

HdBA
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Worksheet "O3-5-1 Access and Inclusion"

Key questions:

1. Which action perspectives are required for integration and inclusion?
2. What should be considered when determining costs and revenues for refugee migration integration measures?

Fifteen years on average - for integration

Based on past experience with immigration in Germany, a total of about 15 years is expected before a comparable labour force participation can be achieved among the refugees as on average for the rest of the population; catching up on incomes will, according to these estimates, take even longer.

(By the end of 2016, according to the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), only 30,000 refugees have been fully integrated into the labour market - mainly in low-threshold, low-skilled helper jobs, temporary employment, cleaning, warehousing and logistics, and hotel and restaurant services.)

Significant improvements were achieved in the legal framework through the recently passed integration laws. For example, the time limit for access to work after granting asylum status has been reduced from the previous six to now three months. At the same time, the priority examination for filling vacancies was abandoned in 133 out of 156 employment agencies (with the exception of the congested urban centres of Bayern and in the Ruhr area), which significantly speeds up the placement process. In addition, legal certainty has been created for the two-year employment, regardless of the respective status of the asylum approval procedure. The latter is particularly important in order to reduce the resistance to the inclusion of young refugees in internships, training and/or work, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Nevertheless, a central problem remains for hundreds of thousands of refugees. They enjoy low or no protection status, incomplete asylum procedures, can not be returned to their home countries, and yet are not allowed to participate in language- and integration activities, work or training. In this way, considerable potential for occupational integration remains unused, which adds to the de-motivation and exclusion of the affected, mostly young people.

It depends on language skills

The decisive prerequisite for the vocational integration of the refugees remains, the overcoming of the language barriers. When the (mass) immigration started, the supply of language courses was completely inadequate. In the meantime, it has been considerably expanded so that nearly 300,000 people attend these courses. Here, most strongly represented are the refugees with the highest protection status, i.e. Syria, Iraq and Eritrea. The starting point for the educational and employment resumes is the evaluation of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees. Thereafter, the educational requirements of the refugees vary greatly depending on the country of origin. There is also considerable polarisation in

general education, on the one hand with a relatively high proportion of secondary education compared to the Federal Republic of Germany, and on the other hand with a large proportion who are lacking education or only completed elementary school. Overall, only a few of the refugees have a practical or other vocational training, among other reasons, because there is hardly any comparable occupational training in the countries of origin. About 73 percent of the surveyed refugees of working age said they had already gained professional experience in their home countries, but in the vast majority of cases, without formal qualifications. Accordingly, they are mainly employed in Germany in helper type jobs.¹

Promotion of Networks

The German Federal Employment Agency (BA) has now developed, in collaboration with the employers and unions, a wealth of new pre-employment measures for different groups of refugees according to their recognisable qualifications and other characteristics. They are constantly developed and modified, based on practical experience. However, the decisive factor is the willingness of the employers to actually give refugees the chance to prove their qualifications in the company's "real operation" (see the relevant text by Mr Weber).

Here, not only is the networking of the BA (employment agencies and Job Centres) - with the social/collective bargaining parties, employers and trade unions and their associations - indispensable, but so is the networking with educational institutions, social and charitable organizations, churches, refugee organizations, municipalities (and other levels and institutions representing policies).

There is one central problem that could become a political explosive and must be given special attention: the growing competition for low-skilled jobs. For years, the number of (above-average) long-term unemployment for hard-to-place people in the Federal Republic of Germany has been lingering around one million people. This applies above all to older people, with health restrictions or disabilities, but also many single parents, low-skilled youth and migrants.

Just recently, an opinion of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation came to an alarming conclusion: Already now there is a considerable shortage of jobs for which, neither a vocational qualification nor linguistic ability to interact, is required. This competition in the labor market is further exacerbated by the increasing number of job seeking refugees with little or no professional qualifications.

The willingness to accept their vocational training as a necessary investment in their professional and social future, as well as an investment in social peace in Germany, must therefore be encouraged, especially among young refugees. Likewise, any form of wage and social dumping in the occupational integration of refugees should be prevented, e.g. the evasion of the legal minimum wage or the social insurance obligation should be prevented, in the Federal Republic of Germany. This would only exacerbate the already existing resentment and aggression against refugees.

¹ IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Interviews with Refugees. Overview and First Results, IAB Research Report 14/2016.