

**IMPROVING THE VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS
A NETWORK OF GERMAN DPS SEEKS SUSTAINABLE IMPACT THROUGH ENHANCED
COOPERATION AND TRANSFER OF GOOD PRACTICE**

The presence of six out of every ten immigrants living in Germany can be accounted for by German industries recruiting large numbers of foreign workers from the mid 1950s until the early 1970s. The workers were initially expected to return to their home country on completion of their limited employment contracts but many have become long term or permanent residents. There has been little concern at a policy level about the vocational and social integration of these workers and their descendents, but in recent years strategies have been adopted to address this gap. EQUAL Development Partnerships are now delivering new approaches to support the effective implementation of these strategies.

ISSUES OF IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION HAVE MOVED UP ON THE GERMAN POLICY AGENDA



During the last 50 years, the number of foreigners living in the Federal Republic of Germany has risen from about 600,000 (1.2% of the total population) to around 7 million (more than 8% of the population). This figure of 7 million includes 2.3 million citizens from other EU countries. Over this period, Germany has taken in more immigrants than any other country in Europe. The largest of these groups are Turkish citizens (1.9 million), Italians (600,000), citizens of Serbia and Montenegro (570,000), Greeks (350,000) and Poles (330,000).

Most of the first generation of foreigners came as temporary workers, with permits for a limited period of residence. However in the late 1960s, a growing number of them wished to stay permanently and they began to bring other members of their families to live with them in Germany. Today, the large majority of all citizens holding a non-German passport have been living in Germany for at least 10 years, and about one third have lived here for 20 years or more. More than one third of the Turkish immigrants were born in Germany and are thus second- or third-generation immigrants, as are 29% of the Italians, 27% of the Greeks and 20% of the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro. Amongst these young people below 18 years of age, two out of three were born in Germany.

As a result of this process, Germany has become a country of immigration and this, in turn, has increasingly raised awareness of a need for more deliberate and more effective integration strategies, including those related to the labour market. The unemployment rate amongst foreigners is double that of the indigenous work force and whereas 28% of the "German" unemployed have no formal vocational qualifications, the corresponding figure for immigrants is almost 75%. In addition to the 7 million immigrants holding a foreign passport, an even higher number of Germans (9% of the total population) have also had the experience of migration, including 4 million "late repatriates" (i.e. ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries who are eligible to relocate to Germany under a special programme) and 3.3 million immigrants who have acquired German citizenship. Many of them face integration and employment problems that are very similar to those encountered by non-German immigrants.

The European Employment Guidelines place a strong emphasis on reducing employment gaps between third-country nationals and EU citizens. In its Recommendation ([2004/741/EC](#)) on the implementation of Member States' employment policies, the Council stresses, in one of its specific recommendations to Germany, the need to "strengthen efforts to integrate immigrants" in order to attract more people to the labour market and to make work a real option for all. This

concern is also reflected in the new German Immigration Act which entered into force on 1 January 2005 and includes specific measures to promote the integration of legal immigrants in Germany.

A NATIONAL THEMATIC NETWORK TO PROMOTE NEW APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION

Within the context of EQUAL, a number of German Development Partnerships (DPs) have developed and tested new approaches to improving access to training and work for immigrants and people with a migrant or ethnic minority background. They have also joined forces in a National Thematic Network (NTN) on the Vocational Integration of Migrants, through which they pool their experience and disseminate their approaches so that these can be taken up and used within the country's mainstream integration strategies.

A TIMELY START TO ATTRACT THE INTEREST OF POLICY MAKERS



Presenting the outcomes from DPs to key actors

explains National Support Structure, who coordinates the work of DPs in these thematic fields. Successful models of good practice and recommendations for further action and mainstreaming that emerged from the network's three working groups were presented and discussed at a major national conference (*Capabilities, Profiles, Perspectives – New Ways for the Vocational Integration of Immigrants*) in December 2004, in Hannover, the capital of the Federal State of Lower Saxony.

Well timed to take place on the eve of the enactment of the new Immigration Act, the conference attracted a lot of interest and support amongst policy makers and other key actors. *"The vocational integration of immigrants is a top-theme of labour market policy in Germany and requires urgent action. Through the Immigration Act, the Federal Government has taken a number of measures to improve the integration of immigrants. One of these is the creation of new centres for advice and counselling and this is directly linked to the work of EQUAL"*, said Gerd Andres who was then Secretary of State at the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour. In addressing the conference participants, he went on to confirm that *"the Ministry will place particular emphasis on the development of regional networks and/or guidance centres for the vocational integration of people with a migrant background."*



From the left: Walter Hirche, Minister of Economics and Labour of the State of Lower-Saxony; Rita Süßmuth, former President of the Bundestag and Chairwoman of the National Council of Experts for Immigration and Integration; Gerd Andres, Secretary of State at the Federal Ministry of Labour

CONTINUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY



Stefan Schulz-Trieglaff,
EQUAL National Support
Structure

The positive feedback on the successful outcomes of the NTN has provided a strong stimulus for further joint work in this thematic field during 2005 to 2007. A new phase of cooperation on the Vocational Integration of Immigrants was formally launched and this involves both new DPs and a number of those that had started in Round 1 and have subsequently been approved to develop their activities during the second phase of EQUAL. *“We must make the best use of the two years ahead to demonstrate the effectiveness of the DPs’ approaches and products and to strengthen our network structures, in order to maintain the momentum for action after EQUAL. Continuity and sustainability are the key words in this process”*, emphasised Stefan Schulz-Trieglaff at the first meeting of the new Cooperation Network in November 2005.

The DPs that participated in this meeting decided to organise their work in several thematic working groups which meet regularly and are open to new DPs who may wish to join.

▪ **Guidance and Initial Training for Young Immigrants**

Five DPs have agreed to cooperate in this working group (see annex). Its main objectives are to motivate and enable young immigrants to engage in training, and to mobilise employers to provide more training opportunities for this target group. As a first step, the group has started to prepare an inventory of successful approaches and experiences that exist and of relevant institutions and key actors operating in this thematic field. The next stage will be to identify the most promising models of good practice and those institutions and strategic partners who should be involved in promoting transfer and developing practical recommendations for action.

▪ **Improving Access to Training for Adult Immigrants and Offering them Opportunities to Update their Qualifications**

The nine DPs involved in this working group have adopted a methodological approach similar to that of the group concerned with young immigrants and have identified a series of key questions such as: Which approaches and “products” have already proved effective in responding to identified needs, and what are the factors that have conditioned their success? Which approaches have failed and why? Which are the most important target audiences that need to be involved in promoting transfer and mainstreaming of good practice, and how can their interests be met?

The DPs emphasise that responses must take account of both the heterogeneous interests and needs of adult immigrants and the changing demands of the labour market and thus, they have produced a second set of questions, namely: Which vocational fields offer perspectives for stable employment? What levels of qualification are required and what forms/methods of training are appropriate to enable adult immigrants to attain these levels? What approaches to training and qualification are suited to support those who want to set up their own business? The group feels that the answers to these questions need to be based on further analyses of changes in the labour market and of the capabilities of the existing institutions, structures and funding mechanisms to cope successfully with these changes

▪ **Building on Diversity and Promoting Intercultural Communication**

Eleven DPs cooperate in this working group. Its aim is to explore and disseminate effective ways of anchoring strategies for intercultural opening and diversity action in companies and in public institutions and agencies. The group identified several priority areas under which promising practices should be grouped, including: demonstrating the added value or “business case” of strategies that value the diverse background of immigrants; intercultural approaches in the education and training system; raising public awareness; sensitising decision makers; and involving organisations that represent the interests of immigrants. Based on examples of validated successful experience that have already emerged or will be gained from work on these priorities, the group will engage in dialogue and discussion with partners who hold strategic positions in the processes of mainstreaming and achieving policy impact in these fields.

▪ Tackling Issues related to the Situation of Asylum Seekers

One of the main interests of this group is to continue to explore, through joint work at national level and through cooperation with transnational partners, a range of issues that were identified by the European Thematic Group on Asylum Seekers (ETG5) during the first phase of EQUAL. The [nine DPs](#) which are involved feel that work in some of these areas for action (e.g. those related to training and qualification) would benefit from close exchange between relevant DPs in the other working groups and that the cooperation network will provide a helpful framework to organise such exchange.

Six of the DPs in the cooperation network are also members of the national network "[Integration through Qualification](#)" (IQ-network) which was launched in June 2005 by the Federal Ministry of Labour and the Federal Employment Agency. The remit of the IQ-network is to develop models of guidance, information and qualification for immigrants and to test these new approaches in 58 agencies, throughout the country, that have special experience in the field of vocational integration of migrants. The six DPs involved in the IQ-network participate in several working groups of the EQUAL cooperation network. They are therefore well placed to ensure synergetic links between the two networks.

All of the working groups agree on the need to seek the cooperation of employers in the activities of the network and to involve strategic partners who are, or have good access to, policy developers and decision makers. All the groups are also planning action to attract the interest of wider expert audiences and the general public, including through intensifying their links with the media.

Clearing house services and overall technical coordination of the activities of the working groups are offered by the Central Agency for Further Training and Qualification in the Craft Sector ([Zentralstelle für die Weiterbildung im Handwerk - ZWH](#)), a nationwide provider of training services which involves the chambers and other organisations of the craft sector as members or partners. ZHW also coordinates the IQ-network.

HARNESSING EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE AND OPPORTUNITIES

All the working groups in the cooperation network stress the importance of capitalising on the outcomes and achievements of the work carried out in the first round of EQUAL in order to avoid re-inventing the wheel and to focus their efforts on further development. In this context the initial meeting of the network noted that during this first round the European Thematic Group 1 ([ETG1](#)) had compiled experience from relevant DPs on a number of issues that are of interest to the network's activities in Germany. This experience concerns, in particular, approaches to support the implementation of the [European Directives](#) on Racial Equality and on Equality in Employment ([Equality, the Labour Force and the Law](#)) and to tackling disadvantage through Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity Management ([New Alliances to Boost Jobs for the Most Disadvantaged](#)).

The European policy framework to combat discrimination and promote integration also provides important reference points for thematic work and mainstreaming activities in several Transnational Partnerships in which the network DPs are involved. It is thus hoped that some of the outcomes of transnational cooperation can be used to support and strengthen the action of the network by highlighting its relevance to common European interests. Further opportunities for drawing on transnational experience will arise from the mainstreaming strategy that has been agreed at European level between the Commission and the EQUAL Managing Authorities. On the initiative of France, several Member States including Germany have decided to cooperate within this strategy on a series of activities to promote the transfer of experience from EQUAL that can help to improve anti-discrimination practices in the labour market. The German cooperation network on the vocational integration of migrants will contribute to these activities by identifying examples of good practice and recommendations for action.

The thematic priorities that the network has defined for its mainstreaming activities are very much in line with European concerns about immigration and integration. They reflect many of the suggestions for national action that the Commission outlined in its Communication "[A Common Agenda for Integration](#)" [COM(2005) 389 final], which provides guidance for EU and Member

States' integration policies. These suggestions are based on the Common Basic Principles that were adopted by the Council, in November 2004, to underpin a coherent European framework for the integration of third-country nationals. They can also be helpful in drawing the attention of policy makers to promising EQUAL practices that offer potential for wider transfer and mainstreaming.

CONTACT

Dorothee Schwendowius
Clearingstelle EQUAL Kooperationsnetzwerk
Zentralstelle für die Weiterbildung im Handwerk - ZWH

Sternwartstraße 27-29
D - 40223 Düsseldorf

Tel.: +49(0)211-30 20 09-32

Fax: +49(0)211-30 20 09-99

E-Mail: dschwendowius@zwh.de

Website: www.zwh.de

Links to information on DPs involved in the network: see annex

Annex:

DPs involved in the Working Groups of the Cooperation Network on the Vocational Integration of Immigrants

| Name of the DP | DP Website | ECDB Description | Transnational Partnership |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Guidance and Initial Training for Young Immigrants</i> | | | |
| Auf KURS in die Zukunft | www.kurs-auf-zukunft.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-NW-246 | ESSAY-4207 |
| INCLUSION II | INCLUSION II | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-332 | LIFT-3689 |
| KOMBINETZ | | DE-XB4-76051-20-ST-210 | Against Discrimination for Integration-4552 |
| OPTIMA | www.equal-optima.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-256 | MOTIVA-3986 |
| PamirSon | http://www.projekt-region-braunschweig.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-NI-209 | T.E.F.I.-3919 |
| <i>Improving Access to Training and Qualification for Adult Immigrants</i> | | | |
| InBeZ (IQ-network) | www.inbez.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-337 | "Network of Divers-Cities"-4017 |
| INCLUSION II | INCLUSION II | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-332 | LIFT-3689 |
| Integra.net (IQ-network) | Integra.net | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-238 | SIMTEGRA-3951 |
| MAISA | www.btz-stiftung.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-288 | BEST4YOU-4513 |
| MORE | www.gegen-menschenhandel.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-301 | |
| NOBI (IQ-network) | http://www.ep-nobi.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-219 | CEED-4523 |
| PamirSon | http://www.projekt-region-braunschweig.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-NI-209 | T.E.F.I.-3919 |
| PRO QUALIFIZIERUNG (IQ-network) | www.pro-qualifizierung.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-331 | S.E.E.D.-4078 |
| TransKom | www.transkom.info/ | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-298 | AIM-4472 |
| <i>Building on Diversity and Promoting Intercultural Communication</i> | | | |
| ALBUM | www.amfn.de/Simba | DE-XB4-76051-20-NI-213 | ASTRA- 4475 |
| GENIA | www.equal-genia.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-NI-205 | PEOPLE-4488 |
| INCLUSION II | INCLUSION II | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-332 | LIFT-3689 |
| Integra.net (IQ-network) | Integra.net | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-238 | SIMTEGRA-3951 |
| Competence and Diversity | http://www.kompetenz-und-vielfalt.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-NW-225 | New labour market possibilities-3886 |
| MigraNet (IQ-network) | www.migranet.org | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-335 | MEET-3733 |
| PRO QUALIFIZIERUNG (IQ-network) | www.pro-qualifizierung.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-331 | S.E.E.D.-4078 |
| ProAqua/ProWorQ | EQUAL Bremen and Bremerhaven - ProWorQ | DE-XB4-76051-20-HB-200 | Diverse Workforces-4449 |
| ProIntegration | www.prointegration.info/ | DE-XB4-76051-20-BE-211 | DigiTales-3963 |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| ProViel/ProDiv | EQUAL Bremen and Bremerhaven - ProDiv | DE-XB4-76051-20-HB-201 | European Network to Promote Diversity-3564 |
| zip | BBQ: zip. | DE-XB4-76051-20-BW-213 | CEMA-NET-3765 |
| DPs Working with Asylum Seekers | | | |
| Arbeit und Bildung - International | http://www.ab-international.dgb-bwt.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-260 | PASSI-4153 |
| bridge | www.equal-bridge.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-308 | CONCENTUS-3699 |
| Fluchtort Hamburg | www.fluchtort-hamburg.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-221 | Aware-Net-4267 |
| INCLUSION II | INCLUSION II | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-332 | LIFT-3689 |
| Kumulus - Plus (IQ-network) | www.kumulus-plus.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-237 | New labour market possibilities-3886 |
| MORE | www.gegen-menschenhandel.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-301 | |
| SAGA | www.equal-saga.info | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-205 | MOLE-3623 |
| Sepa | http://www.agef-saar.de | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-359 | The Alliance-3898 |
| TransKom | www.transkom.info/ | DE-XB4-76051-20-20-298 | AIM-4472 |