

# FAB project

## Partner research report - challenges regarding refugees on labour market

**O1 - Increased knowledge on refugees' situation in partners' contexts and on main policy and practice drivers in place**

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## Summary

Berlin is a city of diversity, in which people of different worldviews, cultural backgrounds, origin or religion live together. Berlin`s history is one of immigration and integration. Integration and inclusion are processes already succeeding in the city every day, however big challenges remain. The Berlin Senate values the participation of the refugees and supports their own organisational efforts by supporting them with diverse programs and projects based on a comprehensive strategy, which has been and is going to be renewed in 2017 and 2018.

Refugee and asylum seeker policies are governed by Federal Authorities, like the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Federal Employment Agency and its regional and local branch offices, the 12 Jobcentres and by Authorities of the Land Berlin, like the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs, the Regional Authority for Refugee Affairs and the Berlin`s Foreigner`s Registration Office. Apart from these institutions many other partners, like the Social Partners, Chambers, different associations, Berlin-based companies, volunteers, housing agencies, single persons and grass route initiatives are involved.

After elections in 2016, a new concept for inclusion, labour market integration and participation of refugees has been developed by the Berlin Senate. The comprehensive strategy aims at strengthening the integration and participation of refugees. Focusing on labour market integration, three main goals have been highlighted within this strategy: a) integration of employable refugees into the labour market b) ensuring a high level of skills that can be used in the labour market, c) enabling a life independent of government transfers. As a fundamental solution strategy for promoting labour market integration, special emphasis is placed on the further integration of advisory and support services as well as target group-specific communication and public relations. In addition, a continuous and reliable accompanying structure and support structure is essential.

In 2016, 28% of the Berlin population, had a migration background. In 2015 around 55.000 refugees were

welcomed in Berlin (Germany: 890 tsd.), in 2016 roughly 17 Tsd. and in 2017 around 10.000. Most asylum applications have been submitted by Syrian citizens, followed by Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea. Meanwhile 28 Tsd. refugees (July 2018) have been registered as job seekers at the Federal Employment Agency. Until May 2018, 11.200 refugees from the main countries of origin had an employment subject to social insurance in Berlin.

Labour migration policies on Berlin level are implemented by a broad variety of policy measures, instruments and counselling services with full or limited access for refugees and asylum seekers dependent on being recognized or still in the process of recognition or being tolerated only. As soon as the refugees are registered at the Jobcentres or the Employment Agency, they can profit of all active labour market measures and services. Measures provided for migrants or foreigners, including refugees, are language courses (also profession oriented), integration courses, special support for accessing apprenticeships in the dual system of vocational education or 'Integration Facilitators' as an individualized support structure.

Special projects for women are the 'Neighbourhood Mums' ('Stadtteilmütter'), the 'Mobile Education Counselling' and the ARRIVO project, with special courses offered to female refugees, and many others.

Unaccompanied minors or young refugees can turn to the 'Berlin Youth Career Agency' ('Jugendberufsagentur') in each district of the Land Berlin, a one-stop-government of different institutions on local level. This agency offers a broad variety of support and guidance on the pathway to VET or to the labour market.

In addition, the Berlin 'Local Pacts for Economy and Employment' (one in each of the 12 districts) offer a lot of projects for refugees co-funded by ESF or ERDF:

Main challenges are to accommodate, to organise and to provide services for the high number of refugees in Berlin.

Insufficient language skills, unsatisfactory housing conditions, health or mental problems, psychological traumas, difficulties of recognition of (foreign) degrees and generally lack of knowledge of the German school and labour market system are barriers on the way to the labour market.

Female refugees often suffer, amongst other, of gender based violence or lack of available or affordable child care, low level of education and lack of work experience outside the home.

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# Partner research report - challenges regarding refugees on labour market<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Governance, structure and strategy

### 1.1 Direct and indirect responsibilities

*Which institutions are involved in a) the admission of refugees and b) the labour market integration of refugees?*

a)

**BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees** is the Centre of Excellence for Asylum, Migration and Integration in Germany. The Federal Office is a federal authority within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. With its decentralised locations, including branch offices, arrival centres and decision-making centres, it is in direct contact with all players in refugee protection and integration work.

**LAF - the Regional Authority for Refugee Affairs (LAF)** started work on 1 August 2016, making it Berlin's youngest authority. When refugee numbers rose enormously in the autumn of 2015, the Senate had decided to set up the LAF explicitly for these extensive issues relating to the provision, care and accommodation of refugees. With this Senate resolution, the areas of refugee care were dissolved out of the hitherto responsible State Office for Health and Social Affairs and transferred to this new administrative structure.

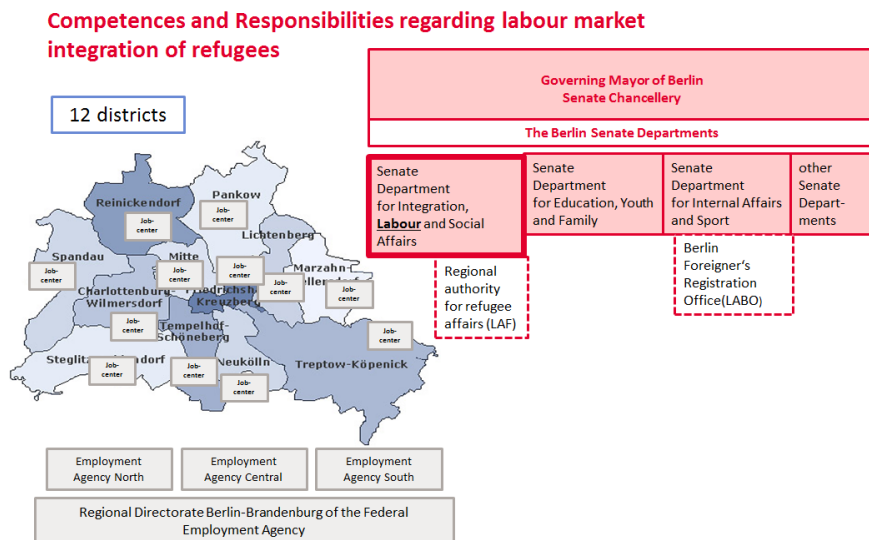
**FRO – Berlin Foreigner's Registration Office (LABO):** If you want to apply for or renew a residence permit; residence titles for work, family and humanitarian reasons are issued or extended here (amongst other: residence permit for spouses, for the purpose of studying, transfer of a residence permit to a new passport, for freelance or self-employment, EU Blue Card, Schengen – Visa-Extension etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> This report is not an official paper of the Senate of Berlin.

b)

The following chart shows the competences and responsibilities regarding labour market integration of refugees (Federal and Berlin State):



The main actors are the Federal Employment Agency under control of legality of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs and the 12 Berlin Jobcentres, a merger of the districts and the Federal Employment Agency.

*What are their specific tasks a) in general and b) with regard to refugees?*

a) The tasks of the institutions involved in admission of refugees have been described above. In addition, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees offers language courses and integration courses (all over Germany), including language and (cultural, political) orientation (700 to 1000 hours per participant).

b)

The general tasks of the institutions for labour market integration are supporting unemployed persons to find (individual) pathways into the labour market, by consulting, training, placement activities and a broad variety of further active labour market measures ('activation'), such as wage subsidies for enterprises, publicly financed schemes for

employment of disadvantaged groups as well as payments for unemployed or social benefits.

For (registered) refugees they offer mixed (together with German residents) or special programmes for activation and preparation for the labour market as well as fast track integration measures into the labour market, such as language courses, profession-oriented language courses, intercultural courses, consulting and placement activities, co-operation with employers.

Refugees still in the procedure of seeking asylum can turn to the three Employment Agencies in Berlin for consultation and programmes for activation and preparation for the labour market (depending on their country of origin they will have to adhere to certain waiting periods). During that time, they receive social benefits from 'The Regional Authority for Refugee Affairs'. Once their asylum-seeking-procedure is positively assessed and they are unemployed, they are obliged to register at the Jobcentres which now pay for social benefits and are responsible for consultation and activation policies. Refugees who have received a negative decision towards their asylum application with permission to remain until deportation stay in the responsibility of the Employment Agency and 'The Regional Authority for Refugee Affairs'.

## **1.2 Cooperation and consultation**

*How do the institutions described under 1.1 cooperate? Feel free to enter a flow chart or other image here.*

Institutions on the federal Level and on level of the federal states in Germany, here Land Berlin, co-operate for enabling social and labour market integration of refugees. On Berlin Level the co-operation of the Federal Employment Agency (Regional Directorate, 3 Employment Agencies and 12 Jobcentres) and the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs is decisive, but also other Departments are involved as well as the 12 Berlin districts (boroughs). The Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs develops the labour market policy strategy of the Land Berlin, in close cooperation with the Berlin regional directorate of the Federal Employment Agency. Apart from that, the Jobcentres are joint organisations of the



Federal Employment Agencies, the districts and the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs. The Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs supplements the activities of the Federal Employment Agency in Berlin and develops, finances, steers and controls additional programmes, counselling services and projects for labour market integration. Labour market policy in general is regulated by the federal state.

### **1.3 Strategic framework at local level**

*Is there an explicit strategy for labour market integration of refugees on the local level? If so, please describe it. If not, are there other (implicit or non-local) strategies that determine or influence the action taken with regard to labour market integration of refugees?*

In 2016, the “Masterplan for Integration and Security” had been issued by the Berlin government as a result of the increase in migration of refugees<sup>2</sup> in the years 2015 and 2016. This Masterplan described a detailed strategy in seven areas. It started with the issues of arrival, registration and the allocation of social benefit. Then accommodation and housing had to be organised. In parallel, asylum seekers are to receive comprehensive and appropriate educational offerings and integrated into the labour market.

After elections, with the change of government in 2016, the new coalition decided to design and develop a new concept for integration and participation of refugees.<sup>3</sup> The comprehensive strategy aims at strengthening the integration and participation opportunities for refugees. This concept is oriented to the different areas of life. Nine specialised working groups in different departments have been installed working out and implementing the new strategy. Accordingly nine different fields of action have been identified: (1) registration and asylum-seeking procedure; (2) accommodation, living and social affairs; (3) health and care, (4) preschool and school education, unaccompanied minors, career orientation and preparation as well as acquisition of German language skills; (5) labour market integration, working life and vocational training; (6) higher education; (7) social spatial

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<sup>2</sup> In this report, the term “refugees” covers both asylum-seekers and recognised refugees.

<sup>3</sup> The process started in 2017 and was still on-going at the moment when this report was written (August 2018).

integration; (8) participation; (9) promoting democracy, security and prevention of extremism.

In context of our FAB-project special attention should be paid to the action field No 5 'labour market integration, working life and vocational educational training (VET)'. This strategy<sup>4</sup> contains a mix of goal definitions, analysis of the current labor market, challenges and basic solution strategies.

Three main goals have been highlighted within this strategy (April 2018): a) Integration of employable refugees into the labor market b) Ensuring a high level of skills that can be used in the labor market c) To enable a life independent of government transfers. Amongst other, in this paper is stated that the labor market integration of women, despite their high professional orientation, is more difficult than for men. A very intensive co-operation between the different actors of politics, public administration, economy, civil society and the refugees themselves is necessary.

Basic solution strategies for labor market integration of refugees are identified in the strategy - in eight different action fields: a) Acquisition of German language; b) Determination of professional competencies and development potential; c) Vocational orientation, acquisition of knowledge about the labor market and learning about social rules of the labor market; d) Differentiated offer of measures to promote integration in education, work or self-employment; connectivity of the measures is important ; e) Ensuring timely access to measures and connection offers to integration into the labor market; f) Sufficient supply of training and jobs; g) Beneficial conditions for occupational integration (especially for women) h) Intercultural openness of institutions and companies for refugees and persons with migration background.

As a fundamental solution strategy for promoting labor market integration, special emphasis is placed on the further integration of advisory and support services as well as target group-specific communication and public relations. In addition, a continuous and reliable accompanying and support structure is essential.

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<sup>4</sup> At the time this report was drafted, the process of designing the strategy was still on-going.

#### **1.4 Changes brought on by the influx of refugees and asylum seekers**

*Has the influx of refugees and asylum seekers brought change with regard to a) the responsibilities of different institutions, b) their cooperation, c) the strategic framework? If so, please describe.*

Due to the enormous influx of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 (almost 80.000 people found their way to the German capital, and well over 50.000 were registered and accommodated in Berlin; more numbers see under chapter 2) the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs (LAGeSo) faced big challenges and was partly overloaded. Big refugee shelters, up to 5.000 residents, had to be installed in short time. In 2017, the Berlin government created a new structure (replacing the LAGeSo), 'The Regional Authority for Refugee Affairs' (LAF, see above), seeking to provide a better service for refugees and asylum seekers. While in the beginning, primarily accommodation and registration processes were in the focus, since 2016 more and more refugees have successfully undergone their asylum-seeking procedure and integration in jobs and apprenticeship has become more and more the focus of Berlin's strategy. A close co-operation between the Senate Departments, the Federal Employment Agency, the Jobcentres, the districts and – first of all – with the employers, the social partners (unions and employers' associations), the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Craft is of high importance for this process. For that purpose, a number of coordinative working groups meet on a regular basis.

## **2. Context – statistics**

### **2.1 Population in partner city**

From 2003 when Berlin had 3.330.242 million inhabitants the city grew up to 3.711.930 inhabitants in the end of 2017. Especially since 2010 the growth accelerated and from 2011 on, every year a net increase of more than 40.000 inhabitants can be seen.

3.000.648 inhabitants of the total population of Berlin are German passport holders, which corresponds to 80,8% percent of the population. 13,4% of the population are described as immigrants with migration background holding a German passport and 19,2 % of the population of Berlin have other nationalities.

The biggest share of the population is aged from 25 to 45 years and this is also the fastest growing group<sup>5</sup>. The average age of the population of Berlin in 2017 was 42,7 years.

## **2.2 Refugees and newcomers**

### **2.2.1 Development in recent years**

Since 2014 the number of asylum seekers in Germany increased significantly and found its peak in 2015 when 890.000 persons reached the country as refugees. Following a national allocation formula Berlin receives about 5% of all refugees newly arriving in Germany. In 2015 55.001 refugees were welcomed in Berlin<sup>6</sup>. In the following years the number of newly arriving refugees decreased again – in 2016 280.000 refugees arrived in Germany among them 16.889 in Berlin. In 2017, 186.644 refugees seeking asylum arrived in Germany, among them 9.759 in Berlin.

Due to the situation that many people arrived at the same time in Germany longer waiting times occurred to officially request asylum and to get an answer about the decision on the application. Most of the decisions have been taken in 2016 and 2017. In the years 2015 until 2017 the protection rate in Berlin was rather stable between 43,7% (2015) and 44,3% (2017). For the first quarter of 2018 the protection rate lowered to 30,6% which corresponds to a decrease in the national average<sup>7</sup>.

### **2.2.2 Country of origin**

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in Germany yearly publishes the most relevant countries of origin of asylum seekers.

Since 2014 in every year the most asylum applications have been submitted by Syrian citizens. Other countries that are in the list with the most asylum applications in Germany since 2014 are Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea. Changes can be seen for the Balkan countries. In 2014 Serbia, Albania, Kosovo,

<sup>5</sup> Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg (2018): Statistischer Bericht. AI5 – hj 2/17. Einwohnerinnen und Einwohner im Land Berlin am 31.12.2017. Grunddaten.

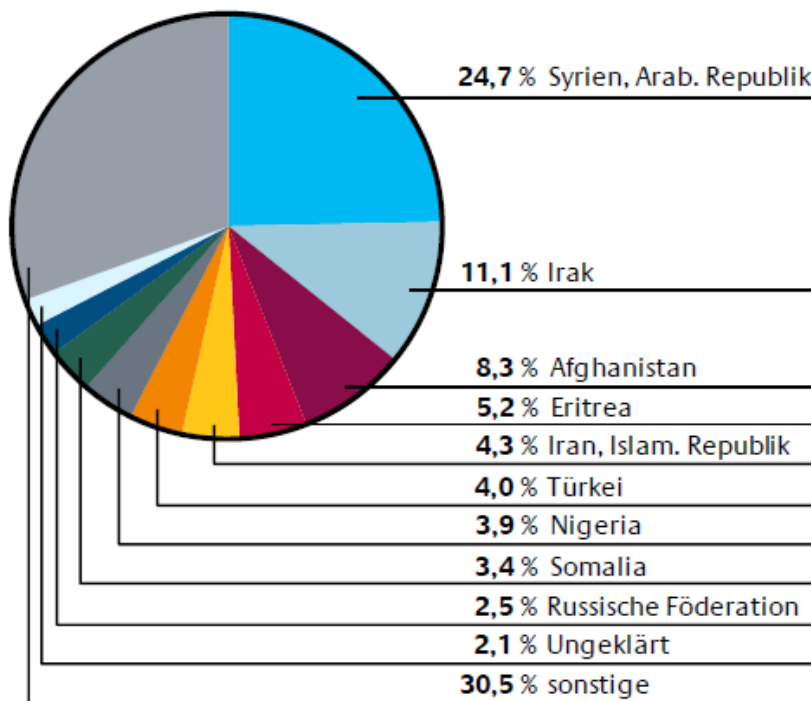
[https://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/Statistiken/statistik\\_SB.asp?Ptyp=700&Sageb=12041&creg=BB](https://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/Statistiken/statistik_SB.asp?Ptyp=700&Sageb=12041&creg=BB)

<sup>6</sup> Datenmappe BAMF Regionaldirektion Juni 2018

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia were all part of the “Top-Ten List of Origin Countries of Asylum Applicants”<sup>8</sup>. In the following years these countries have a smaller share and in 2017 none of them is found in this list.

In 2017 186.644 asylum applications have been submitted in Germany. In the following chart the percentages of the origin countries can be seen



**Figur 1: Origin Countries of Asylum Seekers in Germany in 2017<sup>9</sup>**

(Translation Figur 1: 24,7% Syria, 11,1% Iraq, 8,3% Afghanistan, 5,2% Eritrea, 4,3% Iran, 4,0% Turkey, 3,9% Nigeria, 3,4% Somalia, 2,5% Russian federation, 2,1% undetermined, 30,5 others)

The statistics for the first quarter of 2018 show almost the same picture, only the order of applications per country is slightly changing.

<sup>8</sup> Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2015): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2014. Asyl, Migration und Integration.  
[http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2014.html;jsessionid=6707497E2E0580EA0DAB46EFC4F4CB67.1\\_cid359?nn=9121126](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2014.html;jsessionid=6707497E2E0580EA0DAB46EFC4F4CB67.1_cid359?nn=9121126) [22.0618], p. 12

<sup>9</sup> Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2017. Asyl.  
[http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2017-asyl.html;jsessionid=6707497E2E0580EA0DAB46EFC4F4CB67.1\\_cid359?nn=9121126](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2017-asyl.html;jsessionid=6707497E2E0580EA0DAB46EFC4F4CB67.1_cid359?nn=9121126) [22.06.18] p. 18.

### 2.2.3 Unemployment rate

28.538 refugees were registered with the Federal Employment Agency as seeking employment in June 2018.<sup>10</sup> Among them 9.656 were registered as 'unemployed'.<sup>11</sup> The number of employed refugees has increased constantly in recent years. In December 2015, 3.623 citizens from the most relevant countries of origin<sup>12</sup> had an employment subject to social insurance in Berlin. Until March 2018 this number had increased to 10.400 employees (approx. 287 percent).<sup>13</sup> Most of them work in the hospitality sector and other services (e.g. security, cleaning or call-centre).<sup>14</sup>

## 3. Labour migration policies at local level

### 3.1 Policy measures

#### 3.1.1 Language competences

*Please describe the typical path(s) of language acquisition for a refugee.*

*Which institutions are involved?*

The path of language acquisition for refugees depends strongly on their status and country of origin.

Asylum seekers coming from countries with high recognition rates (share of positive decisions is more than 50 %, this is the case for Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Eritrea, Iran) as well as recognised refugees usually enrol in an integration course ('Integrationskurs'). The courses are offered by the Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees and consist of 600 teaching units<sup>15</sup> of language training and 100 teaching units of civic orientation. The course can be extended to 1000

<sup>10</sup> Federal Employment Agency (2018): Migrationsmonitor. Berlin. Data status: 29.06.2018.

<sup>11</sup> In German statistics, the unemployed are a sub-group of the job seekers. There are several criteria to distinguish between the two groups, the most important of which is availability to work. For example, participants of a language class or integration measures are currently not available to work but are still registered as jobseekers. What is more, persons in integration measures may register as jobseekers.

<sup>12</sup> Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Syria

<sup>13</sup> Federal Employment Agency (2018): Migrationsmonitor. Berlin. Data status: 29.06.2018.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Employment Agency (2018): Arbeitsmarkt in Kürze: Fluchtmigration. Data status: 30.09.17.

<sup>15</sup> One teaching unit lasts 45 minutes.

teaching units. Participation is mandatory for all migrants with residence permit – including persons with refugee status – and little or no knowledge of German (less than B1 level). Participants should reach a B1 German level. Additionally, the government introduced a vocational language training program as a follow-up to the integration course. These courses include work-related language tuition (e.g. vocabulary for communication in the workplace) as well as training modules.

Asylum seekers coming from countries with recognition rates less than 50 % (e.g. Afghanistan) only have access to ‘orientation courses’ (consisting of 300 teaching units). Persons whose asylum requests have been rejected, but who cannot be deported (‘Duldung, engl.: Toleration’) do not have access to federal schemes. In order to provide language courses for these status groups the Berlin Senate implemented its own language course programme provided by the Volkshochschulen (adult education centres), consisting of free courses from A1 to B1 levels.

*Which specific / additional measures have been implemented recently to improve or fasten language acquisition? Which measures have been adapted to match new needs?*

Recently, several programmes have been implemented that link language acquisition with training, qualification and work (e.g. “Qualifizierung für Beschäftigung” (QvB), “KomBer”). This is based on the experience that language acquisition is much more effective when applied in practice. Furthermore, participants can learn specific specialist terms they need for their profession.

*Are there any specific measures for women?*

Yes. The Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees as well as the Berlin- financed “Volkshochschulen” (adult education centres) offer special language courses only for women, including the provision of childcare.

### **3.1.2 Information and counselling services**

*Please describe the most important information and counselling services for refugees with regard to the labour market?*

The access to the labour market is dependent on the status of the asylum seeker/ refugee.

- (1) Full access: Recognized refugees who have received a positive decision from the BAMF (see above) have full access to the labour market and can also engage in self-employment.
- (2) Restricted access: Asylum seekers have restricted access to the labour market. They have the allowance to live in Germany for the time of their asylum-seeking-procedure and (after a waiting period of three months) to work under certain conditions, until the decision on their application: Before the Berlin Foreigner's Registration Office issues the permission to work, the Federal Employment Agency in Berlin examines the concrete work contract and the working conditions. Persons, who are not any more in the recognition process, having received a negative decision, but where the deportation ('Abschiebung') is suspended, are tolerated until deportation. Access to the labour market for them is restricted as well. Self-employment in general is not allowed.
- (3) No access: Asylum seekers originating from countries politically labelled as 'safe' countries of origins do not have access to the labour market.

Recognized refugees (1) who are unemployed and who need social benefits have to register at the Jobcenter to receive counselling and job placement.

Asylum seekers (2) (not originating from "safe" countries of origin) and tolerated persons can receive counselling from the three Employment Agencies and – after a waiting period of three months – also job placement.

Asylum seekers without access to the labour market originating from "safe" countries of origin can receive counselling from the three Employment Agencies.

The Land Berlin offers additional counselling and guidance centres, like the Information Centre on Decent Work for Everyone, Welcome Centre Berlin, Welcome-to-work-offices, including the Berlin Jobpoints and Learning Shops. Those services target asylum-seekers, tolerated persons and refugees, including asylum-seekers from "safe" countries of



origin (for the latter with the exception of services that aim at job placement).

*Which institutions are involved?*

See above

*Which specific / additional services have been implemented recently to improve information and counselling of refugees? Which services have been adapted to match new needs?*

See above

*Are there any specific measures for women?*

- The “Stadtteilmütter” (“neighbourhood mums”) - project opened and adapted their existing services also for refugees, in particular for female refugees and their children or/ and families.
- The Berlin project ‘Point’ offers action for labour market integration of refugee women who came alone or with their children. This project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.
- ‘Mobile Education Counselling’ (MoBiBe) especially for women  
Mobile counsellors offer advice on further and vocational/ academic education and related issues such as German language courses, additional qualifications, recognition of degrees and certificates, job search and application writing/ strategies, work and internships in Germany generally, and in Berlin particularly. There are in total 34 counsellors consider qualifications and skills, guide towards possible education opportunities and make suitable individual proposals. The counsellors are active in the adult education centers (so called ‘Volkshochschulen’), the so called ‘Welcome-to-work-offices’ in the refugee accommodations and others places such as community centers, youth and leisure centers, women’s meeting places etc. The counselling takes into consideration the personal wishes, needs and circumstances. The counselling is free of any charges and is offered in more than ten languages.

**For the special needs of women** there are four education counsellors exclusively for women. Their work particularly focuses on encouraging women for education and labour

market measures. They show different ways and possibilities into the job market and illustrate various options and perspectives for qualifying.

- Berlin city authorities and the local Chamber of Handicrafts ('Handwerkskammer') launched the ARRIVO project in 2014 to improve the labour market integration prospects of refugee residents and plug stringent labour shortages in local businesses. The project offers a combination of workshops on local employment standards and ethics, short vocational and language training modules, internships and on-the-job skills assessments to refugees with basic German language proficiency.

ARRIVO Berlin consists of various sub-projects: these offer workshops for refugees in the fields of handicrafts, health, hospitality, construction and industry. Additionally, the ARRIVO service office provides companies with information about the employment of refugees. Special courses are offered for female refugees where they can try out various craft trades (for example gardening, hairdressing, sewing, carpentry etc.) and the health sector such as carer for the elderly or nurse. In addition:

- German courses for the proficiency of general and professional vocabulary;
- Advisory elements about the German apprenticeship system and opportunities in the Berlin job market;
- Guided visits of Berlin-based companies;
- Courses on how to write/ expand a CV for job Interviews;

Participation is free, childcare is possible. After the project, participants will be able to switch to pre-vocational courses in which they work closely with companies where they can get offered internships and/or job possibilities.

### **3.1.3 Skills development and vocational training**

*Please describe the typical path(s) of skills development and vocational training for a refugee.*

A typical path consists of integration- and language courses, diagnosis of skills/competencies, counselling measures of different kind (e. g. concerning VET or recognition of professional qualifications), measures of vocational orientation and training and/or employment service.

As described above, recognised asylum seekers can apply for Vocational Training at the Job Centre, at Employment Agency or the 'Berlin Youth Career Agency' ('Jugendberufsagentur') – a new Berlin one-stop-shop unit. Mostly they are supported by one of the numerous counselling or volunteering services or they contact directly the enterprises. The application for an apprenticeship in the German Dual system requires good German language knowledge. Thus, language courses are mostly the first step to enter vocational training, especially such courses which combine language learning with professional learning.

*Which institutions are involved?*

- Unaccompanied minors or young refugees can turn to the 'Berlin Youth Career Agency' ('Jugendberufsagentur') in each district of the Land Berlin, a one-stop-government of different institutions on local level. This agency offers a broad variety of support and guidance on the pathway to VET or to the labour market.
- The 12 Berlin Jobcentres
- The Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs
- The Senate Department for Education, Youth and Families
- Enterprises
- Education providers

*Which specific / additional measures have been implemented recently to improve or fasten skills development and vocational training for refugees? Which measures have been adapted to match new needs?*

See above

*Are there any specific measures for women?*

#### **3.1.4 Other**

*Are there further important policy measures at local level that support labour market integration of refugees?*

The Berlin Local Pacts for Economy and Employment (BBWA), one in each of the Berlin Boroughs (Districts), offer many services and measures on the ground. In particular,

they are implementing two different instruments: a) the Local Social Capital Programme (LSK, micro-projects up to 10.000 EUR) and b) the Perspective, Development and Employment Programme (PEB, projects up to 500.000 EUR). The numerous projects within these two programmes offer employment and social integration opportunities also for refugees. Their strength is that they are very close to the ground ('locally') and have good access to the refugees in the different Berlin boroughs.

## 4. Challenges

### 4.1 Main challenges in integrating refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market

*What are the main challenges in integration refugees and asylum seeker in the labour market in the short and the long term?*

In the following we provide an overview of the main challenges in Berlin:

- To accommodate, to organise and to provide services for all refugees in Berlin
- Coordinated co-operation between the different institutions and actors involved
- Insufficient language skills as one of the most important barriers
- Difficult general situation, i.e. unsatisfactory housing conditions (including a tense situation on the housing market in general), health or mental problems, psychological traumas, unclear residence status
- Insecure existence often leads to early termination of vocational training and limited access to the labour market and to VET
- Recognition of (foreign) degrees, credits and certificates as well as recognition of informal and non-formal education
- Lack of qualifications, (school) degrees and certificates
- Lack of knowledge about the school system, the education and the labour market system

*How do you deal with these challenges on the local level?*

Note: In 2017/ 2018 the Land Berlin designed, developed and up-dated the Masterplan of Integration and Security (2016) aiming at implementing a new strategy that adapts to the current needs of the asylum seekers/ refugees and improves the co-operation between the different actors and with the companies.

### 4.2 Specific challenges regarding women

*What are the main challenges in integration female refugees and asylum seeker in the labour market in the short and the long term?*

General challenges regarding female refugees are:

- gender-based violence in different forms prior to their arrival in Berlin including rape, sexual slavery, trafficking, witnessing acts of violence and being forced to leave their homes
- trauma may follow them into their resettlement

Female refugees in Berlin face a number of barriers and challenges when they try to secure employment in Berlin. Potential challenges to employment may include:

- Low proficiency in German
- Lack of available and/or affordable child care
- Difficulty in obtaining German accreditation for their skills and education
- Lack of knowledge about German workplace culture
- Concerns regarding the academic equivalency to German educational standards
- Limited work history (due to war in their former countries)
- Low level of education and lack of work experience outside the home as they have been busy caring for children and/or family members

*How do you deal with these challenges on the local level?*

Design, development and implementation of gender and culture sensible measures for women on the ground which tackle the above-mentioned challenges

## **5. Examples of good practices at local level**

*Name 3 at max*

*For each example, please describe shortly:*

- *the target group*
- *the aim of the practice / project*
- *the responsible institution and partners (if applicable)*
- *the measures that are carried out*
- *the results and experience so far*

### **(1) Jugendberufsagentur Berlin ('Berlin Youth Career Agency')**

The general objective of the Berlin Youth Career Agency is to enable all young adults in Berlin to obtain a vocational qualification and – in the long run – to achieve their integration into the labour market. Young people are given comprehensive advice in the offices or elsewhere, if necessary. The individual goals and prospects are developed jointly with the young adults. They are offered realistic qualification programs. These are combined with coordinated support measures. All available instruments are used to support the young adults until they obtain a vocational qualification or, in some cases, find long-term employment.

The target group of the Berlin Youth Career Agency includes all young people who are generally under 25 years old, are about to finish school and enter the job market, and are registered in Berlin. This transitional phase ends once the young people successfully obtain a vocational qualification. The target group also includes registered refugees who are under 25 years old, even those who (still) have no permanent registered address in Berlin.

Partners to the agreement at state level are the Senate Department for Education, Youth and Families, the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs, the Federal Employment Agency Berlin-Brandenburg regional head office and all of Berlin's twelve borough administrations. In the State Advisory Board they have collaboration with strategic partners, the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB Berlin-Brandenburg), Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK Berlin), Chamber of crafts (Handwerkskammer Berlin), Business Association Berlin (UVB BB), State Committee for Vocational Training (Landesausschuss für berufliche Bildung), State Youth Welfare Committee (Landesjugendhilfeausschuss)

In the 12 local branch offices all network partners work under one roof:

- Job centres: advice, placement of trainees, support
- Federal Employment Agency: career guidance, career advice, placement of trainees, support
- Youth welfare service / borough office: Benefits granted by youth welfare service, programs of youth welfare

organizations, counselling for young people, initial advice on benefits granted under Sec. 16 a of Book II of the German Social Code (SGB II) [not under the jurisdiction of the youth welfare service]

- Schools: career guidance, advice on traineeships in schools, registration procedure for vocational schools

The Berlin Youth Career Agency creates a culture of concerted action:

- The focus is on all young people under 25 who have no vocational qualification
- All partners have a shared interest in finding ideal solutions to help young people find long-term gainful employment and lead independent lives
- Concerted action of all players across different jurisdictions to facilitate consensus
- Transparent processes
- One-stop solution – young people do not get lost going from one institution to another.

#### Contact Person

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## **(2) Neighbourhood Mums (‘Stadtteilmütter’)**

Since many years, the *Neighbourhood Mums* serve as a key example of Berlin's low-threshold, outreach integration policy. It is a local initiative, launched in Berlin-Neukölln in 2004, that qualifies long term unemployed women who are mothers and have a migrant background. In a six months training program they are prepared to offer education and support to other migrant families that cannot be reached through established institutions and programmes. Whereas the initiative originally has started in Berlin's district Neukölln, it has been later successfully extended to other districts (Mitte, Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg) during the last years. Since 2018 the Neighbourhood Mums are working in all Berlin districts.



Since 2014 the focus of the Neighbourhood mums project has broadened to the newly arrived refugee women as well. For the work with refugee women the knowledge and the experience of the *Neighbourhood Mums* are particularly important because they can easily overcome the language barrier and can take the role of an intercultural mediator and role model.

An evaluation of the pilot project<sup>16</sup> showed that the preventive and low-threshold approach achieved significant results, in particular in the dimensions education and health care issues. Due to the cultural proximity, neighbourhood mums are able to reach social disadvantaged and under privileged migrants, predominantly through their networks on local level. The work in Neukölln mainly focusses on Turkish and Arabic migrants, though the work also takes place in other languages. The preventive approach supported the migrant target groups partly to change behaviour and to be better included in the society.

Responsibility for the implementation of the Neighbourhood Mums is shared by a number of different authorities, among them the Senate Departments for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs, for Education, Youth and Families and for Urban Development and Housing (until the end of 2018), district authorities and different institution carrying out the project.

Responsible Institution in Neukölln:

Diakoniewerk Simeon gGmbH  
Fachbereich  
Soziales & Integration

Stadtteilmütter Neukölln

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<sup>16</sup> Stadtteilmütter in Neukölln - Final Report of the Evaluation,  
Abschlussbericht von Liv-Berit Koch, Camino, Berlin 2009.

### **(3) The Integration Facilitators (‘Integrationslotsen’)**

The Integration Facilitators are a program of the Senate Department for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs and is implemented in close cooperation with the twelve Berlin districts. The allocation of funds for the promotion of integration and for the integration facilitators, which are in use in all Berlin districts, is carried out in consultation with the district administrations according to socio-spatial criteria. The providers of the district pilot projects are also selected by the district administrations themselves. In addition, district coordinators have commenced their work in the district offices, which provide technical support for the cooperation of the various pilot projects at district level.

The ‘Integration Facilitators’ (‘Integrationslotsen’) support people with migration background and newly arrived refugees by offering low-threshold counselling services, facilitating steps into work and education. Some integration facilitators are closely linked with the Welcome-to-Work Offices and the Welcome Centre Berlin. They assist the established support and social welfare structures. They offer assistance either at a drop-in centre or through outreach work and they provide consultation services.

The goal of the Land Berlin Framework Program is to ensure the high-quality and professional use of the rule-based integration and to create a reliable structure for their work.

At the end of 2014, the program was expanded as part of a pilot project with initially eleven integration slots and integration facilitators for refugees. A mobile team was created to support large-scale accommodation. Additional integration facilitators could be recruited via funds from the Masterplan for Integration and Security Berlin.

In the meantime (as of February 2018), the Berlin Program comprises 18 district projects as well as a super-district project and secures the deployment of 202 Integration Facilitators in Berlin.

Integration facilitators are employed by independent providers on the basis of social security working contracts.

The program includes a comprehensive accompanying and qualification offer for the Integration Facilitators:

- They have a basic qualification of 150 hours for their work. This is continuously supplemented by additional qualifications.
- All Integration Facilitators have the opportunity to participate in coaching and supervision.
- There are regular network meetings of the project promoters and, in addition, the Integration Facilitators of all projects.

For technical support, an advisory council has been set up to include Senate administrations, districts, Job Centres and the Regional Directorate Berlin-Brandenburg of the Federal Employment Agency.

Results so far:

The program had been evaluated<sup>17</sup> in a qualitative way. The most important outcomes of this evaluation are:

- Important results of the program are the added value of integration policy in terms of supporting immigrants and migrants who have lived in Berlin for some time and improving their employment situation.
- The offers for communication and networking and the participatory approach of the Operational Body are an important contribution to the quality assurance of the work of the Integration Facilitators.
- The professionalization of the facilitators is secured by qualification and reflection offers as well as offers of professional support by the Operational Body and the providers, i.e. by means of a double accompanying structure.

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<sup>17</sup> „... und jetzt bin ich Integrationslotsin.“ Evaluation des Landesrahmenprogramms Integrationslotsinnen und Integrationslotsen  
Meggi Khan-Zvorničanin Liv-Berit Koch Dorte Schaffranke

- Lots of shared professional standards can be identified across the different projects.
- There is no quality assurance in the field of language and cultural mediation.
- The development of a job profile is a first step on the way to install the Integration Facilitator as a regular job.
- The Operational Body takes over essential tasks of controlling the Program in close cooperation with the department of the Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the Senate of Berlin, whereby the participatory approach has proven itself as very helpful.

Responsible Body:

Commissioner of the Berlin Senate for Integration and Migration

Contact Person:

Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales  
Kai Leptien  
Potsdamer Strasse 65  
10785 Berlin

Website of the program:

<https://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/integrationslots-innen/>

and as service provider and operational body:

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Tel.: 0049-030- 6900 85 - 0

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

What are the most important insights you have gained so far in your local context with regard to labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers?

Berlin is a city of diversity, in which people of different worldviews, cultural backgrounds, origin or religion live together. In 2016, 28% of the Berlin population had a migration background<sup>18</sup>. Berlin`s history is one of immigration and integration. Integration and inclusion are processes already succeeding in the city every day, however big challenges remain. The Berlin Senate values the participation of the refugees and supports their own organisational efforts by supporting them with diverse programs and projects based on a comprehensive strategy, which has been and is going to be renewed in 2017 and 2018.

A large number of refugees will presumably remain here permanently or for a long time. That implies a considerable need for integration measures and, at the same time, an opportunity for Berlin.<sup>19</sup>

Essential for a successful labour market integration of refugees is the close cooperation with all labour market actors. Here is still a lot to do. The Employment Agencies and Jobcentres form the regulatory framework for integrating refugees into the market. This has been so far quite successful as the number of refugees in work increased by 53,2 percent between March 2017 and March 2018 (from 6.790 to 10.400). The Berlin Senate backs up these activities with its own instruments along language, training and employment support (see above).

The new Senate strategy aims at further improving the integration and participation opportunities of refugees. Several working groups have been installed and concrete new goals are going to be defined. The co-ordination of these working groups is task of the Commissioner of the Land Berlin for Migration and Integration and Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs.

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<sup>18</sup> Source: Statistisches Bundesamt: Mikrozensus – Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund

<sup>19</sup> Source: Masterplan for Integration and Security, short version, Berlin Senate, 24/05/2016

A major challenge is the change in the atmosphere. The social climate towards refugees has deteriorated in the German society (as in other European Countries), less in Berlin, but more in other regions.

Despite such developments fast track integration of refugees remains an ongoing task, in short-, midst and long-term. The good labour market situation in Germany (and also in Berlin) in combination with the high motivation of most of the refugees should be used for a close co-operation with the companies and enterprises. Many of them are facing skills shortages and are urgently or even desperately seeking for skilled workers. These suitable economic circumstances allow an optimistic point of view concerning the labour market integration of as many refugees as possible.

#### Focus on female refugees:

Reaching female refugees with measures of labour market integration is more challenging than finding male participants. One reason is that there are substantially more male refugees in Germany. The age of the women coming to Germany differs a lot, so that measures have to reach different age groups. The professional experiences of women are various, too, mostly depending on their country of origin. Especially women who received little education have little professional experiences. A survey conducted among refugees in 2016 showed that in Germany 73% of the male respondents and about 50% of the female respondents had gathered professional work experiences. According to this 86% men and 60% women said that they definitely intend to work.<sup>20</sup>

Besides their educational background female refugees have different reasons to stay away from courses and measures. The most important reason is family- and childcare. They often don't have time and power to participate on courses. On the one hand because there aren't enough Kindergartens, yet. On the other hand, they don't participate because some women feel the duty to do the family work rather than participate on education and training. That means, integration measures have to have very flexible schedules. And because there are

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<sup>20</sup> OECD, March 2017: Finding their Way – The Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Germany

many appointments with the competent authorities, doctor`s and even times for meals if they live in refugee shelters, the measures have to be even more flexible and individual. And sadly women often become victims of violent crime during their escape and even sometimes after they arrived. For this reason, measures have to be holistic, connecting diverse partners and supporters like psychotherapists, social workers, counsellors and facilitators of education. Fortunately, Berlin can build upon its rich experiences with regard to the integration of women with migration background and make use of its diverse structures which have already been established earlier.

*Which approaches turned out to be useful? Which ones did not work at all? Why?*

- Outreach measures: to go where the refugees are and to offer them counselling and other services meeting their basic needs
- Comprehensive counselling approach  
Not only work-oriented, but taking in consideration the individual prerequisites and experiences of the individual/ help for overcoming bureaucratic barriers
- Activation with the following steps:
  - Identification/ further development of professional competencies and skills in real working situations
  - Vocational orientation
  - Job application Training
  - Job-related language training
- Special or combined language courses  
As often highlighted, language is the key to integration. However, isolated language courses have limited success. If possible, they should be combined with vocational orientation and internships in companies. Moreover, there are also jobs in English speaking companies or jobs, for instance in the IT-sector, which do not necessarily require German language from the beginning. In these cases the language can be learned part time. In particular, for women language courses with child care offers are very important.
- Integration measures which include also inter-cultural learning
- ‘Fast track’ recognition of degrees and certificates (to make use of the professions and qualifications the

refugees already achieved in their home country, also good for better motivation)

- Projects on the ground for hard-to-reach groups
- Mixed groups/ Diversity: German residents, migrants and refugees are learning or working together
- Sufficient supply of apprenticeships and work places
- Openness of institutions and enterprises towards persons with flight- or migrant history
- A good monitoring and (formative) evaluation system, accompanying and improving the strategy and the single programs/ projects continuously
- Political initiatives to counteract the prevailing negative trend of increasing exclusion of refugees/ highlighting the positive and visible results of successful integration in the mass media, in meetings and conferences.