

# Refugees: A challenge for adult education

Matthias Klingenberg/Sascha Rex (Editors)

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DVV International  
Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des  
Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes e. V.  
Obere Wilhelmstraße 32, 53225 Bonn, Germany  
Tel.: +49 (0)228 97569-0 / Fax: +49 (0)228 97569-55  
info@dvv-international.de / www.dvv-international.de

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**Responsible:** Christoph Jost

**Editors:** Matthias Klingenberg / Sascha Rex

**Managing Editor:** Gisela Waschek

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**IPE**  
International Perspectives  
in Adult Education

# Refugees: A challenge for adult education

Matthias Klingenberg / Sascha Rex (Editors)



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# People seeking refuge: A challenge for adult education

Volkshochschule (VHS)<sup>1</sup>: Integration for all!

Long queues on registration day for a VHS had become a rarity by 2015. Such an onslaught on the educational programme was unfamiliar and worthwhile of attention from many media outlets. And that is how, in the summer of last year, the current situation of community further education centres landed in the focus of public interest.

In the meantime, so many people had sought refuge in Germany that not only the registration offices but also the educational institutions arrived at the limits of their capacities. VHS language and integration courses were swiftly booked out, professional course instructors and suitable rooms in the communities became scarce. In this situation, the VHS associations got active and proclaimed loudly and clearly to the leaders in politics and administration as well as to Germany: “We can do it!” This was the core message of a concept paper in which the VHS demanded a comprehensive educational campaign for refugees and German society in autumn 2015. Together, the national associations of the VHS and the Federal Office of the German Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV) formulated guidelines for effective education management in order to adequately counter the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees. “Important success factors for integration are local and time-sensitive orientation and education offers,” said the position paper.

As community centres for intercultural learning and as the largest provider of German language and integration courses, the VHS were the obvious choice as strong local partners. The concept, which was published in time for the refugee summit of the Federal Republic, the states and local authorities, simultaneously set out the financial support needed for the VHS in order for it to be able to fulfil the role of an engine for integration. The situation also revealed both strengths and weaknesses. The

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<sup>1/</sup> The “Volkshochschule” is an adult education centre and is also known in Germany as the VHS.

social commitment of the VHS is strong and unbroken. They stand for a holistic understanding of education, which people from any origin deserve. And they see immigration as an opportunity. “Germany can benefit greatly from early integration measures because they can contribute to tackling the deficit of skilled workers and achieving a balanced demographic development and strengthening of social systems,” says the preamble of the much-debated concept. Despite a number of initiatives at the private, communal, or rural level, the reports from the situation of the VHS at the time had shown: A uniform and nationwide concept – an educational offensive – had to be developed and implemented.

On the basis of their long-standing expertise for integrative education measures, the VHS bring, in the current situation, a variety of offers which are being financed by the many initiatives and programmes recently launched by the federal, state and community governments. As an initial language orientation measure, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has made nearly 20 million euros per year available for the DVV project “Einstieg Deutsch” (Entry-level German). Professional course instructors as well as qualified volunteer language sponsors



*Learning opportunity: Einstieg Deutsch (Entry-Level German) at VHS Recklinghausen*

*Source: Nola Bunke*



support refugees in Germany during their first encounters with the German language. The world of digital learning is also being expanded by the VHS through the learning portal “ich-will-deutsch-lernen.de” as well as the learning app “Einstieg Deutsch”. Within the framework of “Project Reconnect” from the NGO consortium “NetHope”, non-profit organisations like as the VHS have been provided with Chromebooks free of charge in order to enable refugees to get access to information and education facilities. Thanks to the generous donation to Einstieg Deutsch these can be used for learning together as well as for deepening learning.

## **DVV International: Education in conflict regions**

The educational offerings of the VHS are, of course, anchored in the community, but at the same time, for decades, they have been aware of their global responsibility. That is why they wanted to make the experiences of the unique network of publicly responsible and locally administered training institutions known in other regions of the world. In 1969, the Centre for Adult Education in Developing Countries was established, and in 1993 it was renamed the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV).

At the same time, the local institutions also benefit from the international work of the association, since DVV International has been active for a number of years in the countries around Syria that accept refugees, but active with education partners in the Maghreb as well.

Just like the VHS in Germany, educational centres in Jordan are also dedicated to the task of further education for refugees and promoting integration. Three main topics are focused upon: psychosocial support, conflict prevention, and vocational training. After fleeing and traumatic experiences, education programmes and centres provide women in particular with space for communication and a sense of community, not only among themselves, but also with women from the Jordanian host community. This creates support networks that facilitate their arrival in the new culture. Major challenges for Jordan are the scarcity of resources and a worrying labour market situation. 30 percent of Jordanians live below the poverty line. The influx of some 1,000,000 Syrians (about 10 percent of the Jordanian population) leads to a shortage of water, rising food prices and, above all, increased rent prices. Some schools teach in two shifts, doctors and hospitals are overcrowded. Even though Jordan has generously taken in refugees, conflicts frequently arise in areas of overcrowding. The educational programmes in the centres foster mutual understanding. The learning of conflict-preventive communication techniques also extends

beyond the participants into families and communities. After five years of conflict, it's clear to everyone: Syrians will not have the opportunity to return to their homeland in the near future. They must be given the opportunity to integrate into the labour market. Their potential must be made useful for Jordanian society. DVV International and its local partners contribute to this through vocational training for Syrian and Jordanian women. All education measures are aimed at both Syrian and Jordanian women. Integration is a common task that neither refugees nor host communities can master on their own.

Currently, according to Turkish figures, there are 2,733,850 registered Syrian refugees in Turkey (as of 23 June 2016)<sup>2</sup>. According to Human Rights Watch, the number of Syrian refugees is as high as 2.75 million, so Turkey has taken up more Syrian refugees than the entire EU and the rest of the world.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Turkey, not Germany, is currently the country where most of the refugees in the world live (as of 18 January 2016)<sup>4</sup>.

In Turkey, DVV International has been cooperating with the Turkish non-governmental organisation Yuva since 2013 for the refugees who have come mainly from Syria, and is currently supporting two educational and meeting centres, one in Kirikhan (near Antakya) and a second in Nizip (near Gaziantep). Both are in close proximity to battlefields. As in Jordan, the courses offered address both refugees and locals, which is particularly important given the ever-recurring tensions between the groups. The course offer is aimed at the needs of the participants, which are constantly being renewed, but in any case includes the following basic areas: vocational and job-oriented offers, social partnership measures, training for key qualifications, language courses, as well as local community strengthening offers like low-threshold trauma work programmes, consultations on hygiene and health and intercultural exchange.

On arrival of the first Syrian refugees in Turkey in the summer of 2011, they were given the status of "invited guests". In the meantime, the Turkish government has also had to acknowledge that a quick return of the refugees was not going to happen due to the ever-worsening situation in Syria itself. Since the beginning of 2016, the government also speaks of integration and a gradual naturalisation of the new arrivals. In this context, DVV International, together with its partners in the Turkish Ministry of Education, supports the internal-social discussion process on migration, integration

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2/ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224> (11.07.2016).

3/ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/20/un-press-turkey-open-border> (11.07.2016).

4/ <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2016/1/569ca19c6/high-commissioner-welcomes-turkish-work-permits-syrian-refugees.html> (11.07.2016).

and immigration. In this area, the extensive experience Germany has had can be successfully introduced.

### **Use shared experiences together**

The experience gathered in Jordan and Turkey with regard to learning habits, the local education system and much more can be made use of through targeted exchange for work in Germany. At the same time, the VHS are convinced that their education offers are beneficial for all those who have fled to Germany, irrespective of their permanency of residence. Well-trained returnees from Germany can promote sustainable development in their countries of origin.

A sole focus on language and vocational integration doesn't go far enough for the VHS and its associations. A far-reaching integration of people coming to Germany, who will remain for many years or permanently, is only possible with comprehensive general education which encompasses



*Work with syrian refugees*

*Source: DVV International*

cultural and socio-political aspects. Adult education centres are therefore places of encounter between the newly arrived and people already living there. At the same time, many institutions have already begun to launch communal discussion processes on the future of a society with immigrants. Socio-political education and the coordination and training of committed volunteer sponsors are – in addition to suitable educational programmes to enable young adult refugees to get their school-leaving qualifications remedially – part of the great challenge faced by the VHS.

The outstanding commitment of the colleagues at the VHS, as well as the course instructors, in respect of so many refugees, inspired the new DVV President Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, in the fall of 2015, to record a videotaped message dedicated to the topic. In addition to a personal thank you, she emphasised: “The greatest asset we have in the VHS is the commitment of the personnel!” Only together is it possible to cope with the greatest challenge in decades.

In this volume we try to present the national and international educational work of the VHS and its international institute on the basis of individual examples, in the context of those seeking refuge and those driven out. This is done simply by dividing the broad topic into individual aspects of educational work. For each of these individual aspects we have selected an example that examines the out-of-school youth and adult education. This volume is therefore not a complete presentation of the work done with and for people seeking refuge, but it allows for an overview of the various facets of the current challenges.

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**Matthias Klingenberg** (DVV International)

**Sascha Rex** (Bundesgeschäftsstelle des DVV – DVV Federal Office)

November 2016



## The importance of training and voluntary work during emergencies

*DVV international's experience has shown that volunteering and voluntary initiatives are of high cultural, humanitarian and social value, and should be further enhanced in developing countries. It has also shown that participatory based adult education interventions can be an effective tool in development and during emergencies. Moreover, ongoing coaching is a key element in the process of capacity building for CBOs and volunteers, as it allows the local community, local partners and target groups to take part in planning, designing and determining the implementation tools, and also to deepening the concepts of ownership and sustainability for everyone. The main challenge lies in the method of enhancing voluntary initiatives and bringing them to the level of actual institutional implementation. Best practice example is the RECOVER project implemented by DVV International.*

## Development and social interaction

For the purpose of contributing to the social development process, Jordan seeks to enhance the role of voluntary sectors to achieve social participation. The Jordanian Law on Societies 2008<sup>1</sup> (the first societies law was published in 1966), whereby community based and civil society organisations are registered, governs all activities carried out by such organisations and is considered the main reference for them, besides overseeing the relationship between voluntary organisations and government institutions.

The Jordanian government's goal is to make voluntary work a cornerstone of development, and to give it the ability to deliver quality services for society. Now the question is: In practice, how congruent and effective is the work of voluntary organisations?

According to the 2014 annual report by the Ministry of Social Development, which is considered the official umbrella for the voluntary sector, 4474 voluntary organisations were registered in Jordan by the end of 2014. If the average number of members for each organisation is 30 members, then the total average number of members in the voluntary sector as a whole is around 134,220 members. By contrast, the same report indicates that only 550 organisations are committed to delivering their annual reports; this shows that 13% of the sector is active in social development and responds to the needs of local communities. As a result, 87% of voluntary organisations may be in need of capacity building and rehabilitation processes to be able to interact and respond to the needs of the local community, which requires great resources and efforts. In spite of this reality, it is acceptable to say that these days, volunteering in Jordan has developed to a certain extent; it is taking various forms depending on goals and objectives, moving towards actual institutionalisation, developing a work methodology that incorporates delivering aid and social empowerment, to active participation and self-reliance. All previously mentioned points can be viewed as major improvements in voluntary work, increasing its effectiveness for the purpose of achieving development, and largely contributing to its ability for dealing with socio-economic challenges. All this is on various levels in tune with adult education plans, which aim at achieving education and socio-economic empowerment through social interaction and participation.

The state of instability and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East present one of the most important challenges Jordan is facing, especially with

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1/ <http://www.icnl.org/news/2009/09-16.html>



*Beneficiary working on a straw basket*

*Source: Jawad al Gousous*

regard to refugees who fled to Jordan in large numbers from neighbouring countries. The Syrian crisis alone has pushed over one million refugees to Jordan, of which 650,000 still live in Jordan<sup>2</sup>, this increased the importance of the role played by the voluntary sector in mitigating not only the hardships that refugees go through, but also the state of suffering experienced by host communities.

This underlines the significance of steadily working on the development and training of the voluntary sector, to keep it up with the latest best practices, whether on the level of administration or that of deliverable programmes and services, and also to maintain high levels of competence, awareness, and reaction to challenges. Thus, both volunteering and social initiatives form a vital gateway for interaction during states of crisis and emergency.

DVV International Jordan has based its programmes and interventions on those visions and perspectives, where the goal of CBO (community-based organisation) training and capacity building is to improve the

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<sup>2/</sup> Jordan Department of Statistics, February 2016, population and housing census main results, 2015.



responsiveness to the type of challenges encountered by development and social interaction, including those challenges caused by crises and emergencies.

### **Capacity building: The RECOVER Project**

The RECOVER project (Adult education centres in Refugee Hot Spots) implemented by DVV International Jordan, was accurately designed and based on the knowledge that it is not possible to plan intervention and actual change before deeply understanding the complications and changes refugees and host communities go through. The project's first step was to perform research using the participatory rapid appraisal approach, as it is a way of learning from and with the community, and one of the best practices for community based planning to determine the right interventions in general and as well during crises and emergencies. This is qualitative research that seeks to understand the complex relationships between environment, economy, culture and politics in target communities, observe the many aspects of social life in all its shapes and complexities, treat it as a complete lifestyle, and understand how the components of this lifestyle are affected by one another.

During emergencies, many questions come to the minds of service providers, including those who design adult education programmes, such as: Who is the target community? What are their characteristics? What are the complications, needs and priorities? How do they think? What are they suffering from? How do they perceive their reality and plan for their future? It is in fact an intricate and complex process, where service providers cannot design and implement their programmes without proper planning and a deep understanding of these complexities. This research attempts to put forth a realistic image that answers most of these questions.

Within this framework, two governorates impacted by the Syrian crisis were selected for commencing the project, out of the twelve Jordanian governorates, with one CBO in each to build their capacity as active local partners (a third governorate got selected at a later stage of the project).

Overall, DVV International's experience proved that the participatory rapid appraisal approach is a suitable tool for identification of needs and priorities as an introduction to planning and designing programmes during emergencies, especially in the field of adult education; it is also a pathway towards institutional capacity building for local partners.

Based on the research, two points necessary in order to build the capacity of CBOs have been determined. The first point is concerned with

Despite the initial training, I did not know in the beginning how I was supposed to act in front of the other ladies, but once each one of them started telling her story, I noticed a huge interaction between participants. I saw how important it was to continue listening to each other. This was an excellent step, because I discovered that each participant has a desperate need for someone to hear her out... Each one of us has her story... **Dalal, Syrian Facilitator**

infrastructure and administrative skills, the second point is concerned with training volunteers as competent facilitators.

It is evident that the training focused on the most important principles of volunteering, mobilisation and social work skills, which are: planning, designing and following up on educational programmes, the personal understanding of roles as motives for creating change, tasks and responsibilities, communication skills, active and empathic listening skills, creating a supportive educational environment, coaching skills, and other topics related to the nature of social conflicts over resources, the different types of managing those impacted by conflicts in terms of planning educational meetings and developing working units for different fields, cooperative popular education, group dynamics, and planning and building social initiatives.

According to the results of the training evaluation, the sessions achieved excellent results on the level of knowledge, skills and orientation, in relation to communication skills, facilitation and working in groups. Also, volunteers have formed a deeper understanding of themselves, their identity and of each other as well. They also became capable of performing and applying all the coaching and educational tasks in different educational and coaching sessions. Furthermore, the volunteers developed more knowledge and skills on topics like the different ways of managing conflicts. Therefore by following this approach, institutional capacity building has formed a practical foundation for CBOs to become active incubators for adult education.

### **Needs of refugees and host communities**

Proper training and preparation build the foundation of success for any project and, accordingly, the training activities of adult education during emergencies were based upon two key factors: The **first** factor was related to the participatory rapid appraisal approach results, by selecting topics that conform to the needs of the target groups. The **second** was by



*Training workshop on participatory learning approaches*

*Source: Jawad al Gousous*

engaging volunteers from Syrian refugees and host communities to work together. As for the direct management and supervision of activities, it has been left for partner CBOs to accomplish. The same goes for the shortlisting and selection of volunteers who wish to work as field coordinators and facilitators for educational sessions; volunteers first go through a personal interview and they are later selected depending on their qualifications that match the project standards, and finally, they sign a volunteer placement contract. This approach granted CBOs enough space to work, learn and gain the required knowledge and experience for the development field; it also reinforced the concepts of ownership and sustainability. These are all considered among the best practices in the institutionalisation of volunteering, and respond well to the needs of partner CBOs, refugees and host communities. A multi-level training programme in line with the project implementation process was designed for the purpose of developing the skills of the volunteers who would work as facilitators. First, a training session had been delivered on the basic concepts of participatory education, social work and the use of dialogue as a means to learning, identifying reality and problem solving. This was important as an introduction to break any barriers between Jordanian and Syrian volunteers, as it was clear that high levels of stress were present between both groups at the beginning of the sessions.

I managed to learn some handicraft skills from the project and later started selling products, then the demand for these products increased, especially for the herbal soap, so I asked for the assistance of four of my Syrian colleagues to work with me, as they are not allowed to obtain a work permit. We have all benefited from this...

**Maryam, Jordanian participant**

In the second stage and after the commencement of the sessions, the need to acquire more knowledge and skills was raised within the group. The second and third stages of training were designed for that reason and by the same token. This training and coaching process raised the levels of work achievement, especially by its contribution to accomplishing the project goals.

The approach used in the implementation of educational sessions bases itself on the REFLECT<sup>3</sup> methodology, in which participants deter-

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3/ A radical new approach to adult literacy and empowerment, which seeks to build on the theoretical framework developed by the Brazilian Paulo Freire, but provides a practical methodology by drawing on Participatory Rapid Appraisal techniques.

mine the topics they would like to discuss according to their priorities, for the purpose of forming a basic learning curriculum that would consequently allow them the opportunity to talk about their reality and share their problems and experiences. All the way through the project, it has been established that giving participants the opportunity to share their stories and listen to those being told by others turned the struggle and competition into a new state of understanding between Jordanians and Syrians, and by the enrichment of dialogue, they shifted towards a state of cooperation.

Four components are used in the implementation of educational sessions: The **first** component is linked to the building and development of partner CBOs capacity, development of volunteer skills, and raising the levels of awareness and positive thinking, all for the purpose of enhancing our local partners' knowledge about social protection, and to build a foundation in the local community to perform educational activities and self-designed social initiatives. The **second** component is linked to orientation as an approach for understanding challenges and dealing with new realities, through the mobilisation and registration of beneficiaries in the form of groups (25 beneficiaries in each group) and engaging them in 6 orientation sessions for a period of two weeks, 4 sessions of which are upon joining the project. These sessions aim at mitigating stress, raising awareness of reality, encouraging harmony and cooperation, accepting others and determining needs and priorities, followed by two more orientation sessions at the end of the project, to help them visualise and contemplate their choices and plan for their future. The **third** component incorporates three educational fields, where participants are allocated to one field according to the results of the orientation sessions; each educational field includes 16 other educational session in a period of 4 to 6 weeks. The three fields are: Literacy, handicrafts and household management, and public and family health awareness. As for the **fourth** and final component, it is linked to social initiatives, where participants work on organising self-designed, self-planned and independently implemented social initiatives, for the purpose of improving cooperation and quality of life.

It was not until the end of the first stage that I realised how good the facilitators were. At that moment, I was able to compare the state of both Syrians and Jordanians in terms of their ability to express themselves, having a constructive dialogue, enhanced self-confidence and their ability to manage their homes and families in a manner that is not lacking in creativity... All of this gave me a great sense of joy... **Maha, Jordanian facilitator**



*Project fair at the closing of the project*

*Source: Jawad al Gousous*

What distinguishes the project is that it carries out a series of activities with participants, gradually and in a period of one month, in order to meet as many expectations and priorities as possible, so that each participant benefits from a group of activities. Another factor that makes the project stand out is its networking with other service providers, so as not to exclude any other priorities that the participants may have, by referring anyone with a need not covered by the project to other service providers.

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## “Komm rein!<sup>1</sup>” – The first encounter with Germany: Everyday orientation, language and intercultural awareness-creation

*For many people who are seeking protection from war, torture and death, Germany is first and foremost a blank space on the map only bearing signs of hope as a vague goal. People often do not realise what they have let themselves in for until they arrive in this foreign country. As a rule, their stay commences in an initial reception facility. They wait there for days or weeks to be transferred to joint accommodation. The wait can take up to three months, or even longer. Refugees can put this time to good use. It is important that they start educating themselves as soon as they arrive in Germany. This prevents misunderstandings which otherwise arise from ignorance. The new arrivals can move around in public spaces correctly from the outset, learn the rules of behaviour in Germany, and receive important geographical information enabling them to realistically assess their future in Germany. Munich Adult Education Centre (MVHS) has worked together with the Office for Intercultural Work of the State Capital Munich on the “Komm rein!” pilot project in order to develop standards for appropriate educational activities. The project’s pilot phase lasted from March 2015 to March 2016. “Komm rein!” is implemented at the McGraw barracks initial reception facility in Munich. MVHS passes the experience that has been collected there on to other adult education centres and initial reception facilities.*

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1/ “Come in!”

## A flexible concept

The outcome of the pilot project is an educational concept for initial reception facilities enabling people to have their first encounter with the German language as soon as they arrive in Germany and imparting important geographical information. It furthermore promotes intercultural awareness creation among participants.

The concept from the projects is applied in the course book entitled **“Komm rein!”**, which was published in April 2016 by the Langenscheidt-Verlag in cooperation with Munich Adult Education Centre. The course book takes the conditions into account as they exist in the initial reception facility: The high level of fluctuation and the irregular attendance by the displaced persons means that it is not possible to establish traditional German courses in the initial reception facility. No progression is possible in the lessons. The lecturer needs to re-adjust to new attendees on a daily basis and repeatedly decide anew what contents he/she would like to impart.

The teacher can newly select, from the many topics contained in the course book, on a daily basis which of them they would like to discuss with the attendees. This includes greetings – both officially and among friends – as well as food and drink, telephone numbers and addresses, completing forms, money, opening times, mobility in town, housing, work, etc.

The role played by the instructor needs to be redefined for the educational activity: He or she becomes a guide, and not only imparts the first linguistic structures, but goes further into the individual topical areas by providing displaced persons with large quantities of geographical information. By comparing with the participants' home countries, the instructor initiates an intercultural dialogue helping the pupils to become aware of their new surroundings. All those involved meet here on an equal footing, given that it is taken into account that everyone contributes their own culture and their own values.

A great deal of space is allotted in the lessons to the culture of origin of those seeking refuge in Germany. Integration is a reciprocal process. Both sides are to develop an understanding for one another.

Were this principle not to be respected, a power imbalance would occur in the lessons: The “German side” would become all-powerful, and would make many attendees defensive: They would not be able to give an account of themselves, and would feel themselves to be misunderstood. It would be a shame to not use this exciting exchange. The primary goal of educational activities in the initial reception facilities is therefore to establish contacts, introduce individuals to the language and get to know





German teacher Gundhild Brössler in conversation with one participant in a course

Source: Martin Jost, MVHS

one another, acknowledge differences and naturally also become familiar with the values and standards which are important for achieving peaceful co-existence in Germany.

### **Experience gained from the practical work of the pilot project**

Those involved in the project collected essential experience for practice during the pilot phase of **"Komm rein!"**, that is the first year of the project.

It is particularly the regularity of the educational activities that is vital. Everyday life in an initial reception facility is characterised by a considerable amount of commotion. The educational activities must take place at fixed times on a daily basis. Sporadic activities make little sense: Refugees rarely read announcements and notices on the notice board. Staff should therefore rather draw their attention as soon as they arrive in the initial reception facility to the courses that are offered as a component of a fixed daily structure, and encourage them to attend them as often as possible.

A professional teacher should teach the educational activities in each initial reception facility. A daily schedule, from Monday to Friday is optimal, which would be divided into two daily sections: three periods in the morning and three more in the afternoon. The experience with “**Komm rein!**” has been that some attendees who have had traumatic displacement experiences are rarely able to concentrate for more than three lesson units. The teacher is able to decide anew every day on the basis of suggestions which topic he or she would like to discuss, and thus explore the needs of the respective participants on an individual basis.

Anyone who appears in good time and obtains a place can attend the educational activities. Anyone coming too late and finding a classroom which is already very full will be asked to come back in the afternoon or in the evening.

Another task of the professional teacher is to involve volunteers in the lessons. The “**Komm rein!**” course book is planned in such a way that volunteers can also engage in a valuable exchange with the refugees after lesson time.

The classroom must be understood as an open space for new encounters where volunteers can meet refugees. This sows the seed for peaceful co-existence in the new society. Many people from different countries of origin are enabled to come into contact and to get to know “the others”. It has proven to be valuable to regularly involve small groups of volunteers in the evening hours, from Monday to Friday. This guarantees that the classroom is also always “open” in the evenings. A sufficiently large number of committed volunteers can coordinate within the small groups and substitute for one another if one of them is unable to attend at some point.

Individual activities organised by volunteers make little sense, by comparison, since the information about the activities flows to the residents of an initial reception facility only slowly.

### **The transferability of the concept**

The “**Komm rein!**” concept can be easily transferred to other initial reception facilities. As has already been stated, its success is contingent on a full-time teacher taking responsibility for the educational activities on the spot and training the volunteers how to work with the “**Komm rein!**” course book, coordinating the lessons, being responsible for the materials and the equipment of the classroom and acting as a contact for the “**Komm rein!**” project. The experience to date suggests that a self-em-

ployed provider is unable to carry out this job because the organisational tasks which it involves are much too onerous.

The future of **“Komm rein!”** depends on funding on the ground. Meeting the basic needs by providing one full-time staffer per initial reception facility and roughly 30 volunteers who are deployed efficiently could launch the educational activities nationwide effectively and profitably.

### **Links (in German language)**

[www.langenscheidt.de/kommrein](http://www.langenscheidt.de/kommrein)

How to teach with “Komm rein!": <https://youtu.be/MDI-13P5H-4>

<https://www.mvhs.de/programm/aktuelle-angebote/projekt-komm-rein/>

Özlem Çolak

# Psychosocial support at community centres in Southeast Turkey

*The purpose of this article is to discuss and make a general assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the community centre model, which is one of the psychosocial support models provided for Syrian refugees living in Turkey, on the basis of experiences gained by Yuva in the community centres of Kırıkhan, Hatay and Nizip, Gaziantep.*

## Current situation in Turkey

In the 2010s, insurrections in Syria evolved into a civil war, which had neither been expected nor imagined. As with the other neighbours of Syria, Turkey did not presume that the number of people who were to be displaced and forced to take refuge in another country after the violence started in Syria would reach into the millions. Thus, having approached this issue with short-term and temporary solutions, Turkey had to develop a more systematical approach over time. In fact, with the increasing number and needs of Syrian refugees who were introduced to the public as “guests”, the legal status of the “Temporary Protection Regime” was put into effect.

Certainly, Turkey had not been faced with the issue of refugees for the first time in its history. Recognising the rights of refugees with the Geneva Convention of 1951, Turkey declared that it would, under a geographical restriction, give these rights within its own borders only to those who come from the European Council member countries. From that date to 2013, Turkey carried out the process through temporary governmental procedures without having any legal infrastructure for refugees, although it received a great deal of migration during conflicts and wars in both Europe and the Middle East<sup>1</sup>.

As mentioned above, due to geographical restrictions imposed for refugee status, Turkey played the role of a transit country, where those who come from outside the European Council make an official application for asylum and wait for third country placement (for those who are admitted as refugees). The procedure for asylum seekers during this period (which could take up to 4-5 years) involved placing those persons in satellite towns in Turkey<sup>2</sup>, registering them and ensuring they benefited from certain basic health services if they had already been registered. There was no regulation or service for other categories of rights and needs such as extensive health service, education, accommodation and employment<sup>3</sup>.

Except for the refugees who are subject to different regulations and rights for some political reasons, Turkey, using its status as a transit coun-

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1/ In 2013, Turkey put the “Law on Foreigners and International Protection” into effect. Turkish, English, French, German and Russian versions of the law are available on the following link: [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/6458-sayili-yabancilar-ve-uluslararasi-koruma-kanunu-yururluge-girdi\\_350\\_361\\_607\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/6458-sayili-yabancilar-ve-uluslararasi-koruma-kanunu-yururluge-girdi_350_361_607_icerik) (04.04.2016).

2/ The concept of Satellite Town is used for towns that refugees are sent to in order to be registered and tracked by Turkish authorities when refugees from different countries apply for international protection in Turkey via the UN Refugee Agency.

3/ Before the Syrian civil war, refugees in Turkey were mostly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.



*Youth Education Programme at Community Education Center*

*Source: Özlem Çolak*

try, did not develop an extensive protection system for refugees and left this field completely vulnerable to abuse. In this context, it is not incorrect to say that a relatively comprehensive approach against refugees in Turkey was adopted, at least for education, health, employment, etc., starting with Syrian refugees.

Similarly, it is possible to say that the services, which were provided for refugees in Turkey by a limited number of organisations under limited conditions, became more common and comprehensive as international humanitarian relief foundations stepped in and local and international non-governmental organisations operating in different fields put this issue on their agenda with the start of the Syrian civil war and the extraordinary influx of refugees that followed it<sup>4</sup>. A more systematic approach was adopted; however, it should be noted that the Temporary Protection Regime that Syrians are subject to is not a permanent and established situation and all these services and rights are provided under certain conditions.

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4/ Almost half of 139 non-governmental organisations registered in Turkey as of October 2015 consist of those who started their activities in Turkey with the outbreak of the Syrian crisis (2015, UNHCR).

The above brief information was provided in order to refer specifically to the context of Syrian refugees and build the main frame constituting that context when talking about community centre-based psychosocial support activities, which is the main subject of this article.

Current data show that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Turkey as of March 2016 is 2,715,789<sup>5</sup>. With this number, Turkey has the greatest number of refugees among the neighbours of Syria, as well as the highest percentage of refugees in the last century (2015, UNHCR). Although many cities in Turkey host Syrian refugees, according to the figures published by Migration Management, the first four cities with the most refugees are Şanlıurfa, İstanbul, Hatay and Gaziantep<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, aid operations carried out by governmental and non-governmental organisations focus mainly on the cities of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay.

Support activities held by governmental and non-governmental organisations can be put under six headings: Protection, Health, Education, Food, Basic Needs and Sources of Income. These supports can be both in the form of one-to-one service in the related field (for example, handing out food card, providing health service, etc.) and bring existing services to those in need of them.

The support activities for Syrians in Turkey for the last four years show that the most preferred means of response and support other than emergency responses are psychosocial support via community centres. One can also see that this is preferred not only in Turkey but also in Lebanon (2014, UNHCR).

Within this context, the community centres as a psychological support model will be looked at and a general assessment will be made using the examples of community centres in Kırıkhan, Hatay and Nizip, Gaziantep, run by Yuva, a local foundation providing services for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

## **Community centres and psychosocial support**

In recent years, the concept of psychosocial support has been particularly emphasised in the fields of humanitarian aid and crisis response. In all the support areas mentioned above (food, basic needs, education, etc.),

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5/ For the current number of registered Syrians in Turkey, see <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224> (04.04.2016).

6/ For current data, see [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713) (04.04.2016).

international policies have been established to implement the model of psychosocial approach<sup>7</sup>.

The psychosocial approach addresses the individual as an organism in interaction with the factors around (family, society, legal order, educational system, working life, etc.) and claims that a person's well being not only depends on their own inner resources but also on other factors that they interact with. Therefore, when addressing a crisis that disrupts a person's well being, it is insufficient to focus on the person only, but a holistic approach covering other factors will produce an effective result. In this regard, the psychosocial support/intervention targets both inner resources (psychological) of a person and other factors (social) that make up the crisis context and/or are affected by the crisis and go through changes.

In this respect, psychosocial support/intervention is a multidisciplinary area and a field of study that is inherent for all the studies conducted on the crisis. For example, one of the most common complaints of Syrians living in tent cities is that toilets are far away and they cannot use them alone; this is a striking example of problems that may arise when psychosocial reality was not taken into account while planning for humanitarian aid. Contrary to popular belief, psychosocial support is not provided through personal and face to face therapy only; it is also a holistic method that covers a multidimensional area of intervention.

In light of the above information, the community centres serve as a ground for conducting several activities simultaneously, including protection, education, health, children's area and recreation, and they also constitute a favourable space to provide multidimensional psychosocial support.

The history of community centres all over the world shows that they have been institutionalised around three main purposes: 1) empowering the local community and paving the way for their engagement in decision making mechanisms; 2) facilitating adaptation of immigrant individuals and communities to their new living spaces; 3) empowering individuals and communities and facilitating their access to vital resources.

We can say that the community centres in Kirkhan and Nizip are intended for these three basic objectives. These are detailed below:

- **Adaptation to new living spaces:** The courses that are provided by community centres are primarily intended to provide individuals with knowledge and abilities to facilitate their engagement in social and

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7/ For the manual published by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which sets internationally accepted standards for psychosocial support, see <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings> (04.04.2016).



economic life. Activities for this purpose include particularly Turkish, English and computer courses as well as study classes for children. Among them, Turkish courses are of special importance. Understanding and speaking the language of the country one lives in paves the way for their engagement in both social and economic life. Therefore, participants from all age groups – from 7 to 70 – show great interest in Turkish courses. For children, speaking Turkish means that they can attend formal education, whereas young people choose these courses to attend high school and university. Older participants mainly prefer language learning for daily life. English and computer courses are usually chosen by children and those who seek to improve employment opportunities.

- **Empowering individuals and communities:** All activities conducted at the community centres are designed to ensure that individuals become self-sufficient. It is part of this empowerment effort to bring necessary abilities (e.g. language learning) and supply information and instruments required for accessing the services. It is also important to note that these courses, activities and supporting practices are prepared, taking into account personal needs and suggestions, in a well-structured way and safe environment. Moreover, specifically structured programmes for strengthening health and psychosocial well being are provided by the community centres. For example, basic health and hygiene programmes are conducted both at the community centres and Syrian schools. All programmes are prepared according to the learning ability of age groups; children are taught through playing while adults learn through brief meetings.
- **Facilitating access to vital resources:** In particular as regards protective services, the psychosocial well being of individuals is supported at the community centres by social workers who follow up those in need and guide them towards proper resources for health, education, legal matters, financial and food support, etc. Meeting these needs helps individuals become self-sufficient as well as facilitates their engagement in social life. In the case of protection, applications are not only made for meeting the specific need, but also take into account long-term contributions. For example, after investigating the personal and family condition of applicants for a health service, they may be encouraged to enrol their children in the activities at community centres.

Sampson and Gifford (2010) also defined the community centres as a “therapeutic area for rehabilitation and regeneration” in addition to conducting activities for young refugees who are placed permanently in a new country, and stated that this therapeutic area consisted of four characteristics:

1. Area for opportunities: Promotes new meanings and objectives
2. Area for rehabilitation: Ensures that fear and anxiety decrease, adds reputation and value
3. Area for socialisation: Encourages connection and communication with others
4. Area for security: Moves away from conflict, improves the feeling of confidence



*Community Education Center Kirikhan, Turkey*

*Source: Özlem Çolak*

Community centres are important for psychosocial support in that they would meet the four characteristics defined by Sampson and Gifford (2010) with the activities detailed above and through their general functioning.

The same study explained that community centres played an important role for repairing the damaged social, economic and cultural links of those who had to flee from their home country for reasons such as war and conflict – deterritorialization – and then

accustom themselves to the second or third countries where they established a new living space and reterritorialization. The fact that community centres have a physical space, are stationary, are always accessible and conduct the activities in a safe zone within the framework of specific principles is a supportive ground for those who are in the process of adapting to a new life. Similarly, we have supporting data that those who benefit from the community centres in Kırıkhan and Nizip take part in voluntary activities at the centres or regularly visit and bring people around them to the community centres.

Although the community centres have a lot of advantages, their disadvantages must also be stated. Despite the fact that community centres having a physical space are an advantage in psychosocial terms, they pose serious problems in regard of transportation. At both centres, participants put forward this issue as the very first problem when they are asked about their expectations. In regions where public transport is not well-structured such as in Kırıkhan and Nizip, there is an issue of accessibility for those who live in distant districts, both in terms of time (because of working, having to take care of children or elderly people, etc.) and money (inability to afford transport cost).

Studies in this field are conducted over the experiences of refugees going to a second or third country through *resettlement*. Even though they start a new life, this means a new regular life with clear legal status and rights. The situation in Turkey needs to be evaluated separately as a unique example. Despite the presence of a legal ground, Syrian refugees are under a constantly-changing and ambiguous condition. This seriously affects the psychosocial condition of individuals and makes difficult the above-mentioned reterritorialization. In a context where everything is ambiguous and variable, having a stationary and well-defined community centre is a very important psychosocial factor. This ambiguity also causes refugees to continuously move within Turkey or encourages them to go to Europe, which prevents the establishment of long-term and psychosocially strengthened relations between Syrian refugees and community centres. Besides, uncertainties for working life decrease participation in community centre activities because they have to work in irregular jobs. Although there is a high demand for our activities at the community centre, continuous mobility and irregular working put a negative effect on participation rates in activities where long-term and regular attendance is required.

A final disadvantage is the lack of qualified and regular staff at the community centres. For Turkish people, two problems include the language issue and reluctance to work in small settlements. For Syrians, this lack of qualified human resources is caused particularly by the mobility mentioned above and troubles in obtaining work permits. Furthermore, the discrepancy in financial power between local and international organisations may be one of the most important obstacles toward accessing qualified labour.

## **Conclusion**

As mentioned above, despite having disadvantages and because they can be eliminated, the community centres with their functions of providing several services concurrently and creating a safe, well-structured and long-term space, have become a widely recognised method of psychosocial support by a number of local and international non-governmental organisations. Also, the Turkish state adopted the community centre model through the Red Crescent in Turkey. Therefore, it is anticipated that in the near future, more community centres for Syrian refugees will be opened in Turkey.

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## Further training for volunteers in refugee assistance

*Tempelhof-Schöneberg Adult Education Centre has set up a further training programme in order to support volunteers in their work with displaced persons who have come to Germany. This article is to particularly focus on the situation of displaced persons in Berlin since 2012, the establishment of the district Voluntary Work Office in 2010 and the launch of a general further training programme for volunteers in 2011. It closes with an outlook on the future and with a presentation of the conditions for success.*

Tempelhof-Schöneberg district office in Berlin has been offering further training courses for volunteer helpers in refugee assistance since November 2015. These courses are planned, organised and implemented by the Adult Education Centre in the district in close cooperation with the district Voluntary Work Office. In a total of 21 courses and workshops, participants are offered a spectrum of topics which directly target practical work with displaced persons.

Overview of the topics

- Workshop: How can I help on a volunteer basis in work with refugees?
- Intercultural skills for work with refugees
- The asylum procedure in Germany and in the European Union
- Recognition and rejection of asylum applications
- Accommodation of refugees in Berlin and social conditions
- Confidence in homework supervision
- First Aid in work with refugees
- First Aid in childcare
- Arabic for volunteer refugee helpers

But how did this further training programme come about within a very short run-up period? How is it being received by the target group? What was the experience so far in the organising institutions, that is the Adult Education Centre and the Voluntary Work Office, when it comes to implementing the courses and workshops? And how will things continue?

## **Development of the further training programme**

### *The situation of displaced persons in Berlin since 2012*

A dynamic situation was created in October 2012 which was to move the residents, as well as the Senate of the City of Berlin, in the most comprehensive sense of the word in the following years: Dozens of asylum applicants from all over Germany arrived in Berlin after a protest march which had taken almost a month and had started in Würzburg.

There were already scenes in the Mediterranean at that time which were subsumed thereafter under the term “refugee drama”<sup>1</sup>. But this dra-

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<sup>1/</sup> see by way of example: Hunke, Friederike (2012).

ma seemed so distant since most of the boat refugees who survived their dangerous passage landed in Italy, where for the most part they remained.

The main concern of the protesting asylum applicants who arrived in Berlin in October 2012 was however not to draw attention to the refugee movements, but to the restrictive conditions under which displaced people had had to live in Germany until that time<sup>2</sup>.

The following events are well known: Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district office accepted a refugee tent camp on a public square, tolerated the occupation of a school by displaced persons, and a movement developed around these two places that was made up of supporters on the one side and of opponents on the other – that is, at both the civil society and political level. A debate developed both in the street and in the media regarding how to deal with the displaced persons who were “stranded” in Kreuzberg, which led in March 2014 to a contested agreement document between the Berlin Senate and representatives of the groups of refugees as well as to the square being cleared<sup>3</sup>.

Regardless of how the agreement document came about and was assessed in the ensuing period, the Berlin Senate adopted a variety of measures from 2014 onwards aimed at improving the situation of displaced persons in the city, such as a language acquisition programme which the adult education centres in the various districts of Berlin were charged in the same year with implementing<sup>4</sup>.

The number of displaced persons arriving in Berlin, which has been rising rapidly since 2014, as well as the media reporting on the unsatisfactory conditions at the Registration Office of the “Office for Health and Social Affairs” (LaGeSo), triggered a major demand for voluntary commitment in work with displaced persons. Self-organised groups were formed in some cases, but a large number of interested people approached established social organisations, associations and initiatives. But how is it possible to successfully include volunteers in work with displaced persons? This question particularly arises if the volunteers have virtually no knowledge, or only limited knowledge, of the group of topics related to the law on asylum and to the asylum procedure, as well as being virtually totally inexperienced when it comes to dealing with people of a wide variety of cultural origins.

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2/ see by way of example: Wendisch, Saara (2012).

3/ see: Land Berlin (2014).

4/ see: Berlin Adult Education Centres (2016).

## Cooperation between the Voluntary Work Office and the Adult Education Centre

### *Establishment of the office and launching a further training programme*

The enhancement of voluntary activity in the district has been on the political agenda at the latest since a motion was filed by the CDU in the assembly of Tempelhof-Schöneberg district councillors in July 2008<sup>5</sup>. Volunteer agencies commissioned by the district offices were already supporting voluntary commitment in some other districts of Berlin at this time. Tempelhof-Schöneberg was now also to follow this example. After exploratory talks had been held between the district office and social agencies, the decision was however taken not to outsource this task, but to pursue the enhancement of voluntary activity with the aid of a Voluntary Work Office which would report directly to the District Mayor. In December 2010, it took up its work with two established posts, and soon thereafter the foundation of a further training programme for people who were working as volunteers in the district was agreed with the district adult education centre, and this started in the autumn of 2011. The intention from the outset was to use the courses and workshops in order to impart concrete relevant contents in a concise form in a practice-orientated manner in order to enable the volunteers' skills to be increased rapidly.

Due to the committed networking engaged in by the Voluntary Work Office and to the constant evaluation of the courses and workshops, it was possible in the ensuing years to, firstly, ascertain the concrete needs with regard to further training among the social welfare agencies and among volunteers, as well as at the same time providing appropriate further training activities. The diversity of potential for the deployment of volunteers was expressed in a major topical spread of the further training activities. The focus was on support activities for work in associations, on human interactivity and conflict-solving, as well as on activities offered for concrete volunteer work, such as training in reading out loud, homework supervision, dealing with dementia sufferers, First Aid courses and much more.

It was necessary to actively publicise the further training programme in the first few years, both via the websites of the Voluntary Work Office and of Tempelhof-Schöneberg Adult Education Centre, and through the web portal of Berlin Adult Education Centres ([www.berlin.de/vhs](http://www.berlin.de/vhs)) as well as using a special leaflet and via the annual programme booklet of the Adult Education Centre. The Voluntary Work Office publicised the ac-

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5/ see: Tempelhof-Schöneberg District (2008).



tivities at the district's annual voluntary activity exchange, and actively approached facilities in the district which worked with volunteers. The programme became well-known, and the enrolment figures for the courses and workshops have developed positively right up to the present day.

Funding was initially provided via budget funds of the Voluntary Work Office, and since 2014 has come largely from regular budget funds from the Adult Education Centre. The independence from time-limited project funds helps ensure that the further training programme can be continuously planned and oriented towards the needs which are actually in place.

### **The genesis of the further training programme for volunteers in refugee assistance**

Thanks to the successful existing cooperation and the intensive networking of the Voluntary Work Office, it was possible to react quickly when the inflow of displaced persons in Berlin increased rapidly over 2014, and many enquirers wished to volunteer for refugee assistance. Several initial reception facilities and transitional hostels for displaced persons were gradually established in Tempelhof-Schöneberg District. The Integration Commissioner of Tempelhof-Schöneberg District organised roundtable talks related to each new facility that was opened, attended by representatives of the facilities' operators, of the district office, of associations affiliated to the facilities, of initiatives and of social assistance agencies, the police and the Voluntary Work Office. The "roundtables" aimed to facilitate understanding between the main stakeholders with regard to the initial reception facility or transitional hostel, to identify needs and to react to them. The inclusion of volunteers was discussed at each of these meetings. The facilities' operators and social welfare agencies connected with the accommodation facilities made it clear to the Voluntary Work Office that volunteers could only take on tasks to a limited degree since they frequently lacked the basic knowledge and experience needed for working in refugee assistance.

In only a few weeks, it was possible for the Voluntary Work Office to ascertain concrete further training needs and to plan and organise appropriate courses and workshops in close cooperation with the Adult Education Centre, as well as to recruit lecturers. The further training programme for volunteers that was already available was topped up to include specific activities for working in refugee assistance and crash courses in Arabic in which basic Arabic could be taught in a communication-orientated manner

and helpful phrases and vocabulary imparted for conversations with displaced persons.

Claus Foerster, who had been working as a commissioner for voluntary work with the “Regional Association of the Workers’ Welfare Association” (“Arbeiterwohlfahrt – AWO”) for many years, and is currently working in initial asylum advice in initial reception facilities for asylum-seekers, was recruited to hold the lecture events on the basics of the asylum procedure and the specific situation of displaced persons in Berlin.

Whilst the general further training programme for volunteers was launched in 2011 with a good dozen courses and workshops, it has 38 activities in the current Adult Education Centre programme year (September 2015-July 2016), 21 of which specifically for refugee assistance volunteers. The programme can be retrieved via the website of the Voluntary Work Office (<https://www.berlin.de/ba-tempelhof-schoeneberg/politik-und-verwaltung/ehrenamtsbuero/>), which was redesigned at the end of 2015. This site also offers further information on voluntary activity, and anyone who is interested can directly register for the courses and workshops of the further training programme via a link to the Adult Education Centre<sup>6</sup>.

## **The experience to date**

### *Positive experiences*

The activities for volunteers in refugee assistance which had been newly introduced into the programme were received extremely well. The initial events were fully booked within a very short period, even though the maximum number of participants was already rather high (25-35 places), particularly for the lecture and information activities. Waiting lists filled up, and additional crash courses in Arabic were timetabled at short notice.

The feedback from the operators of the initial reception facilities and transitional hostels, social welfare agencies and initiatives, on the one hand, and from the participants at the courses and workshops on the other, has been positive to date. The practical assistance and information provided can be immediately used in the work with displaced persons. This rapid transfer has taken place thanks to the fact that the courses and workshops are held by experienced, competent course leaders in a highly-compact form (4-8 45-minute lesson units), and that the focus is placed on rapid practical implementation.

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<sup>6/</sup> See: Tempelhof-Schöneberg Voluntary Work Office (2016).

A representative of the Voluntary Work Office attends each course or workshop (except for the crash courses in Arabic), collects participants' feedback and passes it on to the course leaders. The participants' feedback is also incorporated into the planning for the next further training programme.

The success of the further training programmes was however also enhanced by the fact that it was possible to ascertain the precise needs during the preliminary period. The close coordination with the facilities' operators, social welfare agencies, initiatives and associations enabled the further training programme to be directly imparted to volunteers who were already in the field, which led to large numbers of bookings within a short period.

### *Identified problems*

In addition to the positive experience, problems however gradually reared their heads.

By the summer of 2015, all courses and workshops of the further training programme for volunteers were being offered for a symbolic attendance fee of 5.00 Euro. It was already possible to observe during this period that the low price was giving the impression that attendance was not obligatory. Some of the course places that had been booked were not taken up.

Parallel to this, it was however also observed that volunteers were becoming increasingly reserved when it came to enrolling for the activities. In some cases, they were unable to agree with the social welfare agencies, associations and initiatives for which they worked to have their costs re-funded, or there were subsequent difficulties in this regard. Particularly the fact of having to advance course fees that were due frequently prevented people taking up appropriate further training that was available.

In order to get around these problems, the Adult Education Centre and the Voluntary Work Office agreed to offer the courses and workshops from the entire further training programme to volunteers free of charge from the autumn of 2015.

The initial experience has shown that abolishing the cost burden has three effects: The booking figures are rising, whilst at the same time a larger share of participants fail to attend events for which they have registered, without cancelling, and conversely more people come than previously who had not registered. This makes it more difficult to plan and actually implement the courses and workshops.

The course announcements are therefore to carry much more prominent information on the enrolment procedure in future, and a “request” for participants to cancel registrations in good time if they are unable to attend.

When it comes to the crash courses in Arabic, each of which takes place on a weekly basis over six two-hour lessons, the number of participants fluctuates widely. Whilst most courses start off with 12 to 18 persons, the number of participants falls rapidly from one lesson to the next.

The exact reasons for failing to attend a course have not yet been evaluated, so that it is only possible to speculate on this. The very low-threshold access (no costs, only few course dates) in conjunction with a very high motivation prior to the beginning of the course, are very likely to lead to rapid enrolment. The reasons for not attending the remainder of the course are however likely to be individual in nature in most cases.

Whether the crash courses in Arabic are to be continued after the summer of 2016 is currently subject to consideration (spring 2016). It may be possible to fall back on the regular Arabic courses in the programme of Tempelhof-Schöneberg Adult Education Centre in future.



*Adult Education Centre Tempelhof-Schöneberg in Berlin*

*Source: VHS Tempelhof-Schöneberg*

Three lecture-based courses regarding questions related to the asylum procedure can be booked individually. It was however revealed after the first events that a large number of participants had not booked all three courses, but in fact only individual ones. Since the activities' contents overlap, it however makes sense to attend them one after the other so that the respective concluding discussions in the courses can be more effective.

The course announcements are to include a much more prominent recommendation to attend all three courses in future.

A further problem is constituted by the staffing of the Voluntary Work Office and of the Adult Education Centre. The further training programme for volunteers in refugee assistance was established at a time when both cooperation partners had to work with restricted staffing resources. It was only on the basis of the established cooperation, existing planning routines and infrastructure, as well as the good networking of the Adult Education Centre and the Voluntary Work Office with potential course leaders, that short-term planning could be carried out. It was possible to remedy the staff shortages, at least in the Voluntary Work Office, the end of 2015.

## **Outlook**

The positive development of the further training programme for volunteers in general, and of the programme for volunteers in refugee assistance in particular, have encouraged the Adult Education Centre and the Voluntary Work Office of Tempelhof-Schöneberg District to continue the cooperation over and above the summer of 2016.

In the main, most of the courses and workshops which have been offered so far are to remain in the programme. As was stated above, the future of the crash courses in Arabic still needs clarification. Added to this are more specific further training activities such as assistance for German as a foreign language/German as a second language outside of language and integration courses, dealing with health problems and traumas, dealing with addictions, helping mentors who are to support companies which employ displaced persons, and much more.

The need for further training for volunteers remains considerable, and the success of the Tempelhof-Schöneberg model became known at the level of the Berlin Senate at the end of 2015. Deliberation and consideration are currently underway there as to the degree to which further training activities for volunteers in refugee assistance can be created in all the districts.

## What factors have contributed to the rapid success of the programme?

It has been proven in each case that the success of the further training programme was particularly facilitated by effective cooperation between two highly-committed partners. The Adult Education Centre contributes specialist and educational experience and expertise (direct care for the programme provided by a programme section manager)<sup>7</sup>, the logistical basis (course, administration of participants and funds, advertising via a programme leaflet and a website, planning and implementation routines, etc.), a large pool of course leaders, as well as secure resources. The Voluntary Work Office calculates the specific need for further training, evaluates the entire programme, uses an active, well-maintained network to publicise the further training programme and recruit course leaders, ensures that information leaflets are printed, and announces the further training programme for volunteers at discussions and information events.

The cooperation benefits from the fact that the two cooperation partners form part of the same district administration, and hence coordination and agreement can be carried out quickly.

The direct support from the district mayor and the city councillor for Education, Culture and Sport, as well as the resolution of the district councillors' assembly underlying the programme, furthermore help ensure its considerable acceptance.

The intention from the outset was to provide through the courses and workshops concise, concrete, relevant contents in a practice-oriented manner in order to achieve a rapid increase in skills among volunteers, and at the same time to express appreciation and recognition for the commitment that has been provided.

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7/ It should be pointed out at this juncture that supervision of the further training programme for volunteers is only one of the tasks performed by a Head of Programme Section.

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## Language learning as an obligation

Methods, techniques and approaches of formal and informal language education for Syrian refugees

*As is well known, the Syrian crisis has affected numerous individuals, systems and countries, particularly Syrians who were deterritorialized. This deterritorialization led to the need for a lot of new services and settlements in order for Syrians to benefit from services for education, health, legal and social rights, freedom and responsibilities, all to be seen as basic human rights. In the case of Turkey – especially for the provision of the education service, improving its content and ensuring that all Syrian refugees in need of education can access it – these services and settlements require more thinking about common methods, techniques and approaches in the field, conducting research and development studies and the development of effective practices and policies. This study covers observations, data, opinions and suggestions on common practices, methods and approaches in the field.*



Those who live in Turkey under the legal status of “Syrian Refugees under Temporary Protection” (referred to as “Syrian refugees” in this study) have been stateless for over 5 years.

This study intends to share observations, findings and data on adaptation to the new language and culture of the host country as a need and obligation for stateless people, using research and analyses conducted by other field researchers, formal and informal education service providers and national and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Following the group of 252 people entering Turkey in April 2011, the number of Syrians arrived at over 500,000 in 2 years from the open-door policy implemented by Turkey. Starting from cities close to the border and spread to areas all around Turkey, the stages of the Syrian crisis have been as follows<sup>1/</sup>:

- Syrians fleeing/quitting/being deterritorialized from their countries and taking refuge in Turkey
- Establishment of tent towns, container towns and settlement of Syrians in these living spaces
- Provision of emergency health, food, hygiene, education materials and services, both within and outside the border for Syrian refugees, outside tent towns by both NGOs and government institutions
- Passing the Temporary Protection Law and ensuring that Syrians living within and outside tent/container towns receive education, health, legal services and social rights and responsibilities
- Issuing temporary refugee identity cards
- Increasing the number of tent cities
- Opening Temporary Education Centres (TEC)
- Establishing coordination units for each sector within the state organs,
- National, international and Syrian NGOs start their operations in various sectors

Towards the end of these stages, and after the end of 5 years, service providers, local and national government bodies, national and international NGOs and Syrian refugees’ opinion leaders have recently started to create permanent job definitions, determine a road map and make short- and long-term plans for providing Syrian refugees in Turkey with education, health, legal and social protection. Through the emergency organisation, the two communities, Turkish and Syrian, started to experience together

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1/ Relevant stages irrespective of historical hierarchy.

the sociocultural, socioeconomic and socio-psychological effects of our inability to plan and calculate these steps beforehand.

In this article, I would like to describe my observations about what happened in the Southeast Anatolian Region while Syrian refugees were adopting the Turkish language and culture, and what they experienced.

Before the Syrian crisis that deterritorialized people with different opinions, beliefs and languages, the citizens of the two neighbouring countries, especially those who lived in border cities, had close relations which often brought them together. Prior to the Syrian crisis, tourism was increasing. After the Visa Exemption Agreement of 2009, tourism between Turkey and Syria more than doubled. In 2010, the number of Turkish citizens visiting Syria was 1.6 million, and the number of Syrian citizens visiting Turkey was around 900-thousand<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the two societies were in frequent interaction through activities which included trade and education. Also, the shared history of the two countries means that they were not very different in cultural terms. However, except for those who live close to the border, citizens of the two countries were different from each other in terms of religion, politics, culture, economic habits and behaviour. This does not mean that the two communities do not have disagreements or conflicts in cities close to the border, but these show up in different forms.

To be more specific: the majority of Turkish citizens living in the Southeast Anatolian, Mediterranean and Eastern Anatolian regions might have relatives in Syria, and their disagreements with Syrian refugees, who have been accepted into social and economic lives, are more personal; while local people in the western regions have conflicts and disagreements with Syrian refugees because of the different language, religion and culture. At this point, language is very important, because local people in the east of Turkey can also speak Arabic or Kurdish. In these cities, the two communities understand each other; Syrians can participate in social life, and the conflicts are more dependent on the social and economic reasons which emerged after the process of admission into Turkey.

Despite having a shared history and close understanding, the initial process, starting with the survival instinct, the focus on taking refuge in a new country has come to an end, although there were frequent variables of political and legal rights, the process of sociocultural interaction between the two communities began. The biggest obstacle facing Syrian refugees in Turkey in this process is the language.

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2/ IMPR 2012: Türkiye ve Suriye Arasındaki Krizin Gaziantep ve Hatay Bölgesi Ekonomileri Üzerinde Etkileri: 19.

Out of 2,715,789 Syrian refugees living outside the camps, 20% are children from 0-4 years of age, 34.2% children from 5-17 years of age and 42.2% adults from 18-59 years of age, and 3.6% elderly above 60 years of age.

<b>Demography</b>		
<b>Male (50.8%)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Female (49.2%)</b>
10.5%	0 - 4	9.5%
10.3%	5 - 11	9.9%
7.2%	12 - 17	6.8%
21.1%	18 - 59	21.1%
1.8%	60 +	1.8%

**(UNHCR, 2016)**

Based on these figures<sup>3</sup>, the number of pre-school and school children is greater than young, adult and old Syrians living in Turkey. The concerns of families, state bodies and NGOs for these children is for them not to be the “lost generation.” Today 391,207 Syrian children from 6-17 (school age) out of 663,138 cannot go to school for various reasons<sup>4</sup>. Currently, Syrian children of pre-school, primary, elementary and high school age receive education service at Temporary Education Centres (TEC), most of which are 2-shift schools, or at Turkish schools. In Gaziantep alone there are more than 40 TECs, most of which are 2-shift schools; that is, Turkish students go to classes in the morning, and Syrian students go to school in the afternoon. The language of education at these centres or schools is Arabic and they use the Syrian curriculum to provide the education service. Most Syrian children of school age go to or have to go to these centres. They have to go because there are capacity issues with the number of classes and teachers; or they cannot register at the schools because they do not have identity cards. The number and the physical capacity of TECs are sufficient to meet the education needs of school children, and it is planned to establish new centres and schools.

Syrian children who prefer or are able to register in Turkish schools receive formal education in Turkish under the Turkish curriculum. Each

3/ UNHCR-Turkish Government Data, 3.03.2016 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>

4/ UNICEF, September 2015 [https://www.unicefturk.org/suriye/Suriyeli\\_Cocuklar\\_UNICEF\\_Bilgi\\_Dokumani10\\_09\\_2015%201835-TR.pdf](https://www.unicefturk.org/suriye/Suriyeli_Cocuklar_UNICEF_Bilgi_Dokumani10_09_2015%201835-TR.pdf)

year, grades and attendance of Syrian children for 2 school types are recorded in the “Foreign Students Information System” (FSIS) in Turkish, English and Arabic, and they receive a certificate of graduation. Currently, they do not receive a school report or diploma that is valid in the Turkish education system. This is the reason for the temporary organisation designed by the Turkish National Education system for Syrian school children. Based on this argument, this socially “temporary” status of Syrian children is justifiably accompanied by many states of mind, such as the inability to adapt or the lack of the sense of belonging.

They can benefit from common training and psychosocial support activities provided by national and international NGOs offering psychosocial aid and language, computer and occupational skill development courses outside school hours. The centres providing these opportunities to Syrian children of school age are called the Community Centres (CC) or Multi-Purpose Service Centres (MPSC). Although the total number is not known, there are more than 10 CC or MPSC models in Gaziantep alone. In this region, where more than one million Syrian Refugees live, access to the centres is still limited, due both to the inadequate number of centres as well as health problems, cultural reasons, lack of employment opportunities, financial troubles and stress, anxiety, etc.

In addition to the reasons stated above for adults, access by children to these centres is restricted even further because parents are concerned about “sending children outside”. These concerns are based on transportation problems, fear of being lost in a foreign city and concern for the protection of children (from risks such as child abuse, kidnapping, etc.). As a result – being able to work more dynamically than state bodies – NGOs started to seek actions and solutions to eliminate these risks, to move or establish these centres in city or town centres where the Syrian refugee population is denser, to provide transportation support or support for child protection. CC or MPSC models for children offer non-formal education opportunities in various areas.

The Children-Friendly Areas (CFA) existing in most centres and particularly in camp areas are intended to improve psychosocial aspects for children. As defined by UNICEF, these are safe zones where children from different age groups are offered education opportunities, where entertainment or leisure and cultural activities are organised and psychosocial support is provided. These areas are currently presented in mobile units with the cooperation of the Turkish Red Crescent and UNICEF.

In non-formal or formal education centres and schools, Syrian and Turkish teachers are recruited, but there are also volunteers working at CCs and MPSCs. In particular the trainers, facilitators and volunteers who are working at CCs and MPSCs are there to gain skills in order to improve

training content, and take into account the psychological realities of children or adults who fled from war. In this process of structuring training for Syrian children and adults, a dynamic and complicated understanding is prevalent. As in all other sectors, the education sector suffers from differences in understanding between local or national state bodies and NGOs in the areas of coordination, supervision, permissions, etc., in addition to differences in understanding with Syrian refugees, who are both beneficiaries and service providers. For example, Syrian and Turkish trainers and volunteers, who are encouraged to improve activity content through non-formal techniques, do not comply or are reluctant to comply with non-formal education content. Interactive methods are often found childish and not compatible with behavioural patterns. Neither Turkish nor Syrian trainers want to give up their positions as the only source of information in the education of adults and children. Trainers from both communities also insist on *not* using non-formal education methods. They prefer the verbal narrative teaching technique. Reward and punishment in education are usually used unsystematically in order to shape the behaviour of children. That is, the three different components of the education sector often disagree. Although these differences are not at a level which leads to chaos or significant conflicts, it is expected that service providers and state bodies produce a common and rational policy on this issue.

The Turkish National Education system plans to provide “On-the-job training” for Syrian teachers as well as for Turkish teachers. So far, all that is known is that Syrian teachers are provided with a Turkish course.

Another sub-sector where common grounds for solutions are sought and the same difference of understanding is visible, is higher education. Even though universities have to adopt international disciplines, it is clear that a shared language cannot be established after Syrian students are admitted. That is, for example, that the difference of being a civil engineer in Turkey or in Syria in practice implies that this will cause various complexities in the Turkish business market.

As NGOs, we work on clarifying the requirements for young people to access higher education and the practices they can benefit from. For the purpose of providing more higher education opportunities, Syrian NGOs in particular started to extend their efforts. The most commonly known exams for access to facilities and determining responsibilities are: Ankara University, Turkish and Foreign Language Practice and Research Centre’s (TÖMER) internationally recognised Turkish proficiency exam, Examination for International Students (YÖS), and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which measures the ability to use and understand standard US English at the university level. Although each university in Turkey has different practices, Syrians of university age can attend free courses



*Language course*

*Source: Doğu Erdoğan Gülbaş*

at CCs and MPSCs to prepare for the above exams. Also, they can attend these courses in some language schools in return for a fee.

A number of international NGOs work on developing distance learning methods for Syrians to access European universities. Thus, one of the NGOs that we met with mentioned that they could contribute to the higher education service provision for young people by supplying, via satellite, any instruments, human resources and logistics needed for distance learning.

Throughout this education and learning process, my observations on Turkish teachers giving Turkish lessons to Syrians, and on Syrian refugees learning Turkish are as follows: Techniques, methods and understanding of learning and teaching the Arab alphabet and Latin alphabet are very different. This is more influential on adults and the elderly, based on my observations during Turkish lessons at CCs. When they speak a second language, like English, German or French, or know these alphabets, they can learn Turkish more easily, which has a Latin alphabet as well. Also, in a population that intensely uses social media and the Internet, mobile

phones and computer technologies, alphabet learning may be easier. Despite not being very many, there are also adults and older people who say they would not learn or send their children to learn the Western alphabet because of their religious beliefs. This prevents them learning Turkish. Moreover, the belief that they will return home one day makes them reluctant to learn Turkish, which also partially influences their children.

One of the most significant obstacles in language education for Syrian children going to Turkish schools is that their parents do not speak Turkish and do not know the Turkish National Education curriculum. This means that they cannot get help from parents at home and confine themselves to the already limited opportunities of formal education.

## **Conclusion**

In light of the above information, we are close to the end of the process called emergency organisation. The needs of Syrian refugees in Turkey for basic survival and needs related to that are no longer connected to war. These needs have been reduced but have not yet disappeared. Needs are now more the result of socioeconomic and cultural factors. Education is the most basic right, not only for survival but also so one can benefit from other rights and freedoms. Syrian refugees in Turkey should be able to immediately participate in decision-making processes in order to benefit from basic rights and freedoms, which require language adaptation. The number of facilitating NGOs are expected to increase, coordination is expected to be implemented and state bodies are expected to produce policies on these issues.

## My personal experience: Teaching Palestinian refugee students

*Teaching refugee students brings life and hope not only to the lives of the students or only to my own life, it actually brings life and hope to life itself as well, for teaching is one important pillar to raise their awareness and widen their horizons and understanding of life and society. This being said, and in order to achieve that, we as teachers have to take into consideration the different capabilities students have and the types of intelligence and levels from an academic and social point of view. Most of my students were raised in a very poor and violent environment, the fact which clearly reflects their behaviour and motivation to learn and even to stay in school. We teach them that it is their right to learn, to play and to voice their feelings. However, the current political and economic situation negatively affects their desire for learning in general and acquisition of a foreign language in particular. It is very important to understand the social background of the students before teaching them. We, as teachers, should focus on their characters, help build their personality and respect their needs and their diverse opinions. Our role is to raise up a new well-educated generation who believes that education is the best and only way to live a better life and to restore our rights, since we are one of the few nations that still lives under occupation. Laila Elkhatib reports on her experiences.*



## **Motivation in teaching language**

Motivation is of crucial importance in the classroom, whether learners arrive with it or whether they acquire it through classroom experience. I believe that most students will respond positively to a well-organised lesson by an enthusiastic teacher who is genuinely interested in the students and what they learn.

The positive teacher-student relationship that is characterised by respect and trust will likely increase and create motivation on the part of students to learn. Teachers should realise the important effect of motivation in the classroom and its effectiveness in pushing the learning-teaching process forward and they should avoid the use of punishment and telling jokes that are targeted at students. In addition to that, they should avoid differential treatment based on unjustified prejudices. A teacher should show interest and concern for his or her students.

It is worth mentioning that there are two types of motivation; primary and secondary motivation. The first type comes from inside the learner, but the second type is the feeling of the learner that he or she must learn in order to pass the exam or to please his or her parents and teachers, or to avoid punishment. It is important that teachers should focus on the first type of motivation.

## **Training of teachers**

The negative influence of the occupation, with its checkpoints, walls and denial of Palestinian rights to education is affecting the Palestinian education process negatively because students have to live and study in the middle of an emergency situation and crises all the time, but we, as teachers, have to provide good quality education, although it is not an easy task and, especially in the current political situation, it is getting more difficult.

Due to the current occupation, my students do not live a normal life. A great number of them have witnessed an injury, abuse, arrest and the death of one of their family members or friends. They are frightened, angry, sad, depressed and have a feeling of hopelessness most of the time.

They don't know how to overcome those feelings and live a normal life again. All these factors influence them on the level of their behaviour and their education as well. Therefore it is very important to train teachers on how to deal with such situations in order to change the behaviour of students positively, which in turn will motivate them to study and go to school.

When teachers help their students to express their negative feelings in positive ways it helps them to cope with the anger, sadness, depression and pressure. They should also teach respect and equality.

### **English for Palestinian refugee students: Methods and learning requirements**

The following recommendations are from my teaching experience. I apply them when I teach English to my students.

Increasing student motivation by

1. Teaching English through songs, games and art (drawing and colouring)
2. Using as many visual and audio aids as possible and various teaching techniques such as flash cards, pictures, CD, DVD, overhead projector and real objects
3. Applying different technology techniques, such as using LCD screens, the Internet and computerised lessons
4. Getting students to participate in:
  - a) short plays
  - b) cultural and educational contests
  - c) drawing pictures about given lessons and stories
  - d) a morning broadcast
  - e) English clubs
  - f) Acting
5. Organising field trips to different libraries and cultural centres or to any place that would be constructive and enjoyable for the students
6. Offering as much verbal and tangible reinforcement as possible

Enriching the context of the English curriculum by

1. Providing as many different worksheets as possible that address the different needs and abilities of the students
2. Break the frozen border between students and the English language as a foreign language by making learning English fun, cheerful and lively
3. Using different visual and audio resources, which in turn enrich the learning and teaching process
4. Introducing different games and activities that instil drama in teaching

Adjusting the context of the English curriculum in proportion to the English abilities and knowledge of students

Increasing the self-confidence of students and improving their behaviour by

1. Providing chances for them to express their thoughts and feelings
2. A campaign spreading awareness about a teenager's life and the difficulties that they face
3. Supplying them with culture and knowledge exchange with other schools
4. Using all kinds of positive reinforcement
5. Never using any kind of verbal or physical punishment

### **Behavioural and emotional attitude of students**

The cultural background, citizenship, dignity, identity, conflict resolution and human rights of the refugee student are all very important factors that play an essential role in the behaviour of students and their acceptance to learn a foreign language.

It is very important to understand their needs from their own point of view. The main principles that we as teachers have to focus on while teaching refugee students are their psychological, behavioural and emotional orientations, as well as their academic levels.

The difficulties that I have faced due to negative influences during the time I have been teaching my students – besides the occupation – were: the lack of educational resources, the large number of students in one



*English course for refugees*



*Source: Laila Elkhatib*

classroom, weak financial backup, deficiency of a concrete educationally suitable environment, as well as the structure of the building itself and the lack of facilities in the school. Another challenging difficulty that I have had to go through daily is the insufficient attention of parents and society on the importance of teaching English as a second language. All the difficulties mentioned above impact the sustainability and efficiency of the teaching and learning process.

Susan Nicolai<sup>1</sup> says “Because every emergency is unique, one education approach can never work in all situations.” This is clearly illustrated in not only one school but also in one classroom which is full of different students with different abilities and attitudes, both academically and emotionally. And apart from that they also have their different types of intelligence, that the teachers should recognise and put more effort into understanding and doing their best to meet the different needs of their students.

I believe that teachers should be trained on focusing on peace building in teaching their students as well as be trained on how to help them to cope with the current crisis and not to get involved in the conflict. They must teach that violence generates violence.

### **School development plan for learning english**

From my experience, I believe a remedial development plan should be set up and changed from time to time according to the needs of the students. Here is the remedial development plan that I created to help my students.

School: Dehesha Basic School for Boys

Domain: Teaching and Learning

Objective: Students will be able to master the basics of the four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)

Prepared by: Laila Elkhaitb – 2014

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1/ Page 34 in “Education in Emergencies – A tool kit for starting and managing education in emergencies” by Susan Nicolai [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/038DDBECDACAB5708C1256E24004F3B28-SaveTheChildren\\_EducationEmergencies.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/038DDBECDACAB5708C1256E24004F3B28-SaveTheChildren_EducationEmergencies.pdf)

## Procedures

1. Analyse the needs of students and measure their knowledge of the four basic English language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing
2. Divide the students into different groups according to what they know of the four skills
3. Divide the teaching process into three stages:
  - a) Introduce the goal of this development plan to the students
  - b) discuss their needed skills
  - c) prepare and collect special English materials, including different activities and worksheets for each group according to its needed skills
4. Use different teaching techniques such as:

1. Pictures / flashcards	2. Computer lab (ITEL)	3. Stories
4. O.H. Projector	5. Songs	6. Drawing
7. Games	8. Real objects	9. Acting

5. Set out an evaluation test at the end of teaching each skill to measure whether it is possible to teach the next one
6. Set out an achievement test at the end of teaching the four skills to measure whether the learners have got the basics of the four English language skills

Note: Each student has his own student card in order to study and document his improvement in details.

## Assessment

1. Evaluation Test at the end of teaching each skill
2. Achievement test at the end of teaching the four skills
3. Classroom observation
4. Worksheets
5. Homework
6. Student card

## Resources

Flash cards, English materials, papers, board, computer lab, colours, wall cards, worksheets, objects and pictures

## Promotion of language acquisition and refugees' participation within society

*The increase in the number of refugees in Germany has also led to a three-fold increase in the number of refugees in Löhne, a town in the north of North Rhine-Westphalia with a rural structure and approx. 42,000 inhabitants. Whilst there were roughly 200 displaced persons there in the years prior to 2015, approximately 600 refugees were living in Löhne in April 2016. Although state-supported educational activities such as the integration courses are available to recognised asylum applicants and immigrants, the opening up of these courses for refugees whose applications for recognition have not yet been completed is only in its infancy. Whilst the number of supported projects for refugees has been on the increase since the end of 2015, there is no systematic mechanism visible at present, nor any prospects for supported educational activities being available for all displaced persons in future.*

## Integration courses

Central importance attaches with regard to the language courses offered by Löhne Adult Education Centre first of all to the “integration courses”, which were launched in Germany in 2005. These were created in the context of the German Immigration Act (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) as a state-sponsored tool to promote language acquisition and integration. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is responsible for these courses. A general integration course encompasses 600 teaching hours of support for language acquisition and an orientation course comprising 60 teaching hours, aiming to impart a knowledge of the legal system, culture and history of Germany. However, only those migrants are entitled to attend these courses who already have a residence permit. Displaced persons from Syria, Iran, Iraq or Eritrea have been able to attend since the end of 2015 if they have permission to reside (*Aufenthaltsgestattung*), since their prospects to remain, that is the probability of their being recognised as refugees or asylum applicants, are very high. Since the asylum procedure has taken months in the past, or more than a year in some cases, many refugees hence have to wait a long time before they can attend this state-supported language and integration programme.

Refugees are however part of public life from the very first day they arrive. They have to cope with everyday situations such as shopping, going to a doctor and making official errands, so that alternatives to the integration course need to be developed and made available.

## Standard courses sparked by a local initiative

As an alternative and in addition to the integration courses, Löhne Adult Education Centre additionally offers “standard courses” which displaced persons may attend free of charge if they have a social welfare pass issued by the municipality. This is not a matter of course in the practice of the local authorities in Germany. There are many municipalities who do not regard it as their responsibility to support language acquisition at such an early stage. Additional courses have been developed at Löhne Adult Education Centre since the summer of 2015, which are planned to take 300 hours and aim to impart linguistic skills as well as geographical knowledge in order to enable people to cope with everyday situations and establish contact with members of the majority society. Even if their knowledge is still only at a basic level after 300 hours, this does allow them to build their first linguistic bridges, and is sufficient to help reduce prejudices and promote positive coexistence within the community.

## **Additional language courses on offer**

Since the staffing and space available are limited, increasing numbers of clashes take place, and it is not possible to immediately provide tailored standard courses, so that individual refugees have to face waiting periods of up to three months. In order to be able to bridge these waiting periods, Löhne Adult Education Centre offers other additional alternatives for learning German in both formal and informal surroundings, as well as opportunities to establish contact with Germans and thus to promote integration. This relies above all on voluntary assistance and on civic commitment, as well as on the support of various offices and institutions of the city.

The basis for these activities was formed in September 2015 by an information event organised by the municipality of Löhne in cooperation with the Adult Education Centre, addressing residents who wished to work on a voluntary basis to support the municipality in its work with refugees. One area which attracted roughly 15 people on an ad hoc basis was helping with language acquisition. The Adult Education Centre became the sponsor of this activity, and a separate meeting followed with the newly-formed “language” action group. Advance planning discussions took place in the Adult Education Centre as to where it might seem practical and expedient to act. The following potential areas of action were proposed:

- learning companions for the online-based “Ich-will-Deutsch-lernen.de” (I want to learn German) self-study service (iwdl.de)
- introduction and supervision of a language café
- lessons in small groups and one-on-one supervision
- “bridge courses” and tutoring

Groups formed uncomplicatedly and quickly to carry out the individual activities. The Adult Education Centre acts as a contact, educational advisor and trainer to support the volunteers. Activities are now being carried out successfully in all the areas.

## **The “ich-will-Deutsch-lernen.de” learning portal**

Initial experience with the “ich-will-deutsch-lernen.de” (iwdl.de) learning portal has already been collected in the integration courses at Löhne Adult Education Centre. Given the fact that there is currently a shortage of teachers for German as a Second Language, the learning portal constituted a potential alternative – as well as supplementing the courses. It was therefore possible to use the computer room with twelve computers for





*Communication exchange in the "Mosaik" language café*

*Source: Blue Werbeagentur*

language acquisition when it was not otherwise occupied. This activity is open to all refugees as a general rule. Assistance is provided by voluntary learning companions who have been trained beforehand by an iwdl tutor from the Adult Education Centre. The learning portal is well received, but it has become clear that the refugees are as a rule also very interested in a direct language exchange and in establishing personal contact with Germans.

### **The “Mosaik” language café**

A communicative exchange and getting to know people are therefore the focus of the language café. It is supervised by ten voluntary helpers, who also chose the name “Mosaik” as a symbol of a colourful, diverse society in which everyone is a part of the whole in his or her own way. The language café has been taking place in the Adult Education Centre every Monday afternoon since October 2015. The town’s residents donate coffee and cakes, and the refugees also more and more often bring delicacies from their countries of origin. An average of 50 people come to the café, which is attended by immigrants and locals from the town of Löhne. This informal type of language acquisition is regarded by everyone attending the café as very relaxed: As well as conversations making it possible for people to use their German, language learning games are offered, contacts established and mutual encounters facilitated. The café is now being used in order to pass on information, as well as to introduce projects and activities from the municipality. For instance, the “ich-will-deutsch-lernen.de” (iwdl.de) learning portal is introduced at the meetings, the town library is able to introduce itself, the energy advisory service is invited, and road safety training is planned.

### **“Lessons” in small groups provided by learning companions**

As well as the regular courses which are on offer, “lessons” in small groups are currently being developed and prepared by learning companions. This targets small groups of three refugees at most who are supervised by a volunteer and who achieve their first successes with the new language. The term “learning companion” was deliberately chosen since it was to be made clear from the outset to the committed volunteers, who have no teaching or German-as-a-Second-Language training, that they are not required to have professional training as a German teacher or similar. The expectation is therefore minimised that these learning companions must

have an answer up their sleeves to each of the learners' questions when it comes to the particularities of the German language. This activity is expedient, given that professional instruction is not always necessary in order to learn to take one's first steps in a foreign language. It is however also possible to provide individual guidance where necessary.

### **Bridging courses and support lessons**

Furthermore, bridging courses and support lessons that are provided with the support of volunteers are offered along with the standard courses. These are particularly used in order to provide further assistance to course attendees who have additional support requirements, or to impart preparatory knowledge enabling displaced persons to attend a course.

### **Complementary course activities at Löhne Adult Education Centre**

In addition to the language services offered, Löhne Adult Education Centre however also regards itself as a contact and a forum for further formats and measures which promote integration. These measures are particularly oriented towards also involving immigrants and refugees in standard courses offered by the Adult Education Centre, and are intended to



*Participants in a course for refugees*

*Source: Blue Werbeagentur*

offer courses which deliberately target both migrants and locals. Sports courses are particularly suited to achieving this goal. For instance, an international ball sports group, a football group and a table tennis group are currently on offer which are run by volunteers and with the aid of local clubs; further similar activities are being planned. However, more and more refugees are furthermore taking an interest in the regular courses that are offered by Löhne Adult Education Centre, such as English and computer courses. Attending these courses together with the other attendees is particularly suited to help them integrate and to promote coexistence.

## **Outlook**

Other adult education centres undoubtedly also have other ideas and activities as to how to provide training to refugees, thus promoting their integration into society. The experience that has been collected at Löhne Adult Education Centre so far makes it clear that a great deal can be achieved with creativity, civic commitment, networking and a pinch of optimism.

The homepage of Löhne Adult Education Centre, on which enquirers will find a compilation of further information on the topic of educational work with refugees: <http://vhs-loehne.de/index.php?id=175>

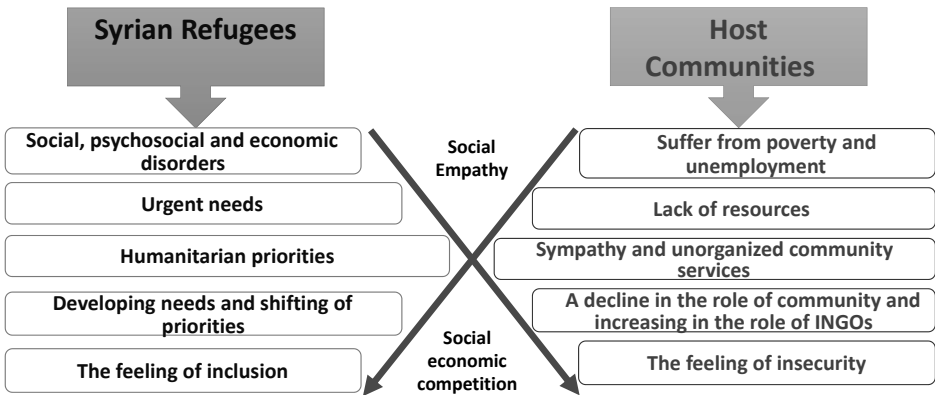
## Socio-economic challenges of host and refugee communities in Jordan

*It is evident that during emergencies, adult education and orientation are necessities. They are a suitable approach for raising social awareness, improving living standards and understanding the socio-economic challenges. It is essential that the project complies with international and government plans and partnerships, includes both refugees and host communities. The locally based organisations play a leading role in the implementation of the projects. Since 2013, DVV International has been supporting adult education programmes for Syrian refugees in Jordan. The programme is implemented in the particularly critical phase of economic integration of the refugees, which can lead to an increase in the potential for conflict, so absolute priorities are the obtaining of knowledge, further training and general education.*

## The socio-economic situation for host communities

Jordan is one of the largest refugee host countries among its Arab neighbours. According to the 2015 census<sup>1</sup>, non-Jordanians make up 30% of Jordan's population – half of that 30% are Syrians – while the illiteracy rate of the kingdom's overall population is 9.1% for those aged 13 and above. There is also a contrast in the economic participation rate, with active male participation making up 71% and only a 21% female participation. According to UNHCR<sup>2</sup>, approximately 44.8% of Syrian refugees are between 18 and 59 years old, which is the age group mostly targeted by adult education programmes, and of which females make up 23.5%, that is 2.2% more than the number of males. Approximately 81% of refugees live in urban areas (host communities), while the remaining 19% live in refugee camps.

### Education in emergencies Syrian refugees and host communities' reality - Jordan



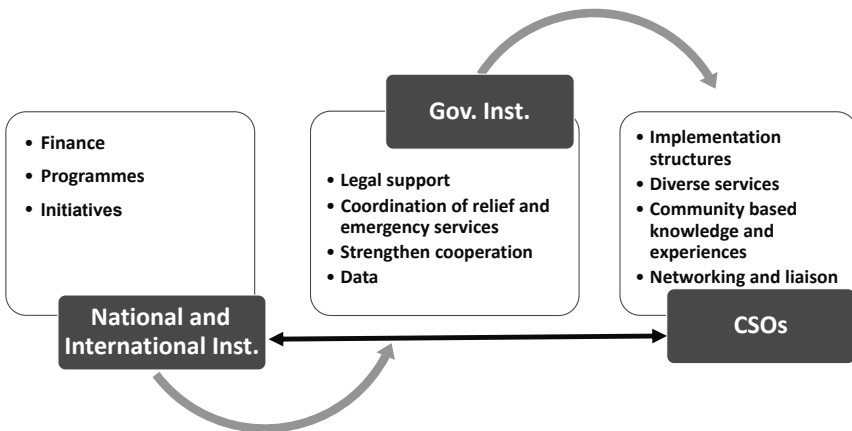
Source: German Adult Education Association 2014 – Jordan office – summer academy – concept paper: Adult education in emergencies

1/ Jordan Department of Statistics – Jordan 2015 – population and housing census results – website [www.dos.gov.jo](http://www.dos.gov.jo)

2/ UNHCR 2015 – website database – website – <http://data.unhcr.org/>

Escaping the ongoing conflict and violence, more and more refugees are expected to arrive in Jordan in hopes of finding shelter as events in Syria escalate and reaching a near-term solution seems wrapped up in mystery. This will result in more challenges and more drastic demographic and cultural changes; it will also lead to more complications for the country's already difficult socio-economic situation in light of its lack of resources, water in particular. This in its entirety will put the country's resources, infrastructure, housing, health and education institutions, environment and waste management under immense pressure, in addition to the increased demand for employment. For host communities, this situation of "compulsory guests" who have stayed for longer than expected and are now competing with locals over limited resources and job opportunities is giving rise to many questions: Who are they? And how much longer are they going to stay? All of this may eventually lead to an increased feeling of despair, threat, fear of what is coming next and consequently, to more tensions between the two groups, which may lead to conflict. Within this reality, it is essential for CBOs (Community-Based Organisations) to have a higher level of awareness, a more accurate analysis of the future and a deeper understanding of the sudden shifts and their effect on host communities.

## The CSOs and their role in emergencies



Source: German Adult Education Association 2014 – Jordan office – summer academy – concept paper: Adult education in emergencies

## **The role of community-based organisations**

### *Government and community response*

Jordan is among the countries that have vast experience in hosting refugees. The kingdom sheltered large numbers of Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian refugees in the past. Through its experience, Jordan proved that initiatives are mainly driven by members of society and that government and international organisations cannot achieve their goals without the experience of CBOs and their modest capacity. For this reason, the Jordanian government, upon the arrival of the Syrian refugees, has broadened the local community's involvement and has given the actual refugee programme implementation tools for CBOs. From this standpoint, and after the numbers of refugees continued to increase, the Jordanian government devoted itself to putting in a response plan to help refugees and host communities, where all interventions, aid and social work got linked to The Humanitarian Relief Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, with the aim of coordinating, organising and controlling international and local humanitarian aid plans.

## **Orientation as gateway for the stages of refuge**

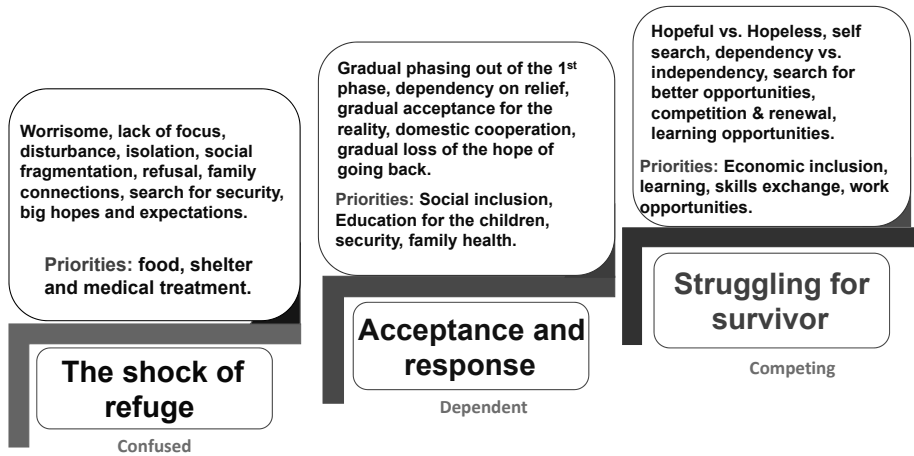
Refugee priorities and needs change depending on social status, economic and psychological states and the duration of asylum. The refugees, after their arrival, go through many stages of hope and despair.

### *First stage: The shock of refuge*

After the shock of losing their homes, their possessions and their social lives, refugees find themselves in a foreign country, living in houses unlike the ones they lived in before, seeking asylum, and living in a foreign society where they hardly know anyone. This in itself is enough to cause a state of shock and uncertainty, while constantly worrying and wondering what is ahead. The difficult psychological state that refugees go through is caused by painful experiences, and by the recollection of the destruction and violence they went through, where in some cases, torture was included. Refugees in this stage show signs of confusion, worry and absentmindedness; they even appear to be in a state of disbelief. Also in the shock of refuge stage, refugees appear isolated due to feeling scattered and separated from their usual community. Refugees still have high expectations



## Phases of refuge and education in emergencies



Source: German Adult Education Association 2014 – Jordan office – summer academy – concept paper: Adult education in emergencies

about the war ending soon and a strong sense of hope for returning to their home country. Usually in this stage, they do not accept being called “refugees” and refuse to register at the UNHCR, as many of them consider it a shame. This is why we found that psychosocial support and humanitarian relief such as food, water and shelter are top priorities for the shock of refuge stage in particular. This being said, any other services offered to refugees and host communities outside the context of the earlier mentioned priorities are completely out of tune. Concerning host communities: At the beginning of the influx, locals develop a state of sympathy towards the refugees and a feeling of responsibility to provide them with humanitarian services. Those services are described as arbitrary and unorganised, as community leaderships and social and religious organisations rush and compete to accomplish their humanitarian duties.

This reality clearly indicates the important role played by community members and CBOs; it also indicates the need for orientation as an introduction to psychosocial support for restoring a sense of security and a balanced state of being. Therefore, adult education in this context focuses on orientation, and providing refugees with the information they need as new arrivals to a community they are not accustomed to, and the same goes for those of the host community impacted by the refugee influx.

### *Second stage: Acceptance and response*

With the ongoing refugee (less than a year), the second stage starts, where refugees begin recovering from the shock and gradually become more responsive and accepting of their new reality, especially after receiving psychosocial support, shelter and basic services. In this stage, they attempt to gradually adapt to their new reality as their hope of returning to their home country diminishes. In this stage, housewives play a major role because they are an important source of the information that humanitarian organisations demand. Therefore, in this stage, which can be called the “acceptance and response stage”, refugees’ priorities start to alter and be rearranged as integration, a sense of security, family reunion, integration of children in schools, and health services go to the top of the pyramid of priorities. This is also the point where the government’s role starts to emerge alongside that played by international and local organisations.

Following that, humanitarian and relief work shifts to a more advanced stage, where the government becomes aware of the importance of cooperating with CBOs in facilitating projects and events and organising humanitarian work. Also, the government mostly emphasises that host communities are not to be excluded from humanitarian activities or projects since they have been immensely impacted by hosting refugees.

The Acceptance and Response stage is important for collecting data and framing and designing educational programmes that are in line with the needs and priorities of refugees and host communities. As for adult education, it is clear that it still focuses on orientation as a gateway to understanding reality and cooperation.

### *Third stage: Struggling for survival*

Upon giving up hope on a near-term solution for their crisis, the signs of the third stage start to appear when refugees begin shifting from a state of expectation to one of frustration, which before long develops and acts as a stimulus for them to once again search for a renewed feeling of hope, motivating them to get themselves gradually more involved in the economy and seeking job opportunities. Because of this and of other negative impacts, such as rising prices, having to work for low salaries, higher competition in the job market and other social matters such as marriage, host communities start feeling more threatened. In short, the struggling for survivor stage is a very sensitive because refugees start to seek economic and labour integration, as it represents true sharing and competition over

the host community's resources. Limited resources and the inability to secure a job through the legal and conventional processes may lead to a tenser and more competitive relationship with refugees, in addition to exploitation, working in non-formal sectors and finding illegal means to earn income, where the need for adult education programmes appears.

All this, once again stresses that both orientation and adult education are required and are of utmost importance during the economic integration stage, even more important than in earlier stages, as refugees are at the pinnacle of their integration and reconstruction of their socio-economic lives, making education, training and learning new skills top priorities for this stage. The economic integration stage is innovative in its nature, where refugees start coming up more frequently with new ideas and experiences that can add value to the host community, it is worth emphasising the importance of encouraging the exchange of knowledge and experiences between both sides to push competitiveness in a more positive direction, and to form a state of cooperation and mutual interest that will mostly improve living standards for everyone. Herein lies a real opportunity for adult education, as it goes hand in hand with the priorities of refugees and host communities, and responds to their needs to gain knowledge, learn and train.

## **Dealing with changes**

Within this context, several questions remain. How can changes and adjustments undergone by refugees and host communities be treated in light of all these challenges and changes? And are there any experiences to be built upon and learned from? The experience that DVV International has gained through its Syrian refugee and host community programme since 2013 has proved that orientation as part of an adult education programme is considered an essential and suitable gateway that contributes to developing awareness and mitigating the impact of refugees, and to building the capacity of CBOs and maximising their potential.

We first discovered that an adult education programme must be undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, a government institution. Secondly, the programme must be based on volunteering and working jointly with CBOs as executive local partners. Thirdly, adult education programmes are within the framework of social protection, which is linked to the Jordanian response plan to the Syrian crisis. Lastly, the project's field activities should be carried out by a group of volunteers

Ruba, one of the participants, states that she and other participants felt full of hope; they have realised that what they have been afflicted by does not mean the end of the world. “The project helped stimulate what is deep within us, it helped us discover ourselves and release negative energy. We were introduced to new constructive behaviours, such as the importance of saving water and resources, how we act towards each other within our families, and how to learn from each other.” She continues: “I never knew that education can be such an active and innovative process, and that it helps us put forth solutions for our problems. The project has added to our knowledge of other cultures and of our rights. We have benefited a

lot from art therapy, it has been a great way for learning and expressing.” Ruba finally added: “At least there are people who are willing to listen to our concerns and discuss our ideas in this project.”<sup>3</sup>



*Cooperation between project beneficiaries  
(Syrian refugees and Jordanians)  
Source: Hussain Al Rabie*

carefully selected and trained to work as facilitators for later orientation and educational sessions.

The project goal is to raise awareness and empower society in the field of social protection; it is executed and overseen by local partners working from within the field. The target group is women aged between 18 and 55. Syrian refugees make up 50% of the beneficiaries, and the other 50% are from host communities.

The project has been capable of accomplishing the following: Developing a team of trained volunteers for adult education purposes, (50% are Syrians and 50% Jordanians), signing partnership agreements with the Ministry of Social Development and three CBOs, organising a group of social initiatives. Despite the project’s modest capacity, it has still been capable of making a positive difference in the lives of beneficiaries and how they understand their reality and challenges, and developing the roles and performance of CBOs. In this regard, it is plausible to say that

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3/ German Adult Education Association – Jordan office 2015 – document showing results for focus groups working with project beneficiaries and volunteers.

## **Counselling is a vital approach during emergencies and crises**

An approach based upon empowering individuals to come up with their own solutions instead of being presented with available ones is an active tool for individuals to improve themselves and their societies, to help them integrate socially and economically and to independently take steps towards achieving a better quality of life. This approach raises awareness and understanding of challenges, helps alleviate stress, supports in defining needs and priorities and in evaluating and handling reality. It also opens up new prospects of cooperation and helps in defining needs and priorities, as well as foreseeing available choices and planning for the future.

adult education went into the scope of active participation and has taken a prominent role that contributes to handling the changes Jordan has been going through.

Kazim, head of one of our partner CBOs says: “This project has clear goals. It came at just the right time for us as a charity organisation, for society and for the targeted groups. It is one of the most realistic projects, and we are going to work hard to make it part of our organisation’s structure and goals.”

## **References**

*German Adult Education Association (Jordan office 2015):* Document showing results for focus groups working with project beneficiaries and volunteers

*Jordan Department of Statistics (Jordan 2015):* Population and housing census results – website [www.dos.gov.jo](http://www.dos.gov.jo)

*UNHCR (2015):* Website database – website – <http://data.unhcr.org/>

## Diversity, humanity, language

The educational work of Stuttgart Adult Education Centre with displaced persons

*As the largest provider of German courses in the city, Stuttgart Adult Education Centre is one of the first points of call for displaced persons, particularly when it comes to permanent residence in Germany. With approx. 6,500 people attending just under 400 courses, the volume in the field of German as a Foreign Language increased from 2014 to 2015 by roughly 10 % in terms of the number of courses, and by approx. 20 % in terms of the attendees. Many people with a migration background, including refugees, come to Stuttgart Adult Education Centre to learn German. The goal pursued by Stuttgart Adult Education Centre is to use and expand this contact with a German educational facility, which is frequently the first contact of all. In order to enable attendees to gain access to educational opportunities which go beyond the language courses which have an integration and an employment orientation, there is a need to build bridges leading to other courses. The concept of “Diversity – Humanity – Language” was developed and implemented in this context.*

## Diversity – Humanity – Language

The guiding idea that is followed by Stuttgart Adult Education Centre is defined by precisely this interlinking of language acquisition with learning and cultural activities which go far beyond this. Diversity, Humanity and Language thus form the focus of the integration work. If integration is to be successful, it must be a holistic concept which does not only concentrate on language acquisition pure and simple.



Fig. 1: From integration to participation

## Diversity, Humanity and Language

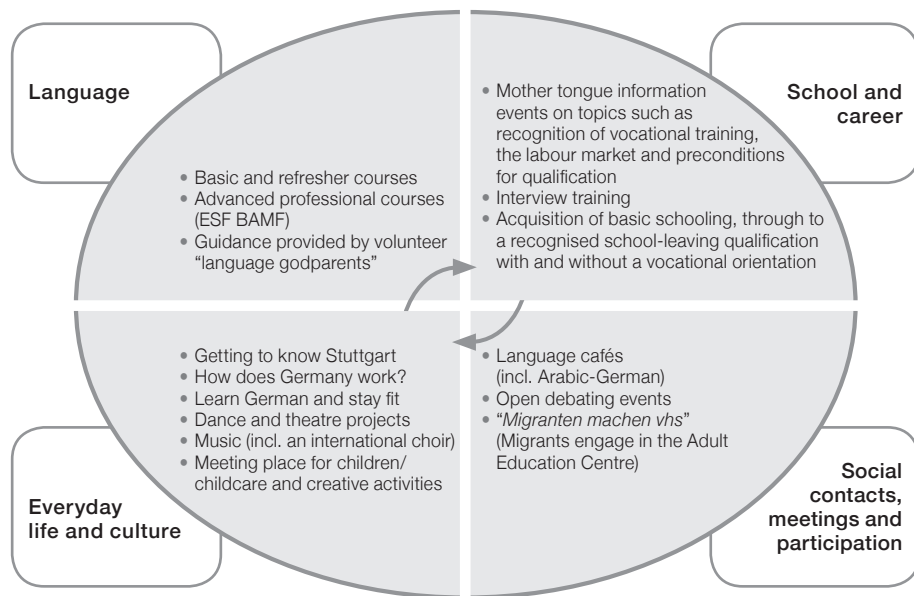


Fig 2: Diversity – Humanity – Language

The Adult Education Centre therefore offers not only language courses, but also a wide range of activities which go beyond them. The portfolio includes, amongst other things, training courses intended to enhance confidence in dealing with authorities, a work-orientated learning and advice meeting, as well as the opportunity to meet people in the language café.

The Adult Education Centre also offers solutions for displaced persons with smaller children: While parents learn the language in the course, their children are looked after at the "Children's meeting place", and can playfully form contacts with other children and with the new language.

The goals of this educational work are: To establish social contacts, initiate encounters between the residents of Stuttgart and the new arrivals, involve them in social life, enable them to come into contact with the language, culture and everyday life here in Germany for the first time, and enhance their skills. This is implemented both in smaller projects, at



individual events and in campaigns, as well as in entire programme areas, such as in the field of “Migranten machen vhs” (Migrants engage in the Adult Education Centre).

### **“Migranten machen vhs”**

In Stuttgart, where an above-average number of people with a migration background were already living before the recent immigration movements, that is since the 1960s<sup>1</sup>, a whole programme area has developed entitled “Migranten machen vhs” which is based on immigrants’ skills. This existing service can now also be used for people with a displacement background without making any major structural changes to the concepts in order to make a contribution towards successful integration.

The principle is simple: People with a migration or displacement background become course leaders and lecturers at the Adult Education Centre.

The aim pursued by “Migranten machen vhs” and by the specialist area entitled “Intercultural dialogue” is to build bridges between people from different countries of origin, and to promote dialogue and hence mutual understanding. It particularly suggests itself to deploy course leaders from other countries of origin, especially in the areas of world music, foreign literature, popular dance, intercultural theatre or international cuisine. An afternoon in an oriental tent, an evening meal enjoyed with “guest worker” families, or a concert with dancing Dervishes and classical Turkish music, are only a small selection of what is on offer in this specialist field. The activities are to be used to involve migrants, whether or not they have experienced displacement, in the shaping of the programme as lecturers in order to benefit from their abilities, skills and knowledge of another culture. Together with the migrants’ organisations in Stuttgart, the Adult Education Centre is planning activities which are interesting or helpful for their members, and which help them to advance in their career planning.

The inclusion of people who have foreign roots in the programme of the Adult Education Centre allows their status in society to be acknowledged by the Adult Education Centre. Working as a lecturer enables them to encounter German residents on an equal footing, and the new work and the role as an instructor frequently instil a certain pride.

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1/ The numbers vary, but a figure of roughly 40% of the population of Stuttgart municipal district can be presumed to have a migration background (<http://www.statistik.baden-wuerttemberg.de/Service/Veroeff/Monatshefte/20151002.mha?path=/BevoelkGebiet/MigrNation/>; 22 March 2016).



*Migrants and displaced persons learn and teach at Stuttgart Adult Education Centre*

*Source: Dagmar Braun*

Having said that, it is not only as course leaders, but also as course participants, that displaced persons or immigrants who have been living in Germany (in isolation) for a prolonged period can be approached and activated. The orientation of the activities, the content of which is frequently multicultural in its nature, the fact that the courses are held in a different language, or simply the commonality with the course leaders, who may have had similar experiences with migration or displacement, mean that an increasing number of people from different countries of origin can be encouraged to attend.

Several selected activities from the “Migranten machen vhs” programme are to be presented below with the accompanying programme texts.

## **Female European migrants – Refugee women in Europe<sup>2</sup>**

Refugee women have a wide variety of different talents and abilities. They want to work, and they want to achieve something in their lives. Learning the language is not enough for this. They also need advice and guidance in order to become aware of their skills for the German labour market. They need an orientation for the paths towards basic and further training. They need competent specialist support to enable them to overcome their traumas, as well as reliable childcare. Together with experts, specific goals are drawn up showing the steps that need to be taken in order to achieve integration into the labour market.

## **Learn German and stay fit – Relaxation and fitness during your break**

Be it headaches, tenseness, neck problems or fatigue, simple energy exercises during the lunch break of the German courses rapidly help improve physical fitness, reactivate circulation and give energy to keep on learning. Lecturers from the health section demonstrate a large number of exercises during the lunch break in the foyer of the “TREFFPUNKT” at Rotebühlplatz, the main building of Stuttgart Adult Education Centre, and these can also be done very simply at home. This enables German learners to concentrate during the lessons and learn effectively.

## **The international choir<sup>3</sup>**

A workshop with an international repertoire. you can learn to develop your individual musical experience by singing in the choir, and at the same time to adjust to other voices. No prior musical knowledge is necessary.

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2/ In cooperation with SWR International (German radiostation with news for migrants) and the Integration Office of Stuttgart State Capital, Working Group on Migrants and the Ministry of the Interior of the *Land* Baden-Württemberg.

3/ In cooperation with the “Verein Freundschaftsbrücke e.V.” (Friendship bridge association).

## **Armenian cuisine<sup>4</sup>**

Armenia is a country with a unique cuisine and culture, with ancient churches and cloisters and with a culinary tradition that is more than a thousand years old and which has also enriched the cuisines of other countries. We invite you to attend a workshop with the author of the book “Eine kulinarische Reise durch Armenien” (A culinary journey across Armenia), Susanna Sarkisian. Learn about some of the secrets of Armenian cuisine. This is an opportunity for Armenians to rediscover the recipes of their home, and Germans to simply fall in love with the sunny, healthy, diverse cuisine of Armenia. Susanna Sarkisian spent many years working as an expert for Armenian cuisine on Armenia’s state television, contributing to a great number of programmes on Armenian culture and cuisine. She has been living in Germany for roughly 17 years.

## **Ramadan? What exactly is it? An information event and an invitation to take part<sup>5</sup>**

Ramadan – the Islamic month of fasting – begins on 6 June and ends on 4 July 2016. According to the law, fasting is defined as refraining from engaging in specific activities: Fasting is a part of the day, and breaking the fast is for the night. The fast ends when night falls.

We would like to invite you to learn why Ramadan is celebrated, how Muslims in Stuttgart spend this period and what they gain from it for themselves. You will receive information and observe practical examples on eating specific dishes and ingredients in the daily breaking of the fast, and how the cleansing of the body and the soul takes place. You will also learn a lot about the beneficial effect of water, dates and salt. You can try it out in June by visiting a family for a day and see whether such a day of fasting is something you might want to do.

## **Hand-made jewellery from Peru<sup>6</sup>**

There are countless fruits, peas and beans, seeds or bamboo sticks in the jungles of Peru which offer a colourful diversity and have been used

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4/ In cooperation with the “Armenische Gemeinde Baden-Württemberg e. V.” (Armenian Congregation of Baden-Württemberg).

5/ In cooperation with the “Verein StuFem e. V.” (Stuttgart Women’s Association).

6/ In cooperation with Artesanos Peruvian Handicrafts.

for centuries to make great jewellery. Silver is a metal which is also mined in the mountains of Peru. You can get together with the Peruvian artists to make simple, original pieces of jewellery such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets and key rings from seeds and fruits such as hauyruro or tagua and from pearls from the Peruvian rain forest. This will also provide you with lots of interesting information on the origin and use of the natural materials.

### **How is “Migranten machen vhs” possible?**

In order to establish a programme like “Migranten machen vhs”, it is necessary first of all to establish good contacts with migrants’ organisations and associations. These are not only the key for tailored activities, but also for the acceptance and support of the courses and events. So that activities do not prove futile, it is important not to implement one’s own ideas, but to take up the ideas which are put forward by the migrants’ associations and organisations to the Adult Education Centre. The Centre regards itself as a kind of infrastructure provider. Actively approaching migrants’ associations and organisations, pointing out that the Adult Education Centre is making itself and its infrastructure available (premises, enrolment management, planning, advertising via the programme, etc.) can help establish a functioning network.

The vital aspect is that the structures offered by the Adult Education Centre need to be designed in a way that is flexible enough and that they must be adjusted to the needs of the associations. Experience has shown that for instance the common practice of cancelling courses one week in advance if the minimum number of participants is not reached is not practicable when working with the associations. Many attendees do not register until several days before the course begins, or turn up to the first lesson. These particularities must be taken into account. A more flexible, tolerant approach is also needed with regard to arrangements and deadlines. It should furthermore be borne in mind that support needs to be offered in some areas, such as when it comes to drafting announcements for educational activities for the programme booklet. More pedagogical support in the development of course curricula and in supporting and developing the skills of the course leaders also helps to smooth the cooperation with migrants’ associations and organisations.

When it comes to programme planning, it is important, firstly, for the initiative to come from the migrants’ associations and organisations since they are best able to assess which topics are relevant for their clientele.

Secondly, however, when it comes to programme planning, it is also possible to include current (political) developments. During the war in Yugoslavia or the Arab Spring, Stuttgart Adult Education Centre for instance offered more events and discussions regarding topics from the respective crisis area. It is possible here that topics such as religion, folklore or political opinions do not always correspond to the mainstream opinion. A little courage is therefore needed when it comes to offering migrants a platform for exchange, discussion and development. An openness exists on the one hand, but on the other hand boundaries are set by the guiding and fundamental values of the Adult Education Centre.

In order to maintain an active network of different migrants' organisations and associations, the Adult Education Centre holds a "Day of Cultures" once per year. This "Day of Cultures" is a colourful celebration for the whole family at which the associations and organisations provide an insight into their respective cultures and can present their work on information stands. On this day, more than 60 German and foreign cultural associations offer a varied, supra-generational, sensory cultural programme on several stages as well as on stands. This Day serves, firstly, as a kind of market of possibilities for the associations to network and introduce themselves. On the other hand, it is used as a provider of ideas and a "recruitment exchange". Many of the talents and topics which are shown on the stands there can be taken up later when planning the courses. Many course leaders and the activities which are offered in the programme of "Migranten machen vhs" were "discovered" in this way.

A further major aspect is supporting the associations and organisations in acquiring potential funding. High fees are frequently demanded for events with well-known authors or musicians which neither the associations nor the Adult Education Centre can pay, and which are also not to be recouped from the attendance fees or entry charges in order to avoid raising the entry threshold. The Adult Education Centre therefore acts to provide assistance both when applying for grants and in acquiring sponsors. The good reputation of the Adult Education Centres as a reliable partner with high-quality activities frequently helps the migrants' associations and organisations to obtain funding which they would not have received without the Adult Education Centre. The acceptance of the Adult Education Centre among the associations and organisations thus increases massively, and facilitates further good cooperation, as well as stabilising the network, without which "Migranten machen vhs" could not be implemented.

## Tandem programme for displaced persons

A further project of Stuttgart Adult Education Centre which is based on integration and participation is the Tandem programme, in which course participants of the Adult Education Centre are enabled to take a person along who has experience of displacement to a course of their choosing. The task of the course sponsors is to give the displaced persons a hand and to go the extra mile in terms of guidance so that persons who have fled to Germany are able to follow what is taking place in the course. This is necessary since the course leaders sometimes cannot take on this role (for example when they lack the language knowledge).

The programme was developed with the aim in mind of both involving the new arrivals and enabling them to be included in social life, and of enabling people from Stuttgart to overcome their inhibitions and prejudices vis-à-vis displaced persons, as well as collecting new shared learning experiences. The course sponsors only need to contribute a relatively small amount of time, as they would attend the course in question in any case. They also have a less onerous obligation than in other types of refugee assistance, and are able to determine for themselves how intensive the contact is. For the displaced persons, on the other hand, attending a yoga class in English, a creative course or the international choir is a welcome change from everyday life in the accommodations. They are also given the opportunity to improve their German, and are pleased to take the opportunity to learn something about culture and life in Germany on an equal footing with the others attending the course. Particularly also for the course attendees who are initially not involved, who are not course sponsors, the tandem programme constitutes a gain. It enables people to come into contact with displaced persons who might not have sought such contact by themselves, might feel insecure about how to approach such newcomers, or are even prejudiced against displaced persons.

### *How does the Tandem Programme work?*

As a matter of principle, the Adult Education Centre uses its existing contacts with displaced persons in the German and integration courses when looking for suitable tandem partners. This is where the currently-available tandem places are made public. However, displaced persons who are interested in attending one of the courses can also be reached via social workers working in the accommodations, or via the many “friends of refugees” circles with their countless volunteer helpers. “Matching” is relatively time-consuming since both the course sponsors and the tan-

dem partners not only have to be found and brought together, but also provided with guidance. Therefore sufficient capacities should be available in the educational facilities to supervise the programme and its participants. Given the situation in the accommodations, or because of traumatic experiences, it may happen that the tandem partners make an unreliable impression if they do not turn up when arranged. Traumatized individuals may also appear uninvolved, as if they were not enjoying the course. This may confuse or worry the course sponsors, or even exasperate them. The task of the tandem project coordinator is then to mediate between the different positions: On the one hand to strive to create an understanding for the special situation of displaced persons, and on the other to explain that binding arrangements should indeed be complied with where possible or that appointments that have been made need to be cancelled in good time.

These tandem course places for displaced persons are funded via donations. The possibility to also support Adult Education Centres financially via donations is still relatively uncommon, and was actively advertised by Stuttgart Adult Education Centre via its own homepage, on social media and in the programme schedule. This made it possible to acquire donations not only for tandem courses, but for instance also for language grants for people with a migration or refugee background. If no donations are available which could fund tandem course participation for a displaced person, the places are offered at a very large discount. Reducing the course fees by 80% enables them to attend a course cheaply even when no donations are available. The remaining amount for the course is paid by the course sponsor him or herself in most cases. The reduction rate is borrowed from the “opportunity place exchange”<sup>7</sup> principle. This is a further tool which was not developed specifically and exclusively for displaced persons, but which is nonetheless well adapted – just as “Migranten machen vhs” – towards integrating and involving people who have a refugee background.

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7/ The “Chancenplatzbörse” (opportunity place exchange) is offered shortly before the courses commence in order to offer individual places at a fee that is discounted by up to 80% for holders of the Stuttgart City Bonuscard. These courses are advertised in close cooperation with social facilities in Stuttgart, such as Tafel food banks, Job Centres, the social welfare office or Caritas. Opportunity places are granted for courses where the minimum number of participants has already been reached, but the maximum number of participants has not yet been attained. The places are awarded 3-7 days before the courses commence.



# Cultural Communication Skills at Aalen Adult Education Centre: Ten years of intercultural training

*The current immigration situation poses new challenges for the providers of intercultural courses: Integration and intercultural understanding are reciprocal, mutual processes which need to include both the members of the majority society, and immigrants themselves. This is why separate formats need to be developed for displaced persons. Intercultural skills are also becoming a necessary prerequisite when it comes to the activities of volunteers in work with refugees. Aalen Adult Education Centre has been offering intercultural courses since 2005. The content and status of these courses have fundamentally changed since then: Whilst ten years ago the reference framework was still a clearly international context, today's courses relate to the diversity of active interculturality in a modern immigration society. The demands that are made by such a society are taken into account by the "Xpert Culture Communication Skills®" course programme.*

Aalen Adult Education Centre deploys this multiplier programme in a diversity of forms for local course activities: Intercultural skills forming a key qualification for the local administration, as an established element of further training for course leaders, and as a train-the-trainer programme. New target groups and formats were constantly added: Educationalists and schools, early learning and day facilities, international city partnerships, blended learning and EU projects.

### **Classical intercultural training – preparing for a stay abroad and the international context**

“Lokales Denken – globales Handeln” (Think local, act global): This much quoted book title by Geert Hofstede was the force behind the first programme activities offered by Aalen Adult Education Centre on the topic of intercultural skills. More than ten years ago, back in 2005, the basic elements and the focus lay almost exclusively in classical preparations for a stay abroad. Aalen and its surrounding area are home to a large number of successful international companies operating in optics and mechanical engineering. The Adult Education Centre offered specialised courses to these global players for secondments abroad, particularly to India, China and the Near East.

Deployments abroad of a special kind also departed from the neighbouring transport battalion of the Federal Armed Forces in Ellwangen, from where soldiers were sent to Afghanistan and the Islamic world. Aalen Adult Education Centre also carried out intercultural awareness courses with geographical elements for this special target group.

Intercultural issues furthermore were and remain the special area of interest of the Head of Aalen Adult Education Centre who, having obtained his doctorate in Islamic Studies and Arabic Studies, deals intensively with non-European cultures. He spent a large share of his training and of his career to date in India and in the Near East, and he worked as a freelance intercultural trainer prior to that.

The common framework of all these course formats was their international context: In this process, a distinction was “always made quite naturally by national affiliation. The national culture acts as a vital factor here, enabling us to comprehend and accredit people’s actions” (Roth/Köck, p. 9). Dealing with cultural topics provides a highly welcome orienting and organisational function in such contexts. Preparatory training courses which have an international orientation are therefore aimed to avoid cultural clangers and to minimise conflicts in established work-related situations within (seemingly) clear-cut cultural boundaries.

## The “Xpert Culture Communication Skills (CCS)” course system

Migration and the increasing everyday nature of intercultural encounters in Germany have led since that time to a process of rethinking: “Today’s training programmes in intercultural skills are expected to refer to the diversity of active interculturality. Unlike in international contexts, the ‘foreigners’ are an established part of society in this case. Societal coexistence blurs the precise contours of cultural delimitation, given that the everyday reality of migrants, of those who frequently change cultures, and of members of bi-cultural and tricultural families, cannot be adequately described by simplified formulae such as ‘Turkish’, ‘Moroccan’ or ‘Russian’” (Roth/Köck, p. 9).

These considerable changes in demands are taken into account by the Adult Education Centres’ Xpert Culture Communication Skills® (CCS) course and certificate system. It was developed from 2002 to 2004 by a project group of the Bavarian Association of Adult Education Centres in close cooperation with specialists at Munich University, and promoted from funds of the European Union and by the Bavarian Ministry of Culture and Education.

The new course concept was particularly welcomed at Aalen Adult Education Centre because it provided a standardised course programme on a demanding academic basis which firstly discussed the concrete challenges posed by a modern immigration society on the ground, and secondly could be adjusted in a highly-flexible manner to the needs of the various target groups in the local environment.

For this reason, Aalen Adult Education Centre invested a considerable amount of time, energy and staffing resources from the outset into introducing the CCS concept as a multiplier programme. Back in 2006, the head of the Adult Education Centre and several selected lecturers underwent the complete training to become Xpert CCS trainers. Since then, all the modules of the course concept have been regularly offered at Aalen Adult Education Centre. The first target group was that of course leaders from the languages section (German and foreign languages) from the region’s Adult Education Centres.

Large numbers of course leaders from adult education took the basic and professional modules within the further training programme of the Eastern Württemberg Adult Education Centre Region and in cooperation with the Regional Office for Vocational Further Training, and have furthermore been enabled since 2008 to attend the advanced modules and the entire train-the-trainer training at Aalen Adult Education Centre. The close cooperation between Aalen Adult Education Centre and the Baden-Württemberg Association of Adult Education Centres began when the Centre was recognised as an examination centre for this course concept. The CCS train-the-

trainer training has been offered together with the Provincial Association of Adult Education Centers in the state of Baden-Württemberg since then, and a call for tenders was put out in the land-wide further training programme for course leaders in adult education centres. Almost all the trainers who teach CCS educational activities at adult education centres in Baden-Württemberg received their train-the-trainer training in Aalen.

It is thanks to the intensive cooperation between the Adult Education Centre and the Office for Migration and Integration, still referred to as the immigration office at that time, and its director, that the Xpert CCS courses in Aalen themselves have been very well received and were particularly intensively deployed in the further training of local decision-makers. The Office for Migration and Integration received the prize for the friendliest immigration authority in Germany in 2005 from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and from the “Donors’ Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities”. A large share of the prize money from this award was spent on the intercultural skills courses for local authority staff.

The Xpert CCS programme therefore became an established component of municipal further training. The successful anchoring of intercultural skills as a key qualification took place via a classical top-down strategy: First of all, the mayor, divisional heads, and office directors, attended one-day awareness-creation courses. This was followed by regular courses lasting several days in the introductory CCS basic and professional modules for municipal staff who had regular contact in their work with people from other cultures.

## **New target groups and course formats**

In addition to the main target group of the local administration, the intercultural skills courses particularly targeted educationalists from the outset. In addition to the lecturers at the Adult Education Centre, many teachers from the Eastern Württemberg Evening High School for Adults took the opportunity to take the basic, professional and master CCS modules within their in-school further training.

In particular at educational conferences, workshops were asked about for teachers from schools in Aalen which were to borrow from the CCS concept. The concept has also been used several times on project days with school pupils.

There was considerable demand for the intercultural courses among kindergarten teachers in Aalen. Their staff were offered both one- to two-day workshops and the opportunity to attend the modules of the Xpert CCS course. Two heads of day-care facilities acquired their CCS trainers’

licences as multipliers for their staff in 2010. These certificates were presented at a public ceremony by the Mayor of Aalen. In doing so, he made it clear that the City of Aalen regards intercultural skills as constituting a key qualification and as an established component of its further training programme.

Cooperation with the regional Universities of Applied Sciences has also been playing a greater and greater role since 2011. Aalen University of Applied Sciences offers the Xpert CCS basic and professional modules within its orientation phase for students, and the Dual University of Baden-Württemberg in Heidenheim has integrated the first module into individual courses of study. The courses are taught by lecturers from Aalen Adult Education Centre directly at the universities within a separate teaching assignment, and the examinations are set by Adult Education Centre in each case.

In particular these new target groups and cooperation activities are the reason why Aalen Adult Education Centre is one of the most success-



*Xpert Culture Communication Skills course for migrants*

*Source: Jürgen Wasella*

ful CCS examination centres in all of Germany, and in some years has set more examinations than the examination centres at adult education centres in cities such as in Berlin, Hanover or Munich.

Aalen Adult Education Centre has always carried out its activities aimed at expanding the Xpert CCS programme in close coordination with the regional associations of the adult education centres. The centre's staff are for instance represented on the CCS Programme Commission, which decides on the refinement of the concept and on new course formats. At the same time, Aalen Adult Education Centre was involved in 2012/2013 in a pilot project with the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Culture and Education in which the CCS programme was expanded to include e-learning elements. The advanced "Xpert CCS Master" module has been offered in Aalen exclusively since then as a blended learning course. The advantage of this is that the many case studies and items of homework contained in this module are processed and discussed on a joint learning platform. Since large numbers of participants of the master's course travel to Aalen from all over Baden-Württemberg, the course can now be held on two weekends instead of, as previously, on three. The content of the third weekend is dealt with on the learning platform.

Between 2013 and 2016, this ILIAS learning platform was an established component of the "Integrating cultures – intercultural opening of the administration" further training programme, which was promoted from funds from the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Integration and from the European Social Fund (ESF). The basic to master CCS modules formed the foundation for its courses. Within this *land-wide* project, Aalen Adult Education Centre offered not only seminars within the individual municipalities, but it also operated cross-regionally by offering amongst other things courses for municipal administrations whose adult education centres had no experience with the CCS concept, or placing experienced course leaders at their disposal.

The most comprehensive, time-consuming project so far to implement intercultural skills was carried out by the city and Adult Education Centre Aalen in 2013. Under the title "IK Twin – New paths in town twinning", the EU programme entitled "Europe for Citizens Programme" (EBB) promoted a training and encounter programme lasting for several months for participants from Aalen and its twin towns. This multilateral project, which was concerned with both the international and the multicultural context, was launched in February 2013 with a one-week intercultural training course for almost 80 participants from five European countries. The special aspect here was that the course was given parallel in English, French and German. What is more, all the material of the CCS course (textbook, accompanying



*EU-Project “IK Twin – New paths in town twinning” – Presentation of a participant*

*Source: Jürgen Wasella*

texts, slides and examinations) was translated into these languages and made available on a specially-launched Moodle learning platform.

As the course progressed, it was concerned with drawing up joint pilot projects, which were presented to the Mayor of Aalen at the end of the project week in Germany. These included sustainable project ideas such as a German-Polish school partnership, pupil exchange programmes, youth encounters, band workshops for music groups or tourist programme concepts in the respective twin towns, as well as joint projects on interculturality and gender issues.

All of the sub-projects were worked on once more in the next six months jointly via the online platform, and finally were presented in October 2013 at a second workshop in Aalen’s twin town of Cervia on the Italian Adriatic coast. The sustainability of the project was based not only in the sub-projects, which were also continued after the end of the project, but also on the drafting of multilingual course material of the CCS concept, which will also be available for future projects at European level.

## The outlook: Future course formats for the migrants society

The increased immigration by refugees since 2015 poses new challenges to the providers of intercultural course programmes: Integration and intercultural understanding are mutual processes which must include both the members of the majority society and the immigrants themselves. Aalen Adult Education Centre thus endeavours to ensure that the contents of the Xpert CCS course programme are also made available to migrants who only recently arrived in Germany. In order to achieve this goal, a project was submitted to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) at the beginning of 2016 which aims to train multilingual residents of Aalen as integration mentors to offer course activities to those who seek refuge in Germany in their languages of origin.

The focus on the target groups that are to be approached has also been changed by the current situation. It is no longer only local authority staff who are in urgent need of attending a course, but intercultural skills are also becoming a key qualification for an increasing number of volunteers who work with refugees. The helpers are frequently too little prepared for the cultural differences. Conflicts in work with refugees are frequently intercultural in their nature. Sound preparation can help make the deployment of voluntary helpers more successful. The new shortened Xpert CCS workshop entitled “Skill-building for volunteers in work with displaced persons” was developed especially for this target group. This course has also been offered by Aalen Adult Education Centre since recently, and there is considerable demand for it, particularly at the meeting point between full-time staffers and volunteers, as well as in local authority facilities which work together with volunteers.

Finally, immigration also entails a potential for social conflict which suitable course programmes can alleviate. In order to be sustainable, such programmes for the majority society however must start early on in life. Aalen Adult Education Centre therefore aims to develop intercultural course formats for school pupils and to train multipliers who can impart intercultural questions to their fellow students in a way that they can understand at their age.

As is shown by the example of Aalen Adult Education Centre, the framework conditions and the status of intercultural training have undergone a complete change in the space of only ten years. The Xpert CCS course concept however constitutes a stable basis for adult education centres to borrow from and flexibly offer courses tailored to target groups and to react to such changes. At the same time, the experience of Aalen Adult Education Centre also makes it clear that particularly educational



facilities in medium-sized towns can become the most important partner in their municipality in this promising field by targetedly deploying intercultural courses.

## References

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## Education for displaced people – National and international perspectives

*The immigration of roughly 4,000 refugees in 2015 alone posed a major challenge to Kassel Region Adult Education Centre with regard to supporting the successful integration of these people. This situation led to new tasks and aims requiring restructuring in terms of both funding and staffing, as well as replanning/restructuring activities. It is particularly the contrast between the concentration in the city centre and the spread in the rural district which required individual approaches to be taken. However, concerning the successful integration of newly-arrived immigrants, importance particularly attaches to ensuring that all the stakeholders work together closely to reach as many people as possible and to enable them to transfer seamlessly between different educational activities.*

## The current situation in Kassel – opportunities for refugees

Stretching 42 km from East to West and 55.4 km from North to South, Kassel rural district is one of the largest districts in Hessen in terms of its surface area, which totals 1292.77 km<sup>2</sup>. Kassel's rural district is based in the urban municipality Kassel, which is almost completely surrounded by the rural district, consisting in turn of 29 municipalities. Together, the city of Kassel and Kassel's rural district now have more than 428,000 inhabitants. After the number of inhabitants in the rural district had fallen continually from 2002 onwards, 2014 was the first year in which growth could be observed. This is primarily the result of immigration. There had been rapid growth in the number of immigrants since 2014. In 2015, a total of roughly 4,000 displaced people arrived in the city and in Kassel's rural district.

Kassel Region Adult Education Centre (Volkshochschule Region Kassel) is a municipal educational institution targeting the services which it provides for people in the city and in Kassel rural district. The range of activities includes society, culture, health, languages, IT and careers. There is also an Education Centre for children which offers courses for children throughout the subjects.

### First step: learn the new language

Learning German is the first and probably most important step for newly-arrived immigrants to be able to integrate into society and to participate in social life. Therefore, Kassel Region Adult Education Centre has to rise to the challenge of shortly meeting the major demand for language courses. Caused by these developments, there are new tasks and aims for Kassel Region Adult Education Centre which bring about changes for the educational institution itself. It is particularly also the spread in the rural district in contrast to the concentration in the city which poses a challenge for the city and for Kassel's rural district.



In June 2015 Sven Hebestreit spent a period of time on a guest visit on behalf of Kassel Region Adult Education Centre in the “Studiefrämjandet” educational institution in Uppsala, Sweden. This institution has already developed specific concepts concerning integration work for quite some time. The purpose of the internship was to facilitate an exchange of experiences as well as to collect new ideas in order to be able to plan and implement activities of our own. It was the organisational structures and funding which were particularly interesting here.

## **The current situation in Kassel – opportunities for refugees**

### *Networking of educational facilities*

Cooperation and exchange with other educational institutions and with all areas being involved in integration and education are necessary in order to ensure a successful, holistic range of education for newly-arrived immigrants. This is ensured above all by engaging in a great deal of networking. The Adult Education Centre is the only provider of integration courses in Kassel rural district which satisfies the requirements made by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), whilst the city itself houses a variety of educational institutions offering integration courses. The institutions absolutely have to work together closely in order to ensure optimum provision of services in promoting language acquisition, and hence to quickly reach as many of the new arrivals as possible.

Having said that, it is not only communication with all the service-providers that is important, but also with all concerned in the field of integration. There is a constant exchange with all the stakeholders in integration work. These include the BAMF, with its regional coordinators, as well as the voluntary coordinator for work with refugees in Kassel. The major stakeholders however also include the responsible offices constant contact is maintained with them.

### **Training for employees**

Since very many of the newly-arrived immigrants come from the Arab region, language is frequently a major challenge for the staff of the public offices. In order to ensure that they are able to address this target group confidently, special training courses have been designed to teach them greetings, how to engage in small talk, know important specialist terms, as well as being familiar with cultural aspects. This training has been provided to staff at the Adult Education Centre itself, as well as to staff of the social welfare office, amongst others. Specific terms and greetings as well as understanding help displaced people to feel welcomed and accepted. This quickly creates trust, as well as showing mutual respect, thus making interaction easier.

Another training course in which the planning phase is almost complete and which will be implemented soon is a course for voluntary helpers and managers. It is to provide both language knowledge and the legal basis as well as other skills, such as intercultural ones. The purpose is to improve the communication and support of those being involved in order to optimise integration.

## New structures

The large number of additional integration courses and other language-acquisition services have led to structural changes. In order not to influence the courses operating outside these educational activities, the responsible “Integration department” was separated in terms of its funding from the remaining divisions of the Adult Education Centre. This ensures that it does not superimpose itself on the other specialist areas. It also makes it possible to use revenue that is generated more flexibly for staff, material or other things there. This is a major structural factor since it means that it does not influence any other educational sector, even if the integration activities were to fall considerably once more in their intensity.

In order to ensure that there is adequate funding to cover the costs of the language-acquisition activities as well as the integration courses which are promoted by the federation, a variety of types of project funding has been acquired. This is a major aspect since the displaced participants are unable to meet the cost of the educational activities themselves.

The considerable demand for integration and language courses automatically led to an increase in the demand for course-leaders for German as a Foreign Language and German as a Second Language. To avoid shortages of specialist staff, the previous fee-based contracts were con-



*talentCAMPus: "Sprache macht stark!" (Language makes you strong!)*

*Source: Sven Hebestreit*

verted to permanent integration contracts. Employees can therefore count on having a secure job, and this minimises the risk of them being tempted away by other educational facilities.

In general terms, the entire integration area has been expanded with regard to staffing and funding in order to be able to carry out the work that needs to be done, whilst maintaining high quality standards.

Language is the first step towards integrating newly-arrived immigrants. Therefore it is important that language-acquisition is commenced very soon after immigration. As soon as this training has been completed, refugees need to be offered an opportunity to apply what they have learned in a practical setting so that they do not get left behind. This may be an advanced course, or they can be enabled to attend labour market-orientated activities such as internships. A good opportunity for such involvement is also offered by the standard courses which can be attended at the adult education centres. Teachers in all subject areas who would be willing to teach in several languages (English, French), or can see another way to integrate participants having little knowledge of the language into their courses have been targetedly approached for this. Displaced people can then attend free of charge if there are still open spots on the course. This offers a variety of opportunities for newly-arrived immigrants. They can firstly familiarise themselves with different fields, whilst at the same time they can try their language knowledge and apply what they have learned. On top of that they get the opportunity to meet people from the region.

### **Example: *talentCAMPus***

Another programme concerning integration work for newly-arrived immigrants being intensively used by Kassel Region Adult Education Centre is the *talentCAMPus*, which is made possible by the “Kultur macht stark. Bündnisse für Bildung“ (Culture makes you strong. Alliances for education) support programme. The programme is promoted by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and focuses on children and juveniles who have educational disadvantages. The *talentCAMPus* is a cultural holiday course programme, which promotes individual measures for learning target-orientated education, and facilitates a cultural and aesthetic interaction with the social environment.

Kassel has already implemented 32 successful projects from when it was launched in mid-2013 down to the present day.

Caused by the large number of displaced people who arrived in 2015 it was impossible for many children and juveniles to attend school right after their arrival. This frequently takes several months at present. Besides, there

is no compulsory education for juveniles from the age of 16 in Hessen. In order to be able to make education available to this particular target group the *talentCAMPus* support programme has been expanded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The recently introduced *talentCAMPus plus* makes it possible to extend the range of activities by implementing cultural educational projects even during school hours. Therefore, the *talentCAMPus plus* affords children and juveniles having sought refuge in Germany but who are not currently attending school the opportunity to improve their language knowledge as well as enabling them to enjoy a varied cultural programme promoting integration and participation.

Kassel Region Adult Education Centre is an educational institution for adults, but it nonetheless attaches importance to shaping education in terms of lifelong learning, starting at a young age. The additional projects are therefore supplemented in the Adult Education Centre's standard programme to include activities for children and juveniles.

In order to successfully integrate newly-arrived immigrants, we are particularly concerned to ensure cooperation on the part of all stakeholders in order to reach as many people as possible and to facilitate a seamless transition between different educational activities.

# Empowerment-based education in a multicultural environment

Working with Syrian refugees<sup>1</sup> in Turkey

*The Syrian refugee flood first started in April 2011 when human mobility became dense on the borders as a result of the “open-door policy” implemented by Turkey. The need to implement and give voice to different empowerment methods arose when the nature and geographical prevalence of the short-term immediate humanitarian aid approach, anticipated by immigrant-receiving and immigrant societies during the Syrian civil war, changed and increased. This article aims to define and analyse the experiences of the Yuva Association (YUVA), a national NGO providing Syrian refugees in Turkey with education services that are empowering and providing assistance. This review article will evaluate the concept of being a refugee in Turkey, the importance of education in the lives of children, young people and adult refugees and the issues they face in this process, and discuss the approaches of empowerment-based education through discussions on educational processes using socio-psychological concepts.*

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1/ Throughout the study, Syrians under temporary protection will be referred as “Syrian refugees”.

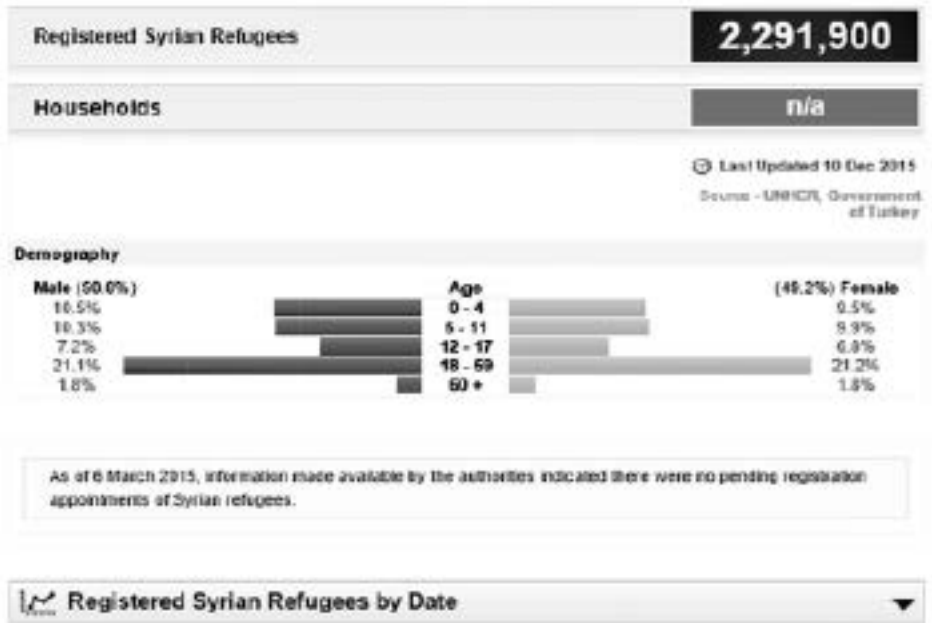


## Introduction

The “Arab Spring” is a process that broke out in the early 2010s, the effects of which are on-going. It started in Tunisia, followed by numerous Middle Eastern countries, and has come to a deadlock in Syria (Topak, 2014, p. 246). The points to take into consideration and investigate are how the Arab Spring process, which caused a serious restlessness in the Arab streets (Topak, 2014, p. 249), affected immediate humanitarian aid operations in Turkey, which methods were followed when defining, meeting and evaluating the needs of Syrian refugees from the perspective of education, and how non-governmental organisations made sense of and modelled education from humanitarian aid activities.

## Syrians in Turkey: From guests to temporary protection

The migration wave from Syria to Turkey is still continuing. The increasing effect of the Syrian civil war changed the picture from guests to mass



<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>

influx; so much so that, according to the figures from the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), 1.65 million Syrians took refuge in Turkey in October 2014 (Erdoğan, 2015, p. 33) while unofficial figures say 2.2 million.

The increasing number of refugees led to the need to make some official regulations for Turkey, which attempted to meet this need with the temporary protection regulations of 22 October 2014, within the framework of the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection, in which the definition of refugee was replaced by the statuses of conditional refugee, secondary protection and temporary protection (Erdoğan, 2015, p. 44).

In this context, temporary protection was defined as “Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection.” (Law on Foreigners and International Protection, 2014, p. 41). Within this framework, it can be seen that the definitions of conditional refugee, secondary protection and refugee were made clear with the legal framework in the background, without using the term “Syrian”. Definitions also give information about limitations and inhibitions in Turkey while determining action plans and strategies of humanitarian aid activities.

The newly arranged legal framework appears to be a soft transition, however the feeling of being in an unsafe zone, which triggered Syrians to leave their country, continues, particularly as regards access to education, shaping the future and generating sources of self-sufficiency. The legal regulations which have been made also pose the risk of civil rights abuses towards the immigrant community, by leading to an approach of “service”, which is defined outside the concept of rights and left at the sole discretion of the state (Erdoğan, 2015, p. 53), with the discourse of “being within the bounds of possibility”.

The Yuva Association has observed in its field studies – conducted in Gaziantep and Hatay under the Syrian Refugees Programme since 2013 – that Syrians had difficulty in accessing formal education and they believed that education would make no contribution unless there was a legal foundation.

Determining if the profile of Syrians in Turkey is similar to universal refugee profiles in order to identify advocacy activities through a rights-based approach involves comparing it with the universal refugee profile to show the inability of temporary protection, secondary status and conditional refugee concepts to define the current situation.

The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Universal Refugee Profile vs. the Profile of Syrians in Turkey*

Characteristics	Universal Refugee Profile	Profile of Syrians in Turkey
Different languages	*	**
Different cultures	*	**
Different life styles	*	**
Low socioeconomic levels	*	**
High proportion of women and children among the refugee population	*	**
Low educational level	*	**

Source:

\* Castles and Miller (2008, p. 18); Simurg (2007)

\*\* AFAD (2014, p. 24); AFAD (2013, pp. 25-26); Erdogan (2014, p. 28); Sanduvac (2013, p. 25); Kanat and Ustun (2015, pp. 23-24); Oytun and Gündogar (2015, pp. 16-17)

When the Syrian experience in the Immediate Humanitarian Aid Operation is examined, all the studies in the literature reflect that the legal acceptance framework to realise humanitarian conditions on a global scale can be resolved by granting refugee rights to Syrians.

### The role of the Yuva Association

Non-governmental organisations are effective entities on the national and international scale. With globalisation, they have turned out to be actors with very important missions in humanitarian aid operations.

The characteristics of NGOs in the Syrian Refugee operation in Turkey vary as local, national, international and UN-based. The general distribution of the Syrian Immediate Humanitarian Aid Operation shows that the NGOs operate in different areas by subject.

As a national NGO, the Yuva Association aims at decreasing poverty by operating in the fields of vocational training, livelihood and protection, on the basis of adult education and human rights, generating common environments to support the culture of living together and to promote participation among Turkish citizens and Syrians, and channel qualified and unqualified labour to proper professional formation areas through vocational training.

According to Stein (1981, p. 326), the adaptation of immigrants to the host country “in terms of time” varies: “the first few months”, “the first few years”, “after four or five years” and “after 10 years”.

When this fact is interpreted in association with the Yuva Association’s social protection and education activities as well as field visits, it is observed that within the first few months Syrian refugees were faced with what they lost. Syrian refugees were reluctant to participate in the activities carried out through the model of Community Centre. The observation was that they were in a struggle to gain a place in the host society within a few years, and regain what they lost. During that period, most of the refugees change their jobs and move from where they initially lived to the districts where a concentrated refugee population lives. This creates the concept of Syrian districts in cities. When shaping its studies and building new Community Centres and Vocational Training Centres, YUVA prefers locations in which the refugee community can be easily accessed and pays attention to bringing Turkish citizens and Syrians together.

After 4-5 years, refugees complete the process of adaptation to a large extent. Resistance and determination disappear, despair arises and they settle for the changes in their lives and status. Over time, most of them get tired of life as a displaced person and become alienated. This stage causes restlessness in certain parts of society because Syrian refugees cannot gain the status of refugee and accept any changing legal ground as an opportunity. The younger generation in particular feels compelled to shape a future for themselves. At this phase of the crisis, YUVA offers, through the Community Centre and Vocational Training Centres, psychosocial activities, vocational training and apprenticeship and workshops supporting socialisation in order to prevent alienation and social introversion.

Following the completion of permanent settlement, after ten years, they reject accepting their declining status. Therefore, they expect too much from the institutions in the host country. The active role of the NGOs in Turkey during the Syrian refugee crisis needs to be moved to an earlier start in order to define the process and demands.

Thus, refugees need more support in the process of gaining necessary skills and capabilities for a permanent life in the host society. At this point, the expectations they have of NGOs to contribute to improve and facilitate civil life are natural.

## Syrian Immediate Humanitarian Aid Operation: Empowerment-based education

The process of migration transforms homogeneous structures of societies and brings forward the needs and problems of different groups in the society, such as immigrants, guests, foreign students and refugees. When compared with other groups in society, refugees have fewer chances to realise their future plans because of social ambiguity, socioeconomic difficulties and traumatic events that they experienced. Being aware of this inequality of opportunity, the Yuva Association will keep emphasising the importance of determining and evaluating the needs by accepting them in the context of universal refugee rights in order to ensure that equal opportunities are provided.

**Table 2:** *Universal Refugee Rights and Opportunities Provided to Syrians in Turkey*

	<b>Universal Refugee Rights</b>	<b>Opportunities Provided to Syrians in Turkey</b>
Right to non-refoulement/Opportunity to receive protection against refoulement	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right to be treated at human standards	* (Right)	**
Right/opportunity to health services	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to education services	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to travel	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to get work permit	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to begin a business	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to social security	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to get residence permit, housing	* (Right)	** (opportunity)
Right/opportunity to get citizenship	* (Right)	** (opportunity)

Source:

\* UN (1948); UN (1951); UN (1966); European Convention on Human Rights (1970); UN (1969).

\*\* Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013); Temporary Protection Directive (2014); Settlement Law (1934; cancelled); Ministry of Internal Affairs (1994); Toksoz, Erdogan and Kaska (2012, pp. 25-29); Tungç, (2015 p. 40)

To update two items on the list: There have been some new practices put into force in Turkey as regards work permit and travel rights. A work permit has been issued for Syrian refugees, but has not been put into effect yet.

The following section examines the “right and opportunity to receive education services” under the subtitle Immediate Humanitarian Aid Operation in designated titles regarding Universal Refugee Rights and



*Courses for Syrian refugees and local population*

*Source: Makale Ebru Açıkgöz*

opportunities granted to Syrians in Turkey. YUVA supports the adaptation studies that bring Syrians and Turkish citizens together and all the studies are based on this main objective.

YUVA's major fields of operation can be explained under two main headers founded on the empowerment-based education for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

### **Formal education**

The Ministry of Education built **Temporary Education Centres** as formal education organisations. Their establishment, meeting their basic needs, training of trainers and the safe transportation of children to the Temporary Education Centres is covered with the support of NGOs, including the EU, UN-based organisations and international NGOs.

It is also advocated that formal education should be provided in Turkish **state schools** within the urban environment, however this is hindered by the fact that there is a language barrier between Syrian students and Turkish students and teachers, there is also a negative attitude from

local people and parents do not support this kind of cohesion. Under its Complementary School Programmes, carried out at the Community Centres, the Yuva Association offers compensatory classes, study programmes, Arabic reading-writing classes for children and young people who missed school in previous years.

There are also **private schools** for Syrians established by Syrians. However, access to education is still limited with this model because of poor physical conditions in the buildings, inability to control the curriculum, the behaviour of teachers without professional formation, or high annual prices, all of which drive children away from the school. The Yuva Association is planning and organising short-term psychosocial activities in Syrian private schools to increase the attendance rate of students, and Training of Trainers and Peace Building Training sessions.

For **university education**, Syrian refugees have two options. First, they can take the TÖMER exam conducted for those who are from 18 to 23 years old and obtain a Certificate of Turkish Proficiency, or they can take YÖS (Examination for International Students) in Arabic and then make a choice for any university under the foreign student quota. The Yuva Association supports the preparation of students for the higher education exam through the establishment of an Exam Preparation Programme and Language Skill Acquisition Workshops.

Because Gaziantep University and Şanlıurfa University are close to the border where Syrian refugees initially settled in, they offer privileged education opportunities. Students who can document that their education was interrupted in Syria can continue their learning at these universities.

YUVA provides Higher Learning Coaching to match beneficiaries with universities and ensure they can access scholarship programmes.

All these inhibitory steps on the side of formal education lead to the discourse of a “lost generation”. This is because the education institutions are the leading structures facilitating the adaptation of children and young people with the host society. The children and young people whose access to education is inhibited are seen as an opportunity for unregistered employment, employed as cheap labour under improper conditions, given in marriage or forced to beg on the streets.

## **Non-formal education**

1. **Public (Adult) Education:** The Community Centres, Multi-Purpose Centres, Support Centres for Women and Vocational Training Centres can be put under this category. Within this structure, the Yuva Associ-

ation offers Language Education and Daily Language Skill Acquisition Courses (Turkish, English, Arabic, etc.), Occupational Skill Acquisition Workshops, Short-Term Psychosocial Support Activities and Arabic Literacy education, mostly for adults.

The **Community Centres Model** used by YUVA for the purpose of supporting adults in particular to participate in Turkish society is intended for providing services defined under the categories of education and social protection.

2. **Child and Youth Education:** Child-Friendly Area, Youth-Friendly Area and Youth Centres are establishments built for supporting children's and young people's creativity and conducting psychosocial activities and workshops. The Yuva Association is committed to creating safe zones for improving peer learning and networking.
3. **Distance Learning:** This category addresses activities regarding the use of distance learning and mass media in formal education. The mass media provide support for language education at the Yuva Association Community Centre.
4. **On-the-Job (Capacity Building) Training:** Demand-based modular trainings are designed for Turkish citizens and Syrians by the Yuva Association to consolidate and support the professional formation of trainers.
5. **Vocational Training and Apprenticeship:** These are the training certificate programmes that are provided by the Yuva Association for Syrian refugees in Turkey to support qualified or unqualified labour and bring them to self-sufficiency skills. In this context, by focusing on gender equality, the Yuva Association provides training for Air Conditioner Maintenance and Care, Natural Gas Indoor Installation, Beauty and Hair Care, Studio Photography, Entrepreneurship and Business Management, Pastry, Food Service (Waitering), Patient Admission-Registration Officer, and Computer Maintenance and Repair.  
Considering the problems related to the work permit, labour market and unemployment in a developing economy such as Turkey, an adult training programme for Syrians has been built.  
In order to enrol in the Vocational Training Centre Programme, participants are required to have an A1 level Turkish language proficiency certificate. In order to meet this prerequisite, an Intensive Turkish Programme is provided.  
To support the start of business life, a short-term career counselling service and a CV preparation techniques programme are carried out simultaneously.





*Courses for Syrian refugees and local population*

*Source: Makale Ebru Açıkgöz*

## Investigations for determining educational requirements

The Yuva Association designs educational processes to be maintained in an innovative and sustainable portfolio. For this purpose, it makes and supports the use of research for Adult Literacy Education, Adult Education for Social Development, Determination of Educational Requirements for Adults, Evaluation of Adult Education Activities, Vocational Training and Apprenticeship and Adult Learning, in order to shape, ground and model its own operations.

Through research, education models become more transparent and more holistic and inclusive using the “learning from each other method”.

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# The education system in Syria

*Adult education offers the opportunity to learn new things and to benefit from new experiences. It is a challenge which consists of successes and failures; in this specific case consisting also of the special aspects of Syrian society and the way it dealt with adult education – before the crisis and after it. The author has not only completed various further training courses on different subjects, but also worked as an instructor in Syria. In the meantime, she fled to Europe and now lives in Sweden. In her article, she puts together her personal experiences as a teacher in Syria with the new impressions she has had since her resettlement in Europe and the possibility that came along with that, to look at adult education from a different point of view.*

**It is difficult for me to say it, but we were practicing the worst kind of education!** The education system defined which kind of teaching tools teachers could use and how they could deliver the knowledge. If we are talking about the education system, we can't separate it from the education itself. In Syria, the education system incorporated human rights violations, and I, as a teacher, stood in front of children between the ages of 13 and 18, just reading or trying to ask them questions, or telling them stories about history, and I blame myself because it was destroying their ability to analyse and come to their own conclusions.

While searching for a definition of education, most articles talk about methods. We used to understand education as delivering information to students. I remember a training session I had in Syria called Education Tools – it was a total disaster; nothing changed except that teachers could now use Power Point and a projector instead of a whiteboard. The person who was training us was reading notes from a piece of paper and telling us how we could use these new tools in teaching. It was the same boring indoctrination technique and it led us to lose interest and find something else to think about in order to stay awake. The irony is, that when I eventually decided to use a projector in school and I asked the person in charge to let me have one, he refused, apologising by saying that he was afraid that if anything happened to the equipment he would have to pay for it himself!

So, we missed this possibility of having fun during learning and teaching and got crushed under tons of information.

### **Adult education, something to think about**

In our tradition there are many proverbs that joke about people who want to learn something after the age of 30. It was really strange for me to see someone with grey hair at university. Some clarification is necessary here: This man with grey hair was not a man who had recently decided to study, perhaps in a different faculty; we have a lot of young men who had to suspend their studies in the 1980s because they had been arrested for being part of the opposition, so after 15 years or more they started to show up again at university in order to complete what they had already started.

After the Syrian revolution, a lot of people had the chance to start a number of different trainings in order to do something in support of this revolution and in support of the civil society in Syria, and to do something by documenting human rights violations. I also had this opportunity to be a student again, and many of my fellow students used this knowledge in the right way. But the benefit for me was the amazing teaching tools present-

ed to me. I was totally shocked (in a good way) by the teaching methods and how the facilitator could turn the information into a tangible idea so that we could feel and know how much we had changed and how this new information effected our attitudes.

This was the beginning of a new era in the history of education for Syrians. We began to accept the idea of adult education. But the dark side of this was that it was aimed at activists and the elites.

### **How will I benefit?**

After I started to work as a facilitator in an education project which targeted all age groups but was focused on adults and young people, this was always the first question, and I heard it hundreds of times. It was a legitimate question for people living between borders waiting for the war to end or to get another chance in another country. Why should they spend hours with us, to what purpose? The rule is that when a facilitator knows the subject well and knows the target group as well, and believes that the right information is available for the group, they will be happy to attend the session. But when there are emergencies, education falls to the bottom of the list for people who are living through the crisis. It is very common to see children going to work instead of going to school.

This is a big issue, because if you are working for an educational organisation, that means that most people won't even let you step inside their houses to introduce yourself and the organisation. There must be another way to reach people, because it is really hard to reach the adults who are in need of this education. However, if the organisation has other projects, like relief projects or other projects carrying financial benefits or services, this leads people to give you the chance to talk about the project and how this information will affect their lives. Those are the most valuable moments. Otherwise they're not interested about the subject and want to focus on the other projects. Some people might say that this method is not ethical, and I agree with that totally, but in times of crises, we must remain realistic and not allow our dreams to lead us to forget the basic needs. On the other hand, all projects are somehow connected. But sometimes it can lead to misunderstandings because people think that the workers promised them some benefits from other projects if they register for this one. And sometimes people are dissatisfied with the organisation but think they cannot complain because then they will be deprived of aid, and so they vent their anger on the education team because, from their perspective, education doesn't give them any benefit.



*Course in an adult education centre*

*Source: Nawara Akkash*



*Learning at home*

*Source: Nawara Akkash*

## **Education for females**

Usually, to assess equality in education, one looks at the percentage of females and males who have the opportunity to go to school. Numbers cannot always measure inequality. I had serious difficulties

reaching middle-aged men who were convinced that they were totally familiar with the subject content – even more than I was. The project I worked with was called ERW (Explosive Remnants of Wars) Risk Education; simply defined, with elementary messages on how to stay safe when traveling from or returning to a contaminated area. We had a session with a small group of 3 women and one man, 65 years old, who refused to talk to me, saying very clearly that women cannot talk about this subject. Previously, this man had

worked as a teacher. It was hard for me to step back and give up, but my colleague managed the session alone after that because of this prejudice. However, after this incident I decided I would never give up again. After all, it is also a kind of education when one helps others to stop prejudice about people because of their colour or dress or gender. Women who attended this session were showing more flexibility and the ability to change their perspective because they were away from weapons of war. And women also showed flexibility while using new education methods, like playing games.

## **Immigration to the EU**

A lot of people are trying to get to Europe to receive an education. During this period, the main aim of many organisations was educating adults in many ways, starting with learning new skills, through to learning how they can solve the conflict in Syria. Leaving the task of educating children to schools created by individuals or funded by someone – which is a real disaster, since the owner of the school can control those emerging minds as he wants. Religious fanaticism started in those schools. For me it was a reason to escape to Europe, in order to give my son a chance to have a regular education without any agendas or religious supplements. I know that not many people have the same reason, but the alarm is ringing loudly for this generation. If they don't find out how to rescue their ability to think critically, if those kids grow up with these religious influences, adult education will not help them when they are grown up.

## **Theory and application**

After I arrived in Sweden to start a new life, I had to learn a new language, so I had the chance to be in school again. All refugees between 20 and 65 have this opportunity to learn Swedish, and Swedes know exactly how to connect that benefit with education for adults. A person who lives in Sweden will not get any financial aid in the first two years if she or he does not attend the language classes. The beneficiaries attend the classes regularly, but that doesn't mean that they learn something. Physically they are attending, but something must be missing, especially when you see that there are people who have lived in Sweden for more than 6 years without ever really learning the language. The theory of sending people to learn the language is good, but the application of the methods has to be better!

# Educational offers for the host society: Examples from the practice of Kreisvolkshochschule Vorpommern-Rügen<sup>1</sup>

*A look at the VHS as a traditional provider of seminars on inter-religious dialogue, on the understanding of democracy and on imparting intercultural competence. Due to immigration there have been changes in the work done by Kreisvolkshochschule Vorpommern-Rügen (KVHS VR). We have developed projects and made new offers available in political education which give migrants a forum to express themselves in and at the same time open up the opportunity for the local population to enter into dialogue with their new fellow citizens. Many volunteers also offered their support so that the KVHS instituted training sessions for volunteers. The Meeting Café has now become a popular place for refugees and the local population to get together.*

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<sup>1/</sup> Regional Adult Education Centre of Rügen in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.



## **Networks and initial offers**

Ten years ago (2006) in Stralsund, together with the VHS, the Migrant Assistance Organisation “Yurt of Cultures” was founded. Above all, it was to be a megaphone for immigrants and promote dialogue with the local population. Many common activities were dedicated to this goal, e.g. Human Rights Days, workshops on environmental problems in the third world, cultural events, etc.

A highlight in the collaboration was certainly Christmas 2014 when we held an event entitled “Christmas in the Mosque!”. The title was meant to elicit attention and be an invitation to discussion. Increasingly, we saw the need to tackle and to raise awareness about the emerging Islamophobia and prejudice against immigrants (especially Muslims). So we invited the rabbi for the region, a representative of the Muslim community of Greifswald, a Buddhist and a Protestant pastor to be partners in a conversation. There was an energetic discussion, and during the subsequent buffet there was ample opportunity for person-to-person talks between the migrants who were present and the local people from Stralsund. The event was so well received that we carried out more of them. Some of the topics in focus were: one’s own seeking of refuge, everything related to asylum, migration, religion and human rights. The discussion was always very emotional. Prejudices, misunderstandings, mostly based on ignorance, also came to the fore, and some positions were very difficult for the migrants present to bear. But that is precisely what we regard as an important goal of our educational assignment: to learn together, to endure other opinions and to declare one’s own position, to enlighten and to accept each other. All in all, these were well-attended, interesting and attractive events.

## **Transmitting intercultural competence**

An increasingly important area of our work is the imparting of knowledge in intercultural communication. Since 2010, we have continuously trained employees of the Stralsund city administration and the rural district of Western Pomerania-Rügen. This is where there is a growing need for suggestions and support in helping to deal with immigrants and improve mutual understanding.

Especially since 2015, there has been a large number of people in our region who are very committed to taking care of refugees, be it through voluntary German language teaching or by accompanying and helping them with everyday life. Many volunteers turn to the VHS for advice in



*Refugees and local young people learn together*

*Source: Sabine Koppe*

order to provide a better and more effective response to the refugees. So, for example, there was a church community in Franzburg, who asked us to audit the volunteer teaching they offered and perhaps give hints and tips. From this first contact, a solid, good cooperation has emerged.

### ***talentCAMPus* – Cultural education and intercultural learning**

In February 2016 we introduced a *talentCAMPus*<sup>2</sup> within the federal programme “Culture makes you strong” for German and immigrant children and young people. Together with the “Yurt of Cultures” migrant organisation and the media education association “Identity Films”, we took on the task of working with these children and adolescents during the winter holidays in various creative and artistic ways on the subject of fear. With

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2/ With the programme “Culture makes strong alliances for education”, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is promoting extra-curricular offers of cultural education until 2017. In local alliances for education, the nationwide projects are implemented for children, young people and refugee young adults who come from conditions that make access to education more difficult.

a dramaturge, catalogs of questions were developed, interviews were conducted and these were then realised cinematically. Painting was added and a rap video was shot. The participants are justifiably proud of the result. The premiere, in front of about 100 guests (friends, relatives, teachers and interested citizens), was an emotional highlight for everyone.

During the project, the KVHS staff as well as the participants learned a lot about each other and from each other. How do we deal with each other? How do we solve conflict situations?

The resulting connection to young people certainly provides room for further joint projects. The film has not been forgotten and “put away in a drawer”, but is being shown at political events, in schools, in front of the Rotary Club, etc., and is also available on YouTube and Facebook. Above all, the project offered the possibility that young people with and without the experience of having to flee could meet, come into communication and could create something together.

## **A Meeting Café for immigrants and Germans**

Together with the “Flüchtlingshilfe AG” (refugee aid group) in Stralsund, we set up a Meeting Café for Germans and immigrants in the rooms of the KVHS. At the beginning, two small tables were enough, but now we sit together in a tight crowd in our largest room. The Meeting Café has proven itself to be an opportunity to make contacts and apply language skills. Topics such as the situation of their own families, food and typical dishes from the different regions and countries, life in Germany, to questions about democracy, the rights of refugees, etc., are discussed. The VHS not only offers the local framework but also supports the Meeting Café staff. It takes place every 2 weeks on Friday afternoons. This makes for a foreseeable size that the interested parties can adjust to.

Another offer was a visit to the theatre. Together with the refugee aid group and the Theatre of Western Pomerania, we have made it possible for the immigrants to go to the theatre for free with their new German friends in order to get to know new elements of our culture. Again, everything here has also been made possible through good networking.

## **Art exhibitions as a “place to meet”**

Positive approaches are also developing in the cultural sphere. Therefore, in March 2016, we were able to organise an exhibition by a Syrian who paints for a hobby at the Bergen/Rügen location and start it off with a

great vernissage<sup>3</sup>. The interest of the people from Rügen was great and a whole series of pictures were even sold. The exhibition will also be held at other KVHS locations<sup>4</sup> in the future.

## **Refugees as instructors**

In the meantime, a number of former graduates from the refugees are active as course instructors at our VHS. They come from Morocco, Armenia, Latin America, Romania, South Africa, Syria, Iran, Sweden and Spain, etc. For us, this is integration being lived. They teach both their mother tongue and German as a foreign language. This is particularly efficient because trained non-native speaker instructors for German as a foreign language can better adjust to the needs of the refugees than their German colleagues, since they don't have the experience of seeking refugee. We even welcome Muslim women who openly show their faith by wearing a headscarf. We want to set a new tone, especially with the backdrop of the current arguments relating to the wearing of headscarfs and burka, and to invite people to tolerance as well as to discuss the issue.

## **Offers of counselling support for instructors**

Emotionally and mentally, course instructors as well as colleagues who work particularly intensively with refugees often reach their limits. Every individual fate stirs emotions and often one simply cannot switch off at the end of the day. We have therefore started, along with the "Yurt of Cultures", to offer counselling for the colleagues who work a lot with these groups. In this way people are supported, who are, as it were, the "direct contact person acting as a substitute for the host society" with the refugees.

## **Vocational training offer**

In the meantime, the changes in our society have an effect on all aspects of our work. We try to react quickly and professionally. Thus, for example the need is increasing for courses for people who work in the care of the elderly or child care and have an intercultural relationship: How do I deal

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3/ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernissage>

4/ The KVHS is present in the following locations: Barth, Ribnitz-Damgarten, Stralsund, Grimmen, Rügen.

with migrant children and their parents? How does multilingual education work? What do I do with the nutrition of children? etc. Here there is a great need for information, which we try to meet.

## Conclusion

Many friendships, which are a great personal enrichment for all participants, have since emerged from the numerous encounters. While there were only a few refugees in our circle until recently, the percentage has now risen, but is still well below that in the southern German municipalities or around North Rhine-Westphalia. But in our cities it is also noticeable that life has become more colourful and diverse.

We also know that there is a lot of education to be done so that new arrivals and locally established people in our region can live together. A first step is surely the increased interest in language courses, e.g. English and Arabic, which are no longer primarily enrolled in for linguistic edification or for travel abroad like a few years ago, but often the will for a better understanding is behind their attendance.

We see another major task for the KVHS in the area of political education, in order to clarify even more and to convey knowledge about



*Local young people and refugees produce a rap video*

*Source: Sabine Koppe*

countries, cultures, religions, etc. In this way, we are following in the direct tradition of the founding fathers of the VHS in Germany: To enable knowledge for all, irrespective of origin, income and ethnic and religious affiliation. We are committed to this democratic tradition. The VHS in Stralsund as well as KVHS Western Pomerania Rügen have had, since their foundation, a clearly declared opinion against racism, right-wing extremism and inhumanity.

Long before the so-called wave of refugees, we dealt intensively with these topics. We conducted a series of seminars on world religions, initiative days on issues of human rights and on environmental problems in the third world. In a writing workshop, participants creatively explored the problems of globalisation. From this, brochures were produced that present the results of these workshops. The history of the Sinti<sup>5</sup> (Romany people from Central Europe) and Roma<sup>6</sup> (originating from the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent) in Germany, and especially in our province, was just as much of a problem for us as the integration of ethnic repatriates, just to mention a few examples.

In 2016, we chose “global migration” as the main theme for political education at Stralsund. It is our concern to show that flight and migration have always taken place in the history of mankind. We would like to invite people to deal with these topics from a historical perspective. For this we offer events such as. “The psychological side of migration” or “Migration in previous history: Between ancient times and the early Middle Ages. The Germanic peoples change Europe”. It was particularly interesting for participants to get a look at the psychological problems of migration, which were new to many of them.

Therefore this is a tradition that we continue by offering exhibitions, lectures and discussion sessions, which are conducive to democracy and which make the enemies of democracy clear to see.

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5/ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinti>

6/ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani\\_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_people)

Mathilde Wasmeier

# Refugees and hospitality – The Cameo Magazine

A joint project by refugees and local people

*Raising awareness and understanding about refugees in Germany is the aim of the “Cameo Magazine – Thoughts on Hospitality” project. A young collective has set out to create a platform over which refugees and the local population can come into contact. The basic idea is not just to write about refugees, but to exchange thoughts with them. Through pictures, letters and experiences, the refugees themselves become authors and report on their experiences during their flight and in the new country. The collective describes itself as follows: “We are a collective of creative minds with a heart for a colourful society. We are convinced that every person enriches our world, no matter where they come from. For this they need a chance – and that begins in one’s mind. We find that talking to each other helps. And we do even more. That is why we conceive ideas that create space for diversity.”<sup>1/</sup>*

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<sup>1/</sup> <http://www.cameo-kollektiv.de/wir/>

“Bunt, laut, interkulturell  
Colourful, loud, intercultural  
Ruidoso, intercultural”

“Wir machen ein Magazin!  
We’re creating a magazine!  
Hacemos una revista!”

### **How it began**

Two photography students from the University of Applied Sciences in Hanover discussed the subject of “hospitality”. The result was *Cameo Magazine #1*, entitled “Hotel Aachen – bath or shower, WC, telephone, Internet, cable TV, minibar, some with balcony. Waiting”<sup>2</sup> which appeared in 2014. This first edition allowed refugees to say something – those who travelled on one of the routes from Paris to Cologne with the Thalys high-speed train and who “end up” in Aachen and have to stay there if they cannot show valid papers. Many of the refugees, especially unaccompanied minors and children, were placed in hotels by the City of Aachen. The interplay of graphics, photos and personal texts as design elements in the magazine bring socially relevant topics impressively into focus.

*Cameo Magazine #2* “Kloster Weingarten – High up on the Martinsberg, in the west wing with the nuns. A park with a pond. Praying”<sup>3</sup>, accompanied by a photo series by photographers Sebastian Cunitz and Julius Matuschik, shows the point of view of the refugees who found accommodation in Kloster Weingarten in 2014. They share their feelings, thoughts, fears, emotions and expectations of their future in the form of letters.

### **The current *Cameo Magazine* #3 “Arrival”**

The new magazine, #3 “Arrival”, is currently being prepared. What does it mean to have a home? Or not to have a home? What defines your identity? Can one invent oneself? Who are “the others”? Are there individuals without

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2/ “Hotel Aachen – Bad oder Dusche, WC, Telefon, Internet, Kabel-TV, Minibar, teilweise mit Balkon. Warten.”

3/ “Kloster Weingarten – Hochoben auf dem Martinsberg, im Westflügel bei den Schwestern. Eine Parkanlage mit Teich. Beten.”





*Refugees and local people collect ideas for the project*

*Source: Cameo Kollektiv*

groups? How do people change? What determines their thinking, feeling, and their language? When does one arrive, and when does one want to leave?

For the new magazine the Cameo Kollektiv is looking for people from Hanover – refugees and local people. Together, a professional magazine is to be created with them. The refugees themselves will be able speak out in it, but with some possibly critical voices from the population of Hanover as well. People with and without the experience of seeking refuge, from different countries, of different ages, will work together on the creation of Cameo Magazine #3. Both journalistic and artistic contributions are planned.

It is a relatively long-term and intensive project. It is divided into several phases: preparation, workshops, production, design, evaluation, sales and sustainability aspects.

### **Preparation of the project**

For a successful result, good preparation is essential. The project needs interested and active participants as well as partners and sponsors, the public's attention and well-functioning networks.

*In preparation, the following activities (among others) took place:*

- Invitation to the information evening on 03 March 2016; where participants were specifically recruited for the pilot project
- Acquisition of sponsors and thus financial support
- Expansion of the existing support network
- Assembling of an editorial team
- Renting a place/space for editorial work. Since a suitable editorial location could not be found at the planned start of the project in mid-July 2016, the start of the pilot project was shifted to the beginning of September

*Information for the public by (e.g.)*

- Photo exhibition in the framework of the *ZINNOBER-Kunstvolks* on Saturday, 03 October 2015
- Invitation to the information evening on 03 March 2016
- Creation and distribution of various flyers.
- Website [www.cameo-kollektiv.de](http://www.cameo-kollektiv.de)
- Press work

*Building networks*

The Cameo Kollektiv e.V. was able to win several cooperation partners and supporters for this project: the DJU (German Journalist Union); the Ada and Theodor-Lessing Volkshochschule Hanover; kre|H|tiv – the creative network in Hanover; the Hanover Culture Bureau; the agency for the use of creative space, etc., to name just a few. Doris Schröder-Köpf became its patron.

The Cameo Kollektiv publishes reports on the project and the publication process on its homepage: [www.wirmachendas.jetzt](http://www.wirmachendas.jetzt)

## **The production of the magazine**

The editorial office, a former furniture store, is the headquarters for the pilot project and is temporarily available as a production facility. The editorial meetings are open to the public. The exchange between all the participants about their own motivation and their own history form the core of the editorial work. In the public editorial sessions and in discussions with experts, the areas journalism, magazine, art, culture, society and integration, sociology, psychology, etc., are worked on, enhanced and deepened.

Throughout the entire project period, direct exchanges and encounters with passersby are possible. Individual offers are open to the public so that everyone can participate – this also promotes give-and-take.

In a democratic work process, during the layout of the texts, photos and graphics, an “intercultural look” and an exciting structure for the reader will be designed as essential elements.

In order to ensure professionalism, in addition to mentoring and training by the editorial staff, lectures by experts and accompanying workshops take place at the VHS, e.g. a “Creative Writing Workshop”, seminars on “Journalism” and “Photography”. Workshop languages are English and German. The participants come from Germany, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Mexico, USA, Syria and Iran. The courses are set up like VHS courses, so that refugees and people without the experience of having fled can train each other. Through participation and the qualifications thus gained, there can be an increase in opportunities for refugees in their search for work. The completion of the magazine is scheduled for the end of December 2016. The magazine itself will be made available in selected bookshops



*Discussion between passersby and the editorial staff*

*Source: Cameo Kollektiv*

and online. The price for *Arrival* will be €5 (circulation: 5,000). The magazine will be distributed free of charge to participants and supporters. The proceeds from its sale will be used to finance a non-profit online platform.

## Future outlook

In addition to “Platform #1 – The Magazine”, a further “Platform #2 – online” will be set up, which is due to be completed in June 2017. In it there will be room for further contributions, ideas and discussions and thus a broader intercultural exchange. The platform thus offers a good opportunity to network across regions and serves as a model for comparable project proposals in other cities.

The experience will be gathered together in a guide that facilitates and supports the transfer of the “cameo concept” to other regions.

Sponsored by:



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## Perspectives for better life – Perspectives to stay

*In four decades of armed conflicts, outmigration and displacement, 75% of the Afghan population has been forced to leave their homes at least once. Conflict-caused displacement has increased again since 2010. The exodus of young Afghans in 2015 reached new records. The future of the country, of the returned families and IDPs, greatly depends on the qualification of the younger generations. “Stay and help rebuild your country” is the new message. DVV International has been conducting educational programmes in Afghanistan since 2002. The main objective is to improve the educational opportunities for young people and thus create hope and future perspectives so that young Afghans can stay in their country.*

## **Afghanistan – Four decades of armed conflicts, outmigration, displacement and returning refugees**

The history of Afghanistan during the last 40 years is about war, armed conflicts, mass outmigration, internal displacement, labour migration, migration from rural to urban sites and about the integration of huge numbers of returning refugees.

More than 75% of the 30 million Afghans (2015) were forced to leave their homes at least once between 1979 and 2009. This continues today. Armed conflict is the main reason for displacement. But the general deterioration of the security situation is just as important for why people leave their homes. Conflict-caused displacement has increased again since 2010.

Afghanistan belongs to the top 10 countries of origin of refugees worldwide.

## **Afghans – second-largest group of new arrivals in Europe**

The exodus of Afghans reached new record highs in 2015. Hundreds of thousands, mostly young people, left via Iran and Turkey to Europe and Germany, due to insecurity and lack of future prospects. Afghans make up the second-largest group of new arrivals amid Europe's huge migrant influx. About 154,000 reached Germany in 2015.

A number of factors contributed to the outmigration. The withdrawal of foreign troops left a security vacuum. The fall of Kunduz was a shock and clearly showed the capacity gaps of the Afghan security forces. Armed opposition groups, the Taliban and even IS fighters gained more territory, and violence is on the rise in many provinces. The "United Nations Assistance Mission" (UNAMA) reported 11,000 civilian casualties, including 3,545 deaths and 7,457 people injured in 2015. National police along with the national army conducted 57 military operations during the last two weeks of March 2016.

Economic growth decreased from 14.4% in 2012 to about 2% in 2015<sup>1</sup> and mass unemployment among youth has also increased during past few years. Many Afghans say the new Unity Government did little to improve their lives. The recent Gallup Survey published in March 2015 confirms that 66% of Afghans think that their lives are worse now than 12 months ago and almost half of them expect the situation to get even worse.

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<sup>1/</sup> World Bank, Afghanistan Economic Update November 2014.



*First steps: Lida will become an English teacher*

Source: ANAF AE

## **Stay with me – stay and help rebuild your country**

The recent exodus towards Europe rings alarm bells and Afghan leaders are seriously concerned about the “brain drain” of the best young minds. President Ashraf Ghani declared the development of the country’s fragile economy a priority, in order to provide a suitable environment for citizens to stay.

“Stay with me” is the message Kabul sent out to young Afghans who think about leaving the country, urging them not to flee and to fulfil their patriotic duty. The Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation, and the Ministry for Information and Culture launched social media campaigns; powerful politicians supported the government’s efforts. Former President Hamid Karzai, in a TV interview, urged the country’s youth to “stay and help rebuild your country.”

In addition to these campaigns, grassroots movements have emerged to convince Afghans not to leave. The Twitter-based movement “Afghanistan Needs You” is posting photos of themselves, holding up signs about remaining in Afghanistan.

## **Not the first outmigration wave**

The recent migration wave is not the first one. The first large outmigration was caused by the Soviet invasion in 1979. Around six million Afghans fled to Iran and Pakistan. After the Soviets withdrew, the fighting between the Mujahideen caused a second migration wave. The urban and educated middle class fled to Iran and Pakistan. The third large migration wave was caused by the war between the Taliban and the United States-led coalition forces in 2001.

One year after the end of the Taliban regime in 2002, more than 1.5 million refugees returned from Pakistan and 250,000 from Iran (UNHCR, 2012). Many returnees moved to bigger cities like Kabul, Jalalabad, Kunduz, Mazar. At the same time, international support to rebuild the country attracted an additional 300,000 Afghan refugees from Pakistan and about 570,000 from Iran to return.

## **Integration of returning refugees**

Since 2002, approximately 5.7 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan. Under these circumstances, DVV International started its education programmes. The first years of the engagement focused on the reintegration of the returned refugees in urban settings.

In particular, income-generating activities were conducted in cooperation with women's groups. Refugee women and war widows attended literacy education, received basic education, skills to read and write and for simple calculations. They acquired technical skills and knowledge, produced cookies, noodles, sweets and soap, etc., for the local markets. With the income, they contributed to their households or supported their children as the only breadwinner in these hard times.

DVV International conducted joint civic education programmes for women's groups from returning communities, to empower them and ensure their equal participation in society. These programmes were jointly organised with the "Afghan Women's Network" (AWN), after their return from exile in Pakistan.

In addition, 3-6 month education courses to acquire basic technical and vocational skills, carpentry, welding, metal and electrical works and tailoring were conducted for returnees in the provinces of Kabul, Khost, Logar and Ghazni. This helped them to settle into their new homes and to find new jobs and income.

Integrated literacy programmes were conducted for about 2,000 Hazara women from rural communities in the Wardak province near Behsud in the



central highlands between 2002-2004. The Hazara people became victims of massacres and ethnic cleansing by the Taliban. The Hazara dominated provinces fell to the Taliban in 1998. Six thousand Hazaras were killed in the north. The Taliban isolated their provinces and did not allow the UN to deliver food to them.

## **Afghan Refugees in Iran and Pakistan**

Many Afghans still live in Iran and Pakistan. In 2014 the Iranian government planned the voluntary repatriation of 200,000 registered refugees by the end of 2015 and to withdraw the refugee status of 700,000 more Afghans but finally delayed these plans. According to “Human Rights Watch” (HRW, November 2013) an additional 1.4 to 2 million Afghans settled illegally in Iran. They were treated as second-class citizens. Young people were excluded from the education system.

Today, some 1.7 million registered Afghans remain in Pakistan and another million live in Pakistan without residency papers. Since the Taliban attack on a school in Peshawar in December 2014, the Pakistani security forces have pushed Afghan refugees to leave the country. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), about 55,000 Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan in the first 3 months of 2015 from Pakistan due to fear of further reprisals.

The profile of the refugees still living in Pakistan or Iran is different from those returned after the fall of the Taliban; the majority of them have lived in exile for more than 20 years. Almost half of the registered Afghans in Iran and Pakistan were born in exile. Their return to Afghanistan is a major problem. Most returnees depend on their relatives for their social and economic reintegration or on international assistance.

## **2015: About 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDP)**

Massive armed conflict, the deterioration of the security situation and natural disasters increased the number of internally displaced persons. The “Internal Displaced Monitoring Centre” (IDMC) estimates the number of IDPs mid-2015, six months after the withdrawal of international troops, to be at least 948,000 people. The Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan reported another 150,000 displaced by the end of 2015.

While Kunduz fell to the Taliban in 2015, approximately 15,000 people moved to other cities. Other provincial capitals might be considered as relatively safe, but severe fighting is taking place in the surrounding districts.



*Training for young electronic technicians*

*Source: ANAFAE*

About an additional 130,000 people left their homes because of natural disasters in 2015.

Because of insecurity, the inflow of people into Kabul during the Taliban era was high. The returnees from Iran and Pakistan, as well as many IDPs, seek refuge, work, income and new future prospects in big cities. The majority of returnees between 2002 and 2009 settled in urban areas, mainly in Kabul and other cities.

Through the influx of IDPs and returnees, population growth in the cities steadily increased. Urban growth is partly due to natural growth, newcomers and migration patterns, whether rural-urban migration, secondary migration or direct migration of returnees and internally displaced persons. It is very difficult to track and assess the presence and profiles of returnees and IDPs in urban areas. They can be categorised into three main groups: (1) returnees who directly settle in cities, (2) returnees who

went back to their home areas and again were forced to move back to the cities, in a pattern of secondary displacement, and (3) persons internally displaced by conflict, natural disaster and poverty.

UN data estimates the annual population growth in the cities between 2010-2015 at 4.7% and in rural areas with 2.7%<sup>2</sup>.

## **Education and community centres for young people**

The Afghan government is facing strong pressure in terms of urban governance and providing basic urban services. Lack of economic opportunities, of employment and education, social and health services impose considerable barriers on returnees and their sustainable reintegration.

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<sup>2/</sup> UN data, <https://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx>

Many of them have limited education and skills, and often limited language skills (Pashto or Dari). Securing the livelihoods for their families in the urban centres is difficult. The Afghan government and Afghan Civil Society can hardly cope with the integration of refugees, the creation of new infrastructure, as well as education and training opportunities.

Because of limited affordable education programmes that enable their social advancement and economic participation, the first two Education Centres, mainly for young people aged 16 to 26, from refugee, IDPs and returning families, were set up by DVV International together with the “Afghan National Association for Adult Education” (ANAF AE) in Khair Khana, a huge district of Kabul in 2005 and 2006.

Khair Khana was the destination for thousands of returning and internal refugees during the Taliban era and for returnees after the fall of the Taliban and still is a melting pot of different ethnic groups from all over the country. An additional Education Centre for women was established in Khair Khana, to open new future perspectives, in particular for girls and young women. Another Education Centre was established in Herat. Here many young people from families who returned from Iran got access to qualified education programmes to strengthen personal initiatives and employability.

In 2012, DVV International and ANAF AE re-established eight Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Mazar-e-Sharif. These CLCs were originally established by UN-Habitat in 1995 during the Taliban era, in order to serve community needs, and to provide a safe place for women to benefit from social and education programmes.

The CLCs are deeply rooted in poverty reduction and in local development. The CLCs promote new skills and competences for disadvantaged groups, empowerment, social change and new life opportunities. Returnees from Iran, Pakistan and IDPs from other provinces have settled in most of the neighbourhoods where the CLCs are located. In addition, literacy education courses were held in most of the districts of Balkh province, e.g. in Nahr-e Shahi, for women from families returning from Iran.

DVV International and ANAF AE have established 23 education centres in 12 provinces to date. They offer a wide range of education opportunities. About 205,000 young people took part in our education courses in 2015.

The population is the second youngest in the world, 63% are younger than 25. The education programmes help an increasing number of young people from a returning or an IDP family background to finish school, to get access to higher education, to further their prospects, to find employment and generate income. Thus, the programmes are a gateway to personally developing perspectives for a better future life.

## **The education system**

Decades of war, armed conflicts, insecurity and low economic development hindered the establishment of the education system. With around nine million adult illiterates, Afghanistan is still one of the world's illiteracy hotspots. The literacy rate is about 36%.

Some important key findings of the Education Sector Analysis from January 2016 characterise the present education system in this conflict country:

- Of the 42% of children aged 5-14 attending school, more than half of them (51%) are involved in child labour activities.
- An initial "Back to School" campaign was started in 2002, at a time when only around 900,000 students were enrolled. Now more than 8.5 million students are enrolled, 39% of them girls.
- Only 55% of children of primary school age (7-12) attend school. In urban areas, 78% of children attend school, in rural areas only 50%.
- Overall, 14% of children who started primary school dropped out.
- Despite the preceding success of the education system, well over 30% of children are not enrolled in school. The MoE estimates that over 3.5 million children are out of school.
- For every ten students who start in grade one, less than six make it to the end of grade six and only two make it to the end of grade 12.
- Less than 3% of the population have completed a formal vocational training.

## **Better chances from school to working life**

The future of the country, of the returned families and IDPs greatly depends on the training opportunities, on skills and the qualification of the younger generations. The education programmes of DVV International and ANAF AE open up new personal opportunities and chances for young people in transition from school to working life, from poorer families, among them many returnee and IDP families. In the Education Centres of DVV International and ANAF AE they gain new skills and competencies for the Afghanistan of tomorrow and increase their employability in various fields, like in ITC, office and database software, server installation, web design, mobile phone repair, English, accounting and office work related spheres.

While economic growth decreased and hundreds of thousands of young people left the country, ANAF AE and DVV International started new



Source: ANAF AE



Trainings especially for young women

Source: ANAF AE

education programmes for some 240 students in January 2016, jointly with the Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) of the northern province of Balkh, to provide better chances for job opportunities.

The programme focus is on office and business skills, information and communication technology, and professional Business English. The curriculum was designed and is implemented by a group of experienced Master Trainers from ANAFAE with the support of DVV International and is based on the “Expert Personal Business Skills” programme of the VHS in Germany. Beneficial student-centred, participatory methods and close cooperation with potential employers are the key elements of this new education programme at the ACCI training centre in Mazar-e-Sharif, one of Afghanistan’s largest cities.

The students who perform best can get jobs provided by the ACCI. Other graduates can participate in internships supported by ANAFAE and the ACCI to get more work experience to enter a qualified career.

With new qualifications and competences, young people can make important contributions to economic growth and social change.

# Glossary

**Volkshochschulen (VHS) or Kreisvolkshochschulen (KVHS)** are educational institutions/centres for the extracurricular education of youth and adults and are generally public in nature and under the control of a local community. They are community further education centres and are regarded as a philosophically neutral place of learning with a comprehensive offer from all fields of education, open to all people.

An **integration course** is used to impart language knowledge and orientation/guidance on the workings of German society. Since 2005 this format has been funded by the state, and people who have newly migrated to Germany are generally obliged to participate in this educational offer. The course consists of 600 teaching units (UE) of German language as well as 100 units of orientation knowledge on history, the political system and values. *Volkshochschulen* are the largest implementors of these courses and do it nationwide.

A **teaching unit (UE)** in Germany is generally 45 minutes.

A **Bezirk** (district) in some German cities is an administrative unit used to divide the city into different administrative sectors.

**Amt/Ämter** (administrative bureau) are managing authorities at different levels of the state. In Germany an adult education centre (VHS) can, in some of the federal states, also be an administrative bureau.

Through **Ehrenamtsbüros** (bureaus responsible for honorary service/volunteers), citizens are informed about volunteering at the municipal level and are recruited for voluntary activities. The bureaus, or sometimes even known as “agencies”, coordinate the volunteers and offer them, as a rule, continuing and further education.

The educational programme of a VHS is carried out by free-lance instructors. It is planned and coordinated by full-time employees of a VHS, who is called the **Programmbereichsleitung** (program area management) or **Fachbereichsleitung** (department management).

**Xpert** is a training programme system of the VHS and their national organisations in which professionally usable competences are taught. This includes computer skills (IT), social competencies, intercultural knowledge, as well as courses in bookkeeping. All courses are able to be completed with an exam and a certificate.



# List of authors



**Nawar Akkash** studied Geography and worked as a geography teacher in Syria. After the Syrian crisis, she was displaced to Turkey and worked there from 2013 until August 2014 with the Danish Refugee Council as a facilitator with an education project. She now lives in Sweden with her family. In Sweden, she works as a language support teacher for Arabic speakers.



**Hussein Alrabie** has a BA in Health Education and is a specialist in sustainable Microfinance. He has vast experience in social development and community education as well as extensive work experience in CBOs and INGOs. He has also provided a number of consultations on social development and social education in Jordan, Syria, Yemen Iraq, Kurdistan and Sudan. He believes in social empowerment as a foundation for public participation, justice and welfare.



**Gunhild Brössler** is a DaF/DaZ (German as a foreign language/ German as a second language) teacher with many years of teaching experience at different educational institutions in Germany and abroad, she has managed the MVHS project “Komm rein! – Das Startprogramm für Flüchtlinge in Sprache und Alltag” (Come in! – The Start Programme for Refugees in Language and Everyday Life) at the McGraw-Barracks initial reception facility in Munich since 2015. Within the project, she developed standards for teaching at the initial reception facility, which she published as the textbook “Komm rein!” with the Langenscheidt-Verlag.



**Özlem Çolak** completed her Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 2005, and post-graduate degree at Istanbul University Institute of Forensic Medicine with her research on hate crimes. She has worked professionally in psychosocial support projects for immigrants and refugees since 2013. She has been an Amnesty International volunteer since 2007, giving human rights training in different human rights areas to various groups, and preparing training programmes with adult education and non-formal education techniques.



**Renata Delic** has been working since 2008 at the Volkshochschule Stuttgart. She is the Director of the Department of German as a Foreign Language/German and Integration and is responsible, among other things, for topics relating to the migration and integration of new immigrants and refugees. She came to Germany in 1992 as a refugee during the Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After completing her studies of German philology and pedagogy at the University of Heidelberg, she began working as an educator at the Landratsamt (district administration) Ludwigsburg in 2002, was primarily responsible for refugees and taught German as a foreign language at the Volkshochschule Stuttgart.



**Franziska Diller** studied literature, pedagogy and psychology at the University of Bamberg. While attaining a Ph.D., she worked at the "Forschungsinstitut Betriebliche Bildung" (Research Institute for Business Education) and published studies, among other things, on the topics of lateral entry into education and qualification counselling structures. At the VHS Stuttgart, she is head of the social-space-oriented Education Management Department and is responsible for project management, which is increasingly focusing on integration and refugees.



**Laila Elkhatib** completed her Master of Translation and Interpreting degree at Al-Quds University in 2015 and studied English literature at and Tourism Management. Her Thesis investigates linguistic and technical mistakes of Sight Translation to confirm the significance of adequate training and experience to perform it successfully. Since 2005 to the present time, she has been teaching English as a second language for Palestinian

refugee students in UNRWA schools. From 2001-2002 she was a research writer in Prime Middle East Research Center. Since 2013, she has been a freelance translator



**Christine Fidancan** is an employee of the Office of Honorary Volunteers of the Tempelhof-Schöneberg District in Berlin, she supervises the training programme for honorary volunteer staff, is a graduate in Business Administration (Technical University), and as a certified manager of honorary volunteers has long-standing, well-founded knowledge of the honorary structures in the Tempelhof-Schöneberg district and at the regional level. She is a member of the Spokesperson's Council of the State Network for Civic Engagement.



**Jawad Al Gousous** was born in 1961, holds a Master of Social Work degree and worked for ten years with the Ministry of Social Development in the field of Community Development. He has vast experience in social development and Non-formal and Informal education, and worked as Consultant with the UNESCO Iraq Office in the field of Literacy and Adult Education. Since 2012 he has been working as DVV International Country Director, Jordan Office.



### **Doğu Erdoğan Gülbaş**

As Manager of the YUVA Association Nizip Community Centre Syrian Refugees Programme for the past year. Ms. Erdoğan Gülbaş has more than 10 years experience as a field researcher and trainer for adult education at non-governmental organisations and formal education institutions.



**Ebru Açıkgöz Güler** studied Sociology and Psychological Counseling and Guidance at the University of Pamukkale. Then she completed a master's course in Pedagogy and Family Counselling. For over ten years, she has been working as a volunteer and a professional in child, youth and adult education based on non-formal techniques and experimental learning. Her main research interests are developing different education contents and methods. Currently, she is the Education Coordinator of YUVA within the Syrian Refugees Program.



**Sven Hebestreit** is currently the Administrative Director of Kassel Region VHS. After a long period of service with the Bundeswehr (army) he graduated with a diploma which certified him as an Administrator – an official in executive service. After several years at the Ausländerbehörde (Department for Foreigners) of the city of Kassel and its region, he assumed his position in the Kassel VHS in May 2011. In this activity, he is responsible for the financial and administrative as well as the artistic aspects.



**Sabine Koppe** has been the Director of the Regional VHS Vorpommern Rügen since March 2013. After her work as a research assistant at the University of Rostock and a stay in Japan from 1992 to 1999, with various positions as a lecturer at universities, she assumed teaching activities at the VHS Stralsund, Greifswald, Rostock, and among other things she was a pedagogical assistant in the Department of Languages and Education, Director of VHS Stralsund and since 2009 trainer for intercultural communication.



**Uwe Krzewina** has been Deputy Head of VHS Tempelhof-Schöneberg in Berlin since 2013. At the Free University of Berlin he studied Modern German Literature and Eastern European Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Some stations in his professional career were: Director of the department Literature and Media at the Nordkolleg Rendsburg, Project Coordinator at the Central Institute for Continuing Education at the University of the Arts, Berlin, and since 2011 he has been Programme Manager at VHS Tempelhof-Schöneberg for parts of the Culture and Design, People, Society, Environment programme.



**Karin Schönemann** has been the Programme Director for Vocational Education and Basic Education at VHS Tempelhof-Schöneberg in Berlin since 2014, and from mid-2015, Director of the examination centre of the Berlin adult education centres. After studying to be a teacher in German and Sociology (second state exam), she spent many years as a trainer for DaF/DaZ at VHS Tempelhof-Schöneberg, where she was an instructor in mothers/parents courses. From 2011 to 2012, she took over the provisional management of the programme area Mothers/Parents Courses.



### **Wolfgang Schur**

Wolfgang Schur, is the Project Coordinator for DVV International in Afghanistan. His background is in system development for the social and education sectors. He conducted various country assessments and feasibility studies to promote non-formal and technical vocational education programmes for adults, for example in the Caucasus Region, Central Asia and Afghanistan and evaluated DVV programmes in Southeastern Europe.



**Jürgen Wasella** studied Islamic Studies, Arabic Studies, Economics and Politics in Freiburg, Berlin and Cairo, and worked for his Ph.D. in Contemporary Orient Research in Bamberg and Beirut. He is a Certified Trainer in Culture Communication Skills©, and since 2005 he has been head of the VHS Aalen where he is also responsible for the faculties General Knowledge, Political Education, Company Training, Intercultural Training and Study Trips. He is also a part-time intercultural trainer and holds a lectureship for Intercultural Management at the Hochschule der Medien (University for Media) in Stuttgart.

**Mathilde Wasmeier** has been active in adult education since 1980, most of the time at Hanover VHS. She initially worked as a lecturer for English and German as a Foreign Language and in 2002 took over full-time management for the programme area Foreign Languages. In addition, she gave courses in the areas of Health (yoga, tai chi, food and drink) as well as Cultural Education (painting and drawing).



**Stefanie Voß** studied DaF (German as a Foreign Language), History and English at the University of Bielefeld and in Turin, Italy and holds a Master. In addition, she completed her studies in Adult Education at the University of Kaiserslautern. Stefanie Voß is the main pedagogical assistant and Deputy Director at VHS Löhne, a training institution for adults sponsored by the community. The main focus of her work is on German as a second language.

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DVV International  
Obere Wilhelmstraße 32  
53225 Bonn  
Germany

Tel.: +49 (0)228 97569-0  
Fax: +49 (0)228 97569-55  
info@dvv-international.de  
www.dvv-international.de

