT TRACK - SCHOOL OR APPRENTICESHIP?

Apprenticeship, school, university study - the agony of choice. In the Austrian education system, many ways will lead to the same goal, and for every type of person there is a suitable offer.

Apprenticeship means that young people complete the main part of training directly in the company and spend only little time at school. In case of a **school-based education** they will spend (almost) the entire time at school.



Important for the choice “school or apprenticeship” are mainly the young people’s interests, abilities and personality.

Often however completely different factors play a more important part:

- the family tradition
- role models in the family or the circle of friends
- the education and training offer in the immediate vicinity of the place of residence and
- the general image of various training programmes

Try to block out these factors and think about the following questions:



Does your child prefer learning in the course of their daily professional work and do they want to use their abilities directly in practice? Then they will probably feel more at ease in an apprenticeship.



If they prefer acquiring their knowledge and skills more theoretically, thinking much about gathered experiences and using them in practice only later, then school-based education is more suited for your child.



For some 15-year-olds it will still be too early to commit themselves clearly to one training path. Both for you as parents and for the young people themselves it is important to accept this fact. Let changes in career choice or educational decision happen, even if this may mean that the training period takes two to three years longer.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP IN THE CAREER CHOICE?

Friends, teachers and media sometimes have a big influence on the educational and career choices of young people. But they still listen to the advice of their parents most.

This is a major responsibility for you as parents. On top of this your child will also be in puberty when the time comes to choose a future career or educational path. Mood swings, acts of defiance, aggression etc. are part of everyday life and require a lot of patience and empathy.



Parents should be aware that this development, with all the crises it involves, takes up a lot of mental energy. This may lead to temporary fluctuations in performance. Sometimes here it is helpful to ease the educational burden on young people, for example by choosing an apprenticeship which focuses on practical activities or by repeating a school year. Constantly overburdening young people should be avoided because this will discourage them and make them much unhappier.

Self-discovery (who am I?) is the most important stage of development which young people have to face in the process of becoming adults. Their profession forms an important part of their identity as an adult. The choice of profession is therefore of vital importance as part of the process of self-discovery.

Here are a few tips to help you provide support in educational and career choices:

Take career aspirations seriously

Even if young people often have very strange ideas about their future career, you should still take these seriously. But also talk about other options in case it does not work out with their dream job.

Play an important role when the career choice is being made

The economic developments in recent years have made it harder and harder to find suitable apprenticeship positions. And of course young people who receive several rejections when looking for an apprenticeship also become insecure. Support your child by providing motivation and comfort, as a confidant or simply as a companion.

Make the most of publicly-available offers

To help them have a successful start to their careers, pupils are supported by their school, teachers and public counselling offices. Ask your child's teachers about planned activities and events.

✔ **Tell your child about your own work**

Tell your son/daughter about your work. Give an insight into what you do and the rules at your work. Talk about your usual everyday working life. Do not only talk about the annoying, tedious things, talk about what you like about your work. Try to make your son/daughter curious about the world of work.

✔ **Tell your child about your own career choice**

What was your motivation for your choice of career? Which pressures did you face at the time? What different professions have you already worked in?

✔ **Make it easier to start working life**

Let your son/daughter take part in the practical professional training days/weeks at the lower secondary school or prevocational school. Maybe you also have the opportunity to take your child to your place of work. Nothing can replace own experience.

✔ **Encourage independence**

A lot of independence is usually required during vocational training. Encourage young people to be independent by giving them responsibility for certain tasks in the family at an early stage.

✔ **Do not value some professions more highly than others**

There are no “good” and “bad” professions, only people who are “well” or “badly” suited for professions or for whom the activities involved in the job seem positive or negative in a particular situation.

✔ **Start early enough**

Choosing a career needs time. Career education begins in the 7th grade. From this time you should already start talking about further types of training and later professions.

✔ **Make sure your child has a good start to his/her professional life**

If someone does something which is fun, the first successes will also soon arrive and self-confidence will grow.



When a career is being chosen it is also important to be consistent and to set boundaries. At the same time your child needs a lot of patience and understanding in this period of change. Even if your child would never admit it, right now he/she needs your love and support and for you to serve as an example.

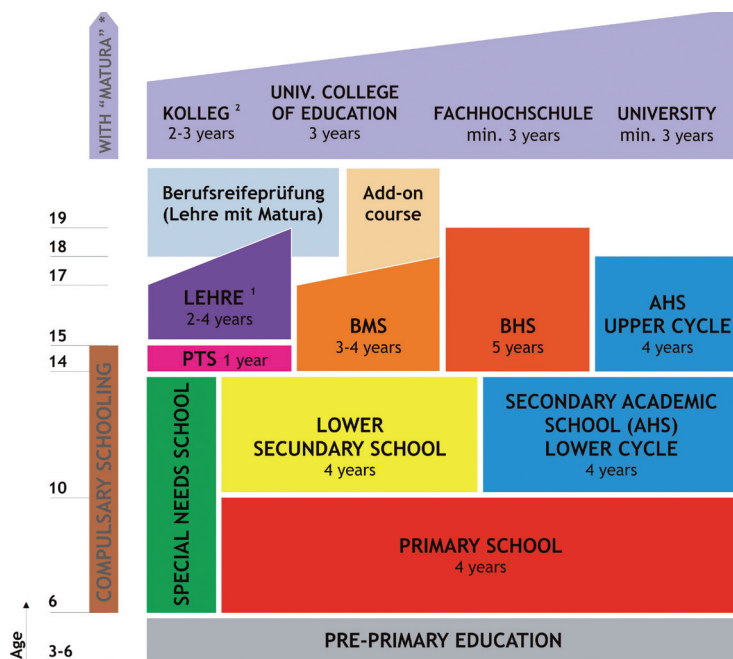
THE AUSTRIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

In Austria, compulsory schooling lasts for **nine years**. It usually starts at the age of 6 and finishes at 15. Pre-primary education can be started with the child's 3rd birthday; by the autumn of 2010, all children are required to complete **one year** at nursery school before school entry.

- ☑ Primary school: lasts four years, usually between the ages 6 and 10
- ☑ Lower secondary school or the lower cycle of secondary academic school: lasts four years, usually between the ages 10 and 14
- ☑ Special school (lasts eight or nine years)

The **ninth year of schooling** can be completed:

- ⇒ at prevocational school
- ⇒ in the first grade of a VET school or VET college
- ⇒ in the fifth grade of secondary academic school



* or Berufsreifeprüfung or Studienberechtigungsprüfung³

¹ Lehre = Apprenticeship training; ² Kolleg = Postsecondary VET course;

³ Matura (=Reifeprüfung) is the upper secondary school leaving examination; Berufsreifeprüfung is similar to Matura; Studienberechtigungsprüfung = Higher education entrance examination

APPRENTICESHIP - VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Apprenticeship training comprises: learning in practice on the job and at part-time vocational school. An average of 40% of school leavers each year opt for an apprenticeship. This makes apprenticeship training the most important form of vocational training in Austria. Currently there are some 260 apprenticeship occupations in Austria.

The precondition for taking up an apprenticeship is **fulfilment of general compulsory schooling** (that is: completion of nine school years). But to actually find an apprenticeship place, it is very important that compulsory schooling is also **completed with good grades**. The training duration (**apprenticeship period**) is **2 to 4 years**. Most training paths last 3 years.

DUAL TRAINING

Apprenticeship training is also termed dual training, because it takes place at two places of learning. Practical training at the company is complemented by training at part-time vocational school.

Apprenticeship training = the dual training system

Company-based training

- special occupational skills and abilities
- special occupational knowledge



Education at part-time vocational school

- provision of basic subject-related knowledge
- supplementing company-based training
- supplementing general education

COMPANY

- learning the latest state-of-the-art techniques by doing
- exercising a qualified activity immediately after apprenticeship training
- learning while doing productive work
- learning jointly with others

PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

- promoting and supplementing company-based training by specialist job-specific instruction
- providing in-depth general education (German, mathematics, etc.)
- subject-oriented foreign language instruction (English)



Part-time vocational school is either attended throughout the year (once or twice a week) or in course-form (for eight to twelve weeks in one block). The remainder of the time the apprentice will learn and work at the company.

Part-time vocational schools for apprenticeships with many apprentices (such as office assistant or baker) have been set up in every province. For apprenticeships with a small number of apprentices there are also only few vocational schools across Austria (sometimes just one). Most of them offer **boarding school facilities** for vocational school students from other regions.

WHY LEARN AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- ☑ An apprenticeship diploma gives young people good possibilities of advancement and professional development.
- ☑ They already earn their own money during training.
- ☑ They can immediately put their acquired knowledge into practice.
- ☑ They obtain full vocational training.
- ☑ They can acquire the upper secondary school-leaving certificate at the same time (Berufsreifeprüfung: “Apprenticeship and Matura” scheme).



SUCCESSFUL CAREER WITH THE APPRENTICESHIP DIPLOMA

After they have completed their apprenticeship, young people have many options for continuing training, giving them advancement and development opportunities such as:

- additional apprenticeship-leave exam in a related apprenticeship
- exam for **industrial master**
- **master craftsperson examination**
- self-employment (see chapter “Self-employment - I will be my own boss”)
- **Studienberechtigungsprüfung** or **Berufsreifeprüfung** (“Apprenticeship and Matura”) to take up a study course at university or Fachhochschule

Some **40% of all executives** in the Austrian economy (entrepreneurs and CEOs) have completed an apprenticeship.



APPLYING FOR A JOB MEANS: PROMOTING ONESELF

Job applications mostly go through several stages.



The following questions are often asked in job interviews:

- Why did you opt for this job?
- Why are you applying to this company of all companies?
- What interests and abilities do you already have for your dream job?

The earlier your child thinks about appropriate answers to these questions, the better he/she will be able to present himself/herself at companies. → **And this will increase the opportunities of finding a workplace or training place!**



The following is important when applying for an apprenticeship place: Training usually starts in September, but many companies fill their apprenticeship places as early as the January / February before that. Therefore your child should already start looking for an apprenticeship post and apply for it in the autumn of his/her last school year.

Here are some important tips your child should remember for applications and job interviews:

- ☑ Applications and CVs should be written **on a computer** (using a simple font, e.g. Arial) and on **white paper**. Much importance is attached to **spelling** and **neatness** of documents.
- ☑ **Photos:** They should use colour passport photos taken by a photographer (not from an automatic photo machine, no holiday photos).

- ☑ Please note: **CV and application documents should never be sent as a copy**, make sure your child writes new ones for each application.
- ☑ **But certificates should only be sent as a copy**, never the originals.
- ☑ Always check if the date and personal details in the letter of application and the CV match and both are signed.
- ☑ In applications for a training position, information on parents and brothers and sisters are commonly found. **Parents are also important points of contact for the companies**. These details are no longer necessary if your child is applying to a company after completing training.
- ☑ Your child should make sure he/she knows as much as possible about the company, e.g. by looking on the internet.
- ☑ Your child should look before to check where the company is located (in which street), and how you get there. **Punctuality** is a must, ideally he/she should be there ten minutes before the actual meeting. Nothing is worse than going into an interview exhausted.
- ☑ Your child should always take all application documents to the job interview.
- ☑ Nice, **clean clothes** are important. But they should also be comfortable and be suitable for your child and the occasion. Whether your child wears a suit or clean jeans and a shirt or blouse depends entirely on which job he/she is applying for.
- ☑ In the job interview, your child should sit upright and look in a friendly way into the interviewer's eyes. By nodding, for example, your child shows the interviewer that he/she is listening attentively.
- ☑ Your child should let the interviewer finish speaking and then try to explain things about himself/herself **as objectively as possible without being inhibited**. To always answer just with a short yes or no is no better than talking endlessly.
- ☑ If there is something he/she does not understand at any time during the interview your child should also always ask questions: this will show his interest and curiosity.
- ☑ Should your son/daughter receive **many rejections**, it is important he/she does not give up. Think together about what the reason for the rejections could be. Check the application documents again for mistakes. Your child can also ask companies why he/she has received a rejection.



ADDRESSES & LINKS

COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS - SELECTION:

☑ Vienna

Beratungszentrum für Migranten und Migrantinnen
(Counselling Centre for Migrants) ⇒ www.migrant.at

☑ Lower Austria

Horizont - Beratungsstelle für Migrantinnen und Migranten
(Horizon - Counselling Centre for Migrants) ⇒ www.horizont-noe.at

☑ Upper Austria

Zentrum für MigrantInnen Oberösterreich
(MIGRARE - Upper Austrian Centre for Migrants) ⇒ www.migrare.at

☑ Salzburg

Verein zur Beratung und Betreuung von Ausländern in Salzburg (VEBBAS)
(VEBBAS - Association for Counselling and Assistance for Foreigners in Salzburg)
⇒ www.vebbas.at

☑ Tyrol

Zentrum für MigrantInnen in Tirol (ZEMIT)
(ZEMIT - Centre for Migrants in Tyrol) ⇒ www.zemit.at

☑ Vorarlberg

Okay. zusammen leben (okay. living together) ⇒ www.okay-line.at

☑ Carinthia

IAM - Institut für Arbeitsmigration Beratung für Ausländerinnen und Ausländer
(IAM - Institute for Labour Migration Counselling for foreigners) ⇒ www.iam.co.at

☑ Styria

Zentrum zur sozialmedizinischen, rechtlichen und kulturellen Betreuung von Ausländern und Ausländerinnen in Österreich (ZEBRA - Centre for Sociomedical, Legal and Cultural Assistance for Foreigners in Austria) ⇒ www.zebra.or.at



EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING AND CAREER GUIDANCE INSTITUTES OF THE AUSTRIAN ECONOMIC CHAMBERS AND INSTITUTES FOR ECONOMIC PROMOTION (WIFIS):

Information, Job, Career - educational counselling	Robert Graf-Platz 1 7000 Eisenstadt	T: 05 90 907 - 5140 E: waltraud.paulesich@wkbgltd.at W: www.bgld.wifi.at
BIWI (Careers Guidance Centre of the Vienna Economy)	Währinger Gürtel 97 A-1180 Vienna	T: (01) 514 50 - 6518 E: mailbox@biwi.at W: www.biwi.at
Educational counselling for career & enterprises of WIFI Vienna	Währinger Gürtel 97 A-1180 Vienna	T: (01) 476 77 - 5361 E: bildungsberatung@wifwien.at W: www.wifwien.at/bildungsberatung
WIFI Lower Austria Career Guidance Centres	Rödlgasse 1 3100 St. Pölten	T: (02742) 890 - 2702 E: biz@noe.wifi.at W: www.wifi-biz.at
Career guidance of the Economic Chamber Upper Austria	Wiener Straße 150 4021 Linz	T: 05 90 909 - 4052 E: karriere@wkooe.at W: wko.at/ooe/karriere
WIFI Styria	Körblergasse 111 - 113 8010 Graz	T: (0316) 601 - 492 E: david.schuetze@wifi.wkstmk.at W: www.stmk.wifi.at
Vocational training of the Economic Chamber Carinthia	Koschutastraße 3 9020 Klagenfurt	T: 05 90 904 - 850 E: lehrlingsstelle@wkk.or.at W: wko.at/ktn/lehrlingsstelle
AHA! - Educational Counselling of the Economic Chamber Salzburg	Julius-Raab-Platz 4 5027 Salzburg	T: (0662) 8888 - 276 E: aha@wks.at W: www.aha-bildungsberatung.at
Career guidance and educational counselling of WIFI Tyrol	Egger-Lienz-Straße 116 6020 Innsbruck	T: 05 90 90 5 - 7291 E: sabine.kofler@wktiro1.at W: www.tirol.wifi.at/bildungsberatung
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