

Refugees entering the employment market

A practical guide for companies



Refugees as potential workers



Dear readers,

Our country has many faces. Each and every one of us is unique. Different genders, different ages, different cultural affiliations and much more define us – and make us special. Nonetheless, we as a society are currently again faced with the question of how much diversity benefits our country and is acceptable for us. What do we accept in others, what can we tolerate, and what overstretches us? Discussions about this are important and proper in a democracy. But it is also time to chart the course for constructive and productive cooperation. Diversity will remain a part of Germany; we should perceive it as a resource and consciously integrate it into the economy and society. Though not every refugee is a qualified employee, and though cultural differences sometimes lead to conflicts, it is worthwhile to see these immigrants as potential workers. Work is essential for their integration and helps them – besides acquiring our language – to build a new life. With this practical guide, we would like to encourage you to give refugees an opportunity in your company. We show you the advantages and describe what conditions need to be created – both within your company and from a legal perspective. Some companies have already chosen this path; we present three of them to you, accompanied by helpful contact and information addresses. Please join us in giving diversity in Germany a face – as well as giving people an opportunity to make a new start!

All the best,
Aletta Gräfin von Hardenberg
Managing Director Charta der Vielfalt e.V.

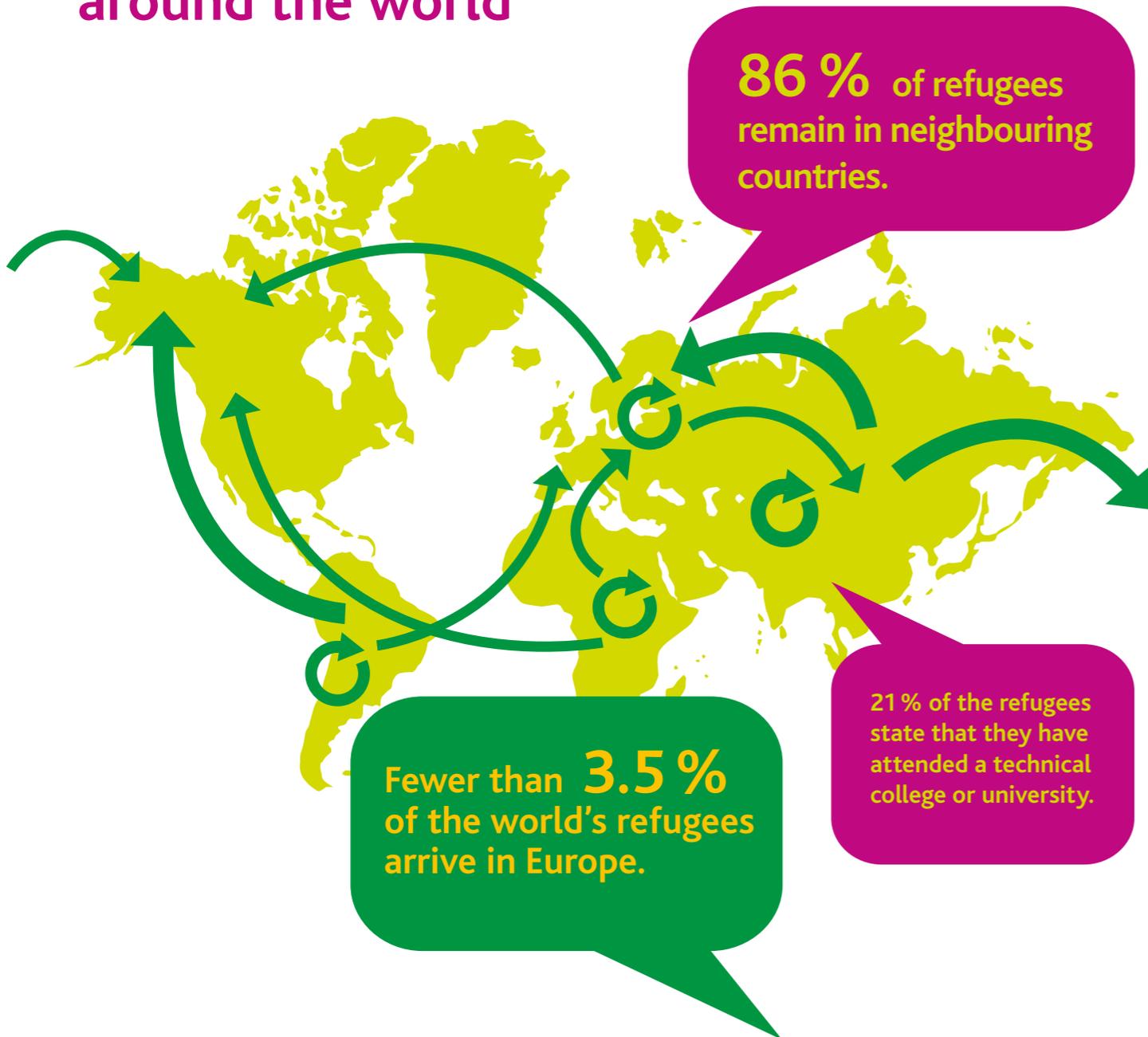
Around the world, about 60 million people are refugees; only a few of them are looking for protection in Europe. Nevertheless, it is clear that several hundred thousand refugees will stay in our country permanently, will live and work here with their families. Integrating these new neighbours poses huge challenges for politics, administration and civil society, but also for companies and employers. Employment and work are key for successful integration into our society: they give refugees new hope and perspective in a new country. The hurdles for refugees to find work are high: legal restrictions, language barriers, recognition of qualifications, getting oriented in the German working world. For companies and employers, however, these challenges are also a genuine opportunity. In these times of demographic change, an aging workforce and a lack of trainees, predominantly young people are coming to us seeking a new start. It's worth taking a closer look and searching for and recognising potential! We would like to support companies and employers and motivate them to make the most of this opportunity and train and employ refugees. We can all benefit from this.

All the best,
Aydan Özoğuz
Federal Government Commissioner for
Migration, Refugees and Integration

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Refugees in Germany and around the world



In 2014, **one-fourth** of all applications for asylum in Germany came from Syrian nationals.

One of five company founders today has a migration background.

In Germany in **2014** there were **2.5** asylum seekers per pro **1,000** residents.¹

Almost **60 mil.** people are fleeing their homes around the world.

Without immigration, by 2050 the number of employable people in Germany would fall by **16 million.**²

¹ See UNHCR Asylum Trends 2014.

² See the calculations carried out by the Institute for Employment Research [Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, IAB]



Diversity as a resource – the “welcome culture” and applying diversity in companies

A) Diversity as a gain

There’s no way around this trend for companies in this day and age: people, ideas and products are flowing through global spaces as never before. For companies, this means more diversity of customer groups, business partners and employees. To operate sustainably, businesses need to come to grips with the growing diversity on the labour market and integrate it productively into workforce structures and commercial considerations.

Diversity as a competency

All employees bring different skills and talents, enabling innovative solutions. The competencies of a mixed workforce help companies accommodate different customer groups and business partners, be active in new markets or make their company image more compelling. Diversity offers opportunities: mixed teams that are managed competently and a working climate free of prejudice create competitive advantage on the employment market and among customers.

Advantages in the competition for qualified professionals

German society is getting older, the birth rate is dropping – and the number of available workers is shrinking along with it.

Three out of four medium-sized companies are already having difficulties in finding suitable employees. This costs them EUR 33 billion.³ Even companies that are not yet experiencing bottlenecks will sooner or later have to turn their attention to new workforce potential if they want to remain

sustainably competitive. Besides specialised personnel recruited from abroad, certain groups of people come to the fore here who today are still under-represented on the German employment market and in many industries: older employees, people with disabilities, migrants and their descendants,

³ See EY, Mittelstandsbarometer August 2013.



Three out of four medium-sized companies are already having difficulties in finding suitable personnel. This costs them EUR 33 billion a year.

and of course also refugees. Up to four million additional workers can be recruited by integrating these groups better into the employment market.⁴ Particularly for small and medium-sized companies it is of vital importance to enhance their company’s attractiveness to a great variety of employees and to make use of the opportunities that result from this. To this end, an open working climate free of prejudice is needed through which a welcome culture can be experienced and credibly communicated. German companies can save EUR 21 billion in this way, since an appreciative working climate free of prejudice reduces employee drift.⁵

Diversity as reality and resource – a change in perspective

To date, integration is frequently understood such that a migrant minority should take on the characteristics and value system of the majority society. According to this thinking, immigrants need to adapt and – ultimately – become “less different” to have the same

opportunities as the native population. The differences of the immigrants are perceived as ostensible “deficits” and interpreted as an impediment for successful coexistence – whether within a specific company or in society as a whole. A change in perspective is necessary here – away from thinking in terms of shortcomings and towards thinking in terms of resources. It’s no longer (only) a case of protecting individuals with supposedly weak potential against discrimination. Instead, workforce and cultural diversity should be understood as a general added value to which all parties involved contribute and from which companies and society benefit.

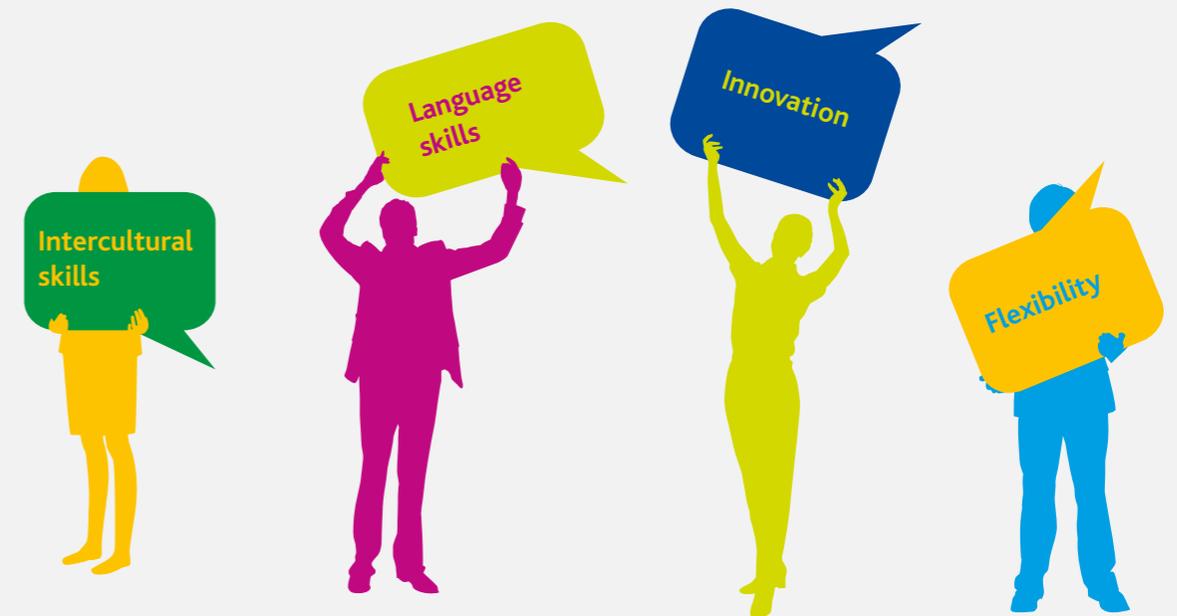
B) Dealing successfully with diversity

Accepting diversity and deploying it for the company’s success – that’s the idea of diversity management. At the heart of this idea are the dimensions by which all persons are distinguished from each other according to the Charta der Vielfalt definition:

⁴ Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Perspektive 2025: Fachkräfte für Deutschland, 2011

⁵ Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, Dreamteam statt Quote – Studie zu Diversity und Inclusion (2011).

The strengths of immigrants



The guiding principle behind diversity management consists of

- a) reflecting **society in its diversity** within companies
- b) **respecting, appreciating and actively promoting** the diversity of employees with **their diverse potential**.

Both are key to a company's commercial success.

gender, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation and identity. Diversity is understood here as something fundamentally positive. Particularly against the backdrop of transformations already mentioned due to globalisation, increasing mobility and demographic changes, diversity is a prerequisite for economic success and a topic for the overall company strategy that cuts across all areas. Besides decisions related to personnel policy, diversity management affects aspects such as production, product design, communications strategy and marketing.

Companies and society – strong together for diversity

From the diversity management perspective, the company should reproduce the diversity of society in its workforce to be able to successfully offer products and services for different customer groups. At the same time, supporting disadvantaged groups on the employment market relates to

companies' social responsibility. That's because the role the economy plays in actively changing societal realities cannot be overstated. Consciously communicating opportunities is thus also a component of effectively practiced entrepreneurial responsibility.

Dismantling structural barriers

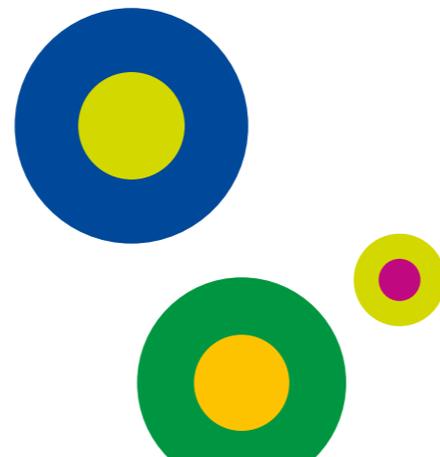
The objective of effective diversity management is to shape the company culture in an open and appreciative way. In so doing, essential changes take place at the structural level. To enable an intercultural opening, the possibilities of access and promotion for certain groups of persons must be assessed in the company's existing personnel processes and structures. There are a number of legal circumstances to heed when employing refugees. However, the possibilities to employ displaced persons are often better than companies realise. That's because majority of the refugees – depending on their residence status – are not subject to any further restrictions; they can be employed as German employees can. Employers are asked to explore new approaches to recruit (future) specialised staff and create opportunities for sustainable access to the employment market.

Raising awareness of diversity

Before specific actions can take effect, all employees need to be sensitised to diversity. Training, mentoring programs and intercultural tandems ensure more awareness and understanding on both sides. The focus is also on conveying the individual company values to new employees, not solely a focus on the "foreign".

Successful diversity management – a long-term process

Implementing diversity management measures is always a process that sustainably creates company culture in an open and appreciative way. And that pays off! By enhancing awareness of the topic of diversity, new competencies and areas of action develop that will make the company more competitive in the changing business world.



Opportunities and benefits of employing refugees

A) Recruiting skilled personnel

Given demographic developments in Germany, it is predicted that there will be a lack of up to 6.5 million workers in Germany by the year 2025.³ Here, the group of people who have fled to Germany with prospects of permanent residence constitutes – together with other groups of persons who are currently still hardly taken into account on the employment market – an interesting and important potential workforce. That's because about two thirds of the refugees currently living in Germany are of working age and in addition often have good qualifications. Labour law conditions for refugees have improved significantly in recent months. Further simplifications of access to the employment market are currently being negotiated at the political level – first and foremost in response to the initiative from the business community.

B) Recruiting highly motivated trainees

In many industries, the decline in the birth rate over decades is creating a dwindling pool of trainees. Between 2005 and 2014, the number of applications registered with the job centres for trainee positions in the dual system shrank by almost a quarter. This places small and medium-sized businesses in particular under pressure.

When looking for capable trainees, it's worthwhile for companies to look beyond the usual recruiting procedures. Among the refugees living in Germany there are many young people who can be trained with a high degree of motivation, determination and commitment – qualities that people (have to) demonstrate when, despite unforeseeable risks, they leave their own country to provide for their future.

6 German Federal Statistics Office, demographic statistics 2012

Germany is shrinking and getting older: Development over the next 20 years

Source: German Federal Statistics Office, demographic statistics 2012



No one left behind: larger pool of potential workers by means of diversity-oriented recruitment.

C) Active integration

Since the structures to place refugees with companies often have yet to be established in local communities, refugees' contact to employers frequently originates via informal networks. The registration of qualified job seekers who do not have suitable connections has until now been fragmentary.

In this case, it is worthwhile to become active as an employer and look for placement opportunities. You can find competent individuals who can establish contact with qualified applicants at associations, job centres and employment agencies, bodies responsible for refugee assistance or even by directly contacting local refugee accommodation centres.

D) Attractiveness and competitiveness

By embracing diversity, companies position themselves towards customers and job applicants as attractive employers. Diverse teams are more creative and innovative and stand for an open company culture. Besides their specialised know-how, foreign employees often have the advantage of language and cultural competencies. Precisely these intercultural competencies are essential in the increasingly globalised economic world. Businesses that consciously choose foreign employees are investing in the future and, by succeeding, they contribute to the attractiveness of Germany as a place to do business.

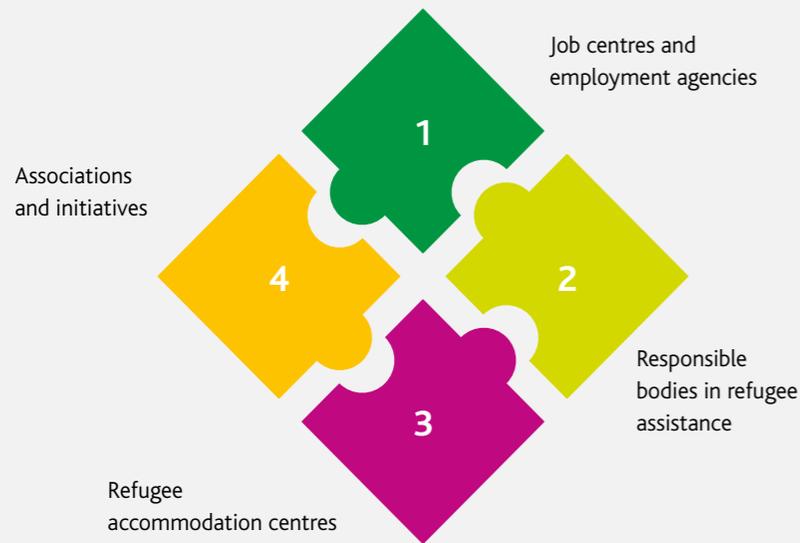
E) Strengthening local communities

Refugees who are successfully integrated into the labour market drive their host countries' growth and prosperity. Employers not only increase the opportunities for capable employees, actively support persons in need of protection in getting integrated in Germany, and foster their participation in a decent and self-determined life – they are also acting in their local community's interests. That's because a high rate of employment ensures social peace and also economic stability in the region.

Successful diversity management

Many companies have recognised that they benefit when they employ people with international origins in a targeted way. When a company opens up interculturally, new challenges arise for all parties involved: for instance, misunderstandings can sometimes arise due to differing expectations and cultural practices. Unconscious prejudices should also be discussed from the outset. An open and offensive communication culture is the best strategy here to deal with possible difficulties and actively involve all sides. To foster mutual understanding for differing cultural backgrounds, awareness-raising training, intercultural workshops and other measures should be offered within the scope of diversity management. They support in creating an awareness of hidden prejudices and examining them critically.

Who finds jobs for refugees?



Asylum seeking, recognised or tolerated? Definition of terms relating to the right of residence



Who are we talking about when we speak of refugees or – the term in EU law – international beneficiaries of protection? In general, and in this brochure as well, it means all persons who, for reasons of persecution, civil war or severe violence find themselves forced to leave their place of origin. When someone is fleeing persecution, he or she is recognised as a person entitled to political asylum by Art. 16a of the German Basic Law or a refugee in accordance with the Geneva Convention on Refugees (GCR). If someone is fleeing severe violence or the dangers of civil war, he or she receives what is known as subsidiary protection. The granting of protection according to the Geneva Convention on Refugees as well as subsidiary protection are uniformly regulated for all EU member states in an EU directive. Both forms of protection are now designated as international protection. In principle, all immigrants have the right to file an application for asylum. Not everyone, however, who seeks protection will be recognised according to German, European and international law as a refugee and granted refugee status. Whether residence in the country is permitted is decided in Germany by the Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees (BAMF) after asylum proceedings. One can distinguish the following groups of persons with regard to authorisation to remain and work in Germany:

A) Persons entitled to political asylum, recognised refugees or international beneficiaries of protection

Persons entitled to political asylum by Art. 16a of the German Basic Law and international beneficiaries of protection are granted a residency permit for humanitarian, international law or political reasons.

Prospects of permanent residence: The residency permit of persons entitled to political asylum and recognised GCR refugees is initially limited to three years. If the situation of persecution continues unchanged after three years, the competent Foreigners'

Registration Office grants an (unlimited) settlement permit. Persons granted subsidiary protection first receive a residency permit for one year. If the hazardous situation remains unchanged, this is extended for two additional years. Differently than for persons entitled to political asylum and recognised GCR refugees, only after five years of legal residence does a claim for granting an (unlimited) settlement permit arise under certain additional prerequisites.

B) Persons who come to Germany within the scope of humanitarian resettlement actions

They receive a humanitarian residency permit without having to go through asylum proceedings first. A distinction is to be made here between admission by means of the permanent resettlement program⁷ and the admission activities of the federal government and the states for Syrian refugees.

C) Asylum seekers

Foreigners who have submitted an application to be awarded protection are designated applicants for asylum or asylum seekers. They are permitted to stay for the duration of the asylum proceedings. The temporary residency permit is not a right of residence, but just authenticates the ongoing proceedings.

Prospects of permanent residence: Although the aim on the part of the authorities is to conclude all asylum proceedings quickly, asylum proceedings sometimes take much longer. For this reason, no fundamental statement can be made about the prospects of permanent residence for this status. As regards certain countries of

⁷ The term designates the permanent resettlement of particularly vulnerable refugees in a third country that is willing to receive them, that grants them full refugee protection and offers them the possibility to integrate into the country. A number of refugees is determined each year together with the UN and other relief organisations. (source: unhcr.de, 2015.)

origin, it is currently assumed – also on the part of the authorities – that there are good prospects for permanent residence. This concerns, for instance, Syrian, Eritrean and Afghani asylum seekers, as well as members of religious minorities from Iraq.

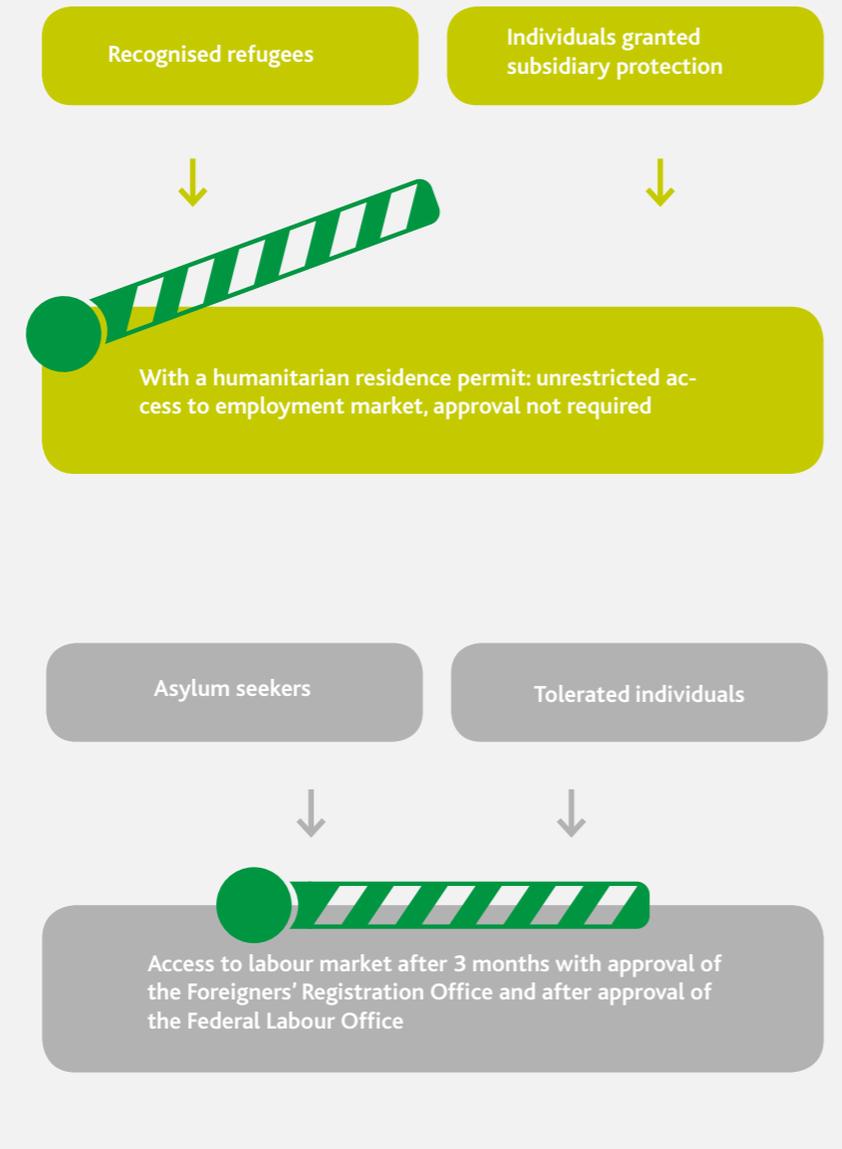
D) Tolerated persons

Those persons are considered tolerated whose application for asylum has been refused, but who for legal, political, personal or actual reasons may not be deported. For instance, the protection of marriage and family, illnesses, the lack of travel documents or also interruptions of the transit routes in crisis regions can lead to a suspension of deportation being issued. This “toleration” is not a right of residence; it does not procure a legal residence. However, tolerated persons may work.

Prospect of permanent residence:

Depending on the reason for the obstacle to deportation, a suspension of deportation can exist for years. Tolerated persons who have been living for eight years or six years (for minor children) in Germany can usually obtain a humanitarian right to residency if they can for the most part provide for themselves.

You would like to employ a refugee. What do you need to be aware of?



Who may work? Prerequisites for access to the employment market

Whether paid employment may be pursued depends on the individual's right of residence. Refugees and individuals granted subsidiary protection may take up any employment approval-free. For asylum seekers and tolerated persons, the length of the stay plays an important role in employment market access.

Regular employment market access: persons entitled to political asylum, recognised refugees, and persons granted subsidiary protection

Persons entitled to political asylum and recognised refugees as well as persons granted subsidiary protection may be gainfully employed; there are no differences between them and German job applicants. In case of unemployment, they are supported by the job centre. Besides benefits to cover subsistence costs, all measures designed to assist integration in the labour market are in principle open to them.

Distinctive features: asylum seekers and tolerated individuals

For a stay of three months, the Foreigners' Registration Office can issue an employment permit to asylum seekers and tolerated individuals if the Federal Labour Office has approved (request for acceptance). Before this there is no employment permit. Tolerated individuals can receive earlier acceptance, however, if they want to take up vocational training in a certified occupation or a profession which is similarly governed.

Checks by the Federal Labour Office and the Foreigners' Registration Office

In the first 15 months of the stay, the Federal Labour Office verifies in its priority check whether asylum seekers and tolerated individuals can fill the respective positions or whether preferred job-seekers – including German citizens or EU citizens – are available. After a stay of 15 months in total, the priority check lapses, as does the prohibition to work as a temporary worker that has applied until then. In the first four years of stay in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Federal Labour Office

also checks whether employment is carried out under the same working conditions as for German employees. From the fifth year of stay, employment market access is approval-free. For tolerated individuals, the Foreigners' Registration Office can, however, impose a ban on employment and thus block access to dependent employment or to company-based training. In these cases, legal consultation should take place.

EU Blue Card

Since 2012, immigrants with a German or a recognised foreign university degree, a permanent job in Germany and annual gross income of EUR 48,400 can obtain the EU Blue Card with a temporary working permit. For certain activities declared shortage occupations (bottleneck occupations), the income threshold is EUR 37,752. You will find further information under:

» www.bamf.de > English > Migration to Germany > Working in Germany > Citizens of third countries > The EU Blue Card

Twice a year the Federal Labour Office issues a white list of professions in which there is a lack of qualified employees. You can find the current list under:

» www.arbeitsagentur.de > EN > Working and Job-Seeking > Working in Germany > Admission to the German labour market > Whitelist

Refugees in vocational training

As for other types of employment, young people with entitlement to political asylum or refugee status have unrestricted access to vocational training. Asylum seekers and tolerated persons must pay attention to several special features here:

Approval of the authorities

Asylum seekers can begin on-the-job training in the dual system after staying for three months and tolerated persons immediately after the suspension of deportation is issued unless there is a prohibition on employment. The Foreigners' Registration Office must issue an employment permit for the specific training position. No approval of authority is necessary for school education and state-certified or comparably governed training. With recognition as a person entitled to political asylum or refugee, no approval is necessary either.

Extension of a suspension of deportation during and after apprenticeship

Foreigners can receive or extend the status of suspension of deportation if they have taken up qualified vocational training. The same applies for further training recognised by the Federal Labour Office. The Foreigners' Registration Office can in the process keep extending the suspension of deportation for a year at a time as long as the vocational training is concluded within a suitable time period. The prerequisite is that the trainees begin the vocational training before turning 22 and do not come from a "safe country of origin"⁸. If tolerated individuals find a job that suffices to cover their living costs after completing the vocational training, they can obtain a limited residence permit.

⁸ Relates to Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Senegal, Ghana and the EU states (as of Sep. 2015)

Vocational training allowance (Berufsausbildungsbeihilfe (BAB))

Whether trainees are entitled to vocational training allowance depends on their individual residency status. Persons entitled to political asylum, recognised refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection have in principle an entitlement to BAB. Asylum seekers in ongoing proceedings usually do not obtain

any benefits supporting vocational training. For persons with a status of suspension of deportation, there is an entitlement to vocational training allowance after four years of continuous residence in the country; as of January 2016, this will apply after 15 months. Previous gainful employment of the parents can also support an entitlement to an allowance.⁹

⁹ The Federal Labour Office provides more detailed information.

Summary:

You would like to hire a refugee. What do you need to pay attention to?

Approval-free employment market access

- For applicants with a humanitarian residence permit as recognised persons entitled to political asylum, recognised refugees, persons granted subsidiary protection
- For asylum seekers and tolerated persons if in Germany for more than four years (however: prohibition on employment possible for tolerated individuals)

Priority review and checking the equivalence of working conditions

- For asylum seekers and tolerated persons (without prohibition on employment, with duration of stay between three and 15 months)
- Priority review ceases to apply after 15 months; equivalence of working conditions must be examined further

Embarking on vocational training is easier than you might think



Recognised refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection



Asylum seekers and tolerated persons

Work placement to enter professional life

Introductory Training (Einstiegsqualifizierung, EQ)

It is intended that those interested in receiving training who are not yet completely able to begin training use the EQ as a stepping stone into the employment market. They are prepared for the vocational training within the scope of a six to twelve month work placement.

Advantages for companies and interns

Conducting an EQ lends itself to introducing candidates to the business

for a later traineeship and assessing their skills in advance. For young refugees, the lack of language skills is often the greatest impediment to employment. During Introductory Training they have the possibility to try out their desired job and prepare themselves for a traineeship in terms of language – including job-related language courses – as well as on the job.

Who can participate?

Refugees can take part in an EQ independent of their residency status. Even persons with a temporary residence permit and with a suspension of deportation can make use of this benefit, regardless of their previous stays and periods of employment. Unlike other types of employment, no priority check takes place. The intention should be to later take on the intern in an apprenticeship.

Applying for an EQ – what has to be done?

The EQ subsidy must be applied for with the local job centre before the internship begins. Before beginning the internship, the intern's work permit is also obtained from

the regional foreigners' registration office.

Tip: Practice has shown that the authorities usually also approve vocational training or employment after a work placement.

Compensation and allowances

The EQ is subject to mandatory social insurance contributions and remuneration and is subsidised by the Federal Labour Office. The company covers material and personnel costs, as well as contributions to the Employers Liability Insurance Association.

Other measures for professional integration

Operational measures with an employer (MAGs)¹⁰ are activities at a company of a maximum of six weeks duration that serve vocational integration and are financially subsidised by the Federal Labour Office. Unemployed people or persons threatened by unemployment receive professional knowledge in this way and can at the same time test their suitability for the specific profession. Asylum seekers and tolerated persons may take part in an MAG from the fourth month of their stay. Approval by the authorities is not necessary.

¹⁰ www.arbeitsagentur.de > Veröffentlichungen > Weisungen > Arbeitsmarkt und Integration.

Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications: having equivalence checked – without and without certificates

Prescribed recognition of qualifications

To pursue one of the approx. 60 regulated professions¹¹ in Germany, recognition of the vocational qualification is mandatory. Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications is also necessary for school education, vocational training, university studies or advanced training/retraining.

Recommended recognition of qualifications

For non-regulated professions,¹² recognition is not prescribed, but it is recommended. This concerns academic professions and qualifications in the dual system. In this way, employers have the possibility to better assess candidates' existing skills and competencies.

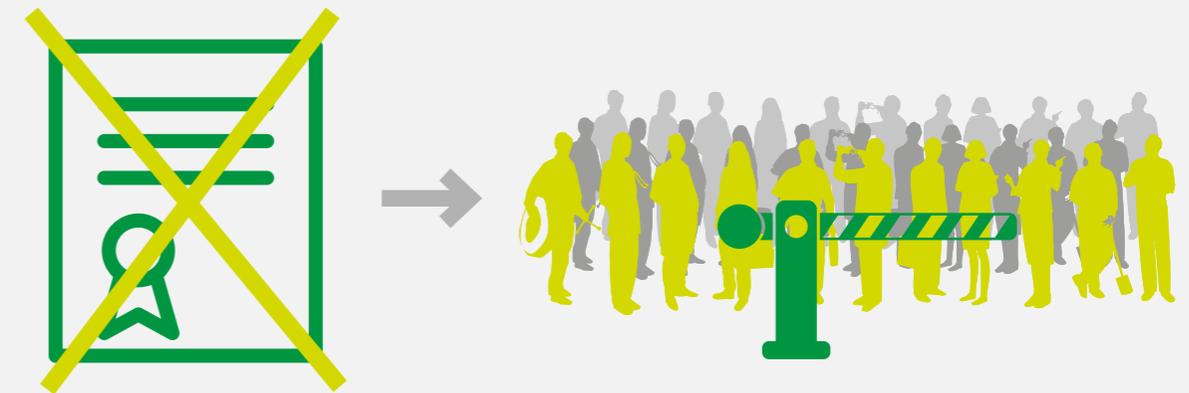
Having the equivalence of vocational qualifications checked

The responsible office verifies within a time period of three months the content and duration of the professional qualification and decides whether it is equivalent to a German qualification.

In-company placements facilitate job entry for many refugees. The Federal Labour Office supports this.



The recognition of vocational qualifications is mandatory for practicing qualified professions.



¹¹ List of regulated professions: www.berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de > Reglementierte Berufe.

¹² List of recognised training occupations in the dual system: www.bibb.de/de/40.php

Assessment of certificates: Usually, the recognition of professional qualifications earned abroad is based on analysis of certificates. For foreign university degrees, the Central Office for Foreign Education issues individual certificate evaluation.

Analysis of qualifications: Given their particular situation, refugees frequently have no written proof of their vocational qualifications or the acquisition of professional qualifications. In case of missing certificates or incomplete documents, certain professional groups can have their professional knowledge and skills determined on the basis of an analysis of qualifications (equivalence proceedings). This occurs using work samples, expert discussions and specialist presentations. For individuals who have worked for a number of years without a vocational qualification, an external exam is possible before the responsible chamber. In each state, seminars and training courses are offered in preparation.¹³

Contacts

Under www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de you will find additional information and contacts. The Chamber of Trade, in some states the chamber of commerce, and the IQ recognition and qualification consultation centres of the "Integration through Qualification (IQ)"¹⁴ subsidy program can help.

¹³ Information on external exams for people who have worked for several years provided by the Federal Labour Office.

¹⁴ For points of contact for the "Integration through Qualification" (IQ) support program, see p. 27.

Good to know: All immigrants have legal entitlement to have the equivalence of their professional qualifications checked, independent of citizenship and residence status. The costs for this will be borne by the job centre or the Federal Labour Office.

Advanced training and adaptation periods

For some professions there are adaptation measures to attain lacking qualifications. Refugees not employed subject to statutory welfare contributions can receive funding of the advanced training costs from the Federal Labour Office or the job centre. Employees subject to statutory welfare contributions can be released from their employer for advanced training. Wage payments for this time period can be subsidised by the job centre. The employment permit is extended for the time period of advanced training.

Integration and German courses

Integration courses

Persons entitled to political asylum and recognised refugees are legally entitled to an integration course from the federal government (at least 600 hours). The aspiration is Level B1. Persons granted subsidiary protection, holders of a residency permit in accordance with Sect. 25 par. 5 Residence Act, as well as tolerated individuals with a suspension of deportation in accordance with Sect. 60a par. 2 p. 3 Residence Act are not automatically entitled to a place on the course, but can fill available places in the course. Asylum seekers for whom a legal residency and permanent stay is to be expected can also take part in the integration courses if there are available places.

Vocational ESF language courses

Job-related German lessons are offered for free in the framework of the ESF BAMF program. The language course usually lasts six months and includes an internship (four to six weeks) with a local employer and possibly company visits. The course is supplementary, building on the integration courses and targeting a higher level of language.

Other language courses

The Volkshochschulen also offer language courses. The employment agency or job centre can take on the costs in case of unemployment and a need for help.

Good to know: These courses are available to refugees





Real-life examples

Many companies in Germany are interested in employing displaced persons. They want to help, to take social responsibility – and at the same time recruit and/or train talented staff. In local communities, the structures have yet to be created to find jobs for work-seeking refugees. Many networks and a few companies are currently performing pioneering work. They show that – if social and economic interests are combined – many things are possible.

Orientation internship for highly qualified persons

Siemens, Erlangen
342,000 employees

From idea to project

Siemens AG has been offering orientation internships for refugees since February 2015. The focus is on providing professional orientation for the young refugees, on the one hand, and overcoming prejudice on the German side on the other. The Siemens project was initiated in collaboration with the city of Erlangen. To this end, the company developed a concept of their own with special contracts enabling paid internships and accompanying implementation with diversity management actions.

Selection of the participants

The target group is asylum seekers with an unclear residence status. The highly qualified young adults have completed vocational training but so far have little practical work experience. The language requirements: German at Level B1. The contact to the refugees came about

through the information centres in the city of Erlangen. The consultants know the refugees' CVs and vocational backgrounds, can facilitate contacts directly, and remain the point of contact during preparation and once the project is up and running.

The project in brief

Through late 2015, up to 10 interns will commence a two-month internship at Siemens in Erlangen. Similar programs have been starting at nine other company sites across Germany since October 2015. Each intern is assigned a dedicated "buddy" in the business during the orientation internships. These mentors are employees from other departments who have volunteered to support in case of questions or difficulties. In a one-day team workshop together with the interns, the employees are provided with information about the project and intercultural training to reflect on their own biases.



ROSA RIERA
HEAD OF EMPLOYER
BRANDING & DIVERSITY

"I'm enthusiastic about the employees' willingness to help and commitment. This willingness is important because ultimately something like this only works with the support of many. Big ideas like inclusion and diversity are implemented and tested on a small scale here, on site. Quite a few of our employees who are already active in their personal lives feel themselves more strongly connected with 'their' company in this way. It's a win-win situation."

Young refugees in skilled crafts Heizung Klima Sanitär Höber GmbH, Passau approx. 145 employees



From idea to project

A request from the vocational college in Vilshofen got the ball rolling. Vilshofen is one of 31 vocational colleges around Germany that teach refugees German, preparing them for traineeships at the same time. Höber GmbH has been offering young refugees one-year internships since the autumn of 2015. For qualified participants, subsequent vocational training is planned.

Selection of the participants

Young refugees up to 21 years old with manual skills were sought, with as good a knowledge of German as possible and the motivation for on-the-job training. Initial contact was made to interested applicants through an internship fair for refugees organised by the Economic Forum Passau. Pre-selection was made based on knowledge of German and participation in a German course, as well as practical considerations about the distance between place of residence and job.

The project in brief

Five interested parties completed a trial internship of almost a week, trying their hand at the tools of the business and demonstrating proof of their manual skills. Three of them then began one-year industrial training within the scope of the

EU-funded job integration year project, consisting of two days of practical application in the business and three days of vocational college each week (job integration course). On the job, a team of ten employees was formed who took charge of looking after the interns. An intensive 1:1 support by "apprentice champions" is planned for the traineeship period.

Partners

The business managed the increased workload with reliable contact persons: the Wirtschaftsforum Passau supported in legal matters and visits to the authorities; the Vilshofen vocational college helped with practical implementation (for instance, for issues related to transport and apartment search). Volunteer helpers gave additional German lessons and accompanied the young interns in day-to-day life.



HELMUT HÖBER,
MANAGING DIRECTOR

"What is important is selecting the right people. Many are very motivated, hard-working and open-minded. Of course, you never really know beforehand whether someone is suited to be a mechanic or a tradesman and will stay on in the business permanently – and that's no different to a German trainee. But the investment has already paid off with the opportunity to find future employees. And we're doing something for the young people. It's not for nothing that we're called 'entrepreneurs'."

Qualified staff for Brandenburg

Reuther STC, Fürstenwalde
approx. 300 employees

From idea to project

Jointly with the Gesellschaft für Arbeit und Soziales e.V. [GefAS: Society for Work and Social Matters], Reuther STC developed the plan to train several young refugees in welding during a three-month intensive training internship – welding is an area in which Reuther is always looking for specialised staff. The focus was on how the refugees living in Fürstenwalde could be better integrated into the local community.

Selection of the participants

Reuther developed clear requirement criteria for participation in the project: those eligible were young men between the ages of 20 and 30 with manual dexterity and an interest in working with metal, high motivation and adequate German language skills. In addition, the young men needed to be able to envisage staying in Fürstenwalde for the long term and possibly beginning a traineeship. GefAS conducted individual interviews with young refugees and took over selection.

The project in brief

From February to April 2015, 14 young men from Somalia, Cameroon and Syria, among other countries, learned the basics in various welding processes. The training took place in part in Reuther STC's production works and in part on the premises of the training centre in Fürstenwalde. After the three months were over, all the participants passed an examination and received a certificate attesting to the skills they had acquired in process and welding technology.

Partners

Reuther STC took on the training, including material and personnel costs. GefAS established contact with the refugees, funded additional German courses on the weekends and took care of administrative issues. The Fürstenwalde training centre provided training rooms.



GEROLD BRUNKEN, RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCE AND HR

"The three months were full of intensive learning and strenuous for the participants: they started at seven in the morning, studied every day; on the weekend, too, there were language courses. At first I was concerned about whether the young men would keep it up, but they proved me wrong. The guys did a brilliant job, gave it their all, highly motivated. We then decided to offer not just one or two but four of them an employment contract. Since May they have been employed by us, initially as production assistants; in the upcoming months, they will be further trained by us internally and externally. We hope that they'll be able to stay with us permanently."



Interface between companies and refugees "FAM – Making use of potential" project, Passau

Example of successful placements

In October 2014 the "FAM – Making use of potential" project was started, initiated by the Economic Forum of the Passau Region, with the objective of placing work-seeking refugees in the Passau region in businesses. Until now, about fifty participants aged between 21 and 45 have been selected. The prerequisites are adequate German language skills, high reliability and motivation. In a qualification phase, the participants were prepared for the labour market with a two-month intensive language course, intercultural training on the values and rules in German working life, as well as a job application coaching at the job centre. Then placement in the businesses of the region starts. During a two-week internship, participants and businesses test whether it's a fit and ideally begin an employment relationship (traineeship or employment).



JAKOB SCHREINER, PROJECT MANAGER

"We've been getting great feedback from the companies. Of course, difficulties can crop up sometimes, for instance through cultural misunderstandings. These need to be communicated openly because the people affected often have no idea what the problem is. Ultimately, work is one of the best forms of integration: the people are in contact with natives, improve their German, stand on their own two feet financially, and can participate sustainably to society."

Support offerings from the job centre

Support offers from the job centre

The job centre provides financial support to promote integration into the labour market. This includes among other things:

- assuming the costs for the recognition of qualifications gained abroad
- wage subsidies for employers
- qualification offerings, professional development

Active job creation

In Germany, refugees who are registered as unemployed as well as, in the future, asylum seekers with prospects of permanent residence have access to the following funding:

- vocational guidance
- placements in free apprenticeships
- financial support of internships to prepare for vocational training (introductory training)

Qualification and training offerings

In addition, there are special support measures for refugees and asylum seekers with prospects of permanent residence who aim for vocational training and whose parents have worked in Germany for a certain time period. These include:

- assistance flanking training
- external vocational training
- vocational preparation courses

Consultation and information

The Federal Labour Office and the ESF right of residence networks offer consultation and support.

More information at www.esf.de

Success factors

A) German skills

A sufficient command of German is of utmost importance for successful collaboration. In every industry, as well, there are technical terms that all employees have to learn. For the business, financing job-specific language courses or organising language mentors and tandem programs can be a good complement to the publicly subsidised offerings.

B) Selection of participants

To make the internship, apprenticeship or employment relationship a positive experience for all involved, the requirements from the applicants should be communicated precisely in advance. Do professional interests and prior knowledge fit the position offered? Can the employment work from a practical point of view (distance from residence, transport options, etc.)? What vocational training opportunities can the company offer interested parties?

C) Preparing the workforce and culture of open dialogue

To make a success of a company's intercultural opening, it is of vital importance to involve the workforce. When employing refugees, the effort required due to inadequate knowledge of the German language and the usual processes in companies is often higher. The willingness of the permanent workforce to engage voluntarily and contribute to integrating the refugees into the work processes should definitely be addressed in advance. Mentoring programs and the establishment of responsible core teams as contacts in day-to-day working life have proven valuable here. A culture of open dialogue is an advantage for all employees in the business.

D) Intercultural training

Preparatory diversity management measures are very useful to prevent hidden biases towards refugees standing in the way of integration into the workforce. In an intercultural training session, employees can actively engage with possible biases and develop new perspectives. The significance of this step for collaboration as equals should not be underestimated. At the same time, it is important to convey to the new employees the manners and rules of the German working world. This is because differing levels of importance are put on different behaviours in every country.

E) Cooperation partners and contacts

For bureaucratic matters and questions relating to practical implementation, you can find helpful contacts in the networks and organisations involved in refugee assistance. The local job centres provide information on labour law and subsidy possibilities. And the support from volunteer helper groups – for instance in organising language courses – is also of great value. Experience shows: with reliable cooperation partners at one's side, one can embark on new paths in employing refugees and build up solid working structures.

Service addresses

Service addresses (throughout Germany)

Job exchange for refugees

» [workeer.de](http://www.workeer.de)

XENOS – Employment market support for individuals entitled to permanent residence and refugees

» www.esf-meine-geschichte.de/programme/xenos-arbeitsmarktliche-unterstuetzung-fur-bleibeberechtigte-und-fluechtlinge

Integration through Qualification (IQ)

» www.netzwerk-iq.de/english-version.html

Free legal consultation for refugees and helpers

» www.deutsche-anwaltshotline.de/fluechtlingsberatung_en

Information for asylum seekers, job seekers and employers

» www.bmas.de/DE/Schwerpunkte/Neustart-in-Deutschland/inhalt.html

Networks and initiatives (by regions)

NORTH

Land in Sicht – work for refugees in Schleswig-Holstein

» www.mehrlandinsicht-sh.de

Fluchtort Hamburg Plus II

» www.fluchtort-hamburg.de

Flüchtlingsrat Bremen

» www.fluechtlingsrat-bremen.de

WEST

Work for individuals entitled to permanent residence in Gütersloh, Bielefeld und Lippe

» www.alpha-bielefeld.de

Aufbruch Portin Plus – Dortmund, Hagen, Märkischer Kreis

» www.bleiberecht-aufbruch-portin.de

Integration network ELNet Bleiberecht Emscher-Lippe

elnet-bleiberecht.de

Job Network MAMBA Münster

» www.mamba-muenster.de

Participation Plus, network promoting employment market support for individuals entitled to permanent residence and refugees

» www.participation-wuppertal.de

Network BLEIB in Hesse

» www.bleibin.de

InProcedere Rhineland-Palatinate

» www.inprocedere-rlp.de

Consultation network for individuals entitled to permanent residence and refugees Saarland

» www.sabene.de

Service addresses

SOUTH

Right of residence networks for Baden-Württemberg

» www.bleibinbw.de

Residence with employment – help network at Bodensee

» www.bleibenmitarbeit.de

Network for consultation and work placement for refugees Western Bavaria

» www.bavf.de

Refugees in work and training Eastern Bavaria

» www.muenchen.de/fiba

EAST

Right of residence network “to arrange – pro job” Thüringen

» www.ibs-thueringen.de

Job Bridge Plus Saxony-Anhalt

» www.jobbruecke-chance.de

Bridge Network for right of residence Berlin

» www.bridge-bleiberecht.de

BleibNet PLUS Brandenburg

» www.bbag-ev.de

Network Work for Refugees Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

» www.naf-mv.de

Welcome to Germany – the Deutsche Telekom AG information portal

Deutsche Telekom AG developed a portal as an information platform addressing all refugees in Germany. The platform answers frequently asked questions, provides explanations of the asylum procedure, things worth knowing about living and working in Germany, as well as local information about preliminary reception centres. The information is compiled by voluntary helpers and updated continuously – in a number of languages.

» refugees.telekom.de

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page 25: Wirtschaftsforum der Region Passau e.V.

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The Charta der Vielfalt: the largest diversity management network in Germany



The Charta der Vielfalt has existed since 2006. By signing it, companies and institutions commit to creating an appreciative working environment free of prejudice in which all talents can develop and evolve. Four major corporations led the way, profoundly convinced that only a culture of diversity can meet the challenges that will change Germany as a business location in the next 20 years. Since then, more than 2,250 companies and institutions with more than 7.5 million employees have endorsed this conviction. You can read all the information on the largest diversity management network in Germany at:

» www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en

→ The Diversity Charter stands for a holistic approach to dealing with diversity. The association focuses on six diversity dimensions that determine people's identity and conduct: gender, cultural or national origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation and identity.

» www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/diversity/diversity-dimensionen

charta der vielfalt

Diversity as a Chance – The Corporate Charter of Diversity for Germany

The diversity of modern society, influenced by globalisation and reflected in demographic changes, is affecting economic life in Germany. We have come to realize that we can only be successful economically if we acknowledge and leverage the existing diversity. That includes the diversity of our workforces and the diverse needs of our customers and other business partners. Diverse competencies and talents on the part of staff open new opportunities for innovative and creative solutions.

The implementation of the Charter of Diversity in our organisation aims at creating a work environment free of prejudice. We deeply respect all colleagues irrespective of gender, nationality, ethnic background, religion or worldview, disability, age, and sexual preference and identity. Appreciation and promotion of these diverse potentials produce economic benefits for our organisation.

We foster an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual trust. This will have positive effects on our reputation with our partners and customers in Germany and in other countries in the world.

In the framework of this Charter we are committed to

- fostering a corporate culture characterised by mutual respect and appreciation of every single individual. We seek to create conditions such that everyone (superiors and co-workers) respects, practices and acknowledges these values. This will require explicit support from leaders and superiors.
- validating and ensuring that our human resource processes are compatible with the diverse competencies, abilities and talents of our employees, as well as with our own performance standards.
- recognising the diversity of society inside and outside our organisation, appreciating the intrinsic potential residing in it, and endeavouring to utilise it profitably for our business or organisation.
- ensuring that the implementation of the Charter will be a subject of internal and external communication.
- publicizing on an annual basis our own activities and progress in promoting diversity.
- and keeping our own employees and colleagues informed about diversity and actively involved in implementing the Charter.

We are definitely convinced that practicing and appreciating diversity will have a positive impact on German society. We welcome and support this business initiative!

Organisation: Minister of State Aydan Özoğuz
Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration

The members of the Charta der Vielfalt e.V.



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www.deutscher-diversity-tag.de
www.facebook.com/chartadervielfalt
www.twitter.com/ChartaVielfalt
www.xing.com/companies/chartadervielfalte.v

The description of the legal context reflects the situation as of November 2015 and has been checked by legal experts.
With the friendly support of



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Migration, Flüchtlinge und
Integration