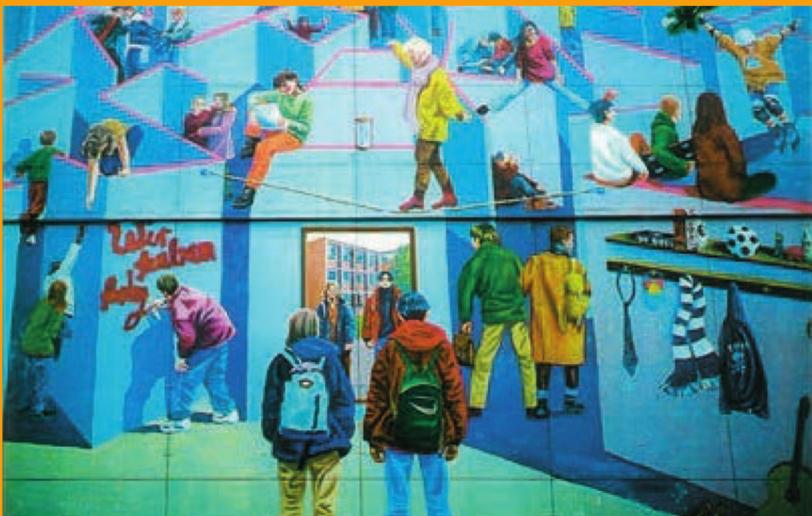




# Breaking Down Barriers from Education to Employment

THE JOURNEY TOWARDS INCLUSION  
FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

Edited by  
Joachim Schroeder



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Bulgarian Comparative Education Society

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Breaking Down Barriers from Education to Employment:

The journey towards inclusion for vulnerable groups.

Edited by Joachim Schroeder.

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# Part I

# Introduction

# 1. Background, context, study questions and objectives of the project

JOACHIM SCHROEDER

A large mural at a secondary school in Hamburg (see cover photo) expresses the personal perspectives for the future of young people attending the school – some of them having no school leaving certificate, being unable to find a training place and having no job. A boy and a girl are looking into a mirror back into the past and at the same time forward into the future; the school building is behind them. Other young people are going through a maze and searching for their way through. For some of them, the outlook for the future is "like a tight-rope walk", for others it is "like doing the splits". Some take a more relaxed or even carefree attitude to the future, and are enjoying their leisure activities. Others help one another to overcome a barrier; two girls are walking along arm in arm. One young man is looking for help to find his way out of an inescapable maze; another student seems to have given up (on himself). Some others seem to have found their path and are moving onwards, moving ahead... The two students at the front are carrying well filled rucksacks – maybe they contain what is needed to move from school into an insecure, risky, uncharted, confusing life situation?

At present things do not look particularly good for adolescents and young adults in Europe. While there are major differences between the various countries, the future perspectives tend to look rather gloomy for many of them. The path from the school sys-

tem into vocational training is difficult for millions of young people; they do not have expert social support, do not have supplementary formal training and non-formal learning programmes, and have no opportunities to do internships or placement sessions in companies and thus gain experience in the world of work, so they cannot find their way into the employment system. All of these programmes are in fact already available, but it is not easy to find them and use them successfully. The offers are not always tailored to the different needs of the adolescents and young adults; and sometimes there are simply not enough of them.

In order to provide young people with better assistance and support, a number of countries make efforts, at least sporadically, to build up and institutionalise a vocational education transition system (VET system). It is well known that the players involved in the design of educational courses related to the world of work, and of teaching disciplines (especially general school teaching, vocational school teaching, special needs education and social pedagogy) have to try in cooperation with businesses, educational and labour administration and with the youth services to improve the interfaces between the various sub-systems. That requires tools for an effective transition management, but so far only a few of these have been set up. And the discussion of transition pedagogy has also been very neglected – that is education of adolescents and adults for the world of work, taking account of the very heterogeneous life situations and learning careers of disadvantaged young people aged between 15 and 25 years, and their varied educational and qualification needs, and developing these in convincing curricular ideas, teaching concepts and methodological approaches.

The Leonardo da Vinci Partnership "Integration of vulnerable groups, focussed on the transition from school to vocation or world of work" (TransVet) is a cooperative project with institutions from five countries – Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Ireland and Turkey. It runs for two years (2013-2015) with intensive focus on the question of how the respective local, regional and national vocational education transition system is organised, how well it operates, and how it

could be improved. The project focussed on the social group of *adolescents and young adults* and particularly, on the social situation of *vulnerable groups* and the disparities in the social area.

The European partnership *TransVet* grouped the varied experience of institutions working in different fields and people from a range of different perspectives. Firstly, it involved players from practical work and research, people working in the VET system and closely linked with the world of work and with the institutions of formal general and vocational education. And secondly, it included the experience of people specialising in work aimed at *vulnerable groups*. The diversity of the partner countries involved ensured that the life situations of the *vulnerable groups* had been examined from the perspective of very different socio-economic, cultural and political contexts. The project organisation permitted reciprocal learning processes, with inputs from the structures of the respective VET systems and the specifics in the respective labour markets. It promoted greater understanding of the specific needs of *vulnerable groups* in the transition process from school to vocational training and the world of work, for incorporation in innovative VET concepts in Europe.

This learning process within the partnership had been systematised by mutual exchange between theory and practice, with context-related processing of vocational training theory and research, experiences from vocational training practice and teaching for disadvantaged groups. The heterogeneity of the partnership gave rise to a range of processes for awareness raising and access to new subject fields for the individual players, thus increasing professional know-how for the partners, and dealing with innovative questions, and jointly developing solution methods for new concepts. This interdisciplinary cooperation also included numerous "silent partners" from the various project regions, increasing the chances of improving the life conditions of *vulnerable groups* in the partner countries and their chances of participation in vocational training and the world of work, with sustainable application, testing and establishment of the concepts, programmes and strategies developed here.

The working programme of the Learning Partnership had been operationalized in six work packages:

1. Clarification of definitions with respect to the terms such as *young adults*, *vulnerable groups*, *transition* or *inclusion* to VET and the world of work, and stocktaking of the current situation for the purpose of further project work;
2. Identification and selection of regions in partner countries with strong and weak structures with regard to structural problems of the labour market, specific VET systems and target groups;
3. Identification by way of example of the regionally typical life situations and problems for the target group (using biographical reconstructions), relating to young adults and focussing on transition from school to VET;
4. Exchanges on good-practice models and experience relating to the organisation of transition systems, critically discussed in terms of how they take account of vulnerable groups, adaptation to the needs of young people, and regional differentiation, to determine possible transferability to other partner countries;
5. Analysis and comparison of different tools for planning and monitoring transition systems from school to VET. Adapting elements of existing instruments, linking in vocational and general education, migration-specific and social elements, and relating to various social area contexts (local, regional, national and European);
6. Preparation of recommendations how to use the instruments as a strategy for improving the systems of transition from school to VET.

This book presents the findings of the project and recommendations based on them. Chapter II explains and discusses key words on which the project was based, in order to get a common framework

for understanding of the concepts. A great deal of work was also done on the term *vulnerable groups*, which is relevant for European social policies. It is a sociological term which refers to the fact that in marginalised segments of society, there are sometimes more, sometimes fewer people in the *vulnerable zone*, for a number of different reasons; their lives are characterised by uncertainty of living conditions, unemployment, poverty, marginalisation and unclear perspectives for the future. VET is very much affected by social exclusion – *vulnerable groups* are exposed to a higher drop-out risk; lack of vocational qualification means they have to work in insecure areas of activity, so it is not possible for them to secure their livelihood in the long term and to participate in social life. That means they have very little participation in vocational advancement, and remain dependent on relatively insecure jobs. That is why the learning partnership also debated in great detail on possible consequences of the efforts for *inclusion* of these vulnerable groups. Chapter III presents country reports, where each of the partners has described for at least one *vulnerable group* what specific barriers exist in transition from school to employment in their respective country, what legal barriers and political conditions can be identified, and how the vocational education transition system is organised. These country reports focus in particular on the consequences of growing mobility in the European labour market, because this brings with it the danger that the *vulnerable groups* can hardly participate in lifelong learning, which is indispensable for society as a whole. The five partners looked at very different aspects of migration: *late arrivals* (Finland), unaccompanied minors (Ireland), students with migrant background (Turkey), so called *children left behind* (Bulgaria), refugees and asylum seekers, and migrants with special needs (Germany). The reports show very clearly that too little account has been taken of the fact that breaks in school biographies and insufficient educational qualifications make it harder to move into vocations and the world of work. That makes participation in lifelong learning particularly difficult for transmigrants, and their initial and further education and training needs are neglected.

Chapter IV gives a collection of examples of good practice. We were able to visit very different institutions in the partner countries and find out about projects making an effort to provide appropriate support and VET programmes for various *vulnerable groups*. The visits were guided by questions such as these: How are *vulnerable groups* supported to enable them to exploit their knowledge, skills and competences to the full? How do the various stakeholders of the VET systems cooperate to help them to participate in learning and to enter the labour market? How are regionally specific characteristics and transnational migration biographies to be brought together? Which kind of monitoring instruments exist and can be applied? It was notable how much such study visits encourage reflections on one's own working context and country – and also fascinating how that made it possible to learn a bit more about this *Europe* to which we all belong, where we all live and have common problems to solve.

Chapter V presents a tool which we have developed, tested and evaluated in the joint project work. One main goal of the project was to develop an "Index of Integration" focused on the specific disadvantages of lateral entrants who are faced with problems from the national orientation of educational systems in the various EU countries. It is a comprehensive tool to assess the suitability of supports for vulnerable groups in transitioning from school to vocation and to the world of work, examining the local VET system and the integration of vulnerable groups. The aim was to familiarise users with the Index for Integration as a useful tool for monitoring, to adapt it to the transition system from school to world of work, and to implement aspects of the tool in cooperation with other organisations and initiatives, for integration in VET as an example for others. The tool can be used in the practice of vocational training institutions in the member states and for continued educational planning. It should also help to reduce the number of people living below the national poverty limits, and the number of young people out of work, and make it easier for young adults to find work.

And finally, we summarise the lessons learned and we present the closing comments and recommendations on European level, for

”Breaking down barriers from education to employment”. An important finding for example is the necessity to link together two political terms – firstly the migration term *integration*, which takes a critical view of nation state barriers; these still present an obstacle in some areas despite the facilitation of mobility between EU member states, specifically in the employment system and the European labour market. And secondly the disability related term *inclusion*, which not only refers to constructional and digital barriers, but also discussed obstacles to access where people do not have the unrestricted performance ability expected in the labour market, due to physical and/or mental health problems. Another recommendation discusses structural ambivalences in the vocational educational transition system – we recommend strengthening the target group oriented approaches for VET of vulnerable groups, because these are known to make an effective contribution to facilitating transition to VET and/or employment. At the same time, we warn against this approach, because it creates *parallel systems* which are difficult to open up to one another, especially if they are structured in *pillars*.

The editor would like to thank all partners for their stimulating and fruitful cooperation in the course of the project. Maren Gag, one of the German partners, coordinated the Partnership with great insight and motivating commitment, thus advancing our joint ”journey towards inclusion for vulnerable groups”. A special word of thanks goes to the Bulgarian partner, the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society, and in particular Prof. Dr. habil. Nikolay Popov, who made it possible to launch the publishing of this book. A complete collection of the products prepared in the course of the project is shown on the website established by the Finnish Partner, in particular by Katarina Sandbacka, allowing publication of the results of the partnership to the expert public – that is:

<http://sites.google.com/site/vetvulnerable/home>

## **Part II**

## **Key words**

## 2. Vulnerability and inclusion

MAREN GAG, JOACHIM SCHROEDER AND LOUIS HENRI SEUKWA

TransVet started with research, discussion and reflection of one of the main goals defined in this partnership: the development of an instrument which allows (on the community level) to identify the needs of vulnerable groups in the transition system – an important first step towards a more inclusive transition system. At the same time, we intended to carefully examine both terms central to the project, "vulnerable groups" and "inclusion", and, based on this conceptual framework, to highlight the implications for vocational education policy at the European level.

### 2.1 The term *vulnerable group* in European social policy

Even though there is no universal definition of vulnerability, there is some consensus that in the context of employment the concept of "vulnerability" relates to the risk of marginalization from the labour market and social exclusion.

Vulnerable groups can thus be defined as follows:

#### **DEFINITION 1**

**Groups that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population. Ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled people, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, isolated elderly people and children all often face difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as low levels of education and unemployment or underemployment.** (EC 2013)

#### **DEFINITION 2**

**People who are long-term unemployed, and also others who are inactive but not registered as unemployed. It should include workers who are in some form of employment but are at a high risk of losing their jobs. It is, therefore, a very heterogeneous group, whose members share perhaps only the involuntary character of their present status.** (Eurofound 2013)

The first definition has a rather descriptive character. It focuses on social groups that have – probably in most European countries – always been threatened by social exclusion. These groups can be considered "risk groups" for social exclusion, as for one reason or another – maybe because they have a disability or are not able to work, because they do not have a home of their own or have addiction problems or maybe because they were not able to finish school – they are more likely to face poverty and problems in getting access to employment than other groups, which may in consequence lead to social isolation.

The second definition, in contrast, is of an explanatory nature. It also mentions different social groups, who, however, have one thing in common, that is they all have – again for various reasons – no or only very limited opportunities for participation in the labour

market. The causes of vulnerability can be traced back here, at least implicitly, to the changes in the wage labour system. While the first definition is closely associated with questions of relevance to the respective national social security systems, the second definition primarily relates to the implications for labour market policy.

The European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) launched in all member states aims to contribute to an increased participation in lifelong learning by people of all ages, including those with special needs and disadvantaged groups.<sup>1</sup> Statistics show that uptake of funding by organizations working with these groups remains low (ECOTEC 2012). The Inclusion project (European Thematic Network 2012) within the LLP – aimed at ensuring the programme is accessible to all who are interested – focused on the theme of working with disadvantaged groups and, in this context, undertook the following activities: conducting background research to understand the current state of play, gathering solutions and transferable examples of good practice, celebrating success and influencing key stakeholders and policy makers. This partnership consisted of 14 National Agencies from 13 EU countries (involving various sub-programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, Comenius and Erasmus). The synthesis report is based on the survey of questionnaires from the participating partner countries.<sup>2</sup>

Coming back to the identification of vulnerable groups and the "fuzziness" of definitions, one can conclude that there is likewise no homogeneity in the way various National Agencies deal with disadvantaged/under-represented groups. Also, there is a lack of research and reliable data on the number and situation of the target groups.

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<sup>1</sup>The Lifelong Learning Programme that ran until 2013 – the end of the funding period – involved four main sub-programmes: Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, Erasmus and Comenius.

<sup>2</sup>Further information on this project as well as various papers, case studies, good practices and recommendations are available at the website of the "Inclusion European Thematic Network" (2012): <http://www.llpinclusion.eu/page.asp?section=128&sectionTitle=Resources>

### **Vulnerable groups**

In the context of learning then, the definition of disadvantaged groups in education and training in general as well as on an individual programme basis usually refers to the following sub-groups:

- People with special needs
- People with disabilities
- Immigrants
- Specific ethnic groups
- Older learners
- Groups facing socio-economic disadvantage
- Prisoners and ex-offenders
- Refugees

Apart from the above-mentioned groups, the following additional groups were identified by various National Agencies:

- People with poor literacy and numeracy skills
- Individuals with little or no formal education
- Part-time workers
- Workers approaching the pensionable age
- Underachievers (especially teenagers)
- Travellers
- Migrant workers and the children of migrants

- Newcomers (who may not be the same group as refugees)
- Looked-after children (children living away from home, e.g. in foster care)
- Institutionalized children
- Children whose both parents work abroad
- People living in rural areas or deprived city areas (inner cities)
- Drug addicts
- The homeless
- People who have caring responsibilities
- Single parents with small children
- Other vulnerable groups
  - victims of violence
  - people with mental health disorders

With regard to these classifications, it is generally also highlighted that the above-mentioned groups are not mutually exclusive and some individuals face multiple disadvantages.

Source: ECOTEC 2012

## 2.2 The term *inclusion* in international policy documents

We would like to start the discussion on the term "inclusion" by introducing some interesting documents which contribute to a deeper understanding of the debate on inclusion through the years and the

reasons why a "Municipal Index for Inclusion" can be a useful instrument.

### ***Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education (UNESCO 2003)***

This conceptual paper gives an overview about the development of the political debate on the global level. The document shows that the discussion on "inclusion" in the area of education is linked with the term "vulnerability" or "vulnerable groups": "It is recognised that current strategies and programmes have largely been insufficient or inappropriate with regard to needs of children and youth who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion" (UNESCO 2003, p. 3). Inclusion is not limited to people with mental or physical disabilities, but it relates to all kinds of excluded groups (working children, ethnic groups etc.). In other words, "inclusive education means that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups" (ibid, p. 4).

The strategy recommended here is to start with identifying and analyzing barriers to learning and development on different levels: It is necessary to address problems in the provision and organization of education, with a focus on the availability of data on different groups of learners (dropouts, those with special needs) and on the question of the distribution of resources to meet different needs, socio-economic factors which place learners at risk, negative attitudes towards differences and the resulting discrimination and prejudice in the society, which manifests itself as a serious barrier to learning, the curriculum, which may prove unable to meet the needs of a wide range of different learners, the learning environment, which may be physically inaccessible, unhealthy or even unsafe, linguistic difficulties, in case the teaching language is not the learners' first lan-

guage, the organization of the education system, which in the case of restrictive centralization inhibits change and initiative, as well as human resource development and the question of the adequacy of training measures for staff (ibid, p. 9-11). Both quantitative and qualitative dimensions are considered here, with questions on the number of dropouts or excluded children, for instance, relating to quantity and asking for the kind of schooling that is adequate for them referring to quality. In the same way, both political and pedagogical issues (legal framework, teaching practice) are taken into account (ibid, p. 21 ff). In our analysis and discussion of the document we identified the following limitations of the approach:

- The early discussion on inclusion was focussed very much on children, which means age 5 to 12.
- For that reason the discussion was also focussed on schools, in fact on primary education (four to eight years of schooling).
- In some cases adults were considered, too, but only in the context of alphabetization or basic education – their role in vocational education, in the transition to work etc. had largely been neglected.
- The approach was focussed on making schools more inclusive, that means organizations, institutions and systems. The importance of communities was mentioned (ibid, p. 24), but not included in a systematic way.

### *Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools (CSIE 2013)*

This document provides "a set of materials to guide schools through a process of inclusive school development. It is about building supportive communities and fostering high achievement for all staff and students." The material supports schools "to adopt a self-review approach to analyse their cultures, policies and practices and to identify the barriers to learning and participation that may occur

within each of these areas.” It helps to ”decide their own priorities for change and to evaluate their progress.” And it can be used ”as an integral part of existing development policies, encouraging a wide and deep scrutiny of everything that makes up a school’s activities. The Index takes the social model of disability as its starting point, builds on good practice, and then organizes the Index work around a cycle of activities which guide schools through the stages of preparation, investigation, development and review.” (CSIE 2013, Introduction)

The Index for Inclusion is a tool to help schools to reflect on learning barriers and exclusion mechanisms, and to set up a strategy to make the school more inclusive for all students. It is an interesting tool insofar as it shows schools a pathway which leads through a process of self-evaluation (“self-review approach”). In the materials three relevant dimensions are to be distinguished: inclusive cultures, inclusive policies and inclusive practices. Each dimension contains up to eleven indicators, and the meaning of each indicator is clarified by a series of questions. This set of questions is given as ”indicators” to help schools in their self-examination process. The Index for Inclusion (school version) has been translated and/or adapted for use in many countries around the world. The use and value of the Index for Inclusion and other instruments to assess and develop inclusive education practice has been positively evaluated by the project group ”Pathways to Inclusion” (EASPD 2012).

For this tool the following limitations need to be considered:

- Again, this tool focuses only on schools and on making one single organization more inclusive. Very often, though, exclusion happens in changing from one school (organization) to another school (organization). Institutional transition is a very powerful barrier, which means, for example, that network approaches are required.
- The instrument is very normative, and the questions proposed are very open, sometimes not very precise. It is, for instance,

not easy to analyze indicators such as "staff and governors work well together".

- The document shows only a part of the whole Index. There are too many questions, it takes schools a long time to get through them, and people may get bored easily.

### ***Inklusion vor Ort (Kommunaler Index für Inklusion) (Montag Stiftung 2011)***

After 2000, the discussion on inclusion was extended to other educational organizations than compulsory schools – to kindergartens, vocational schools, universities and the like. And the debate now included local systems, transition problems and networking approaches (monitoring). In Germany, the Montag Foundation developed a "Municipal Index for Inclusion", which has been piloted in different cities to help communities develop more inclusive structures.

A "Municipal Index for Inclusion" is intended to give transparency in what are sometimes complex structures at the interaction levels of the individual, the neighbourhood, networked organizations and social areas, with active participation of different interest groups aimed at a shared keynote idea (e.g. improvement of the educational system, creation of accessibility etc.) and the different levels of effect. The central methodological element of a Municipal Index is (similar to the Index for schools) a list of questions designed to work out the status quo, the problems and obstacles, and the needs and recommendations. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these questions, but rather this is a systematic, structured analysis of the issues affected by the questions. Thus the list of questions permits the initiation of discussion and reflection processes locally, monitoring and further development and helps to set the process going elsewhere.

"The term 'index' has various meanings, ranging from 'indicator', 'register', 'scale' or 'list' to 'reference'. In the appendix of a book,

for instance, an index may provide a list of relevant terms and for each of the terms the page number where to find it. The Index for Inclusion lists a great number of questions and arranges them according to major topics. This makes it easy to work through the individual items – just like in a well-arranged register. At the same time, the Index for Inclusion outlines a set of recommendations and suggestions as a "reference frame". It provides guidance without being prescriptive and can be used by anyone as a means of re-orientation" (Montag Stiftung 2011, p. 21).

Despite the usefulness of the tool, there are also some limitations to it:

- Again, the tool is rather normative and there are too many questions, often superficial.
- The instrument may not be very helpful when it comes to exactly identifying local vulnerable groups and their needs.
- Transition barriers are likely to be more complex than suggested in the Index.
- Only organizations and systems are considered here – biographies and individuals are not.

## **Conclusions for the TransVet project**

Following the comparative analysis of different instruments developed in the last decades to describe, evaluate and moderate inclusion processes, we were able to formulate the objectives for our project. With the TransVet project we aimed to:

- develop a small, practical, useful and adaptive Index for monitoring the local transition system from school to the world of work in the various partner cities;
- document the experience in preparing and testing the proposed Municipal Index of Integration for one vulnerable group in each city;

- implement aspects of the Municipal Index of Integration in cooperation with other establishments, organizations and initiatives in the context of VET as an example for others;
- build and improve the skills of process monitoring staff and to provide support to municipalities and regions in working with the Municipal Index of Integration;
- evaluate this experience in a practical instrument, while also disseminating material to examine its effectiveness and to support the municipalities in initiating and shaping integration processes with active participation of all stakeholders in the community.

At the same time, we also considered a fundamental debate on the structural conditions and social interaction levels affecting the emergence of vulnerable groups to be of central relevance.

### **2.3 Critical reflections on *vulnerable groups* and *inclusion***

Given the quantitative and qualitative heterogeneity of those considered or defined in existing literature as vulnerable as well as the above-mentioned limitations of the target group-based inclusion or integration approaches and instruments in dealing with the problems the so-defined persons or group of persons are confronted with, a theoretical conceptualization of the terms "vulnerability" and "inclusion" becomes necessary. Such a conceptualization exercise does not only help to systematically get to grips with the phenomenon, but it is also useful when it comes to identifying the social – i.e. objective or structure-based – conditions as well as the subjective conditions that render vulnerability possible and reproduce or maintain it. This will be done in what follows, while providing a vulnerability- and inclusion-related sociological framework.

## **The *labour society* as a socio-scientific *topos***

Since its emergence in the nineteenth century, sociology as a social science par excellence has always dealt with questions of the development, cohesion and functioning of its very research topic – of human society. Examining the method applied in this process shows that the definition of the type of society, which provides an answer to the question in what society we live, turns out to work as a constant. From today's perspective, there seems to be some consensus that we live in a "labour society", as the division of labour is the structuring principle of society and brings about different forms of solidarity (cf. Durkheim 2007, Habermas 1981, Dörre 2006, Castel 2000). Modern societies can thus be defined in terms of communities of solidarity or solidarity-based systems emphasizing individuality and subjectivity. It needs to be pointed out that solidarity here is not dependent on the goodwill of individual people; rather, it is structurally organized in various functionally differentiated social subsystems, among them education, health, economy, politics, work, social affairs etc.

Taking that into account, social integration means, in the first place, nothing more than the participation and hence the inclusion of the individual in these subsystems. It is only with these functionally different subsystems that individuals are able – depending on their competencies – to express their participation in the community of solidarity (which, as we emphasize, is a society by definition) while at the same time to develop on the personal level. As such, society is no compact or abstract unit. It may be a coherent whole, a system, but one that is driven and advanced only by and thanks to its individual parts or subsystems, which reflect different problem areas relevant to social life. For that reason, the development of the subsystems is, from a system theory perspective, strictly dependent on their functional necessity.

The whole process of socialization is strictus sensus a process of integration/inclusion, since it aims at preparing each social individual for entering one of these subsystems and, doing so, for making an essential contribution to the functioning of the whole society as

a community of solidarity. This makes labour in the sense of gainful employment a constitutive factor of modern societies – its structuring principle. Likewise, individual biographies follow this central aim of socialization, that is systemic integration, and are organized into three phases. Phase one stands for the preparatory phase, it generally corresponds to the time of schooling and vocational training. Phase two is that of gainful employment and corresponds to the time of occupational integration. The third phase then is the phase of retirement, starting with the transition to pension phase.

This system theory approach to inclusion and integration also brings about a systemic perspective on the phenomenon of vulnerability, as this can be considered a systemic condition of employment and the labour society, whose main characteristic is the increasingly permanent unreliability and unpredictability of the labour market as to access and retention opportunities it provides for the majority of society's members.

## **Conceptualizing vulnerability**

This permanent unpredictability of the labour market is, according to Robert Castel (2000, 2007), due to an increasing precarization of work. Social solidarity and cohesion in our current labour society have emerged primarily on the basis of stable and secure employment, and "the shift towards precarization of work reveals which processes reinforce social vulnerability and eventually lead to unemployment and disintegration or exclusion" (Castel 2000, p. 350; our own translation).

In order to conceptualize these systemic mechanisms for the development of social vulnerability, in his book "From manual workers to wage labourers: transformation of the social question" (2007), Castel proposes a model in which he distinguishes three different zones of social cohesion: the zone of integration, the zone of vulnerability and the zone of exclusion. The zone of integration refers to stable, financially and contractually secure employment relationships and, related to that, to the inclusion in social networks. Op-

posed to that is the zone of exclusion or disaffiliation, with the long-term unemployed and people who are not likely to be integrated or reintegrated into the regular labour market. Regarding our topic, then, it is the zone of vulnerability in between the two other zones which is most important. The size and the boundaries of these zones are dependent on company-specific, occupational and legal security of employment and the inclusion in social networks. These zones cannot be clearly separated from one another and are open to diffusion effects between them (cf. Castel 2000, p. 357).

These diffusion effects point to the fact that precariousness is not a phenomenon to be found exclusively at the margins of labour society. Rather, the zone of vulnerability undergoes expansion and goes hand in hand with the fear of status deprivation and social decline. The terms "social vulnerability" and "precarious prosperity" are indicative of this process. The category of social vulnerability here has two primary facets: the likelihood of being confronted with risks and the capability of mobilizing resources to overcome them. The term "precarious prosperity", in contrast, refers to an insecure, threatened standard of living, indicating that also for certain zones of the middle class stability is fragile. As Castel puts it: "Not only is the current problem one that issues into a 'precarious periphery', but also that of a 'destabilization of the stable'. The growth of precariousness now reaches into previously stable zones of employment. Herein arises this mass vulnerability, which we have seen being slowly conjured up" (Castel 2007, p. 416).

Klaus Dörre drives Castel's view even further by highlighting in the "destabilization of the stable" a development towards a "stabilization of the unstable" (Dörre 2006, p. 189).

From these observations the following can be concluded: Considering the fact that in a labour society social solidarity and cohesion can only be achieved by systemic integration in the form of gainful employment, which also assigns social status to individuals and thus makes function and status inseparable, a "stabilization of the unstable", which in turn increases and stabilizes vulnerability within the system, constitutes a serious threat to society and individuals – a

challenge not to be underestimated ...

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## Part III

# Diversity of vulnerability in Europe

### 3. Mapping and comparing local VET transition systems in five countries

MAREN GAG AND JOACHIM SCHROEDER

A number of European countries make efforts, at least sporadically, to build up and institutionalise a vocational *transition system*. It is well known that the players involved in the design of educational courses related to the world of work have to try in cooperation with businesses, educational and labour administration and with the youth services to improve the interfaces between the various sub-systems. The transition systems from school to VET and work comprise a wide range of programmes and sub-programmes:

- Programmes of career guidance and teaching of first vocational skills are provided in secondary schools, and young people can do internships in companies, they can request vocational guidance from the job centres, etc. Many secondary schools work with VET schools to prepare the transition for young people from one sub-system to the next one in good time, and to support them in this process.
- If young people do not succeed in finding a job or getting into VET immediately after completing their general school education, they can make use of specific courses and education programmes designed to prepare school students for vocational training after they have acquired a final certificate from their general education school, or after the end of their

regular schooling time at a general education school. These education programmes and courses are often conducted by non-governmental organisations.

- In some EU countries there are programmes run by school and out-of-school education providers that do not give full vocational training qualifications but include elements contributing to vocational qualification, and these can later be counted towards a certificate of vocational training or fulfil conditions required to enter full vocational training.
- The transition system also includes all programmes for additional language promotion (for illiterates, for migrants, etc.), job application training, computer courses, e-learning, etc.
- The transition system also includes all social support programmes – counselling, supervision, mentoring, and accommodation groups, residential schools, study grant programmes, etc., that are needed to secure successful vocational qualification.

In our research we tried to identify the differing characteristics and legal frameworks of the VET systems in each partner country. In some of the partner countries we found that the access to VET systems is more or less easy whereas in other countries there are legal obstacles in terms of access to education and employment. All partner countries identified problems relating to risks of exclusion. One of the central reasons for the existence of numerous exclusion mechanisms is the orientation of vocational education systems in general. Most are oriented towards the legal and educational standards which have become fixed in a national context resulting in the creation of barriers which members of vulnerable groups encounter when they enter the respective country system. These barriers often prevent the vulnerable groups from further developing their educational and working careers. As lateral entrants, they become outsiders because the educational programs and formats tend to be oriented towards

homogeneous groups and because, as a rule, they are explicitly tailored to the requirements and normative rules of the labor markets of the respective host countries. In some countries a holistic approach is not being taken in relation to the problems and experiences of vulnerable groups. Problems experienced by vulnerable groups include issues relating to health, language, intercultural learning, networking and links between schools and the world of work, domestic circumstances and the separation of families. There is a lack of understanding of the rights, entitlements and other needs of vulnerable groups by education providers, teachers, and counsellors. Financial supports and access to funding for vulnerable groups differ in each partner country. The achievement of a VET qualification can be dependent upon whether the individual is continually exposed to poverty or financially secure. However financial security does not always ensure success. On a structural level, different financial conditions were identified in relation to the facilities of the various VET systems (quality of programs, scope of curricular, funding to offer support for special needs).

## 4. Country report FINLAND – focus: late arrivals

KATARINA SANDBACKA, SARI LEHTOMÄKI AND TIINA  
SIRÉN-NUUTINEN

### 4.1 Introduction

The target group in the Finnish country report is young immigrants arriving in Vaasa, Finland, at the age when they are close to the transition from compulsory basic education (ages 7-17) to secondary level education (vocational education or upper secondary schools; ages 15 and older). The main area of focus in this report is basic vocational education and training (VET). The target group in this report will be called *late arrivals*. Immigrants include refugees, migrants, remigrants and other foreigners and, in some cases, asylum seekers as well. In Finland students are expected to continue to secondary level education after nine years of basic education. The students can apply for general upper secondary education, in which case they take the matriculation examination, or for vocational education, in which case they get a vocational qualification. Furthermore, the students can, if they wish, take the matriculation examination at the same time as vocational education. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, over 95% of school leavers carry on to secondary level education. There are hardly any unskilled professions, and it is very difficult to get employed without any kind of vocational education or other further education. The training within VET in Finland

is built on the basic education syllabus. The *late arrivals* have either difficulties to enter or carry through their secondary level education because of poor language skills and insufficient basic knowledge required to succeed or progress in basic VET. The target group members often have an unrealistic view of their language skills. On the oral level, they may manage the language, but when it comes to comprehension, reading and writing, their skills are not sufficient. Students with an immigrant background are always integrated with the Finnish students and are not placed in separate groups. The groups may be large, and it may take time before someone realizes that a student is lagging behind in their studies as they may be good at speaking but do not have a deeper understanding of the language. Young people with an immigrant background are overrepresented in the total of young people outside the education system or without employment in Finland – over one quarter of the total number. The objective of immigrant education is to provide people moving to Finland with opportunities to function as equal members of Finnish society and guarantee immigrants the same educational opportunities as other Finns. A young immigrant of compulsory school age (aged 7-17) permanently residing in Finland has the right to the same basic education as Finns. The objective is to ensure that adult immigrants receive the education needed for working life and that they maintain their existing vocational skills, and for foreign qualifications, studies and work experience to act as the basis of the design of completion of education in Finland. Instruction in Finnish and Swedish is organized for immigrants of all ages. At the same time, they are also encouraged to maintain their own mother tongue and cultural identity. There is preparatory education for immigrant students at all levels of education before they are integrated into groups with the Finnish students.

There is, however, a gap between basic education and secondary level education for the *late arrivals*. They are too old to attend general basic education arranged by the Finnish schools, and they have not acquired sufficient language and basic skills to enter or manage basic VET education. The youth classes and preparatory voca-

tional education and training for immigrants does often not give the young person sufficient skills in the required national language and other skills as the courses of 6-12 months are too short. Sometimes the students are advised to take preparatory courses for adults, but these have not taken the special needs of young people into consideration. The range of preparatory programmes available for young immigrants may vary much between municipals depending on the number of immigrants in the area. This report is based on the experiences of staff at Vaasa Vocational Institute and Vasa yrkesinstitut (VAO/VYI) in Vaasa, Finland. The institute has approximately 1900 students of which 7.5% have an immigrant background. The institute offers basic education and training and preparatory vocational education and training for young people. Adult education is given at Vaasa Adult Education Centre for students over 18. The fact that the Vaasa area is bilingual and therefore many employers require knowledge of both Finnish and Swedish of their employees may make it even more difficult for the *latecomers* as they may need to learn two new languages.

#### **4.2 Mapping VET systems in the partner countries focused on the transition from school to vocational training/ education for young adults**

In Finland, the objective is for everyone to have equal opportunities in terms of education. Basic education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and tertiary level education are free of charge (no tuition fees). In basic education, school meals, materials, school transport and student welfare are free of charge. Students in vocational education and training and at general upper secondary schools are offered free daily meals but they have to pay for materials (e.g. text books). Upon completion of basic education, young immigrants may prepare for further studies either in additional forms of basic education or in other preparatory groups. They may also

participate in general education at adult education institutions. In addition to this, immigrants can participate in education preparing them for vocational upper secondary education and training. The government decides on the general goals of vocational education and training, the structure of qualifications, and the core subjects. The Ministry of Education and Culture decides on the studies and their scope. The curriculum system of vocational education and training consists of the national core curricula. Each education provider makes a locally approved curriculum based on the national curricula, and for each student a personal study plan is made. The application takes place electronically through a joint application system. Through a system called "flexible selection", the education provider may, in special circumstances, accept up to 30% of students for vocational education and training regardless of their point score. Special circumstances may include, for example, missing school certificates and difficulties in comparing certificates. If an applicant has a non-Finnish certificate, he/she should apply through the flexible selection procedure. Education providers primarily select their students on the basis of earlier academic achievement but may also hold entrance exams or aptitude tests and may take the applicant's work experience into consideration. Since the spring of 2014, all students without a secondary education level certificate have been prioritized in the selection of new students. Furthermore, the attendance in or completion of preparatory vocational education and training will give additional points in the application for basic VET programmes. Until 2014, all students that did not have the instruction language of the VET programme as their mother tongue had to pass a language test (reading comprehension, listening comprehension, writing) at level B1.1. Since the joint application in the spring of 2014, students that have completed basic education in Finland (in the same language as that of the receiving VET institution) do not have to do a language test. Neither do students with the grade 7 (on scale 4-10) in Finnish or Swedish as a second language. Furthermore, the applicant does not have to do a language test if she/he has passed all parts of the national language test at level 3. If the students can-

not show proof of one of the above-mentioned criteria, the education provider can choose not to take on the student for VET.

#### **4.3 Formal VET system/types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

##### **Initial vocational education and training – *school based***

###### **Contents**

The vocational qualification has been designed to respond to labour market needs. There are 119 study programmes leading to 53 different vocational qualifications. The qualification is 120 credits, which takes three years of full-time study unless prior learning can be counted towards the qualification. The qualification is based on working life occupations and the competencies required. The qualification includes at least 20 credits of on-the-job learning, and competence-based exams are performed. The training is built on the basic education syllabus. Prior learning acquired in training, working life or other learning environments can be counted towards the qualification. The programmes include 20 credits of core subjects (languages, mathematics etc.). A vocational qualification gives general eligibility for polytechnic and university studies.

###### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Profession/certificate
- Flexible studies
- Lot of learning at work places
- Integration into Finnish speaking groups

- Gives eligibility for further studies
- Hard to get in and manage if your language skills are poor

## **General upper secondary education**

### **Contents**

General upper secondary education develops all-round general knowledge. It continues the educational task of comprehensive schools and provides students with the capabilities to continue to further studies. The admission requirement for general upper secondary education is a school-leaving certificate from basic education. Students apply for general and vocational education through a joint application system. If the number of applicants exceeds the intake, the selection is based on students' school reports. The dropout rate is low. The upper secondary school ends in a matriculation examination, which does not qualify for any occupation. Passing the matriculation examination entitles students to continue studies in universities, polytechnic or vocational institutions.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Matriculation examination
- Eligibility for universities
- If you have a poor certificate, it is hard to get into further education
- Many immigrants have an unrealistic view of the skills they have

## **Preparatory instruction and guidance for vocational education and training**

Will be combined to one programme with other preparatory programmes for VET from 01.08.2015. The groups will be integrated

together. The general name will be VALMA (including: preparatory instructions for VET – ammattistartti, preparatory education for immigrants, home economics instruction).

## **Contents**

This education is directed at young people without a clear idea of their career choice or without sufficient capabilities to apply for or cope with vocational studies. Each student studies with his or her individual study plan. The scope is 20-40 credits (40 credits correspond to one year full-time study).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Gives you extra points in the national application system
- You can raise the grades in your basic education certificate
- Gives you one extra year to plan your future
- You will get to know different professions
- Gives you a view of the studies in vocational education
- Gives you one additional year to learn Finnish and adapt to Finnish society
- Does not give you any formal qualification

### **Youth class**

(arranged by the Finnish Adult Education Centre in Vaasa; the basic education examination is given by the Department of Education of Vaasa)

## **Contents**

One-year education for 17-25-year-old immigrants that have taken part in Finnish basic education but who have had no chance to finish it and get the leaving certificate before the age of 17. Much emphasis is put on Finnish as a second language and mathematics. Core subjects (Finnish basic education). The school is full time and intensive with long days and few holidays.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Gives the chance to complete basic education in one year
- Basic education certificate is needed when applying to vocational education
- Hard to get in to – large demand
- Tough studies
- Not available in all cities

## **Home economics instruction**

Will be combined to one programme with other preparatory programmes for VET from 01.08.2015. The groups will be integrated together. The general name will be VALMA (including: preparatory instructions for VET – ammattistartti, preparatory education for immigrants, home economics instruction).

## **Contents**

Courses in home economics provide students with capabilities and practical skills required to manage their everyday lives and households. The course prepares students for further studies and it can be adapted according to a specific VET field and in a student-focused manner. The scope is 20 credits (40 credits correspond to one year

full-time study); compulsory studies (relevant to housekeeping); optional studies (individually selected: child care, organizing parties, languages etc.).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Improves your Finnish language skills
- Gives you practical skills about home economics
- Does not give you any formal qualification

### **Preparatory education for VET for immigrants**

Will be combined to one programme with other preparatory programmes for VET from 01.08.2015. The groups will be integrated together. The general name will be VALMA (including: preparatory instructions for VET – ammattistartti, preparatory education for immigrants, home economics instruction).

### **Contents**

This education is intended for immigrants and people of immigrant origin who already have basic proficiency in the language of instruction. Its objective is to provide immigrants with capabilities to move on to programmes leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications by improving their basic proficiency in the language of instruction (Finnish or Swedish) and other skills required for vocational studies. A further objective is to increase their knowledge of the Finnish learning and working culture. At the same time, students also learn about different occupations and vocational studies and receive support to retain their own native language and cultural identity. An individual study plan is drawn up for each student. The scope is 20–40 credits (40 credits correspond to one year full-time study).

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Gives you extra points in the national application system
- Improves your Finnish language skills
- Gives you a chance to improve your skills in mathematics, languages etc.
- Gives you a chance to get to know different professions
- Gives you the chance to know Finnish culture
- Does not give you any formal qualification

## **Apprenticeship training**

### **Contents**

Apprenticeship training is hands-on learning at a workplace complemented by theoretical studies. A contract of temporary employment (apprenticeship contract) is signed by the parties of the apprenticeship training. In apprenticeship training it is possible to study for initial vocational qualifications and for further and specialist qualifications. It is a training track chosen by some 9% of vocational students each year. Apprenticeship training is based on a fixed-term agreement which a prospective trainee, aged 15 or more, concludes with the employer. About 70 to 80% of the training takes place at the workplace under the guidance and supervision of an on-the-job instructor. The supplementary theoretical instruction is given by vocational institutions. The employer pays wages according to the collective agreement for the duration of the training.

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Gives you formal qualification
- You combine working and education in school

- Difficult to find employers (study places)

## 4.4 Non-formal VET system/types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures

### Folk high school

#### Contents

Different courses (languages, home economics, handicrafts, physical education etc.).

#### Advantages – disadvantages

- Gives you a chance to integrate into the Finnish system
- Language skills
- Social networking
- Everyday skills needed in Finnish society
- Does not normally give any formal qualification

### Adult education centres

#### Contents

Arrange courses for all ages. Different courses (languages, home economics, handicrafts, physical education etc.).

#### Advantages – disadvantages

- Gives you a chance to integrate into the Finnish system and everyday skills in Finnish society
- Language skills and social networking

- Does not normally give any formal qualification

## **Immigrant office in Vaasa**

### **Contents**

Different courses.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Does not give any formal qualification.

## **Third sector**

### **Contents**

Different courses (languages).

### **Advantages – Disadvantages**

- Gives you a chance to integrate into to the Finnish system
- Language skills and social networking
- Everyday skills needed in Finnish society
- Does not give any formal qualification

## **4.5 Obstacles in general**

The obstacles in general regarding the target group seen from the perspective of vocational education providers:

- Many students with an immigrant background do not have sufficient language and basic skills to manage within VET. This is often realized too late as the students may speak the language well but have a lack of deeper understanding of the

language. They also often lack the study skills expected in VET.

- Students with an immigrant background are a very heterogeneous group with different needs. They are, however, often seen as one group with the same problems.
- How do teachers cope with large and heterogeneous groups? In the same groups there are high achievers, students with special needs and immigrant students that are all on different levels and have different needs. A student with an immigrant background is not classified as a student with special needs just because of weak Finnish or Swedish language skills and is therefore not automatically entitled to special needs teaching.
- The teaching becomes more and more a question of teaching how to handle "everyday-life" issues rather than teaching a profession.
- Students with poor grades get into programmes that they are not interested in, and therefore they have a lack of motivation resulting in a large number of dropouts.
- The students and their families often have unrealistic expectations. This includes both the students' level of performance and expectations for the future. The parents often think that the students will gain a higher academic qualification. There is also a lack of understanding of how the Finnish school system works and what is expected of students. In Finland the students are expected to take responsibility for their own studies, to work independently and to take own initiative, to apply all their knowledge into practice and be analytical. Social competence is enhanced and students often work in groups or on projects. Many students with an immigrant background are used to learning things by heart without having to apply the knowledge into practice and under teachers who are authoritarian and who give the students commands.

- Sometimes difficult to find work placements for students with an immigrant background.
- Immigrant students are integrated into normal classes, but do they feel included in the class or do they want to? According to the teachers, the students often stay in their own groups within the class.

## 4.6 Biographies of three young students with an immigrant background

The education and career paths of three young students with an immigrant background who arrived in Finland at the age of 14-18 are shown. They are all students at Vaasa Vocational Institute. Their biographical data has been disguised to protect their privacy.

### **Biography: Abdi**

#### **Introduction**

Abdi is now an 18-year-old man. He came to Finland when he was 14 years old. His home country is Somalia. He has two sisters, two brothers, a mother and a stepfather. His biological father died when Abdi was just a toddler. The rest of the family still lives in Somalia. Abdi was an asylum seeker when he came to Finland. Now he has a permanent permit to stay here. He wanted his mother to join him in Finland but the decision to join the family together was negative. He is a Muslim and, at the moment, he is healthy. Previously, he had problems with his knee, stomach and back. The problems were diagnosed to be knee-related.

#### **Education and work practice**

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Table 4.1: Education of Abdi, Finland

2005-2010	Somalia	Primary school
2010-2012	Finland	Preparatory basic education for immigrants
2012-2013	Finland	Basic education (no leaving certificate)
2013-2014	Finland	Preparatory vocational education

In Somalia Abdi attended basic education for five years. The language of teaching was English. When he came to Finland, he first attended the preparatory basic education class for children in Turku for two years. Then he moved to the Oravainen reception centre from where he went to basic education in Pietarsaari. He attended basic education for one year. Now he is living in Vaasa and has attended the preparatory education for immigrants for 1.5 years. When he applied for preparatory vocational education, he had to pass a language test.

He has no experience of work practice. On the other hand, he had a summer job painting houses for four weeks in the summer of 2012.

His dream job is to work within the tourism industry. He would like to study at Vaasa Vocational Institute to become a receptionist.

2012	Finland	Summer job (4 weeks)
2013-2014	Finland	Vocational orientation (6 weeks)

### **Experiences of the Finnish education system**

Abdi finds it good to study in Finland. He appreciates the free education and free meals in school. He also finds the teachers to be nice, and he says that they treat you with respect. He explains that students can freely express their opinions during the lessons, the atmosphere in the classes is involving and friendly. In his opinion

the teacher is not a boss who says the final word during the lessons. Nevertheless, he finds the Finnish language hard to learn.

### **Experiences with employers**

Abdi has only a little experience of the Finnish working life, but he could say that with his experience he had no problems during the summer job. In the preparatory education for immigrants the students have vocational orientation included in the studies, and during those studies he attended different vocational study groups within the vocational institute. The aim is to get to know different occupations and fields that the institute has to offer.

### **Hurdles in Finland**

When Abdi first arrived in Finland, he found that the winter was very problematic (the cold, snow). The summer was also difficult because it never gets dark even in the nighttime. He had trouble sleeping. In addition, the new language, which also was hard, caused worries. Another stress factor for Abdi was the fact that the rest of his family was left behind in Somalia.

### **Future plans**

Abdi would like to get into vocational education to get an occupation. His dream is to work within the tourism field. He would also like to get a family of his own. He says he is willing to work hard in school, because in his opinion education and hard work are the keys to a good life.

## **Biography: Dani**

### **Introduction**

Dani is currently a 22-year-old young woman. She came to Finland from Ruanda when she was 17 years old in 2009. Dani was born

in Congo but she and her family, parents and six siblings, had to leave Congo for Ruanda, where they stayed in a camp for 13 years. She has been living in Finland now for five years. She was a quota refugee when she arrived with her family in Finland. Her religion is Christianity. She has no health problems.

### **Education and work practice**

Until 2009	Ruanda	Basic education
2009	Finland	Summer course for girls
2009-2010	Finland	Basic education
2010-2011	Finland	Basic education (youth class) – leaving certificate
2011-	Finland	Vocational education (business and administration)

In Ruanda she completed her basic education in the French language. When arriving in Finland, she was entitled to attend basic education for one year. After that, she attended a youth class to complete the basic education, which she did in one year. Dani also attended summer courses for girls who had just arrived in Finland. Before she was admitted to Vaasa Vocational Institute, she had to pass the Finnish language test at level B 1.1. She passed, and, at the moment, she is studying at Vaasa Vocational Institute to get a basic vocational qualification in business and administration. The education lasts for three years and consists of 120 credit units. When studying in basic education in Finland, some of her previous studies in Ruanda were recognized. She mentions mathematics, biology and geography as subjects that were recognized. While studying in basic education, she got to do more advanced tasks in these subjects. In Ruanda Dani did some voluntary work in a school for basic

education. She worked as an assistant teacher for 1.5 months. The language of teaching was French. In Finland she worked as an assistant in a comprehensive school for three weeks. In the summer of 2011 and 2012, she worked for the city of Vaasa as an assistant in a summer school. For one week she practiced in a department store. There she got a summer job in 2013. Her dream job is to work as a saleswoman in a shop after she has finished her studies.

2008	Ruanda	Assistant teacher (voluntary work, 6 weeks)
2011	Finland	Assistant teacher (summer job, 4 weeks) summer school
2012	Finland	Assistant teacher (summer job, 4 weeks) summer school
2013	Finland	Salesperson (summer job and work practice during studies, 10 weeks in a supermarket)

### **Experiences of the Finnish education system**

She finds the Finnish education system very good and she likes to study in Finland. She points out the fact that it is free of charge to study in Finland. However, she finds the Finnish language hard to learn. She also values the free meals in Finnish schools. When she compares Finnish schools to schooling in Ruanda, she explains that the students in Finland are all equal. She means that money does not play a role in education in Finland. Dani also thinks that teachers in Finland are very polite and friendly, and as a student you can talk to them very openly, without any fears. She also talks positively about study counselling, school social workers and school nurses. She means that you get a lot of support with your studies, and you also get help if you have social or health problems. And you simply have someone to talk to in problem situations.

## **Experiences with employers**

Dani has some work experience either through work practice or summer jobs. She says that she got a lot of support and help from her employers and workmates in Finland. She explains that in a Finnish workplace you do not have to be afraid and she found it peaceful to work. In Ruanda it was peaceful to work if there was peace in the country. Hunger was a major problem in Ruanda, she explains that many students came to school without having had anything to eat in the morning, and she found that it was very hard to teach hungry children.

## **Hurdles in Finland**

When Dani came to Finland, she found that the Finnish climate was hard to cope with at first. The season changes were difficult in the beginning and winter was especially hard for her. Also, the Finnish language caused stress for her.

## **Future plans**

Dani would like to complete her studies successfully at Vaasa Vocational Institute. She says that she would like to continue her studies at the Polytechnic. Eventually, she would like to get a permanent job. She also dreams of having a family of her own. How she will achieve this is through hard and systematic work in her studies.

## **Biography: Hamid**

### **Introduction**

Hamid is now an 18-year-old young man. He came to Finland from Afghanistan as an asylum seeker in 2011 when he was 15 years old. He came to Finland with his big sister, who now lives in Tampere. Hamid's mother and little brother are in Pakistan. His ethnic background is Uzbek. He is a Muslim. At present, he feels healthy.

## **Education and work practice**

Until 2011	Afghanistan	Basic education (leaving certificate)
2012	Espoo, Finland	Finnish language course (16 weeks)
2012	Kronoby, Finland	Finnish language course (8 weeks)
2013-2014	Vaasa, Finland	Vocational preparatory education
2014-	Vaasa, Finland	Vocational education (practical nurse)

In Afghanistan Hamid completed his basic education. At the same time that he went to school, he also worked in a kiosk owned by his family. When he arrived in Finland, he studied the Finnish language in Espoo for 4 months. Because he was under 18 years old and came to the country without his parents, he was sent to the Oravainen reception centre, where he started to study the Finnish language in Kronoby for 8 weeks. Hamid has not attended basic education at all in Finland. In Vaasa he started off in a vocational preparatory class, and he got his leaving certificate after one year. He did almost all his orientation studies within the practical nurse programme. In the autumn of 2014, he started his practical nurse studies at Vaasa Vocational Institute after passing the language test and a suitability test. As he did not have a leaving certificate from basic education in Finland, he had to pass a national language test, which he passed on the second attempt. When he arrived at the Oravainen reception centre he first worked in a garage where they repaired cars. This was work practice and lasted for five weeks. In Finland he has furthermore been in work practice in an ice cream kiosk for four weeks and on a fox farm, where he managed to get

a summer job for five weeks in summer 2013. In 2014 he worked during the summer at a camp for children for four weeks.

Until 2011	Afghanistan	part time job
2012	Finland	Work practice, five weeks (garage)
2013	Finland	Work practice, four weeks (ice cream kiosk)
2013	Finland	Summer job, five weeks (fox farm)
2014	Finland	Summer job, four weeks (camp)

### **Experiences of the Finnish education system**

When coming to Finland, Hamid was disappointed because he could not attend basic education in Espoo as he was considered to be too old. When he moved to Oravainen and started school in Vaasa, he found it hard because he had to travel the distance of about 50 kilometres between Oravainen and Vaasa by bus. He had to get up very early in the morning, and his school day was long before he finally got back to his accommodation in Oravainen. Hamid explained that he was very satisfied with the teachers and the Finnish school system in general. He said that the difference between the teaching methods in Afghanistan and Finland is huge. In Afghanistan the teaching is very authoritarian, only the teacher speaks, whereas in Finland the teaching includes the input of the students and the teaching is much more about discussing different issues with the students.

### **Experiences with employers**

Hamid has quite a lot of work experience in Finland. His first work practice took place in a garage where they fixed cars, and that was quite a shock for Hamid because he did not know the language and he was not aware of the rules of the working life in Finland. He

enjoyed working in the ice cream kiosk because the customers were in a good mood when they bought ice cream, and he had nice experiences during his period of work. Also, the employer was friendly and helpful. On the fox farm he liked the good pay, but he said that the smell was a negative thing in the work. The owner of the farm was, however, friendly and helpful as well. When he worked at the camp for children, he got positive experiences again. He enjoyed working with children and young people. The workmates were friendly towards him and helped him with the language and tasks.

### **Hurdles in Finland**

His biggest hurdle when he arrived in Finland was that he came as a minor with his sister accompanying him. His mother and little brother were left behind. He cannot get his mother to Finland. One hurdle was and still is the long distance to school since he is living in Oravainen, in supported accommodation. The way of studying is also a hurdle to Hamid because he has had to learn a new way to learn and study.

### **Future plans**

Hamid has very clear plans for his future. He first wants to complete his studies to become a practical nurse. He is attending a group with extended work-based learning in the work place. Then he wants to continue his studies in a polytechnic and someday graduate as a nurse. His plans also include medical studies far in the future. Hamid also talked about his wish to have a family of his own someday.

## **4.7 Conclusions**

It is evident from the mapping of the VET system in Finland and the biographies that there is relatively good access for students with an immigrant background to the Finnish VET system. The Finnish

VET system also gives the target group a relatively good chance to make contacts in working life through different types of orientation periods and work practice periods. This will hopefully make it even easier for the students to find a job after they graduate as they have already established contacts to working life. In this way, VET schools can be seen as important facilitators of integration and inclusion of the target group into society. The relatively easy access to VET is mainly facilitated by the law that states that the objective of immigrant education is to provide people moving to Finland with opportunities to function as equal members of Finnish society and guarantee immigrants the same educational opportunities as other Finns.

The new entrance system since the spring of 2014 has made it easier for the target group to get access to VET. There is, however, the group of *late arrivals* that do not get a leaving certificate from basic education and do not pass the national language test that they are required to pass in order to get into VET without a leaving certificate from basic education. In many municipalities there is no place for this group and thereby there is a risk of exclusion from society. Access to VET has become easier for the target group, but this has put big pressure on the providers of VET, as students with sometimes very poor language skills and basic knowledge are admitted to the courses and they cannot be refused access with a certificate from basic education. There is a demand for increased support for the *late arrivals* within VET in order for them to succeed in their studies and to prevent them from dropping out. The education providers and teachers are seldom aware of whether the students have done the whole basic education in Finland or if they are *late arrivals*. The vocational institutes have to rethink the target group of *immigrant students* and realize that they are a large heterogeneous group with many different backgrounds and needs. The responsibility is now largely given to the VET institutions to increase support systems and to develop teaching methods for the target group in order for them to succeed in their studies and be able to enter the labour market.

## **What kind of patterns are visible (e.g. basic learning, motivation etc.)?**

### **On an individual level**

When looking at the three biographies, they all state that they have problems with the Finnish language. They do not have a long basic education background, and they have different types of learning skills from their home countries. That causes some problems because, first, students have to improve their Finnish language skills, gain learning strategies to cope within the Finnish education system and to find ways that suit them best. Secondly, the three students were not allowed to study in their own mother tongue in their home countries. That causes some problems too, because if your mother tongue is not supported and does not develop, you probably get problems when you have to learn new languages and subjects. Having a strong mother tongue of your own is claimed to be the base for the youngsters' thinking and the development of a stable emotional life. The mother tongue is also important for learning new languages and for the learning and adoption of new things. The teachers often say that the target group seldom handles one language really well. The teaching methods in the students' home countries were also very authoritarian. The teachers sometimes even used violence to make the children learn. In Finland they are expected to learn because they want to. The teachers are not authoritarian and the students are expected to work independently and take own initiative. They are expected to tell the teacher if there is something they do not understand or do not know how to do. This is something they have been punished for before. The students had moved around Finland to get their basic education and preparatory education before VET. The commute to school was sometimes very long. One other common feature with the three biographies was that in none of the home countries did they get any free school meals while in basic education. Sometimes they had to go to school hungry. They all appreciated the free meal system and the highly educated teachers, with whom

one can freely discuss anything. Everyone also appreciated the support system of the school, which means the school social workers, special needs teachers, immigrant coordinator, the nurses and the study counsellors. The differences with these three biographies were that one of the students lacked motivation a great deal and two of them had tremendous motivation. The one who lacked motivation came to Finland alone, his family is still in Somalia. The two who have great motivation came to Finland with their families or with a family member. One came with her parents and siblings and the other one with his sister. Another difference that clearly stood out was that the one with no motivation has very little education from basic level school whereas the two with motivation had both a long completed basic education from their home countries. In addition to the fact that they all found the Finnish language difficult to learn, another common hurdle was that all of them found the Finnish climate hard to cope with. They all meant the wintertime with the cold and darkness. The fact that the sun hardly rises in winter-time caused gloom to them. On the other hand, also the summer is found to be a little bit problematic because then again it does not get dark at all, not even in the nighttime. The students explained that getting any sleep in summer is hard. Two of the students also worried a lot about the family members that were left behind. All three came to Finland as quota refugees or as asylum seekers. They often come from poor conditions, many times with a poor education background. They often have a poorer capability to cope with their own life than, for example, work-related immigrants. In the school they are, however, often treated in the same way despite their backgrounds. All three had future plans that included further studies, jobs and a family life.

### **On an institutional level**

On an institutional level, there are issues that should be discussed and some actions to be taken both on a general level and within VET institutions.

## **On a general level**

One major problem in Finnish society and the education system is that it lacks the option for *late arrivals*. What is on offer differs much between municipalities. The *late arrivals* have to gain the basic education certificate in a very short time and they are not given the time to develop their language skills and basic knowledge that would be required to manage successfully in VET. Sometimes they have to travel far or move around the country in order to gain the education. Without enough language and basic skills, the students are more prone to be left behind or drop out of VET.

*Late arrivals* that do not have a basic education certificate from Finland or do not pass the national language test will not get access to VET. These are too old for basic education and have too weak language skills for VET. There is a need to find an alternative for this group in order to prevent social exclusion.

Closer cooperation may be needed between basic education and VET. The basic education stakeholders have to be made aware of the hurdles that may occur if the students are given a leaving certificate despite poor language skills and basic knowledge.

Teacher education does not provide the new teachers with adequate skills to face vulnerable groups with different problems. Courses in this area should be provided for both teachers already in the workforce and those studying for a teaching degree.

## **Within VET**

The target group of *late arrivals* is an increasing group of students in VET. The new application system facilitates an easier access to VET. Is, however, VET ready for this, and what needs to be done in order to support this group successfully through their studies?

- Differentiation has to be done within the group of immigrant students. Support systems and teaching have to be designed to suit the individuals, their needs and abilities at a general level within the school but also in the classrooms.

- School management and teachers have to be educated in the backgrounds, cultures and needs of the different groups. This could aid in the understanding and should be made a common goal in the education. A closer cooperation around these students has to be developed within the school but also with the stakeholders outside the school. Furthermore, instruments for dealing with the needs of the target group have to be developed and given to the teaching and support staff.
- For these immigrant students the language is hard to learn and often the study material and subject is hard to understand. The teaching material used should be in plain language (Finnish/Swedish) so they would be more easily adapted by the students.
- Co-teaching could be more widely used. This means that two teachers are in the classroom at the same time. When one teaches the subject matter, the other one helps the students with poorer language skills with the Finnish language.
- Studies in the student's own mother tongue. Developing one's mother tongue skills is the key to also learn other languages, the subject matter and to develop one's emotional life.
- Education in learning skills. Many students have very poor individual learning skills, which means that it is hard for them to follow teaching and to learn.
- Tutor students, who guide the new immigrant students. Older students who already are familiar with the education system can guide and help new students. This includes letting students know that they are expected to say if they do not understand.
- Workshop learning in school even in theoretical subjects or more work-based learning through extended work practice.

Learning by doing is a good method to teach students with learning skill and language issues.

- The study material given in advance. To give the study material in advance gives the student a chance to get familiar with the subject matter and vocabulary in good time before the class.
- Cooperation with the student's home (parents). Parents' evenings and meetings in order to support the parents and give them an understanding of the Finnish education system and the expectations placed on their children by the Finnish school system and working life should be regularly held. Interpreters could be used in order to ensure that everything is understood.

## 5. Country report IRELAND – focus: unaccompanied minors

CLAIRE CUMISKEY AND FIONA HURLEY

### 5.1 Introduction

The target group focused on for the Irish country report is unaccompanied minors aged between 18-24 years coming to Ireland without family members, mainly as asylum seekers. They are known as *separated children* while under the age of 18 and *aged out minors* thereafter. The target group may or may not have been granted a residence permission to reside in the State with there being significant differences in treatment for those who have a residence permission. Separated children and aged-out minors who do not have an immigration permission and are seeking asylum in the State are subject to the provisions of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended) which prohibits access to employment and vocational training for asylum seekers. Once the children have reached 18 years of age and have completed second level education without being granted residence permission they have no access to grants or public funding which would allow them to continue their education to post second level or third level education.

Separated children are taken into the care of the State until the age of 18 and normally live with foster families. If they do not have a residence status on reaching 18 then the foster family placement concludes and they are moved to *Direct Provision* accommodation.

Direct provision is the system whereby Ireland accommodates asylum seekers in hostel type accommodation. Residents may share a room with several other people. Bed, board and access to healthcare is provided together with a small weekly stipend of EUR 19.10 to meet all other needs.

## **5.2 Mapping VET systems in Ireland focused on the transition from school to vocational training/education for young adults**

The Education and Training Boards (ETB) are statutory body responsible for the administration of VET systems at a local level in Ireland. There are sixteen regionally based Education and Training Boards which have replaced both the Vocational Education Committees (in place since 1930) and as of mid-2014 the former FAS Training Services as well as a coordinating body, Educational and Training Body Ireland (ETBI). The Education and Training Board is responsible for the delivery of publicly funded further education and training programmes throughout the country as well as some second level education.

The Education and Training Boards were established by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 as part of a widespread structural reform of the Further Education and Training Sector and the Labour Market Activation Strategy.

Each Education and Training Board is comprised of a board of 21 members. These members are selected from a cross section of educational, cultural, industrial, commercial, staff and parent interests. The membership is as follows:

- 12 local authority representatives
- 2 staff representatives
- 2 parents' representatives

- 5 members from bodies representing community/business interests: One community/business interest representative must be drawn from business, industry and employers; one from learners' representative bodies and one must be representative of *bodies connected to school management or leadership*

The Education and Training Boards administer Vocational Schools and Community Colleges in their functional area, which provide mainstream junior and senior cycle courses, as well as more specialised vocationally orientated options such as centres for education and education or training facilities. ETBs provide further education and training to over 200,000 adults annually; much of this targeting disadvantage, those with low basic skills and those seeking a second chance at education and training. Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) programmes offer education and training to 33,748 school leavers and adults – ultimately providing access to employment and/or third level education. The Educationa and Training Boards also deliver Youthreach Services, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), BTEI and Youth Services as well as being centrally involved in adult and community education, often in partnership with the voluntary sector.

### **5.3 Formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

#### **Secondary schools**

##### **Contents**

Students may complete junior certificate and leaving certificate qualifications and certain schools in disadvantaged areas are able to avail of specifically designated access programmes that allow students to progress to third level education.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

It can be difficult for separated children to access secondary schools due to their age. Schools are reluctant to take 18 year olds on their leaving certificate programme.

Secondary schools have the advantage of offering a supportive environment to separated children as they have dedicated guidance counselors. Access programmes that may be accessed through some secondary schools greatly assist separated to gain access to third level education. Separated children over 18 years of age are not entitled any state funding for secondary school.

## **Vocational schools**

### **Contents**

Vocational Schools offer leaving certificate and post leaving certificate courses on a full time and part time basis in a broad range of subject areas.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

No State funding is available for separated children to access vocational schools.

## **Institutes of Technology**

### **Contents**

Institutes of Technology offer diploma and degree programmes on a part and full time basis. Institutes of Technology have designated Access Offices that assisted disadvantaged students.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

No State funding is available for separated children to access Institutes of Technology. Access Offices are often in a position to prove

guidance and limited subsistence funding / materials to separated children.

## **SOLAS, National Training and Employment Authority**

### **Contents**

Offers training courses to job seekers along traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. Courses are also available to employees who wish to improve their skills.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Access is limited to those who have been granted immigration permission. Allowances are available to course participants subject to certain conditions.

## **Youth Reach**

### **Contents**

Two year full time integrated education, training and work experience for young people between 15-20 years who have left school early without qualifications or vocational training.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Funding is available but separated children may have problems accessing due to immigration permission.

## **5.4 Non-formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures (certified and uncertified community education usually delivered by community groups)**

### **English language classes**

#### **Contents**

Certified English language qualification.

#### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Low cost, fills a gap in service provision as there is no State provision for English language classes. Good opportunity for integration. Difficult to access due to limited numbers and funding. Demand always exceeds places available.

### **Youth groups**

#### **Contents**

Offer various certified and uncertified courses and other support services for disadvantaged youth.

#### **Advantages – disadvantages**

This is a good social outlet for disadvantaged and isolated youth. Separated children who have no families members can greatly benefit from the support services provided.

## **Literacy classes**

### **Contents**

Adult literacy, numeracy and computer classes.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Caters for beginners only. No funding available to participants. Access is limited due to funding.

## **5.5 Obstacles in general**

- A lack of immigration permission can be a barrier to accessing formal VET despite the fact that it is not a legal requirement to have immigration permission in order to access education in Ireland
- Eligibility for educational grants is dependent upon immigration permission and duration of residence. This is the most significant barrier for separated children
- An immigration permission granting the right to work is required in order to access SOLAS programmes and separated children therefore are unable to access SOLAS programmes
- Lack of understanding of rights and entitlements of asylum seekers and migrants by education providers.

## **5.6 Biographies of young refugees and asylum seekers**

The education and career paths of three young separated children and aged out minors are shown and their biographic data are reconstructed, on the basis of three examples. These cases highlight

the difference in outcomes for separated children who have immigration status and separated children who do not have an immigration status.

## **Biography: Christopher**

### **Introduction**

Christopher was born in Kumbugu, Ghana on 7 January 1993 and fled to Ireland in February 2010 as an unaccompanied minor and applied for asylum. The ORAC (Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner) disputed that he was a minor and his application for asylum was processed on the basis that he was an adult. He was accommodated in an adult accommodation centre while his application for asylum was being processed. As an adult asylum seeker he was not entitled to any financial support that would allow him to access education or vocational training and his only allowance was a EUR 19.10 weekly payment. Nasc convinced a community school to admit him to its leaving certificate programme on a discretionary basis. Christopher completed his leaving certificate and through an 'Access Programme', he was accepted onto a third level course at Cork Institute of Technology. His asylum application and subsequent appeals were refused and he was issued with a deportation order. He is currently challenging the deportation order in the High Court. He is not entitled to any financial support or grant for his third level education and relies on financial support from Nasc and another private charitable organisation to cover his educational fees. The Access Office in his college also provides him with support. He continues to live in asylum seeker accommodation and shares a room with three other adult males.

### **Family context/background**

Christopher fled from Ghana as an unaccompanied minor. He has no relatives living in Ireland. His father died when he was seven and

he has never known his mother. A friend of his father took care of him after his death. He has completed primary education in Ghana and began working as a farm labourer at a young age.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 5.1: Education of Christopher, Ireland

Until 2005	Ghana	Primary school
Since childhood	Ghana	Farm labourer
2010-2012	Ireland	Community School: Leaving Certificate
2012- present	Ireland	Institute of Technology – Three Year Degree – Construction Studies

Christopher believes that it would not have been possible to access an Institute of Technology without the support offered by his community school and the availability of an access programme. It was also impossible for him to finance his education on his weekly allowance and he believes that he was very fortunate to receive funding from charitable organisations.

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Christopher hopes that he will not be deported from Ireland before he finishes his third level education. He is not able to work in Ireland as an asylum seeker. His ambition is to enter into employment in Ireland in the construction sector after his education. He will not be able to do this unless his deportation order is revoked and he is granted a permission to remain in Ireland.

## **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Adjusting to second level education in Ireland having no previous experience of the Irish education system.

He was accommodated in an adult accommodation centre and shared a room with adult males. He finds it very difficult to study in this environment and he struggles with the lack of privacy. His accommodation centre initially refused to give him a packed lunch when he was in secondary school. He found it embarrassing when he had to ask charities to continually help him to deal with the problems that he was experiencing. He finds it difficult to cover the costs of his school expenses with his current allowance. While he is not legally prohibited from accessing education, his status as an adult asylum seeker, prohibits him from receiving any State funding towards his education.

He finds it very difficult to deal with the uncertainty of his current legal status. He could be deported at any time and has no guarantee that his High Court case will be successful. This makes it difficult for him to concentrate on his studies. If he does complete his current degree programme, he will not be able to seek employment as asylum seekers do not have a legal entitlement to work.

## **Biography: Jennifer**

### **Introduction**

Jennifer was born in Nigeria in 1994 and came to Ireland in 2009 when she was 15 years old. She was placed into the care of the Health Service Executive and an application for asylum, was submitted on her behalf in 2010. Her social worker would see her as particularly vulnerable as a result of very difficult circumstances that she has had to overcome at a young age and her commitment to education has been very impressive. She was removed from her foster family when she turned 18 years old and was sent to adult accommodation for asylum seekers. She only entitled to a weekly allowance of EUR 19.10 and relies on funding from the Nasc Separated Children Fund

to continue with her education. She is still waiting for a decision to be issued in relation to her immigration permission. As an asylum seeker she has no right to work or access any government funding for her education.

### **Family context/background**

Jennifer's parents died when she was 14 years old and she was taken care of by an aunt in Nigeria. Her aunt eventually brought her to Ireland. She was exploited by her aunt. She eventually managed to leave and was placed into State care in 2010. She was then placed with a foster family in rural Ireland for 23 months when she attended the local secondary school and completed her leaving certificate to a good standard.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 5.2: Education of Jennifer, Ireland

1999-2009	Nigeria	Primary & Secondary School school
2010-2012	Ireland	Secondary School: Leaving Certificate
2012-2013	Ireland	FETAC Level 5 Pre Nursing Course (including work experience in a nursing home)
2013-2014	Ireland	FETAC Level 6 Advance Certificate in Community and Health Services

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Jennifer is very academically driven and is in the process of applying for a private scholarship that would allow her to undertake a three year degree programme at a local university. It would be impossible

for her to enter into a degree programme without a scholarship as she would not be in a position to access funding to cover the cost of fees. She has been highly recommended for this scholarship by her current college. She has always wanted to be a nurse but is unable to study nursing as she does not have the points required in her leaving certificate. She now hopes to work in the area of childhood and health and wants to pursue a third level degree in a related field in order to access employment in this area in the future. She believes that education has improved her aspirations for life.

#### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

She has found it very difficult to make the transition from living with a foster family to her current accommodation in the system of direct provision. She greatly misses her the love and support of her foster family and was devastated that she had no option but to leave them when she turned 18. She finds the lack of privacy, and autonomy of her current living arrangements very challenging. She shares a room and finds it difficult to concentrate on her studies. The centre has dedicated meal times and she is prohibited from cooking. She often misses meals due to her classes.

She has required professional support and counselling to deal with the trauma that she has survived as a result of the loss of her family and the exploitation that she has been subjected to at a young age.

She finds the uncertainty surrounding her pending immigration application very stressful. She would be devastated if she was issued with a deportation order. Her application has been pending since 2010 and she has no idea of when a final decision will be reached.

She finds it very difficult to survive on her weekly allowance of EUR 19.10. It would have been impossible for her to progress to vocational education after her leaving certificate without the financial support available through the Nasc Separated Children Fund. It will not be possible for her to progress to university without a scholarship, due to her lack of entitlement to State funding as a result of

her current immigration status. She is worried that her scholarship application will not be successful.

## **Biography: Omar**

### **Introduction**

Omar grew up in Mogadishu Somalia and arrived in Ireland at the age of 16 as a separated child and was granted refugee status. He was placed in the care of the Health Service Executive and was accommodated with a foster family in Cork. He has applied for family reunification with his mother and brother. Omar learned to read and write after coming to Ireland. He did not go to school in Somalia because his family could not afford school fees. As a refugee, Omar is entitled to the same level of funding and access to education as Irish citizens. Omar lives alone.

### **Family context/background**

Omar has no relatives in Ireland. His father and sister were both shot and killed by the militia when they were shopping in Mogadishu in 1995, his eldest brother was shot by militia when he was 20 years old. Omar's mother, sister and younger brother are his only surviving family. Omar was forcibly recruited as a child soldier when he was 15 when he was kidnapped from his home by al-Shabaab. Omar eventually managed to escape from the militia and his mother, fearing that her sons would be killed, arranged for an aunt in Canada to send money to help him and his brother leave the country. Omar fled to Ethiopia and then Ireland. His brother went to South Africa. Omar lost contact with his mother, sister and brother following his arrival in Ireland. He eventually re established contact with them with help from an international Somali radio station that assists with family tracing. Despite knowing the whereabouts of his family, Omar, remains worried about his family.

"My brother is in South Africa. He is a refugee there but it is too dangerous. He told me he is afraid to walk outside. I am worried about him. I am living happy now, living by myself by sometimes I have sleep problems. I am still worried about my family. My stomach was hurting and my doctor asked if I was worried about exams and I told him yes but it was really about my family"

Omar's sister is married and lives in Mogadishu. His mother has fled from Somalia. Omar's mother has become very ill since he fled to Ireland and he worries that she is not getting the medical treatment that she requires. Quality medical treatment is very expensive and his current income is not sufficient to provide for his mother's treatment. He hopes that his application for family reunification will be approved so that his mother can get the medical treatment that she needs in Ireland. Omar sends his family financial support as often as possible.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 5.3: Education of Omar, Ireland

2010-2013	Nigeria	Ireland Secondary School: Junior Certificate
2013	Ireland	Cork City Learning Support Services (Youthreach)
2013	Ireland	College of Commerce - English Language and IT Skills for International Students

Omar receives back to education allowance and rent supplement.

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Omar hopes to work in business or engineering in the future. He wants to have an income that will support his mother and brother

in Ireland. He wishes that his family reunification would be approved so that can stop worrying about his family and concentrate on his education and future employment prospects.

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Learning to read and write having had no previous formal education. He found it difficult to integrate with another family when all he could think about was his mother and brother who he had been forced to leave behind in Somalia. He applied for family reunification with his mother and brother in 2011 and this application remains pending. He is constantly worried about the safety of his mother and brother.

"Now I am still waiting for the answer for family reunification with my mum and brother. I started the application in 2011. They say to me I need DNA tests for them. They are waiting to come to Ireland, then we will be able to enjoy life together. I will be happy then and finally get some rest. Now I am just missing my mum. She loves her family. Now, when she gets sick, nobody knows. She wants to be with her family so we can support each other. I wish it could happen faster because I am losing my energy, you know. My hope and my dream is that actually we will be together: me, my brother and my mum."

He is financially responsible for his mother and brother and finds it extremely difficult cover the cost of the medical treatment that his mother requires. He was on a reduced rate of social welfare for a period of time due to his age and he struggles to financially provide for his mother and brother from his back to education allowance. He has struggled to pay of the costs associated with an application for family reunification i.e. obtaining documents, travel.

## **5.7 Conclusion – biographies**

What kind of patterns are visible (e.g. basic learning, motivation etc.)?

## **On an individual level**

It is clear from the biographies that immigration permission is essential to ensuring that separated children have full and effective access to vocation education and training support. Separated children who remain in the asylum process without a grant of immigration permission before they turn 18 years of age do not have access to State funding for vocational education or training. Separated children remaining in the asylum process are subject to the direct provision system and receive a weekly allowance of EUR 19.10. This meagre weekly allowance makes it virtually impossible for these separated children to access vocational education due to prohibitive fees. The only option available is to access private charitable funding e.g. NasC Separated Children Education Fund. However, this is far from satisfactory, as these private funding streams are very limited and not guaranteed. This leaves separated children in limbo and uncertain as to their future options with regard to education and training.

It is also evident that separated children often face individual challenges in satisfying educational institutions that they are not prohibited by law from accessing a vocational course. It appears that the reluctance / confusion on the part of educational institutions to accept separated children who have not been granted an immigration permission stems from the fact that there is no explicit legal or policy provision that expressly states that this group have the right to access vocational education or training. Legislation in Ireland also prohibits asylum seekers for accessing employment thus making the transition from vocational education to employment impossible for separated children whose immigration status remains undetermined.

The living conditions of separated children whose asylum applications are yet to be finalised i.e. direct provision, also impacts upon their ability to engage effectively with vocational education and training. The system of direct provision would appear to have a significant impact upon the target groups ability to engage with vocational education and training. The lack of privacy, autonomy, exclusion and poverty that are the hallmarks of the system of direct

provision impact upon the ability of separated children to remained motivated towards their education. The delays within the Irish immigration system often result in separated children remaining accommodated in the direct provision system for a number of years and this can have a detrimental impact upon the persons mental health and general well being. The transition from being accommodated with a foster family to being required to move to direct provision upon turning 18 years is also particularly difficult to deal with in individual cases from an emotional perspective and also due to the fact that State supports are removed at this age. The separation from family members also places significant emotional burdens on this target group.

It is also clear from the biographies that previous experience of formal education in the English language in the persons country of origin resulted in a greater levels of educational achievement and ease of transition to Irish vocational education systems and employment.

### **On an individual level**

There is a general lack of understanding, on an institutional level, of the rights and entitlements associated with categories of immigration permissions and the entitlements of asylum seekers to access vocational education and training. Vocational education and training institutions are often reluctant to accept separated children whose asylum applications remain pending onto an accredited course as they believe that an immigration permission is required in order to have the right to access education and training. It appears from engaging with institutions in individual cases that this reluctance stems from the fact that there are no guidelines or legal provisions expressly authorising the right to education for migrants without an immigration permission. As law and policy is silent on this issue, it is often left to advocates to convince the individual institution that, allowing access to education for persons whose immigration status remains to be determined, does not contravene any legal provisions. The Department of Education has confirmed that asylum seekers

are not entitled to any State support however they have refrained from issuing any policy confirming that adult asylum seekers are not prohibited by law from accessing education.

The issue of determining the appropriate level of fees for this target group can present particular difficulties from an institutional perspective. Under Irish law, educational institutions retain the ultimate responsibility for determining the appropriate level of fees for non-EEA nationals. Institutions may exercise their discretion in individual cases and issue a fee waiver if they so wish. From the perspective of separated children whose immigration status remains undetermined, the issue of fee levels is the most significant barrier to facilitating access to vocational education as private funding streams are often unable to extend to cover the payment of international tuition fees. The issuing fee waivers remains at the behest of the individual institution.

The experiences of the target group are differentiated by their immigration status and their living conditions. It is clear from the biographies that the separated children whose immigration status remains to be determined find it virtually impossible to access and remain in vocational education and training primarily as a result of financial barriers.

By contrast, separated children who have been granted refugee status are entitled to access State support on an equal basis as Irish citizens. However, separated children who have been granted refugee status face their own unique problems as they often appear to feel morally responsible to provide for family members left behind in their country of origin and find it difficult to navigate the lengthy and legally complex family reunification process. Their responsibility for family members can place a very heavy burden upon separated children from a financial perspective and can result in significant emotional impacts resulting in feelings of isolation and guilt.

## 6. Country report TURKEY – focus: students with migration background

EMINE UCAR-ILBUGA

### 6.1 Introduction

Migrants consist of individuals who come to Antalya for reasons such as work, retirement, marriage, etc.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>There are transit migration waves to Turkey apart from the Turkish migrations from countries such as Bulgaria, Afghanistan and Chechnya. Turkey does not give the status of emigrant to those who migrate to Turkey from a non-European country because of its reservation in the 1951 convention. Those emigrants are accepted as refugees, and after their procedures are completed in Turkey, they are subject to be sent to a third country as immigrants. There were transit migration waves due to the political events in the Middle East. The emigrants who came from Iran in 1979 may be considered this way. There were also refugee and migration waves beginning with the Gulf War in the 1990s. In the last ten years, the political environment in the Middle East has continuously become more tense and more complex, and the concomitant violence resulted in an increasing migration activity to Turkey. In the 2000s there is a new migration wave from Afghanistan. Besides, refugees and immigrants from Asia and Africa are passing from Turkey in order to reach European countries. Thus, those migrations are added up on top of the existing inbound migrations. In the last 2-3 years, there have been many people coming to Turkey from Syria, and this wave is still continuing. However, the fact that Turkey is unable to welcome all those migration waves resulted in an increase in the number of those who are "waiting at the Turkey station". Today the waiting period of migrants in Turkey is changing from 1 to 3 years. So the waiting migrants constitute a considerable group of migrants from the perspective of Turkey.

These families' children are integrated into national educational system; however, there is not any educational policy targeted specifically at émigrés' children.

Secondary education consists of state schools and private schools/institutions supplying four-year education programmes to students who completed their primary education, providing them all with common general knowledge at secondary education level to prepare them for life and to ascend. Those schools are divided into two groups, namely, *general high schools* and *vocational and technical high schools*. The general high schools prepare students for higher education, whereas the vocational and technical high schools prepare students for life and for their occupation (MEB-SGB, 2011:118). The Ministry of National Education (MEB<sup>2</sup>) is responsible for pre-school, primary school and secondary school education, which also includes vocational and technical high schools. The Higher Education Council (YÖK<sup>3</sup>), in contrast, is in charge of higher education institutions.

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Recently, apart from immigrant families or individuals, there has emerged another sub-group of migrants in those migration waves: solitary immigrant children, better known by their technical name "unaccompanied juniors" or "unaccompanied migrant children".

In illegal immigrants, children make up 17% (24,569) as compared to the group of adults with 83% (120,067) between the years 2007 and 2011. This number shows that the children constitute a considerable portion of irregular migrants.

However, because of both legal and socio-economic factors, there are not so many children immigrants in Antalya. Because the immigrant women, especially those coming from the old Soviet Union, are generally married to Turkish men, the children of those immigrants are assumed to be integrated into the education system.

<sup>2</sup>in Turkish: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

<sup>3</sup>in Turkish: Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu

## **6.2 Mapping VET systems in the partner countries focused on the transition from school to vocational training/education for young adults**

Significant factors/specific introduction of the partner country:

- The first prototypes of the vocational and industrial schools in the Ottoman Empire emerged during the Tanzimat (reform) period (1894) as part of a modernisation process of the Empire and then evolved into a full-time school with having a special decree regulating the technical education in the time of Sultan Abdülhamid II. After the foundation of the modern Turkish republic, the Unification of Education Act was issued in 1924 and the Ministry of Education was established and took responsibility for organising all educational activities, including vocational training. Known as act number 3308, the Vocational Training Act issued in 1986 can be characterized as a reform in vocational and technical education.

According to this act, which is the legal basis of all regulations in vocational training, all programmes including formal education that take place at schools or institutions and informal training at companies are planned, developed and evaluated by the Vocational Education Committee. Decisions taken by the VEC are carried out by the Ministry of Education and interested parties.

## **6.3 Formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

### **12-year mandatory education: elementary education and secondary education**

#### **Contents**

During elementary education, comprising the first eight grades, students only take general literacy classes.

Vocational education does not start until secondary education. Students who graduated from elementary schools may attend secondary schools in accordance with their talents, wishes and special circumstances. There are Anatolian high schools, industrial and technical high schools, medical vocational high schools or agricultural vocational high schools, trade vocational high schools etc.

#### **Advantages – disadvantages**

On the plus side, students who possibly cannot get higher education gain qualification enough to make a living.

It is easier to get a job for specific vocational school graduates such as those of medical vocational high schools.

Vocational school graduates have direct access (without examination) to 2-year pre-graduate schools.

On the downside, children of families from a poor socio-economic background attend these schools. Mostly unsuccessful and problematic students have to go to these schools.

## **Vocational high schools**

#### **Contents**

There are many types of vocational high schools suitable for different target groups:

- Industrial and vocational high schools, vocational high schools for communication, medicine, tourism and hotel management, seamanship
- Vocational high school of justice, vocational school for girls etc.
- Admittance to these schools is through either tests or grades.
- These schools have both theoretical and practical courses: internship, apprenticeship etc.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Talented students may prefer some of these schools, such as medical vocational schools.
- Access to higher education is relatively easier.
- Employment in specific branches is less problematic.
- They bring along class discrimination.
- Immediate entry into the world of work is not always possible.
- Quality of education does not meet the demands of the market, especially in technical areas.
- Employment of women is not as sufficient as employment of men, so they tend to be *schooled housewives*.

### **2-year pre-graduate schools**

#### **Contents**

All vocational high school graduates have direct access to these schools.

General high school graduates may attend these schools if they pass the Access to Higher Education Exam.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Students have the opportunity of transfer to graduate schools with the Vertical Transfer Exam.

Some of these schools have foreign language classes.

Changing one's field of interest is hard and diplomas, certificates, grades are not transferable.

## **6.4 Non-formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

### **Public education centers – subsidiaries of the Ministry of Education**

#### **Contents**

Education in traditional vocations such as pottery, carpet weaving, miniature, music, embroidery is given. Free of charge. No age limit.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Participant groups are not homogenous. Having no admission fee is an advantage; however, classes tend to be overpopulated. That decreases the quality of education.

### **Career centres of municipalities (regional)**

#### **Contents**

These centres have various functions. Language classes, computer classes, technical training etc. are provided to students. More importantly, they offer consultation and job placement services jointly with İŞKUR and other interested parties (i.e. chambers of commerce, trade unions, small and middle-sized enterprises etc.).

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

- No admission fee.
- They help the disadvantaged groups integrate into the world of work.
- Foreign citizens, asylum seekers etc. may participate only with a residence document or a permit of stay. No extra bureaucratic process.
- It is a disadvantage that groups are heterogeneous and courses crowded.
- Lack of cooperation between different services such as İŞKUR (employment agency), city's chamber of commerce etc.

## **Private courses**

### **Contents**

Specific services provided by non-governmental organisations (BİLGE ADAM, BİLİŞİM EĞİTİM etc.). No state funding. Especially in software business, highly effective system.

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

- Some of them offer an employment guarantee.
- Chance to be a qualified personnel for school dropouts.
- Admission fees are very high.

## **6.5 Obstacles in general**

- Rigid age limits: formal vocational education does not start until high school.

- Employment of women is not sufficient due to subtle gender discrimination, bullying and cultural barriers.
- In some cases, access for certain target groups is not possible due to links with legal conditions.
- No specific educational policy for disadvantaged target groups (migrants' children, women, people with disabilities).
- Although there is an immense need for qualified technical personnel, transition to the world of work is not easy due to the fact that the quality of education does not meet the requirements of the market.
- Lack of cooperation and coordination between interested parties. There is a lack of concepts for the implementation of teaching in terms of basic education and literacy training related to the world of work (MEB-SGB, 2011).

## **6.6 Biographies**

In-depth interviews have been made with 7 immigrant female students who are studying different vocational branches in at Alanya Girls Vocational High School (Turkish: Alanya Kız Meslek Lisesi), three of which take place in this present study. The main questions of the interview focused on the transnational immigrant experiences, language competencies, educational processes in different countries, reasons why they have chosen a vocational education, conditions and problems of the female students.

### **Biography: Yevheniya, M.**

#### **Introduction**

Yevheniya, M. was born in 1998 in Ukraine and lived there till she turned five. In the year 2003, she moved to Luxembourg with her

mother and they lived there until 2010. In 2010, her mother decided to settle in Alanya because of her sister's asthma problems. They have been living in Alanya for four years until now.

### **Family context/background**

Yevheniya's mother and father got divorced in Ukraine. Her mother got married to a Luxembourgian man and moved to Luxembourg with the two daughters from her first marriage. The elder sister of Yevheniya got married in Luxembourg, and she is still living there. Later, Yevheniya's mother moved to Alanya with Yevheniya and her son from her second marriage. Her mother and step father are not divorced officially, but they are living apart. However, the step father visits his wife and child in Alanya, and provides for the family. Yevheniya's mother was a model in Ukraine. She is a housewife now, and has not been working for 13 years. Her elder sister, too, was born in Ukraine, went to elementary school in Ukraine, and completed her secondary and higher education in Luxembourg. Her stepbrother, who is 11 now, went to kindergarten in Luxembourg, started to elementary school in Alanya and is still continuing it as a final year student.

Yevheniya's real father is living in Ukraine; she has not received any news from him since they moved from Ukraine. She only knew that her father got married again in Ukraine. Besides, Yevheniya's aunt and cousins live in Antalya, too.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 6.1: Education of Yevheniya, M., Turkey

1998-2003	Ukraine	Kindergarten
2004-2011	Luxembourg	Primary education

2011-2013	Alanya, Turkey	7th and 8th grades (private school)
2013-2014	Alanya, Turkey	9th grade (vocational high school)

### Why vocational school?

After studying in a private school for two years, her mother had her registered in a vocational school due to economic reasons. Yevheniya did not worry about leaving the school she had been continuing for two years, because the school, which is mostly attended by children of middle and upper class families, gave priority to those students who would be successful in the university entrance exams rather than focusing on providing equal training for both successful and troubled students. Yevheniya is not fully competent in the Turkish language and has problems in classes because of it. This situation affects the country-wide success of the school in a negative way. Moreover, as a child of a single Ukrainian immigrant mother, she is isolated by the school management, the teachers and the students.

"I became isolated in the private school. There were hard-working students who are also children of wealthy families. The teachers discriminated those successful students. I was not their concern. They isolated me." As this expression also tells, although it was a private school, which her family paid for, Yevheniya was isolated in school. There is an expectation – both by the school management and by the parents – of the graduates of that school to be successful in the university entrance examination executed across the country, and to be admitted to the universities which accept students with higher scores.

A major part of the students registered for a vocational high school is in a different settlement than those students in other high schools or equivalent institutions (such as private schools, science high schools, Anatolian high schools etc.), who are also going to take the university entrance examination. From those vocational

schools, it is possible to enter the colleges in the related fields. And for this, students are required to take the country-wide central university entrance examination together with the students in the other high schools and private schools, and to be successful at it. Nevertheless, in vocational high schools, the classes such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, literature and history, which are the subjects having great importance in the university entrance examination, are not given enough importance because of the heavy workload of the vocation-oriented curriculum, which affects the students' success in the examination negatively.

Yevheniya stated that she had not wanted to register for a vocational high school in the first place, but later, even though the infrastructure of the school had been inadequate and the class sizes had been bigger, she had been happy to continue with the vocational school because of the friendly atmosphere and the fact that she had got big support from the teachers in classes and from her school friends in spare times:

"My current school is a state school, and I am very happy that both my friends and my teachers are companionable to me."

Yevheniya is now a 9th grade student, and although her specialty has not yet been determined conclusively, she wants to choose the cooking field to have expertise in cookery. The specialties, on the other hand, are determined by the grade point average and the quote of the desired field.

Yevheniya's reason to choose this field is that first, she likes the field of gastronomy, and second, she is working in hotels and restaurants in summers. For this reason, she is planning to consider one of the restaurants or hotels as the internship workplace which she will choose in the practicing period after theoretical training.

Yevheniya states that she speaks Russian, Ukrainian, German, English, Luxembourgian and Turkish, which is why she wants to work in the tourism sector.

## **Future expectations**

Yevheniya's future expectations are dependent on her mother's conditions. For this reason, she says she is yet to have an idea. It is especially important in this regard for them to live economically dependent on the stepfather.

"I don't know. Our condition is not stable. It's not determined whether we are permanent here or not. Everything might change. We don't have work permit. We will have the right to be a Turkish citizen a year later (it'll be 5 years). However, if my stepfather, who lives in Luxembourg, doesn't want, we may not have."

But there is one thing of which Yevheniya is sure. She does in no way want to live in Ukraine in the future<sup>4</sup>. Turkey might be a permanent country for her, but her first choice is a European country.

## **Summary**

One of the most important obstacles for her is the problem she has with the language, both in school and at the workplace. She is still yet to speak Turkish to the fullest extent, and she has problems in understanding it. She has to learn the Turkish language in private courses solely by her own resources. Those courses, nevertheless, generally have her lose motivation by grouping her with other students from different age groups, different language backgrounds and capabilities. The fact that there are no Turkish language courses directed to the foreign students in the schools she attended makes it obligatory for the students to strive for solving this problem by themselves. It is possible for Yevheniya and her mother to find a job in an illegal job market in tourism seasons. However, since they will finish their fifth year in Turkey this year, it is advisable not to face any legal problem that may negatively affect their possibility to

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<sup>4</sup>Yevheniya and her family have moved to Ukraine three months after this interview.

get a permanent residence permit, they live economically completely dependent on the stepfather, who lives in Luxembourg.

## **Biography: Tatiana K.**

### **Introduction**

Tatiana K. was born in Bruges, Belgium, in 1995 and lived there until she was 13. In the year 2008, her parents decided to move to Alanya. Although all of her friends are in Belgium, they have never been to Belgium for 4 years. But her grandmother and uncles visit Alanya to see them and for holiday each year.

### **Family context/background**

Her mother and father are from Belgium. Her mother is a tailor, and her father is a technician. The father worked in industry for many years. Now, both the mother and the father are retired and they do not work in Turkey either. Tatiana is the only child they have.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 6.2: Education of Tatiana K., Turkey

1997-2008	Bruges, Belgium	Kindergarten/primary education/vocational school until second grade
2008-2014	Alanya, Turkey	Vocational school (began from 8th grade, still continuing to 12th grade)

### **Why vocational school?**

Tatiana began her education at the food department of a vocational school in Bruges. After finishing the first grade in the food depart-

ment and settling in Alanya with her family, she wanted to continue her education with the same field. She then registered to the food and beverage department of an Anatolian Girls' Vocational High School. However, she realized in the internship period that she actually did not want to study at that department, nor to work in that field:

"Kitchen is a very crowded place and I like it more to work alone. Indeed, it is easy to find a job once one graduates at this department, but I would like to work as a tour guide or operator. Because knowing foreign languages is one of the requirements to work as a tour guide or operator, and I speak English, Finnish, Turkish and German."

Tatiana does not see any obstacle in her educational development. What she learns in the school matches up with what she experiences in the internship period. She stated that she had experienced no problem with school friends or teachers in the school, at the workplace or in the circle of friends when she worked in summers, nor in the internship.

### **Future expectations**

Tatiana's goal is to live in Turkey, but she desires to get admitted as a tour operator in Turkey through a tourism company that operates in Belgium.

"In the working life, my aim is to be a guide or a tour operator in Turkey." Her justification for that is the fact that the social security and conditions of contract are safer and steadier in a Belgian company.

### **Summary**

For Tatiana, the process of vocational education has started in Belgium, and after she had been through a short-time Turkish language course, she continued her education in Turkey without giving a break. Although she experienced some problems with the language

as she first began her education in Turkey, her language skills developed as she worked in coffee bars and restaurants of the highly touristic place Alanya in holidays, where she found the chance to practice Turkish. She plans her future and wants it to be in Belgium and Turkey, just as her education has been. She thinks of a Belgium-centred company as a good place to get a job because of social security and working conditions, but still wants to work in Turkey. Tatiana and her family do not plan on leaving Turkey for now, but Tatiana sees Germany and England, if not Belgium, as candidates for her future living place.

## **Biography: Julia**

### **Introduction**

Julia was born in 1997 in Nordhausen, Germany. She lived with her family in Germany until she was 8. She has been living in Alanya with her mother since 2005.

### **Family context/background**

Julia's mother had worked as a nurse for many years in Germany. She got divorced when Julia was a child, and moved to Alanya with her daughter, which they had visited many times in holidays. Her father, in contrast, lives with his sister in Germany. He is a worker in an iron and steel plant. Julia goes to Germany in holidays, but does not see her father since they do not get along well with each other. She rather stays with her grandmother and grandfather. As for Julia's mother, some of her family members live in Germany, too. After they moved to Alanya, she worked as a nurse in a privately owned outpatient clinic. After a while, she got married to a Turkish man living in Alanya. Julia is now living with her stepfather and her two siblings, aged 4 and 6.

Julia's mother does not work now because the little sibling of Julia is too little, but she helps the father in his grocery. "My step-

father is Turkish and he owns a grocery store. I have no relationship with him. I am not intimate with him. I speak with him only when it's necessary. I don't know, we can't get along well. Mother takes care of everything related to me."

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 6.3: Education of Julia, Turkey

1997-2005	Nordhausen, Germany	Kindergarten and primary education until 3rd grade
2005-2014	Alanya, Turkey	Began from 3rd grade of elementary school in 2005; started vocational school in 2011, now in 11th grade

### **Why vocational school?**

Her mother registered her at a vocational high school when they were on a holiday in Germany. Although registering for the school was not Julia's deliberate choice, she liked her school and friends, and wanted to continue the school.

However, she has some serious criticisms of the education in the school. Her criticisms result from the facts that the vocational classes are not enough and not adequate, that there is a very limited space for classes such as physics and chemistry in their schedule, that the teachers do not come to the classes on time and do not pay enough attention to the classes, and that the teachers do not concern themselves with one-to-one relations with students.

"There are indeed computer labs and special lecture rooms for application, but those places aren't used enough. Students don't feel uncomfortable with idle classes, either. They even prevent lectures to be made in a serious manner. They are frivolous and impudent."

Since it is a vocational school, they have both theoretical and practice classes, but although they have an application laboratory

in the school, they have no preparation for internships. She has not yet done an internship, and she will choose the company for her internship next semester, because of which she feels inadequate. Her teachers suggest her to do an internship as a tour operator because of her language skills, but Julia does not want it because of the irregular working schedule of tour operators. Julia's choice for the internship is to be a receptionist in a hotel. However, she is anxious to work in a big hotel; she rather plans on doing the internship in a small hotel. The biggest support for Julia in this period comes from her mother.

"My mother supports me in every way. I, too, support my siblings about their homeworks<sup>5</sup>."

### **Future expectations**

Julia is a citizen of both Turkey and Germany. She speaks German, Russian, English and Turkish. She plans on living in Turkey and working in the tourism sector. Germany is for her a place for visiting relatives and a country for holidays.

### **Summary**

Having been born in Germany, she does not want to live in Germany in the future just as her father, whose relatives live in Germany. Although she has no intimate communication with her stepfather in Turkey, she plans a future with her mother and her siblings in Turkey. However, she has strong criticisms based on highly qualified observations of the vocational high school she is now enrolled in, the education system, the schedule, and the teacher and student profiles. Julia's student profile is such that she has the ability to observe the education system, she is aware of the deficiencies, she has the consciousness as to her desired field of expertise, she is informed and prescient about her future. Despite all those criticisms, she

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<sup>5</sup>Julia does not stay with her mother now, because she cannot get along with her stepfather.

wants to continue her education in the same school, being happy. She is preparing for the internship. She visits her grandmother and grandfather in Germany at holidays although those are short visits. She helps her mother do the housework and her siblings do their homeworks. With her multilingual and multicultural background, she is able to see the inadequacies of the education system both from inside and from outside. Julia builds her future plans with knowing about the problems in her field of study and about her own capabilities.

## **6.7 Conclusions: vocational educational conditions of immigrant children in Turkey: possibilities/impossibilities**

### **Individual problems**

In general, seven female students are interviewed face to face, with only three of them included in this present study. The three female students generally continuing their vocational high school education have undergone an experience of migration with their parents. The mothers of the two of the three interviewed students decided to immigrate with their children, having been divorced. Then, they started a new life in Alanya. Both mothers, without having an economic insurance or a work permit, had to work in a way that leaves no room for safe working conditions. Besides, being alone and not knowing the language, they found it hard to support their children professionally. The children had to start their school educations without having the adequate knowledge in Turkish, and because of that, and because of the different education system, they are left with no institutional support. They tried to solve their issues by short-term help coming from school friends and teachers.

According to the interviews, it is possible to list the general personal problems of the female students as follows:

Divorced mothers, little siblings in need of care, the mothers' language insufficiencies, illegal working conditions and economic problems, together with their ambiguous position between being tourists and permanent immigrants, make them experience an immigrant experience which has not yet been given any name. Moreover, the fathers of both of the female students whose mother and father got divorced live in their home country with their new wives and children. Neither of those two female students have a steady and regular relationship with their fathers. Besides, their relations with the husband or boyfriend of their mothers are problematic. Their family having been broken when they were in puberty, they have undergone a very compelling and problematic process where they live in a country with a different religion, language, and a different cultural background, and where they have to be integrated into a different education system. So, their future expectations are shaped by the decisions their family make. The interviewed female students see different European countries as possible future living places along with the possibility of Turkey. However, this situation may change, as in the case of Yevheniya, by the decision of the mother. Besides, whether they will stay in Turkey or not, that is, whether or not they are permanent immigrants or not, is dependent upon the contexts within which the work, social and private lives of their mothers, whom they live with, take place.

### **Institutional problems**

The Vocational High School of Tourism, which the students with whom in-depth interviews are done within the scope of this research continue, is a 4-year school comprising grades 9 through 12. Before choosing their specialities, the students take general knowledge courses such as Turkish, mathematics, physics, chemistry in the 9th grade. Then they choose their specialities, and as of the 10th grade, they take related applied courses, which comprises the big portion of their coursework, together with the general knowledge courses. Beginning from the 11th grade, students are further divided into

branches, and do an internship in big hotels and tourism agencies for almost 5 months. In the 12th grade, students are given education in their field of work, which focuses on applied courses and has an emphasis on the internship. The internship spans the summer months. In that period, students are visited by their teachers weekly. In internship periods, students hold an insurance, and get paid. The internship places are generally determined by the school. The total number of students in the school, which is the research subject of this study, is 1540, 1175 of which are female and the remaining 365 are male. The departments in the school include different branches such as Food and Beverage Services, Child Development and Education, Handicrafts and Technologies, Textile Technologies, Patient and Elderly Care, Accommodation and Travel Services, Hairdressing and Hair Care. The fact that there are more female students in the school is maybe because of the fact that the branches in the school are more of those occupations which are generally attributed to women. As for the teachers in the school, the total number of teachers is 101, 39 of which are vocational teachers, and the remaining 62 are of the cultural educational branches. The number of foreign students in the school is changing every year. In the academic year 2013-2014, the number of immigrant female students is 13, whereas this number is 7 for the academic year of 2014-20151. This situation prevents the constitution of a module for foreign students, because the needs of those students are diversified since their number is very low, their language capabilities, needs, and reasons why they migrated are different. Moreover, the fact that the education system in Turkey is centralized and operated as being directly affiliated with the Ministry of National Education poses the problem for the school managements in the regions and cities where there is a high volume of national and international inbound migrations to prepare their own independent schedules fitting the specific problems they have. Under those circumstances, the students are left with no support related to their language inadequacies, sociocultural needs and beliefs, and it became impossible to add integration courses to the curriculum in this regard. Thus, the students and their families

try to solve their problems by the support of friends, family members or neighbours, or most of the time with the help of private courses.

## Results

The national education system in Turkey is in a constant reconstitution. The current constitution, other than aiming at a successful education in the long run, relies on educational policies that are transformed into a field of ideological attitudes and partisanship. Therefore, with every new government, new changes in the education system take place, while the foundations of these very changes are primarily ideological concerns about how to raise the future generation. This situation causes the education system to be shaped in accordance with political objectives. Every new government, and consequently the Ministry of Education, follow paths that are different from the previous ones and it leads to an instability in the education (Gür and Çelik, 2009: 1-12). One of the main problems in the education system is the inability to reconstruct it in deference to the transformations and new conditions, taking care of the opinions of the parents, students and other figures in education, and paying attention to the regional differences of education in urban and rural areas. However, the reconstitutions in the education system are most of the time without a proper plan, schedule or a testing period, careless of how each change affects other factors in education.

The Turkish education system is composed of *formal* education activities(preschool, elementary, secondary and higher education that are provided to the individuals of the same age group or level, in accordance with programmes that are prepared with an objective, under the roof of a school) and *informal* education activities (alongside with or outside the formal ones, the public, distant or apprenticeship education which is coordinated in accordance with the interests and needs of individuals who have never participated in the formal education or dropped out at any level). Therefore, there are 45.969 formal, 13.013 informal education institutions which are bound to MEB, and it is impossible for MEB to inspect all of them.

Therefore, the ongoing inspections neither raise the quality of education nor produce new policies according to the problems put forward; it is conducted from the point of compliance with the legislations. Other than this, the Ministry of National Education has 16 General Directorates and many Counsellors and Head of Departments; thus it is quite centralist in terms of decision-making processes and activities (Gür and Çelik, 2009: 12).

One of the prominent handicaps of the current education system is especially the exclusion of religious education and imam hatip high schools from secondary education and their inclusion in primary education, as well as their facility in terms of entering university and such structural transformations that are put into practice due to ideological concerns.

In the education system, it is mandatory to finish primary education in order to get high school education. However, in Turkey where many diverse school types are present, different methods are followed when it comes to selecting students for particular schools. Common high schools, trade vocational high schools, industrial vocational high schools, vocational school for girls, imam hatip high schools, multi-programme high schools, vocational and technical education centres admit students by direct application. Every school has an identified service field (region). Science, Social and Anatolian high school students are chosen according to the results of a central examination system and student decision. Also, the students of fine art high schools and sports high schools are selected according to the results of talent examinations (Gür and Çelik, 2009: 23).

The objective of vocational second education is to prepare students directly for the business world. Unfortunately, the preparation of students for higher education comes before the preparation for the business world. One of the reasons for this is that while students prefer vocational high schools, they aim at preparing for both for vocational and higher education; however, the most significant factor is that there is no encouragement for working in the labour market as a vocational high school graduate and the employment problem (Gür and Çelik, 2009: 25).

Although they are insufficient in the face of the problems mentioned above, the increase in the ratio of enrolment in vocational and technical high schools in the recent years and the development of quality in vocational and technical schools are truly important steps. In the 2002-2003 education season, the percentage of vocational and technical high schools (except for students of open plan secondary high schools) was 35.8% and it increased to 51% in the 2012-2013 education season. One of the reasons for the rising interest in vocational and technical high schools is the possibility for entering vocational high schools without examination provided in 2003.

However, following the developments in the field of education, there was no increase in the number of the buildings and classrooms. In the 2012-2013 education season, the number of students per classroom is twenty eight in general secondary schools and thirty-four in vocational and technical education schools. As it can clearly be seen, the number of students per classroom in vocational and technical secondary schools is higher than the one in general secondary schools. This situation proves the fact that there is a need for greater physical investment in vocational and technical education. Also, the current vocational and technical education is quite centralist. Centralist planning and administration cannot be expected to be effective and efficient as long as the numbers of students, schools, fields and branches as well as the economic developments and technological transformations are taken into account.

Because of the diversity and complexity in vocational education, the distribution of shareholders in the job market must be very different; hence, the shareholders must be active in the education and employment processes. Next to this, in recent years the Ministry of National Education has carried out operations regarding the education of groups that necessitate special policies. For example, between the years 2011-2013, there were projects such as *Occupational Skill Development* which aim at improving the quality standards of managers and teachers in technical vocational institutes of education, and at providing employment to those who want to change their oc-

cupation, to disadvantaged groups such as women, youngsters, convicts, ex-convicts, broken families, immigrants who migrated for security reasons, widowers, orphans, half-orphans, the handicapped in need, to the young unemployed, and to those who suffer from hardships in getting employed and so being in need of special protection and support, by taking their interest and tendencies into consideration. Although the expression *immigrants who migrated for security reasons* is present to refer to a disadvantaged group included in those projects, the immigrant groups are not clearly explained, and there is no definitive expression related to the heterogeneous structure of emigrants and to the education and employment of the children of those families (MEB, Vocational and Technical Course of Action<sup>6</sup>, 2013: 18, 21, 65).

As part of the process of harmonization with the European Union, the discussions regarding the developments in secondary schools, their dissemination and such reconstitutions are turned into various projects:

1. to increase the equality level, economic compliance and the quality of secondary education in order to support lifelong learning,
2. modernization of vocational and technical education institutions,
3. to reconstitute and empower vocational and technical education in the direction of the socio-economic needs and the principle of lifelong learning,
4. to track the graduates of vocational and technical secondary education institutions; to identify the problems in employment and the deficiencies in education.

When these projects are finalized, radical transformations in the secondary education system are expected. There are around 20 on-

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<sup>6</sup>Mesleki ve Teknik Eylem Planı

going projects which directly concern secondary education (MEB, SGB, 2011: 121). The United Nations Joint Programme *Humane Jobs for Everyone: National Youth Employment Programme and Pilot Region Implementation in Antalya* aims at reducing the unemployment rate of youth and especially young women in order to include them in the workforce; and although it is highlighted that Antalya is a city that allows immigrants (Adaman and Kaya)<sup>7</sup>, the migration emphasized here is domestic migration. The aforementioned projects do not include a specific endeavour to support the children of immigrant families during the process of vocational education and employment.

As a result, the radical transformations in the education system that took place in the last 15 years resulted in instability in the field of vocational and technical education as well as in general education; the changes that are implemented too fast are prepared disregarding the subjects of education such as students, families and other figures, without pilot studies and without creating education staff and physical environments. Within this process, there is no time left for posing the question of what kind of education is needed under the conditions of these days. Human life takes new shapes in our current global world and needs transforming, because in our day, just like the capital activity, societies gradually interconnect through various webs and the transnationalization of human mobility shaped by the new media necessitates new demands and changes in the environ-

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<sup>7</sup>The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Turkey is implementing a three-year joint project with the UN entitled "Growth with Decent Work for All: A Youth Employment Programme in Antalya". This project is funded by the Spanish Government under the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund with other partners including: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project's overall objective is to formulate and implement locally based employment policies benefiting the most vulnerable groups in the labour market migrating from the east to the west. The joint project moreover aims to reduce youth unemployment among vulnerable young members of migrant families and increase the participation of young women in the labour force (Adaman and Kaya, 2012: 18-32).

ments of education and business in societies. In fact, other than the constitution of the education system that has existed so far in accordance with the aforementioned transformations, the changes and reconstitutions in national education seem to take place primarily over religious and secular concerns. It aims at supporting the disadvantaged groups through national and international projects and preparing them for the business world through vocational education or various courses. However, there are almost no studies or no noticeable developments in the researches regarding the matters that start with the beginning of the 1980s, such as the reconstitutions in the neighbouring countries of Turkey, political instability, economy and war, migrations due to tourism, climatic or educational purposes and the problems that they bring with them such as the health, education, job, employment, citizenship and legal needs of the immigrants. This study is an original research concerning the problems of the immigrant families' female students as disadvantaged groups who continue vocational high schools. We hope it would be an incentive for future studies dealing with immigrants.

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## 7. Country report BULGARIA – focus: children left behind

NIKOLAY POPOV, MARINA BAKALOVA AND TEODORA GEN-OVA

### 7.1 Introduction

The target group which is focused on in the Bulgarian country report is children left behind by migrant parents working abroad. The term "children left behind" in the context of the project includes pupils aged 16-18 who are at the end of their regular school system and on the verge of transition to vocational training or the world of work. The theme of children left behind covers children who do not move themselves, but are left behind by one or both parents who have migrated in search of a better job and providing better living conditions for themselves and their children. They may live with one parent or stay with other relatives, such as grandparents, aunts or uncles or their siblings or in a social institution if both parents have migrated. They are temporarily but regularly deprived of parental care because of migration, which leads to emotional and social changes in the children's lives, and they are faced with the challenges of overcoming these changes. Unofficial data suggest that these children are constantly exposed to violence, trafficking, delinquency and school dropout. There are no institutional or community level mechanisms to help them prevent those dangers on a global scale and in Bulgaria. According to an UNICEF Bulgaria study carried out in 2013,

every fourth or fifth child in Bulgaria has a parent working abroad (UNICEF REPORT, 2014). All these negative trends result in underestimating and neglecting the problem of children left behind in Bulgaria hindering the development of effective measures to deal with this precarious situation. As a consequence, the VET system in Bulgaria does not recognize them as a specific vulnerable group and does not pay any special attention to the problems and needs they are faced with. There should be an elaboration of new mechanisms and improvements within the Bulgarian VET system ensuring that it is open to young people in this vulnerable group, enabling them to take their opportunities for education and training, and to develop their potentials.

## **7.2 Mapping VET systems in Bulgaria focused on the transition from school to vocational training/education for children left behind**

The VET system is supervised by the National Vocational Education and Training Agency, which is a state authority to the Council of Ministries. The main functions of this agency are to:

- develop and approve standards, criteria and licensing procedures;
- permit and refuse licenses of vocational training and orientation;
- develop and offer to the Minister of Education and Science documents such as the list of vocational education and training professions;
- state vocational education and qualification standards;
- give opinion on institutions in the vocational education and training system;

- coordinate activities of development and improvement strategies;
- create and maintain a Register of vocational training centers and information and vocational orientation centers.

The VET system in Bulgaria is regulated by the following acts:

*Vocational Education and Training Act. 1999. Amended 2000-2010. National Education Act. 1991. Amended 1996-2012. Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act. 1999. Amended 2002-2009.*

## **Formal VET system/types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

### **Types of vocational schools**

- Vocational gymnasiums
- Vocational schools
- Schools of fine/applied arts
- Vocational colleges

### **Contents**

Students in vocational education get comprehensive and vocational preparation. According to the profile, there is a great variety of vocational schools, for example, of: geology and mining, metallurgy, power generation, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and electronics, transport, chemical industry, building and construction, agriculture, wood-processing industry, food-processing industry and public catering, light industry, economy, management and commerce, design, etc. Admission of students in the various types of vocational schools depends on school criteria. The admission to

vocational gymnasiums is after grade 7. The entrance requires admission exams. Training leads to a certificate of a given vocational, technical or other kind of specialty. The admission to vocational schools is after grade 8 and no exams are required. Training leads to a certificate of a given profession. Vocational centers offer preparatory courses with different duration and profile.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

There are 4 levels of vocational qualification, where Level 1 requires elementary competences and routine skills and Level 4 requires high competences, complex skills, as well as managing responsibilities. There are 6 vocational qualification programs – A, B, C, D, E, F, that are for students, secondary school graduates, and dropouts. Each program defines how a given qualification is obtained – admission requirements, level of qualification, the contents and duration of vocational education and training. The programs are specified for each profession. Children left behind have an equal access to the VET system and they are not excluded from the formal vocational training process, but the Bulgarian VET system is not flexible enough to address the specific needs of this vulnerable group. They do not receive institutional support at national and regional levels.

### **The VET system also includes the following centers:**

- Vocational training centers, for people who are aged 16+: They target people who have left the school system but want to obtain vocational skills.
- Information and vocational orientation centers: They are formed for assisting students and unemployed people.
- Training trainees centers: They are meant for improving qualification of teachers and other specialists who work in the system of vocational education.

The vocational centers give further opportunities for gaining professional qualifications and vocational skills, improving further specialist qualifications and assisting students and unemployed people. There are no school state or private NGOs or organizations outside the school system to deal with the problems of transition from school to vocational training or education of children left behind.

## **Non-formal VET system/types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

### **Examples of non-formal VET systems**

- Junior Achievement Bulgaria
- Wishbox web platform

### **Contents**

Junior Achievement Bulgaria is the first and foremost organization in Bulgaria offering top-notch programs and courses in business, economics and the development of the entrepreneurial spirit through educational and hands-on activities in economics, financial literacy, business skills, leadership and strategies for success. JA-YE enterprise and economic education programmes are designed for young people aged 6-25 and are implemented through a partnership between local businesses and schools.

The Wishbox web platform aims at motivating, informing and inspiring young adults when they choose and prepare for their further university education and career.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

The mission of Junior Achievement Bulgaria is to educate young Bulgarians to value free enterprise, understand business and economics, develop ethical leadership and be workforce ready. Junior Achievement Bulgaria offers high quality programs for elementary, middle,

and high school students. While elementary students learn about their roles as individuals, workers, and consumers, middle and high school students study the fundamentals of economics, create and operate their own student companies, and compete locally, nationally, and internationally in trade fairs and computer based competitions.

Wishbox provides upper-secondary school pupils and university students with an innovative and interactive web platform for career orientation. On one hand, the platform supports young adults in choosing the most appropriate professional field and on the other hand, it connects the labour market needs to the youths' educational preparation.

## **Obstacles in general**

- The insufficiency of general information on children left behind in Bulgaria is one of the reasons for the lack of development of appropriate policy responses. The institutions are generally not concerned with the situation of children left behind.
- The Bulgarian legislation system does not identify them as children at risk and does not take any decisive actions to face and deal with their problems.
- There are no institutional or community level mechanisms to help children left behind and offer a flexible VET system and school framework to address the specific needs of this vulnerable group.
- The measures that should be taken are creating a social system at a national level and establishing new EU laws at a transnational level. As a result of the measures taken to facilitate the situation of children left behind, it is very important and likely to ensure that the VET system is open to young people in this vulnerable group, enabling them to take their opportunities for education and training, and to develop their potentials.

## **7.3 Biographies of children left behind by migrant parents working abroad**

The career paths of children left behind are shown and their biographic data are reconstructed on the basis of three examples. This also shows the possibilities and limits of the Bulgarian VET system for the transition from school to the world of work.

### **Biography: Dimitra**

#### **Introduction**

Dimitra Zarova (female) was born in the town of Kazanlak, central Bulgaria, in 1997. She is 17 years old now. She lives in the town of Sliven, south-eastern Bulgaria, with her brother. She is a pupil at the National Art High School in Sliven. She has been a child left behind with both migrant parents for many (number not specified) years. She is well-off but misses her parents a lot.

#### **Family context/background**

Dimitra has one older brother, who she lives with, and he is taking care of her. Both her mother and father have general secondary education. They have migrated seasonally to Greece, which is a typical migration destination for seasonal workers from Bulgaria. The father works as a waiter and the mother is part of the kitchen staff in a Greek restaurant, where they work together. She occasionally visits her parents abroad. They keep in touch by phone. She is not familiar with any legal or other difficulties her parents have had to face so far while working abroad. They do not possess a residence/work permit. They send money to Dimitra and her brother on a regular basis to support them financially. The whole family gathers together for seven months annually. Dimitra receives support and understanding from her teachers and/or psychologists. She has got used to managing the separation from her parents. She

does not know any state or private organizations which can help her overcome the parental absence and she does not need any advice. It seems she has elaborated her own mechanisms to deal with the problem of being left behind.

### **Educational biography**

2004-2011	Bulgaria	Primary school
2011-2016	Bulgaria	Secondary school (National Art High School, Sliven)

She has general school subjects (mathematics, Bulgarian language, etc.), drawing, painting, etc. The school subjects she is most interested in are history, Bulgarian language, drawing, painting, etc. Her prevailing school grades are good/4 and very good/5. She has not done any additional courses so far (foreign languages, dancing, sport, etc.)

### **Future ambitions for employment**

Dimitra would like to do something connected with art/drawing after she graduates from high school and work in this sector. She would like to be prepared for the vocation of artist. She has plans to apply for a university degree, unlike most other children left behind with both migrant parents working abroad. She has the intention to achieve her future plans for employment with the support of her parents, brother and friends and, undoubtedly, at the expense of hard work. Dimitra would like to stay and work in Bulgaria and does not want to migrate to another country like her parents or reunite with them there.

## **What problems/barriers are there?**

On the plus side, Dimitra has the motivation to study hard, complete her secondary education and even continue further with her university studies. It seems her school attainment is not threatened by any school dropout, because she neither has interrupted school nor has changed schools up to the present moment. She does not have any health problems, does not suffer from depression, does not smoke or drink, has never committed crime, has never shown any signs of aggression, has never had financial difficulties thanks to the remittances sent by her parents and she has never experienced any negative attitudes towards her on the side of her classmates, neighbors, etc., therefore she is not subjected to social isolation or stigmatization. On the contrary, she does not know if there is any school support organization or any state or private organization outside her school which deals with problems of children left behind. Likewise, Dimitra has never been consulted by any career guidance counselor who can help her choose her career path and assist her in the transition to vocational training or the world of work.

## **Summary**

On one hand, Dimitra is a typical example of a child left behind by migrating parents because she has been deprived of parental care and affection for so many years that she cannot tell the exact time period. She lives with her older brother and is being looked after by him. She seems reserved in sharing her negative emotional problems, although she mentions she does not suffer from any depression or trauma. On the other hand, unlike other children left behind, she is motivated to study and gain a further educational degree. Moreover, she wants to live and work in her homeland. As there is not enough collection of data on the situation of children left behind in Bulgaria and worldwide, no decisive actions are taken by the state authorities. This fact hinders the facilitation of the children-left-behind situation and the VET system to open to young people in

this specific vulnerable group.

## **Biography: Ivo**

### **Introduction**

Ivo Ignatov (male) was born in Pleven, northern Bulgaria, in 1996. He is 18 years old now. He lives in a house in Vrajdebna, one of the quarters of the capital city of Sofia, with his two older sisters. He is a pupil at 130th "Stefan Karadja" Comprehensive Upper-secondary School in Sofia. He has been a child left behind with a father working abroad for two years. He has got used to the situation of being a child left behind since he was a child because his both parents regularly go on business trips.

### **Family context/background**

Ivo has two older sisters, who he lives with, and they take care of him. Their mother is also living with them at present. His mother has higher education and his father has secondary vocational education followed by a bachelor's degree in economy. Her profession is a technical engineer and his profession is a road construction worker. Now his mother works in a laboratory for the analysis of road construction materials owned by an Austrian firm based in Sofia, Bulgaria. His father works in a road building transport company in Germany, which is a typical migration destination country for migrant workers from Bulgaria. He has a year-round job with a work permit. His mother used to work in Germany, too but came back to her homeland six months ago. He has not visited his parents abroad. They keep in touch by phone and Skype. He is not familiar with any legal or other difficulties his parents have had to face so far while working abroad. They send money to Ivo and his sisters on a regular basis to support them financially. The whole family gathers together for two or three days every two months a year. His mother is permanently living with her three children now. It has not been necessary

to receive any support and understanding from his teachers and/or psychologists up to the present moment. He has got used to managing the separation from his parents because this problem has been a normal part of his life since he was a child – his parents going on business trips regularly. He does not know any state or private organizations which can help him overcome the parental absence.

### **Educational biography**

2003-2011	Bulgaria	Primary school
2011-2015	Bulgaria	Secondary school (130th Comprehensive Upper-secondary School)

He has general school subjects (mathematics, Bulgarian language, market economy foundations, marketing and management). The school subjects he is most interested in are the ones related to economy. His prevailing school grade is excellent/6. He used to attend dance classes and now is doing a career-oriented course organized by Wishbox web platform organization.

### **Future ambitions for employment**

Ivo would like to do something connected with transport management or any other industrial field after he graduates from upper-secondary school and work in this sector. He would like to be prepared for the vocation of a manager. He has plans to apply for a university degree, unlike most other children left behind with both migrant parents working abroad. He has the intention to achieve his future plans for employment at the expense of hard work. Ivo would like to stay and work in Bulgaria and does not want to migrate to another country like his parents or reunite with them there, although they insist on him studying abroad.

## **What problems/barriers are there?**

On the plus side, Ivo has the motivation to study hard, complete his secondary education and even continue further with his university studies. It seems his school attainment is not threatened by any school dropout, because he has not interrupted school, but has changed schools four times up to the present moment in the normal way as part of finding the most appropriate place to study. He has chosen these schools on his own. He does not have any health problems, does not suffer from depression, does not smoke or drink, has never committed crime, has only shown signs of aggression in case of an attack towards him, has never had financial difficulties thanks to the remittances sent by his parents and he has never experienced any negative attitudes towards him on the side of his classmates, neighbors, etc., therefore he is not subjected to social isolation or stigmatization. He knows that the person responsible for problems of children left behind is the school psychologist. He is familiar with The State Agency for Child Protection, an organization outside his school, which deals with family problems of children left behind. Ivo has been consulted by a career guidance counselor who can help him choose his career path and assist him in the transition to vocational training or the world of work. He has been doing a career-oriented course for three months at Junior Achievement and Wishbox.

## **Summary**

On one hand, Ivo is a typical example of a child left behind by parents working abroad because he has been deprived of parental care and affection for two years. He lives with his older sisters and is being looked after by them. On the other hand, unlike other children left behind, he is motivated to study and gain further educational degree. Moreover, he wants to live and work in his homeland. He has also been consulted by a career guidance counsellor and has done career-oriented courses at the non-formal vocational education and training system organizations. As there is not enough collection of

data on the situation of children left behind in Bulgaria and worldwide, no decisive actions are taken by the state authorities. This fact hinders the facilitation of the children-left-behind situation and the VET system to open to young people in this specific vulnerable group.

## **Biography: Tsvetomir**

### **Introduction**

Tsvetomir Gerginov (male) was born in the capital city of Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1996. He is 17 years old now. He lives in a house in Levski B, one of the quarters of Sofia, with his younger sister, his grandmother and his neighbor aunt who lives near him. He is a pupil at 130th Comprehensive Upper-secondary School in Sofia. He has been a child left behind with both migrant parents for approximately one year and a half. He got sad and frustrated at first but now he has got used to the situation of being a child left behind.

### **Family context/background**

Tsvetomir has one younger sister, aged 10, who he lives with, and he is taking care of her. His mother does not have education of any kind and his father has general secondary education. Her profession is a cleaner and his profession is a master construction worker. They have migrated permanently to Bremen, Germany, which is a typical migration destination country for migrant workers from Bulgaria. They both work together at a meat factory as warehouse workers sorting out meat. They have a year-round job with a six-month renewable work contract. He has not visited his parents abroad and is not sure if he will manage to do that in the coming months. They keep in touch by phone and Skype. He is not familiar with any legal or other difficulties his parents have had to face so far while working abroad. They possess a residence/work permit using the services of a recruiting company. They send money to Tsvetomir and his

sister on a regular basis to support them financially. The whole family gathers together every six months a year. His grandmother is taking care of Tsvetomir and his sister. He receives support and understanding from his teachers and/or psychologists. He has got used to managing the separation from his parents, although it was very difficult and frustrating at first. He does not know any state or private organizations which can help him overcome the parental absence.

### **Educational biography**

2003-2012	Bulgaria	Primary school
2012-2016	Bulgaria	Secondary school (130th Comprehensive Upper-secondary School)

He has general school subjects (mathematics, Bulgarian language, market economy foundations, etc.). The school subject he is most interested in is German language. His prevailing school grade is average/3. He has done English lessons and playing the drums course so far.

### **Future ambitions for employment**

Tsvetomir would like to do something connected with music after he graduates from upper-secondary school and work in this sector. He would like to be prepared for the vocation of a drummer. He has plans to apply for a university degree, unlike most other children left behind with both migrant parents working abroad. Despite having future plans for further education and career, Tsvetomir is quite skeptic and doubtful if this could possibly happen in Bulgaria; that is why he wants to apply for a university degree in Germany. Some time ago he had plans to apply to the National School of Folklore Arts, Kotel, which eventually failed because he did not have the

necessary financial support to pay his accommodation. He would like to go abroad and reunite with his parents there because he thinks there are not enough educational and career opportunities for young adults in Bulgaria and he wants to live and work abroad because he sadly admits there is no future in his homeland.

### **What problems/barriers are there?**

One disadvantage is that Tsvetomir has no motivation to study. He is only interested in gaining some school grades, completing his secondary education and getting enrolled at the Academy of Music, where he can continue further with his university studies. It seems his school attainment has been threatened by school repetition once due to family problems. He also has interrupted school and he has changed different schools from primary to secondary school. One advantage is that he does not have any health problems, does not suffer from depression, does not smoke but drinks on special occasions, has never committed crime, has never shown any signs of aggression, has never had financial difficulties thanks to the remittances sent by his parents and he has never experienced any negative attitudes towards him on the side of his classmates, neighbors, etc., therefore he is not subjected to social isolation or stigmatization. He does not know if there is any school support organization or any state or private organization outside his school which deals with problems of children left behind. Likewise, Tsvetomir has never been consulted by any career guidance counselor who can help him choose his career path and assist him in the transition to vocational training or the world of work.

### **Summary**

On one hand, Tsvetomir is a typical example of a child left behind by migrating parents because he has been deprived of parental care and affection for more than a year. He lives with his grandmother and is being looked after by her. At the same time, he is also taking

care of his younger sister. He has no motivation to study, although he is planning to go to university and study to be a drummer. He envisages his future outside Bulgaria because he sees no educational or job opportunities in his homeland. On the other hand, Tsvetomir is not a typical example of a child left behind because he has not shown any increased display of unacceptable behaviors such as aggression, substance abuse, committing offences or illegal acts. As there is not enough collection of data on the situation of children left behind in Bulgaria and worldwide, no decisive actions are taken by the state authorities. This fact hinders the facilitation of the children-left-behind situation and the VET system to open to young people in this specific vulnerable group.

#### **7.4 Conclusion – the situation of children left behind in Bulgaria’s school/employment transition system**

The status quo of children left behind in Bulgaria is quite controversial. While developed European countries such as Germany, Finland, Great Britain, etc. are trying to tackle problems of asylum seekers and immigrants mainly coming from South-Eastern Europe, namely from Bulgaria and Romania, the policy makers of Bulgaria are facing the challenges of identifying and becoming aware of the problem with children left behind. According to public authorities responsible for child protection, migrants’ children do not constitute a deprived group; therefore, there is neither concrete legislation nor special strategies developed for their protection in Bulgaria. The actions taken in this regard are sporadic and consist mainly of data collection. The institutions are generally not concerned with the situation of migrants’ children. On one hand, they are children at risk who constitute a vulnerable group, but on the other hand, the Bulgarian legislation system does not identify them as children at risk and does not take any decisive actions to face and deal with their problems. In this regard the VET system in Bulgaria does not pay

any special attention to these children and their educational needs and potentials. The three biographies carried out with representatives of the vulnerable group of children left behind in Bulgaria show that parental migration does not necessarily lead to disadvantaged families, especially educational biographies can be quite successful. On the other hand, in Bulgaria there is too little reliable data to draw conclusions as to how many children and young adults exactly succeed in such successful educational careers. The few empirical studies outline and point out a number of individual problems and unresolved structural issues which have to be identified.

### **Individual problems**

One advantage of parental migration is that it might provide opportunities for parents to earn significantly higher incomes to the benefit of all family members, but the disadvantage is that it is also accompanied by long-term family separations, which might have direct or indirect effects on children's psycho-emotional development. The real harm is the lack of emotional security in the children – not knowing when their parents might reappear, and for how long. From a psychological point of view, children with one or both parents living abroad may react in a number of ways, such as developing behaviors born of the trauma they have experienced or adopting mechanisms to adapt to a situation that they find stressful. This kind of parental deprivation is manifested by the child in the following ways:

1. Unhappiness, anxiety, tendency to feel depressed, lack of motivation, apathy, indifference towards what is happening;
2. Attention deficit disorders, lack of concentration and inability to complete tasks;
3. Lack of long-term perspective and inability to look to the future;
4. Problems in building up self-esteem;

5. Increasing display of unacceptable behaviors (aggression, substance abuse, committing offences/illegal acts).

### **Educational attainment**

This effect is directly linked to the focus on transition to the world of work. Many researchers reported that the loss of parental attention and supervision may lead to poorer school performance and increased dropout rates. Often, children left behind are feeling obliged to perform household duties or take care of younger siblings, which leaves them with less energy for school activities or forces them to abandon their studies (De la Garza, 2010). Another effect is lower educational ambitions - among the risks children could face are the lack of opportunities to pursue education and find a job easily. Living in a migrant household may also have a detrimental effect on the decision to attend school, as it may change children's educational aspiration and increase the prospect of future migration. Most children envisage leaving their homeland in the near future.

### **Health problems**

Deprivation of parental care is considered as a risk factor for children's health. It results in a decrease in health assistance, worsening eating habits, lack of vaccinations, regular medical check-ups. Some of their illnesses can become chronic. In the absence of parents, children usually tend to "hide" certain "health problems" and postpone visits to the doctor.

### **Institutional problems**

The national authorities responsible for the children left behind are The State Agency for Child Protection and The State Agency for Social Assistance. We can also mention UNICEF Bulgaria and in addition the national helpline for children. Since 2008, when it was established, many children left behind shared difficult experience, emotional and social problems relating to lack of adequate parental

support. The state authorities are becoming aware of the consequences of migration on family ties but they are still gathering data and information, therefore the aim is to create a social system at a national level, thus being able to take care of this vulnerable group without stigmatizing it. Establishing new EU laws at a transnational level could improve their plight within the EU. As a result of the measures taken to facilitate the situation of children left behind, it is very important and likely to ensure that the VET systems are open to young people in the vulnerable groups, enabling them to take their opportunities for education and training, and to develop their potentials. The prevailing viewpoint of the institutions is that migration and its consequences on children left behind are a matter of personal choice and any interference on the part of the institutions is not wanted. Accordingly, public intervention becomes acceptable when the crisis has occurred.

Finally, it is important to keep studying the phenomenon and to raise attention of the national and European institutions in order to foster policies that prevent children to be affected by the consequences of European mobility.

## 7.5 Literature/Links

UNICEF Bulgaria Report (2014): Research on the consequences for the children left behind by parents working and living abroad.

International Centre for Migration Health and Development (2013): Migration, Displacement and Children left Behind.

- [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)
- [www.childrenleftbehind.eu](http://www.childrenleftbehind.eu)
- [www.icmhd.com](http://www.icmhd.com)
- [www.iom.com](http://www.iom.com)

- [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)
- [www.dw.de](http://www.dw.de)

## 8. Country report GERMANY – focus: refugees and asylum seekers

MAREN GAG

### 8.1 Introduction

The target group which is focused on in the German country report is refugees and asylum-seekers which are coming often as unaccompanied minors to Germany. The terms refugees and asylum seekers in the context of the project include individuals who have received a residence permit on probation according to the statutory *grandfather clause* (Altfallregelung); asylum-seekers; and *tolerated persons* (Geduldete). German asylum legislation, to which these refugee groups are subject, and their legal status, means that their participation in society is limited and they are not sufficiently able to exercise their educational rights. They are considerably limited in their ability to earn their own living. Instead they are forced to pay for their cost of living from basic provisions which are below public social security payments, to put up with restrictions in their health care, and to live in communal accommodation. The status of toleration (*Duldung*), a legal norm which is unparalleled anywhere in Europe, is not leave to stay under the German legal provisions, but simply suspension of deportation because such deportation would not be possible for personal and legal reasons. It is only in the last ten years that, due to European initiatives and regulations on leave to stay by the Federal Government and by the State Authorities,

some improvements have been introduced, facilitating access to education, training and work.

## **8.2 Mapping VET systems in Hamburg focused on the transition from school to vocational training/education for young adults**

Significant for the transition system in Germany is, that there is a collection of sub-systems (different types of institutions of the formal and non-formal VET system, e.g. Youth Job centres). Under the directive of the Grundgesetz (Basic Law) in Germany the responsibility in the areas of education, science and culture is administered by the federal order. Thus the primary responsibility for legislation and policy in these areas, so called cultural sovereignty (Kulturrecht), rests with the Länder. Since 1990 the Federal Republic of Germany has been made up of 16 Länder. The following collection is only focused on the education area in Hamburg.

## **8.3 Formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

### **Vocational education in the *dual system***

#### **Contents**

Most of the vocational training is done in the framework of the dual system. The training takes place at two locations: in a company and in a vocational school. As a rule it takes three years. The companies bear the cost of the in-company training. There are no further requirements for access to training in the dual system – it is in principle open to anyone. Migrants must have secured right to stay for the duration of the training. Work permit is needed.

Participation of asylum seekers and refugees depends on their status and many details regarding individual characteristics (duration of stay, legislation on which the status is based etc.).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

In the past, refugees and asylum seekers were systematically excluded from education and the labour market, but a paradigm shift in policy has been launched with the introduction of the "right to remain" regulation and the legislation for transposition of the directive into practice. However, it only goes part of the way, because participation depends on the duration of stay, and differs depending on status ('tolerated' status, residence permit, right to remain, etc.). Implementation of the carefully tailored funding programmes is proving successful, and is indispensable. The regular services at the Job Centres and the Job Agency have not yet adjusted to changes in legislation – these changes recognise specific disadvantages for refugees, and give them access to the labour market policy instruments (depending on their status). Business companies are not yet convinced, so there is still a lot of persuasion work to be done. In addition, business companies are faced with major bureaucratic obstacles in obtaining work permits for refugees and asylum seekers.

### **Full-time vocational training schools**

#### **Contents**

There are schools for commercial professions, and for foreign-language professions, for craft trades, for household management and social care professions, for healthcare professionals and for artistic vocations.

- Free access for refugees and asylum seekers if enough German language competencies

- the required school leaving certificate is available
- work permit is not needed.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Funding is available to refugees and asylum seekers under the Federal Education Funding Act (BAföG) if they have had legal right of stay or tolerated status in Germany for four years or more (Art. 8 BAföG), provided that the young people are not living at home with their parents.

### **University sector**

#### **Contents**

Access is available

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Funding is available to refugees and asylum seekers under the Federal Education Funding Act (BAföG) if they have had legal right of stay or tolerated status in Germany for four years or more (Art. 8 BAföG), provided that the young people are not living at home with their parents.

### **Transitional courses for lateral entrants**

#### **Contents**

Courses in vocational schools are provided for migrants/refugees and asylum-seekers where the language of the country of origin is not German. One/two year courses full time participants

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

This course is equipped with fewer resources (lower assessment of needs – basic lessons, basic frequency); that means disadvantages compared with other lateral entrants.

Rigid age limits: compulsory vocational education ends at the age of 18 years.

## **Preparation for vocational training (AV Dual)**

### **Contents**

One year courses, implementing of dual places of learning (curricular orientation towards the dual system and the conditions of vocational training in Hamburg since 2011 part of the reform of the transition system in Hamburg).

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

Not tailored to the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers (short duration for lateral entrants). Normally targeted to school leavers who could not be integrated in the dual system after their period in the regular school system.

## **Hamburg vocational training programme**

### **Contents**

Mainly for young people who cannot obtain in-company training due to individual disadvantages, but who are expected to be capable of successfully completing company training with support, and can achieve rapid transfer to such training. Vocational education in different professions.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

The age limit is 24 years. This programme is open to refugees and asylum-seekers.

### **Youth job centers (Jugendberufsagenturen)**

#### **Contents**

Cooperation between different services (employment agency, job centre, private agencies) offering learning support, social monitoring and *outreach social work*.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

After the implementation of this new approach (2013) it was not clear who is in charge of counseling pupils in the Transitional courses for lateral entrants. Refugees and asylum-seekers dropped out. The cooperation with projects for refugees and asylum seekers is going on step by step.

Raising awareness is needed to the stuff members.

### **Introductory training (EQ) is a programme for vocational orientation run by the Employment Agency, targeting young people.**

#### **Contents**

The goal of this 6-12 month long-term internship is to get to know a company in a particular field of activity; the programme is open to young people up to the age of 25. At the end of this, the internship is to result in an employment contract.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Participation requires a work permit. A very long time it was difficult for refugees with tolerated status to get access, because they

had only subsidiary access to the labour market for the first four years of their stay until 2014. First since June 2015 the access is unrestricted.

## **8.4 Non-formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

**Advice and counselling for different disadvantaged groups**

**Contents**

Specific services funded by the Land of Hamburg or by the European Social Fund or other programmes.

**Advantages – disadvantages**

No limits

**Advice, training, placement – such as network FLUCHTort Hamburg (Hamburg as a save hafen); network of 7 sub-projects give advice, guidance**

**Contents**

Specific services for various disadvantaged groups: specific (pilot) projects, funded by the Land of Hamburg or by the European Social Fund or other programmes. Specific offers for asylum seekers and refugees. With the *Federal ESF Programme on labour-market support for migrants with a refugee background and refugees with access to the labour market*, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has launched a programme which is intended to support the labour market integration process.

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

The tried-and tested model of development partnerships of the EQUAL programme was therefore taken up once again. The various players in migration and labour market policy work together at local level in the context of the networks (non-governmental organisations, job placement services, chambers of commerce and crafts, and trade unions are involved as well as the responsible authorities). This leads to cooperation between institutions which previously often worked in parallel or even at cross purposes.

The programmes within the network are based on the life situations of participants and are interrelated to provide a chain of support, and to enable the refugees to go through a series of programmes that are as precisely *customised* as possible, taking account of their individual circumstances.

A major structural problem is that there are not enough training programmes with a longer period of funding, to compensate for qualification gaps due to long waiting times and long interruptions in educational careers. Immediate entry into dual training is not possible for many of the young refugees, and in particular for adults who want direct access to the labour market.

Limitations concerning duration and funding.

## **Youth schools**

### **Contents**

Specific offers for educationally disadvantaged young people to acquire school leaving certificates and to make the transition into the world of work, suitable for the target group in *Produktionsschulen*, *Schülerfirmen*, *Werkstattschulen*, *Lernwerkstätten* etc.

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

Participation of refugees and asylum seekers is probably limited. Not enough knowledge about the situation in these schools.

**Integration courses: language training and learning in the German social context. Only for migrants who come to Germany to stay permanently (645 hours).**

## Contents

A sub-group of refugees is eligible for participation, due to the offer by the City of Hamburg to fund *supplementary language programmes* and thus to open up the integration courses (500 places per annum). Most of refugees have access, with certain restrictions – they must have been living in Germany for more than 6 month, priority to parents with children aged 3 years or more, to help them the German language and to give support to them when they go to school.

## Advantages – disadvantages

Regularly NO, only for migrants who come to Germany staying permanently (compulsory participation pursuant to Sections 44 and 4a Residence Act [AufenthG]); minimum framework of integration benefits. 1 EUR per lesson to be paid by participant.

The places in the integrations courses for refugees and asylum seekers is a model in Germany (good practice), but the number of lessons is reduced (300 hours). The number of hours is not sufficient.

**ESF-BAMF programme *German language for work* – 6-month courses in various segments of the world of work: caring/social professions, hotels/restaurants, office/trade, industrial. Access for migrants (and refugees and asylum-seekers).**

## Contents

Specific courses tailored to the needs of work related language training. Funded by the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge and ESF.

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

Access for refugees and asylum-seekers is possible beginning January 2012. The access depends on the language level (European Framework for languages A 2).

## **The Jugend in Berufsausbildung programme (youth in vocational education)**

### **Contents**

Funded by the City of Hamburg to cover any funding gaps for trainees (for example due to high costs of rent).

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

The funding is currently not available to refugees until they have been resident here for at least four years. Proposals for adaptation of the programme are currently being examined by the Hamburg Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Integration.

## **8.5 Obstacles in general**

- Rigid age limits: compulsory vocational education ends at the age of 18 years, making access more difficult due to lack of flexibility. The programmes are mostly restricted to young people aged not more than 24 years.
- In some cases, access for certain target groups is not possible due to links with legal conditions.
- Educationally disadvantaged target groups (people with disabilities, delinquency; migrants and refugees) are normally provided for in a *parallel system*.
- Transition to the world of work plays a subordinate role in the institutions of formal education. It is not recognised with equal

value that for many disadvantaged groups it is more beneficial to achieve a transition to easy-access gainful employment.

- There is a lack of concepts for implementation of teaching in terms of basic education and literacy training related to the world of work.
- Problems in cooperation of the institutions/programmes of the formal and non-formal educational system.
- Contradiction: on the one hand, many training places are needed in businesses in Hamburg due to demographic change; on the other hand there are a large number of young people who do not have a training place because they are regarded as *not ready for training*, and they get stuck in the transition system. Considerable reform is needed in this area.

## 8.6 Biographies of young refugees and asylum seekers

The career paths of young refugees are shown and their biographic data are reconstructed, on the basis of three examples. This also shows the possibilities and limits of the Hamburg system for transition from school to the world of work.

### **Biography: Ramson**

#### **Introduction**

Ramson was born in Porto-Novo, Benin, in 1993, and attended school there, according to his own indications.

In 2010 Ramson fled to Hamburg alone, as an unaccompanied minor refugee. A deputy was appointed to represent him, and he submitted an application for asylum, and a final negative ruling on that was given recently. Ramson is currently living in youth

accommodation with partial care provision. He is at present engaged in training as a carer for the elderly.

### **Family context /background**

Ramson fled to Germany at the age of 16 years. His father is already dead, and he does not know where his mother is. Ramson also has two younger siblings, with whom he likewise has no contact.

Ramson was placed in youth accommodation in Hamburg and was given a school place at one of the special schools for young migrants (VJ-M) who come to Germany as lateral entrants. The purpose of these schools is to help young refugees to obtain their first or second school qualification in a two-year course. Ramson stood out quickly with the teachers because of his eagerness to learn. He was determined to get the secondary school qualification (Realschulabschluss).

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 8.1: Education of Ramson, Germany

2002-12/2004	Benin	School in Porto Novo
01/2011-06/2013	Germany	School in VJM class, Hamburg (Secondary school qualification)
11/2011	Germany	Voluntary internship in senior citizens care
09/2012	Germany	Voluntary internship (teaching/social work), Hamburg

10/2012-12/2013	Germany	<p>Participation in ESF Project <i>Opportunities for Refugees</i>, basis &amp; woge e.V. Hamburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching for vocational orientation</li> <li>• Social counselling</li> <li>• Arrangement of internship</li> <li>• Arrangement of training, and support</li> </ul>
09/2013-present	Germany	Training in care for the elderly
01/2014	Germany	<p>Participation in ESF Project <i>Opportunities in Hamburg as a Safe Haven</i>, basis &amp; woge e.V., Hamburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching during training</li> <li>• Social counselling and support</li> </ul>

In the course of his schooling, Ramson did two internships in parallel to school. One of these was in care for the elderly, and the other as an assistant teacher at a youth centre.

In 2012 Ramson joined the *Opportunities for refugees* project, and asked for counselling for vocational orientation. It quickly became clear how worried Ramson was about his status of stay and the restrictions associated with that. At the time, he was still in the asylum application process, but already his lawyer expected that the outcome would not be positive. Ramson was very concerned about

that. He sometimes found it very hard to contemplate the idea of getting a work permit and thus to start training.

However, with support in a number of sessions, Ramson took up the opportunity to find out about a completely new vocational direction, by doing a second internship. He took a two-week internship as a specialist warehouse assistant during the school holidays.

Following this internship, Ramson was certain that he wanted to learn a job where he could work with people and be in contact with others. A training place was then arranged via contacts with the company that had previously given him the internship.

A work permit for Ramson was applied for with success, thanks to the project workers in close cooperation with the organisation supporting him and the training company.

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

He hopes that the Foreigners Authority will not take away his work permit, and that he can thus successfully complete his training. “I am happy” with this work, he said recently, and that is quite evident just by looking at him.

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Ramson found it difficult to concentrate on his vocational future, as his mind was occupied by the wish to complete his training, and his worries about his own status of stay and thus whether he could remain in Germany.

The fears about possible deportation, whether justified or not, were such a burden to him that he started therapy with the help of the organisation supporting him.

The situation became particularly difficult for Ramson when he received the final negative decision on his asylum application, after he had started his training. That meant a change in his identity paper. Ramson was given ‘tolerated’ status. At first it was far from clear whether the responsible Foreigners Authority would also take

over the work permit which had been granted into the tolerated status. Tolerated status means that it is possible under Section 33 of the Employment Ordinance (BeschV) to refuse a work permit because a person fails to meet the obligation for cooperation, for example in obtaining a passport. With the help of the project staff, a lawyer was found to take on the case. Ramson still has the work permit at present. But he does not have the absolute certainty that this will remain the case. Ramson and his employer do not intend to be discouraged by that.

Alongside the obstacles under labour law, Ramson also had to struggle with financial difficulties at the beginning of this training. In the first few months of his training, he did not yet fulfil the time requirements for *Vocational training support* (state-funded financial support for trainees, topping up the trainee payments). At present he only has his trainee pay to cover his everyday costs and rent payments. Ramson still lives in accommodation with pedagogical support, but rent payments are payable there, too. He will not be able to obtain the above funding until the end of 2014. Thanks to the special commitment by the supporting organisation, it proved possible to get top-up social benefits for Ramson.

## **Summary**

The teaching staff at the vocational school saw their limits in dealing with the life situation of refugees, and entered into active cooperation with the Refugee Network project. They also lacked the expertise in foreigners' law, which is decisive for successful access to continuing qualification and training. That means targeted vocational planning for young people of school age who come to Germany as refugees is not sufficiently possible at vocational schools.

## **Biography: Aya**

### **Introduction**

Aya Al M. (female) was born in Zyona/Iraq in 1993. She has been living in Germany since 2010, having entered the country with her mother and her brother as refugees.

### **Family context/background**

Aya's father stayed in Iraq, and her mother lives alone with the two children in great poverty in refugee accommodation on a big estate in Hamburg (Steilshoop); she moved some time ago to a different district in the East of Hamburg. Aya's mother is a qualified teacher, but did not take up employment in Hamburg; her brother is 7 years old and goes to primary school. The family has practically no money for leisure activities. The family lives in great isolation and has no contacts with other families in the district. Her mother speaks no German, and the family lives mainly in the Arab language community.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 8.2: Education of Aya, Germany

1999-2005	Iraq	Primary school in Zyona
2005-2007	Iraq	Secondary school in Zyona
2007-2010	Iraq	High school in Rabyia/Jordan
2013-2014	Germany	Vocational training school (G8) in Hamburg, vocational preparation
2013-2014	Germany	School internship (3 weeks) in a dental practice

2013-2014	Germany	Obtained secondary school leaving certificate
2013-2014	Germany	n counselling with ASM – a sub-project of the SAFE HAVEN Hamburg network

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Aya tried to obtain recognition of her school certificate from Iraq. The brief assessment by the responsible office at the Hamburg Education Authority showed that the certificate for the 11th grade of an IT specialist high school corresponds in Germany to the first general school leaving certificate. One of the reasons given is that there was no certificate for completion of *Basic Education* and that the subjects of the school year at the high school are not the same as the subjects of German secondary school (Realschule).

Aya has knowledge of English and Arabic. She would like one day to train as a pharmacist, and later to work in this sector.

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Aya does not speak good German, because practically no German is spoken in the family environment. That makes it hard for her to get a training place. The advisers from the refugee network indicated that they do not believe Aya is ready for vocational training at the present time. It is hard for her to communicate in German, and she would not be able to follow the teaching at a vocational training school. Due to her socially isolated situation, she has no contact with people of the same age, she does not participate in sports, and she has no bank account. She and her family have not filed an application for asylum, but they have received a residence permit for humanitarian reasons (pursuant to Section 23 Residence Act) and would get a work permit if she gets a training place. Aya gets no support from her family for making more contact with the other

students at school, or for joining in other activities outside of the family.

## **Summary**

During counselling, staff of the refugee project repeatedly had the impression that Aya's mother is satisfied with the life situation of her daughter, and that she can keep family control over her daughter. It seems that she has too little knowledge of the outside world and of the possibilities and opportunities, so she cannot give her daughter any help in terms of motivation. The staff at the vocational school find it hard to establish contact with the parents. Work with parents plays only a subordinate role in the educational courses, because the young refugees mostly have a legal guardian, insofar as they come as unaccompanied underage refugees. So the teachers mainly shift the issue of accompanying support onto the legal guardians. This tradition which has become established in practice tends to prevent the necessary contacts with parents.

## **Biography: Rosanna**

### **Introduction**

Rosanna was born in Moscow in 1995 and, according to her own indications, also attended school there. At the age of seven years, she fled to Germany together with her family. The family submitted a claim for asylum. This was rejected, and the family then received tolerated status. All the members of the family initially had tolerated status with a ban on taking up employment.

### **Family context/background**

Rosanna came to Germany at the age of seven years. She has experienced most of her socialisation in Hamburg. The family spent the first eight years in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania before being re-allocated to Hamburg in 2010.

Rosanna is the eldest of three children in the family. Her brother was six years old on entry to the country, and her younger sister was born two years after the family entered Germany. She currently lives with her parents and siblings in refugee accommodation. Her father and her mother are subject to a ban on employment because the Foreigners Authority accuses them of concealing their identity, they have no passport, and they are therefore not allowed to work. Her younger brother is currently attending school and would like to start vocational training in summer. Her sister is still attending school.

The family submitted a claim for asylum after entering Germany, but this was rejected. Since then the family has had tolerated status.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 8.3: Education of Rosanna, Germany

2002-12/2004	Germany	Primary school Grundschule Fritz Reuter, Crivitz
2005-2006	Germany	Primary school Grundschule West, Parchim
2006-03/2010	Germany	Secondary school Realschule, Parchim
05/2010-07/2010	Germany	Secondary school Haupt- und Realschule Altonaer Strasse, Hamburg
08/2010-present	Germany	District school Stadtteilschule Kurt Tucholsky, Hamburg

06/2011-12/2013	Germany	<p>Participation in ESF Project <i>Opportunities for Refugees</i>, basis &amp; woge e.V. Hamburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching for vocational orientation</li> <li>• Social counselling support</li> </ul>
01/2013-present	Germany	<p>Participation in ESF Project <i>Opportunities in Hamburg as a Safe Haven</i>, basis &amp; woge e.V., Hamburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangement of training</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Social counselling and support</li> </ul>

Rosanna is currently attending the 12th grade at the Altona district school, and will leave school in summer 2014 with the school qualification *Fachhochschulreife*.

In 2011 Rosanna approached the *Opportunities for Refugees* project and asked for counselling for vocational guidance. Rosanna wanted from a very early stage to obtain training in a commercial office vocation. That is one of the reasons why she then decided to go for a higher educational qualification. At the same time, Rosanna had no work permit for a long period, so that initially she only had the option of school education.

Rosanna decided in the course of the years to end schooling with a specialist abitur (Fachabitur) and to obtain full university entrance qualification by training as a legal assistant.<sup>1</sup> In the final year, she

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<sup>1</sup>If the Fachabitur is not done at a Fachoberschule, but the student has left

started submitting the necessary applications for a work permit, with the support of the project assistant working with her. A training company was found via school contacts.

After a trial internship lasting several days, Rosanna received approval for training. At the same time, it was possible to obtain a work permit.

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Rosanna's long-standing dream was to start training in a law firm. Her short-term goals are first of all to get a good start in training in August 2014. Asked what she wants to do after completion of training, Rosanna answered "to work, of course".

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Rosanna lives with her family in refugee accommodation. It is often too noisy and too chaotic there, making it hard for her to concentrate and to study sufficiently. At present the family is living in emergency accommodation, because the accommodation centre was damaged by a fire. It will be about another two months before the family can return there. These are precisely the two months in which Rosanna has to do her exams for the specialist school qualification.

Like her younger brother, Rosanna expressed her wish at an early stage to get into vocational training. The project staff therefore approached the responsible Foreigners Authority at an early stage, to apply for a work permit for her. In terms of time, Rosanna met all the requirements for obtaining a work permit independent of employer. But the application was rejected, and the appeal was unsuccessful.

The family's lawyer has now managed to obtain from the court a work permit for her younger brother. On this basis, Rosanna

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school after the 12th grade at a general secondary school, it is necessary to do an internship period. Access to a Fachhochschule is possible only after providing evidence of such internship.

submitted a new application for a work permit, and that received a positive decision in December 2013. Rosanna now has a full work permit. But unfortunately she still has only *tolerated* status of stay. The applications of the family for a residence permit for the children based on their good integration were submitted in 2011, but have still not yet been finally decided.

### **Summary**

The teaching staff tried to ensure appropriate perspectives for their student. When they realised that they were reaching their limits in terms of the regulations under foreigners' law, they encouraged their student to approach an appropriate office in the refugee network, and to get expert support from there. This example shows that there may still be considerable obstacles for refugees even after they have gone through the general school system, in making the transition from school to vocation.

## **8.7 Conclusion – the situation of young refugees in Hamburg's school/employment transition system**

Refugees and asylum seekers are subject to numerous marginalisation mechanisms in the conditions of the school/employment transition system in Germany (shown here with the example of Hamburg); these conditions prevent them from making sufficient use of their educational rights, so that they have to take roundabout routes if they are to find their way into vocational qualification and the labour market.

### **Individual problems**

Even though there have been some improvements in the access of young refugees and asylum seekers, there are still barriers within

the transition system, as shown by the educational careers examples given here, and by experience in Hamburg in treatment of the target group. Asylum seekers with a permit to stay have no right to claim vocational training support (BAB) or funding under the Vocational Training Support Act (BAföG); *tolerated* persons cannot claim vocational training support until they have been in the country for four years. That means they are prevented by their financial situation from taking up vocational or academic training and education. Many of the tools of vocational education and training are closed to them due to their precarious situation in terms of their papers. Further reforms are needed because of the substantial restrictions which still exist in legislation and regulations, following many years of asylum policy which excluded them – integration courses have to be opened to asylum seekers and *tolerated* persons, and early access to all forms of legal employment should be realised. Existing perspectives for staying in the country should be simplified, and regulations on right of stay should be made independent of age and reference date for asylum seekers who have been living in Germany for a considerable period, in order to create real incentives for vocational training and education (Juretzka, 2014, pp. 92-107; Müller, Nägele & Petermann, 2014).

## **Institutional problems**

Refugees and asylum seekers are exposed to major lines of differentiation and characteristics of exclusion, as is immediately evident from the structure of the education and training system in Hamburg (see matrix):

The transition system from school to employment was fundamentally restructured in Hamburg in 2011, but young refugees, often entering Germany as unaccompanied minors, and getting into the school system by lateral entry as asylum seekers or as tolerated persons, attend schools outside of this reformed system<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>Bürgerschaft (Parliament) of the City of Hamburg, Communication by Sen-

They attend two vocational preparation programmes located at vocational schools, exclusively aimed at young people with migration background, defined as follows in the law:

- The vocational preparation year for migrants (BVJ-M) whose knowledge, skills and abilities in the German language are not sufficient to participate with prospects of success in the educational programmes of the BVJ (vocational preparation year); the BVJ-M lasts two school years in full-time attendance (§2 (2) APO-BVS).<sup>3</sup>
- The preparation year for school students whose language of origin is not German, and whose stay in the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany is of temporary nature, particularly on the basis of leave to stay or toleration (VJ-M); the VJ-M lasts two school years in full-time attendance (§2 (3) APO-BVS).

At year end 2011/2012 there were more than 750 young refugees in Hamburg, concentrated in special-needs classes at nine vocational schools. Forecasts indicate that this figure could double in the coming years. The specific needs of the target group, the lack of data and of tools for data collection, and the impossibility of planning immigration face the educational service and the vocational schools with great challenges – they are trying to plan admission to the school system without long waiting times and to plan education in a flexible way in accordance with needs and to ensure appropriate provision of teaching. The structural difficulties cannot be compensated by existing positive approaches and specific knowledge of refugees at certain school locations. The reform of the transition

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ate to Bürgerschaft: Measures for implementation of vocational training in Hamburg, docs. 19/6273 of 2/7/2010 and 19/8472 of 18/01/11.

<sup>3</sup>APO BVS = Training and examination regulations for Vocational Preparation Schools, 22/07/2011.

system has made the inadequacies of this form of schooling particularly clear, and some of the problems have been made worse by the new organisational structure.

The core of the reform is the reorganisation of the transition from school to vocational activity, focusing on preparation for vocational training (AV) by implementation of dual places of learning (curricular orientation towards the dual system and the conditions of vocational training in Hamburg) and by support in the transitional phase.<sup>4</sup> But, regrettably, the relevant documents and concepts do not examine whether it is legally possible for young people going into vocational schools without knowledge of German, and in particular for refugees and asylum seekers, to start and maintain and successfully complete participation in the reformed AV system; they do not consider whether this possibility is permitted by organisation and plausible in terms of its content.

The legal restrictions, which were specifically the basis of the introduction of the VJ-M, have successively been removed in the legislation at Federal and state level in recent years. After one year of stay in Germany, young refugees and asylum seekers are increasingly given more opportunities to make use of their rights to education and to participate in training and in the job market. After one year, they have a subsidiary right of access to the labour market. With this in mind, further development is needed in terms of function and design of the BVJ-M and VJ-M courses at vocational schools, especially as the Hamburg Senate explicitly includes this target group in new orientation of the Hamburg action concept for immigrants.

The report published in May 2012 analyses the impact of the reform of the school/ employment transition system on young refugees living in Hamburg. It presents analyses on issues of structural and pedagogical fit of the education and training courses for asylum seekers and tolerated persons. It also examines the practice of allocation and placement of the young people and organisational, administrative and legal difficulties. The analyses are put in concrete form us-

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<sup>4</sup>Bürgerschaft (Parliament) of the City of Hamburg, doc. 19/8472.

ing the educational biographies of refugees who have gone through the Hamburg school system.

The report demonstrates that numerous difficulties arise in everyday school operations because of the considerable problems of pedagogical fit between the courses, with insufficient equipment, with educational goal conflicts, with inconsistent curricular concepts, with lack of flexibility and coherence in the examination rules, and with shortcomings in implementation of vocational preparation and language support; all of this is due to the fact that these programmes are not tailored to the learning status and life situation of the young people. There are also additional factors which have an impact on implementation of the courses – they include the organisational and administrative position of the courses at HIBB, the complex legal conditions applicable to the situation of asylum seekers and tolerated persons. These problems reduce the achievement of the educational goals of the current Hamburg Senate, which declare that "no-one should be left behind", and "no qualification without prospects of employment". On the contrary, there are massive obstacles in the way of such young people making use of their right to education, as they are on the margins of society in various respects. The conclusions drawn from this by the authors of the report are as follows:

A separate educational programme needs to be kept at the vocational schools for further concept improvement and for organisation of an appropriate vocational preparation programme for this target group, giving young lateral entrants without knowledge of the German language and with insecure status of stay opportunities to catch up on school qualifications and to enter the Hamburg education system with the option of follow-up programmes, and enabling them to achieve seamless transition to the world of work; this programme needs to be re-organised in its structure and curricula, and should have the same resources as the training preparation programme (AV) (Gag & Schroeder, 2013, pp. 215-220).

Significant for the transition system in Germany is that there is a collection of sub-systems with different types of institutions of the formal and non-formal VET system. That is exemplified by the

Hamburg Refugee Networks, supplementing the regular programmes run by vocational schools for lateral entrants within the framework of transition management.

The interlinking of refugee organisations, educational institutions and school facilities with business operations, the Job Agency and the responsible authorities is effected in an integrated social approach, which takes due account of the life situations of refugees. The goal is to gain real-world knowledge of the target group, to develop and implement tailored concepts based on the prior knowledge of the target group. Programmes of counselling, vocational preparation, coaching, therapy for traumatised individuals, language training and social advice are prepared in an integrated way, giving the refugees opportunities of access to training, education and work. The experience gathered over many years in Hamburg shows that the effectiveness of individual integration measures for disadvantaged groups is increased if they are implemented in networked form. Carefully tailored, needs-oriented approaches require easy-access entry options for participants and a flexible concept – as demonstrated by a wide range of analyses of educational biographies which have been compiled in parallel to projects over many years (Gag, 2013). Access of participants to the programmes is ensured by the cooperation of institutions having a special relationship to refugees and organisations having a special relationship to business and the labour market, with mutually related programmes and contacts. A modular system has been established for entry, qualification and placement offers at a higher level of qualification. The success of education and training programmes depends very much on individual support in transition between training and work, as has been shown by the parallel academic research in the Hamburg network – success in education and training can only be achieved if the whole of the life situation of refugees is taken into consideration in the vocational training institutions. It is vital to improve the legal status of asylum seekers and tolerated refugees, and to secure their financial situation, so that they do not drop out of the programmes for financial reasons. There should also be in-depth social support

programmes, and improvement in accommodation conditions, and provision of optimal medical provisions, in order for this special target group to complete the courses successfully and to cope with its situation in employment (cf. Schroeder & Seukwa, 2007, p. 265). That means there are considerable requirements to establish, focus and manage cooperation with various agencies and institutions in the city (Gag, 2014, p. 281).

Existing problems in cooperation of the institutions often gives rise to many contradictions in practice.

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## 9. Country report GERMANY - focus: migrants with special needs

MAREN GAG AND JOACHIM SCHROEDER

### 9.1 Introduction

The target group in the second German country report is migrants with special needs. In Germany a distinction is made between nine special education needs which are relevant in the general and vocational education system ([www.kmk.org](http://www.kmk.org)). These nine focal areas are divided into two groups, both in social legislation (the Social Codes SGB) and in education legislation:

1. The three focal areas Learning, Behaviour, and to some extent also Language, are where the causes of impairment arise mainly in the life situation of the children and young people concerned. The term used here is disadvantage (or a similar word from this semantic field) is therefore mostly used in these focal areas.
2. The other six focal areas (Vision, Hearing, Motor Development, Mental Development, Health Impairment, and Autistic Behaviour) are the causes of impairment mainly in the physical, neurological, cognitive and physiological circumstances of the children and young people. The term disability is therefore mostly used in these areas.

We have already collected a lot of knowledge about the first group of focal areas here in Germany.<sup>1</sup> In this Country Report we would therefore like to tell you about the interaction of school, migration background and disability: What do we know about possible school difficulties of blind or deaf children with a migration background? What concepts are there for inclusive school education of young migrants with a life-threatening or life-shortening illness? What is the legal position of migrants with disabilities? Are the existing institutions for education of people with disabilities interculturally open? Are the institutions for work with migrants accessible to those with disabilities?

In order to get more detailed information on the life situations and educational barriers of young migrants with special needs, in particular at the transition from school to the world of work, we have examined the fundamental facts and figures in this area, and present them briefly below.

The current Participation Report (*Teilhabebericht*) was published in 2013 – it is issued by the Federal Government once per legislative period, describing the life situations of people with disabilities (BMAS 2013). The status of the individuals as having *disability* is assessed by holding of a Disability ID Card, which is issued by the responsible social authority following an assessment procedure. If the degree of disability is assessed as more than 50, that is classified as a severe disability. According to the Participation Report, more than seven million people in Germany are severely disabled in this classification (ibid., p.7 and p.60).

The Participation Report considers people as having a migration background if they immigrated to Germany themselves, if they do not currently have German nationality, or if at least one parent was not born in Germany (ibid., p.56). By this definition, 2.5 million people with migration background have a disability, that is one adult in five with a migration background (p.56).

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<sup>1</sup>Country Report on the life situation of refugees and asylum seekers

The Participation Report does not give precise details on all the areas of life covered (housing, education, work, leisure, etc.). It should be noted that it mainly concentrates on adults of employable age (18 to 64-year-olds). At the same time, the Report gives some relevant figures for school and education:

- People with a migration background and a disability are more likely than the average not to have a vocational qualification (21% without disability, 38% with disability) (BMAS 2013, p.119).
- The unemployment rate of people with disability and a migration background is above average (14% for men, 24% for women, compared with 10% for men and 7% for women without disability) (*ibid.*, p.142).
- People with a migration background and aged between 18 and 64 years who have a disability are much less likely to earn their own living (49% vs. 75%) (*ibid.*, p.148).
- The mean monthly income (gross) for female migrants with disability is lower (EUR 1,500) than for female German nationals with disability (EUR 1,700), and for men the difference is even greater (EUR 2,148 for migrants with disability vs. EUR 2,500 for male German nationals with disability) (p.150).

This reflects the inequalities which the Participation Report describes with the not entirely unproblematic term of *double disadvantage* (p.56); at any rate, the exclusion risk is particularly great for migrants.

Representative data on the age group 0 to 17 years has been collected by the KiGGS study, which is probably the most comprehensive survey of the *Health of Children and Adolescents in Germany* ([www.kiggs-studie.de](http://www.kiggs-studie.de)), and is published by the Robert Koch Institute. The study data published in 2006 showed that about 2% of all children and adolescents under the age of 18, that is nearly

300,000 boys and girls, have an officially registered disability. Another 8% (1.1 million) have a long-term impairment which for an extended period requires significantly more intensive medical, psychosocial or pedagogical support than is usual for children of their age. The findings of the KiGGS baseline survey show that the proportion of children with disability among children with a migration background is 6%, that is lower than for those without a migration background (11%). The explanation is probably that migrant families are often not recognised as eligible for benefits under social legislation.

Some 600,000 children and adolescents are considered to have special educational needs, that is twice as many as for school students having an officially registered disability.

The main areas of support covered in this report include just under 170,000 school students, about 10% of these not having German nationality. At the present time there are no data available showing in particular the special needs support requirement at the transition period from school to work.

## **9.2 Mapping VET systems in Germany (Hamburg) focused on the transition from school to vocational training/education for young adults with special needs**

The following factors are significant:

- Germany has ratified the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UN Convention). The relevant international treaties are legally binding with effect from March 2009, and have the rank of Federal law.
- As already indicated, Germany distinguishes nine different special needs areas in the educational system: Vision, Hearing, Motor Development, Mental Development, Health Im-

pairments, Learning, Social-Emotional Development, and Language. The status of *disability* for social legislation purposes is defined by the Disability ID Card, which is issued by the Social Office following assessment.

- Hamburg's action plan for inclusion is the tool for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The aim is to make society and its institutions accessible, so that everyone can participate as far as possible (action areas: education, work and employment, independent living, participation in building, housing, urban development, health, women with disabilities, accessibility).
- Under the directive of the Basic Law [Grundgesetz] in Germany the responsibility in the areas of education, science and culture is administered by the federal order. Thus the primary responsibility for legislation and policy in these areas, known as cultural sovereignty [Kulturhoheit], rests with the Länder (states). Since 1990 the Federal Republic of Germany has been made up of 16 Länder.

### **9.3 Formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

#### **Education in the general school system**

##### **Contents**

Inclusive regular classes in grades 1 to 10 (stipulated in Education Act since 1997). Ongoing further development of concepts *Inclusive Education at Hamburg's Schools* (Doc. 20/3641 Hamburg Parliament, implementation of Section 12 HmbSG), comprises conceptual, legal, structural, personal and material prerequisites.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

About half the children and adolescents in Hamburg having special needs attend regular schools (status 2014). Especially children/adolescents with serious mental or physical impairment are practically not included.

Special needs schools often provided sophisticated tailored concepts for vocational preparation specially designed for children and adolescents with serious disabilities (rehabilitation education). Some of these courses were scrapped in the course of Inclusion.

### **Ombudsman for *Inclusion at School Information Centre (SIZ)***

#### **Contents**

Works on an honorary basis – networked with counselling unit at SIZ.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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### **Special needs schools and regional education centres**

#### **Contents**

Schooling for children and adolescents of compulsory school age having specific disabilities.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

A substantial proportion of parents of children with disabilities elect to send them to a special needs school. That may conflict with the political intentions of the Education Authority, which gives preference to an inclusive educational setting.

Traditionally, migrant children are more often assigned to a special needs school, because their insufficient mastery of German is assessed as *learning impairment*. Migrant children are also over-represented in schools for children with physical disabilities or mental disorders (no apparent reason).

## **Vocational education in the *Dual System***

### **Contents**

Most of the vocational training is done in the framework of the Dual System. Training takes place at two locations: in a company and in a vocational school. As a rule it takes three years. The companies bear the cost of the in-company training.

There are no further requirements for access to training in the Dual System – it is in principle open to anyone. Migrants must have secured right to stay for the duration of the training. A work permit is needed.

Participation of asylum seekers and refugees depends on their status and many details regarding individual characteristics (duration of stay, legislation on which the status is based etc.).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Apart from problems which migrants and asylum seekers have to get access in the Dual System, existing problems in access are due to:

- Awareness on the part of business only of *usability* of skills of trainees/ employees with disabilities;
- Not always accessible;
- Legal barriers (especially with respect to refugees and asylum seekers, because they are excluded from examination process of the degree of their disability (disability ID Card)).

## **Programme for participation of people with severe disabilities in public services**

### **Contents**

Employers (with 20 or more employees) are required by Social Code SGB IX Part 2 to employ people with severe disabilities. 5% of their jobs must go to severely disabled persons or persons coming into an equivalent category. If they do not fulfil this requirement, they are required to make a compensation payment.

Self-obligation for employment and training of 5% people with disabilities in Hamburg's public service.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Hamburg has launched a funding guideline based on a Federation/Länder programme called *Inclusion Initiative* to generate commercial incentives for taking on people with disabilities (up to 27 years) in training or employment (over 50 years). Under certain circumstances, funding of up to EUR 10,000 is possible.

## **University sector**

### **Contents**

This is based on the Universities Framework Act and the Hamburg Universities Act, which specify that consideration be given to the special needs of students with disabilities.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

University applicants can enter supplementary applications to improve their chances of acceptance. The Hamburg Universities Act also stipulates that the universities must enable students with disabilities to compensate for their disabilities.

The Training & Education Promotion Act (S.15 BAföG) regulates special funding extension due to disabilities. There are obstacles to receiving the benefits in particular for refugees/asylum seekers.<sup>2</sup>

Individual disability related supplementary needs (aids, etc.) can be funded via *Integration Aid* (S.54, cl.1 No. 2 SGB XII). But obstacles for migrants with unsecured right of stay.

## **9.4 Programmes for vocational preparation and transition management within the Hamburg Institute of Vocational Education and Training**

Expansion of provisions for vocational preparation of school students with severe disabilities is planned, to improve the transition between school and work.

VET schools often had sophisticated and tailored concepts for vocational preparation, especially for students with severe disabilities (rehabilitation education). But these courses have in some cases been dropped in the course of the Inclusion policy.

### **Inclusive VET preparation (AV-I) for young people with and without disabilities**

#### **Contents**

One-year programme for vocational preparation, with the aim of getting a place in vocational training or work, general education qualification possible; the programme can be extended on special application and in the case of special needs by one year beyond the legal compulsory age for schooling. This programme includes young people with special needs for support. It involves eight VET schools.

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<sup>2</sup>See Country report Germany – Focus: Refugees and asylum seekers

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

Access via the Hamburg Institute of Vocational Education

### **Vocational preparation (BV) for young people with mental or physical disability, blind and visually impaired young people**

#### **Contents**

One-year full-time programme (may be extended by 1 year). The aim is preparation for vocational training, and transition to employment. The locations are various VET schools, with a range of occupations: domestic science, catering, home engineering, services, garden services, childcare services, commercial & retail.

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

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### **Dual and inclusive: VET in Hamburg**

#### **Contents**

The aim of the project is to enable adolescents and young adults with disabilities and special educational needs to participate in the overall system of transition from school to work. 3 sub-projects: inclusion in vocational counselling (1); in vocational preparation (2); and in dual system (3).

## **Advantages – disadvantages**

Vocational integration is effected in companies in the primary employment market. Alongside school direction, all the main players are involved: Organisers of employment assistants, Job Centres, companies, and organisers of youth services. 3-year pilot project with funding from ESF.

## **VET schools giving partial qualifications for young people with disabilities**

### **Contents**

Three-year full-time programme leading to a vocational qualification. Training can be shortened on application. Vocational areas: commercial & administration.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **VET schools giving full qualification for young people with disabilities**

### **Contents**

Three-year training as domestic science assistant.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **Special needs schools leading to medium school qualification/vocational college eligibility**

### **Contents**

3 specialist schools available for specific disabilities: Education Centre for Hearing and Communication; Centre for Speech Disorders; and an Education Centre for Blind and Visually Impaired Students.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **Berufsbildungswerk Hamburg GmbH**

### **Contents**

Training vocations with limited requirements in the VET programmes: domestic science activities, industrial cleaning, woodworking, bakery jobs, gardening.

Central VET Unit for young people who cannot be trained in the Dual System due to the severity of their disability. The activities include commercial and technical vocations (gardening, metalworking, bicycle repair, joinery, etc.).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

Access via the Reha Unit of the Jobs Center.

Under the *Principles for VET Institutes* (unified nationwide) it includes the following: Finding vocation, special arrangements to take account of disability, close links between theory and practice (also cooperation with regular VET schools), leisure activities.

## **9.5 Relevant advice centres**

### **Job Centre for people with severe disabilities**

#### **Contents**

Counselling and placement in regular work (with social insurance coverage) (SGB II), implementation of Federation/Länder programme *Job 4000*, various integration measures and programmes especially for persons with disabilities – transition to training/employment.

#### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **Youth vocation centre**

### **Contents**

Networking unit for advice on programmes of state VET schools (see above) in VET.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **Advice and Support Centre (BUZ) for young people with physical disabilities, hearing loss and hearing impairment, vision loss and vision impairment**

### **Contents**

This centre gives advice on VET programmes at regular VET schools and transition from general education schools to vocational training, transition to training, transition after training to employment; also responsible for aids.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **9.6 Non-formal VET system: types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures**

**NETZWERK B.O: inklusiv – an organisation group (Hamburg Employment Assistance, Vocational Training Centre (bbw) and ARINET)**

### **Contents**

The project is aimed at identifying and promoting the strengths and resources of students with recognised severe disability or special education needs and existing diagnosis-based support plan, at informing them in full of their vocational opportunities, and counselling them and supporting them at the transition from school to the world of work. Content:

- Potentials and skills profile
- Internships in companies in the general employment market
- Inclusion of all participants in the process of vocational guidance
- Transition support to employment

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

The project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs via the *Federal Initiative for Inclusion*, runs until July 2016, and is then to be taken over by the Land administration. It provides up to 30 hours of counselling and support per student, on a once-only basis, via the NETZWERK B.O: inklusiv per school half-year. When this programme has been used once, no further use of it is possible, even on switching schools. The projects operates at local secondary schools [*Stadtteilschulen*], special needs schools, and

VET schools, and at Regional Counselling and Education Centres (ReBBZ).

**Supported training and education with company integration bAmBI, organiser: bbw Hamburg in cooperation with commercial training school Gewerbeschule 12**

**Contents**

Supported VET conducted directly in a company. On behalf of the Hamburg Job Centre, bbw Hamburg gives supervision & support to trainees. This is a programme for vocational rehabilitation. Participation is open to young people with special needs, with *Reha status*.

**Advantages – disadvantages**

**Recognised workshops for persons with disabilities**

**Contents**

Aim: provision of employment opportunities for people with disabilities who cannot yet get employment in the general employment market. Support for the transition to the general employment market. This is an employment-like legal relationship.

**Advantages – disadvantages**

## **Day centres**

### **Contents**

For persons with disabilities of employable age, who cannot at present meet the requirements of a workshop (e.g. a minimum of commercially viable performance, S.136 clause 2 SGB IX).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **Integration courses at Heesch school for pupils with hearing loss/impairment**

### **Contents**

Courses for migrants with hearing loss and other hearing impairments, teaching of sign language for all groups and individuals (also multipliers).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

The institution is a special private school for people with hearing loss and other hearing impairments.

## **Education and Integration Service Hamburg (BIHA)**

### **Contents**

Round table sessions with HR officers of companies, to sensitise them and conduct PR work.

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

### **Lobbying**

## ***Handicap project***

### **Contents**

German Trade Union Association (DGB) and Arbeit und Leben e.V. offer advice to companies (Industrial Relations Act).

### **Advantages – disadvantages**

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## **9.7 Obstacles in general**

The following general conclusions can be drawn:

- Hamburg has programmes within a wide range of institutions, projects and initiatives, to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the city. However, students with severe mental and physical impairments in particular are not given inclusive schooling. The Hamburg Senate has appointed a Senate Coordinator for the Equality of Persons with Disability to improve the political monitoring and lobbying function; she is currently working on an honorary basis, and has only a small staff. The Hamburg initiatives have complementary support with the use of federal funding.
- Entitlement to implementation of inclusion in regular school institutions also involves risks, firstly because not all children and adolescents are covered by it, and secondly because specialised, tailored programmes of vocational preparation etc. are dropped for the sake of *Inclusion*.
- The range of offers, focused on the transition sector from school to vocational training / the world of work – comprises specific measures for individual special needs areas, to improve the

opportunities for training. An example of that is the networking organisation B.O inklusiv<sup>3</sup>, a cooperative venture between Hamburg schools and establishments working with people with disabilities to improve their transition from school to work. At the same time, it is clear that there is not enough time available for vocational guidance. Each of the young people is allocated up to 30 hours with the aim of identifying their potentials and skills profile, organising internships in companies of the general employment market; that is all that is allocated to the process of vocational guidance, and to manage the transition into working life. This allocation of staff time seems unrealistic for comprehensive vocational guidance.

- The measures are also related to lobbying activities to raise awareness in Hamburg's companies for inclusive training and employment of people with disabilities.
- We have not been able to get detailed information on the everyday activities of the institutions listed, as we are not sufficiently close to the ground and the data in this field are not sufficient. So it is only possible to express subjective opinions on the quality and the appropriateness of the programmes. In addition, we do not know whether the concepts and curricula meet the needs of migrants. But we do know that from the perspective of young people with a migration background there are complaints in regular vocational preparation courses and in VET programmes within the Dual System that there is not enough support in structure and teaching to respond to the language, communication and specific knowledge requirements at the training companies and the VET schools. The

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<sup>3</sup>The network is a combined initiative by Hamburger Arbeitsassistentenz, the placement centre of the vocational promotion organisation [Berufsförderungswerk], the Berufsbildungswerk and ARINET, and has funding from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and from the Hamburg Senate.

establishment of didactic workshops and other support measures could help to remedy this shortcoming, and give better transition support to young migrants with physical and mental disabilities (Gag/Schroeder 2012, Meyer 2014).

## **9.8 Biographies of young migrants with special needs**

So far there are very few studies on the life situation of migrants with disabilities in Germany. A survey was conducted by Dinah Kohan (2012) with Jewish quota refugees from the former USSR who had a family member with mental disability, to learn about their life situation in Germany. An important finding of this was that these families in the former Soviet Union made intensive use of the existing support systems, and in Germany they also ask about these support services, but are prevented from using them by various obstacles. Julia Halfmann (2012) examined the life situations of migrant families with one child having complex disabilities. This study also described numerous obstacles to the use of support services. The following biographies which we collected show similar obstacles.

### **Biography: Andreia**

#### **Introduction**

Andreia was born in Hamburg in 1995. Her parents had come to Hamburg from Portugal in 1992. After Andreia's birth it was found that she had a congenital physical disability, and the parents then decided to stay in Hamburg.

#### **Family context/background**

In 1992 Andreia's parents took up the invitation by an uncle, and took a job at a restaurant in Hamburg. Andreia's brother was 3 years

old at the time. The plan was for the family to stay in Germany for a few years and then to return to Portugal. But the parents changed their plans when Andreia was born. The main reasons was that provision of the medical care which Andreia needed was much better in Germany.

Andreia lives together with her parents and brother. Both parents have jobs. Andreia's brother does not have a disability. He completed his training as a primary school teacher, and then (in summer 2014) took his Abitur (GCSE A-levels) at a vocational high school. He is currently doing casual work at a restaurant. The family has a limited-duration residence and work permit, which has repeatedly been extended since 1992.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 9.1: Education of Andreia, Germany

2002-2006	Germany	Primary school, Hamburg
2006-2012	Germany	Local school, integration class, Hamburg
since 2012	Germany	Vocational training school providing part qualification for commercial and administrative fields, focus on physical/motor development, Hamburg

2014-2015	Germany	<p>Participation in project Netzwerk B.O: / vocational counselling inclusive, Hamburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational orientation &amp; getting internship</li> <li>• Counselling at transition from school to work</li> </ul>
2014-2015	Germany	<p>Participation in project Job Seeking, Hamburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaining trainee place</li> </ul>

Andreia started primary schooling in Hamburg at the age of 7. After 4 years of primary school she switched to the local secondary school. Andreia was the only integration pupil in her class. She was treated the same as all the other pupils. The occasional help that she needed was soon a well-practised routine, and was regarded as normal. The only negative area was sports, where Andreia could not join in everything due to her disability. Where possible, the contents of the sports lessons were adapted to Andreia's specific situation. Andreia got her first General Education Qualification at the end of 10th grade.

During 10th grade she tried unsuccessfully to get a training place. During a counselling interview held by a member of the Job Centre with integration pupils in the final year of school, the idea came up that she could apply to a VET school leading to partial qualification in commercial and administrative functions, with a focus on promotion of physical/motor development. This special VET school takes its students to Mittlere Reife (Junior High School qualification) in three years. The graded necessary for access are calculated in this

type of school exclusively from the main school subjects, so Andreia met the access criteria.

Andreia's schooling ends in summer 2015. Her goals are Mittlere Reife and a training place in a company in the general employment market. Andreia regards her 3-year programme at the present VET school as positive and supportive. She emphasises in particular the situation of the peer group. She also notes that the conditions are very helpful, with a small class, direct contact with the teachers, and longer period for learning (3 years rather than 2).

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Andreia's wishes to get a commercial position in the tourism and leisure industry. For transition to vocational training, she is making use of support by the project Inclusive Network for Vocational Orientation (B.O. inklusiv). The Job Centre / Rehabilitation Centre is also giving her support from the project for Training Place Search. Andreia hopes that this will enable her to make use of all the possibilities for targeted, specific applications in her desired field of employment, and also to safeguard her transition to training by a Plan B in a broader range of commercial jobs. Andreia's great wish is to make use of her language knowledge in her job.

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Vocational orientation at the local secondary school (Grades 9 and 10) did not take account of Andreia's specific situation as an applicant. She realised during this period that she could not train for her dream job, as a stewardess. She was unable to develop realistic alternatives. The main difficulty was that the jobs which Andreia is physically able to take up (commercial area) mostly require Mittlere Reife.

The rejections which Andreia received in response to her applications were mainly due to doubts about her knowledge of German, and due to her physical disability.

During this period Andreia mainly had support from her family, but they did not have the necessary knowledge of the system. It was important for Andreia to visit the Vocational Information Centre of the Job Centre, where she obtained information and details showing that she could apply to a VET school giving partial qualification.

Andreia was not able to get the Mittlere Reife qualification at her local secondary school because she did not get the necessary average grade.

## **Summary**

In retrospect, Andreia describes the feeling of facing the system alone as the greatest difficulty. She is pleased that she has now received specific, individual support, which also makes the links between herself and her situation, with her physical disability and her skills, and the training companies in the general employment market.

## **Biography: Arthur**

### **Introduction**

Arthur was born in Yerevan / Armenia in 1995. He has had a physical disability since birth. In Armenia Arthur attended school for one year, and was educated at home for one further year.

In 2004 Arthur moved with his family to Hamburg / Germany under a programme of humanitarian aid. Up to 2012 the family lived with *tolerated* status and without a work permit.

### **Family context/background**

Arthur was 9 years old on arrival in Germany. He has an elder sister and a twin sister. Neither of the sisters have a disability. The first three homes where the family lived in Hamburg were not fully accessible for Arthur. Arthur is currently living with his parents and his twin sister in an apartment which is fully accessible for him. His elder sister has married and lives with her husband in Hamburg. The

family has had a limited-duration right of stay since 2012. Arthur's mother goes out to work. His father works as a carer for Arthur. His elder sister completed a vocational training in 2012 (as retail salesperson). His twin sister has been in vocational training since 2013 (to become a skilled medical assistant).

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 9.2: Education of Arthur, Germany

2002-2003	Armenia	Primary school, Yerevan
2006-2013	Germany	Special needs school with focus on physical/motor development, Hamburg
since 2013	Germany	Vocational preparation with focus on physical/motor development, Hamburg
2014-2015	Germany	Participation in project Projekt Netzwerk B.O: / Berufliche Orientierung inklusiv, Hamburg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational orientation and gaining internship</li> <li>• Counselling on transition school-work</li> </ul>

Arthur started primary school in Armenia at the age of 7, at the same time as his twin sister. He was exposed to mockery in the street because of his disability, and was laughed at, so it was decided that he should spend the second year of school at home. He learned with the aid of materials which his sister brought with her from

school. He was given marks by the teacher for assessment. He did not receive a school certificate.

After coming to Hamburg, Arthur started in the 4th grade of a special needs school in 2006, at the age of 11 years, that is 1,5 years after arrival in Germany. This was a special needs school with a focus on physical/motor development. His twin sister had already started in the 5th grade of a comprehensive school in 2005. Arthur originally learned German on the side, and in the course of physiotherapy. At the special needs school, he received two additional teaching hours per week of German teaching alongside normal school lessons.

Arthur has been attending vocational preparation since 2013, with a focus on physical/motor development. He completes his schooling in summer 2015. His goal is to leave school with the first certificate of general education.

The key question for Arthur is what opportunities he has after school to get started on working life. That is why in the first half of the school year 2014/15 he is participating in the project B.O. inklusiv, which also works with school students with disabilities, within the Inclusion Initiative. The main content of the counselling interviews is the opportunities open to Arthur to get started in vocational life, and the respective requirements and perspectives.

### **Wishes related to VET and employment**

Arthur wants to work in an office. He has repeatedly had to revise his dream of training as a bank or office management employee, to adapt to the reality of his situation. He hopes to get into vocational education via the rehabilitation scheme for initial integration run by the Job Centre.

He would like to continue schooling in summer 2015 and take his Middle School Certificate at the vocational school giving part qualification in commercial/administrative work, with a focus on physical/motor development. The first requirement is to get his first certificate of general education this school year. Arthur's most

important goal is to get into a job where he can do useful and meaningful work which he can cope with well in terms of his health.

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

Arthur has had 7 major operations in the last 7 years. During his periods in hospital and rehabilitation, Arthur was taught by the HUK (home and hospital teaching service). That ensured a certain amount of continuity in his schooling. But he had to put a great deal of energy, attention and time into rehabilitation and in new learning of movements, in mobilisation and handling his aids, as needed to increase his independence. That meant he missed a lot of schooling.

Arthur currently has limited-duration right to stay. It needs to be extended at an early stage beyond the period of a possible VET programme by the Job Centre, before it can approve his participation. Arthur will receive a letter from the Agency to this effect as soon as a report has been completed, showing what programme the Job Centre can offer Arthur.

### **Summary**

In order to make better use of his school knowledge and skills, Arthur is currently applying via the Education Authority for a note taker (integration assistant). He hopes that the motor assistance which that would give would enable him to put more concentration into the contents of his education, so that he could develop his intellectual skills better.

## **Biography: Karim**

### **Introduction**

Young refugees with disabilities have particular obstacles to overcome. Karim was born in Chechnya in 1990 and, according to his own indications, attended school there, but with repeated interruptions. He suffers from hemiparesis (loss of movement of one arm and

one leg) following brain damage in early childhood. Medical reports also reach the conclusion that he has a learning impairment. Karim fled with his mother to Germany in 2004, at the age of 14 years, and submitted a claim for asylum in Hamburg. It was rejected six months later, and the procedure was finally terminated. Karim then received *tolerated* status. A follow-up application was made in May 2010. After a settlement proposal by the Foreigners' Authority in autumn 2013, the asylum application was withdrawn, and Karim was granted a residence permit.

### **Family context/background**

Karim's father is dead, and the young man lives with his mother in Hamburg; she is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and is receiving therapy for this. Since 2011 she has also received integration support in the form of personal assistance for people with mental illnesses.

### **Educational and employment biography**

Table 9.3: Education of Karim, Germany

1997-2004	Chechnya	Irregular school attendance
2005-2009	Germany	School attendance: preparatory years for migrants, Hamburg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No certificate of completion</li> </ul>
2008-2010	Germany	Participation in project <i>Aquaba for Refugees</i> , basis & woge e. V.
2011-2013	Germany	Participation in project <i>Opportunities for Refugees</i> , basis & woge e.V., Hamburg

2011-present	Germany	Accepted in Hamburg <i>Arbeitsassistenzen</i> ; Participation in workshop; Various programmes and internships in different vocational fields.
12/2013	Germany	Full-time employment as salesman in an electric goods retailer, Hamburg

Karim's health impairment was at the centre of consultation for inclusion in the AQUABA project. He could not *simply* be included in one of the available follow-up programmes, due to his physical disability and cognitive impairment. It quickly became apparent that Karim needed increased pedagogical support for special needs. For example, at the time he was also in medical treatment. But Karim himself saw no need for support programmes – that meant he repeatedly experience frustration when it was not possible to realise his plans. For example, he could not understand for a long time why, despite all his personal efforts, he was unable to find an internship position in the IT sector.

At the time Karim had *tolerated* status, so he was not eligible for many benefit programmes of the Social Code (SGB III). After a great many phone calls with the responsible Federal Employment Agency, the AQUABA project managed to get an expert assessment in the Department for Rehabilitation of the Employment Agency at the beginning of 2009. The outcome of the assessment interview was that he was offered initial rehabilitation in the vocational training sector by a workshop for people with disabilities. That is the only rehabilitation course in which a person with tolerated status can participate, provided that the person has a work permit. In March 2009 an application was made for a work permit, and Karim fulfilled the requirements for granting of *global approval*. But the application was rejected by the Central Registration Office on the grounds that he had no passport and he was accused of not cooperating to obtain one.

Karim then initially lost courage to continue working on his vocational perspectives. The term *Workshop for people with disabilities* had such negative connotations for him that it was impossible to talk to him about it. He had once taken a look at one of these workshops together with his class teacher, and that really deterred him. It took a great many counselling sessions to motivate him again so that he could take a constructive approach to his education and training situation despite all the difficulties. Like Karim, the project staff also believed that a place in a workshop of this kind would not be the right programme for him. It was first of all necessary to deal with the negative memories of the visit to a workshop in order to show alternatives. That was the subject of counselling for nearly a year. Karim was also given encouragement during this period to accept permanent support. In April 2010 an application was therefore made for integration support (pedagogical support for persons with disabilities in their own accommodation). However, after initially positive signals this was also rejected, because he was still living with his mother in her flat, and thus had no accommodation of his own. An application was then made to the responsible Youth Department for out-patient individual support, and that was approved in July 2010; the support started in August 2010.

In parallel to that, Karim also contacted Hamburg Employment Support [Hamburger Arbeitsassistenz (HAA)] together with the project staff; that is a monitoring service for vocational integration of persons with disabilities. The HAA provides programmes such as *Courses in lieu of workshops*, which give young people the opportunity to do work-related training on condition that they are allocated to a workshop by the Rehabilitation Office of the Employment Agency. This comprises internships with full pedagogical support, with the aim of getting the young person into employment.

Karim's wish *simply to work* was accepted for the first time. He met with further understanding for his rejection of a workshop place, and was given concrete alternatives. Talks were held with the Employment Agency again, to secure a programme of this kind provided that he could obtain a work permit. The Employment

Agency agreed, and so in October 2010 an application was made for a work permit again. This was approved by the Foreigners Authority in January 2011 after lengthy *negotiations* – now with the support of the follow-up project *Opportunities for refugees*. Karim was then able to start at HAA in February 2011. He completed a number of internships in the course of this programme, and in 2012 he got a job offer from a large department store chain. Unfortunately, the offer then had to be withdrawn, because at the time the top management decided to cut jobs. That resulted in great frustration for Karim. It took many more discussions to persuade him to stay on the ball.

He took further internships, and most recently in 2013 he started an internship with an electrical equipment retailer. The employers there were delighted with Karim's commitment, and offered him first a limited-term job, and then a job without a specific time limit. In parallel to all that, Karim was faced with his uncertain and precarious status of stay, which was a major burden for him. In some cases it was necessary to conduct discussions lasting several hours in order to provide appropriate support, and to give him the sense of security that he needed. At the end of 2012 the supporting legal advice department then also submitted another application for a residence permit, in addition to the asylum follow-up application. It was rejected by the Foreigners Authority. After an unsuccessful appeal, legal action was taken at the Administrative Court. In the course of this legal action, the Foreigners Authority then offered a compromise settlement – a residence permit on the grounds of his good integration.

### **What legal (or other) difficulties did she/he have to face?**

One of the major obstacles was access to the support measure of the Rehabilitation Department, linked with granting of a work permit. The only possibility that Karim had with his tolerated status was for him to get funding via a workshop offer. He was subject to the restriction that under the social legislation SGB III he had no claim to training benefits. Despite this, Karim decided to take up this

training opportunity even without entitlement to benefits. No further funding opportunities were available at that time, because they were excluded under *tolerated* status. Another particular obstacle was that every three months he had to submit his extension to the Rehabilitation Department in order to continue the programme. It was the same situation with the Office which issues his disability ID. The validity of the documents is always dependent on the duration of *tolerated* status.

After reaching the age of 21 years, Karim was no longer eligible for support from the Youth Office. An application for support was rejected again, once more on the grounds that he did not live in his own flat. The appeal procedure lasted nearly 1,5 years and finally ended in 2013 with approval of the support.

## **Summary**

This educational and vocational career gives an insight into the life situation where, alongside the restrictions under foreigners' law, the consequences of disability present an even greater challenge. A programme for special needs should have been launched much earlier. The relevant schools and departments are not sufficiently prepared for linking together vocational rehabilitation, lifelong learning and vocational learning, or for providing further support and follow-up measures. Recognition and proper treatment of a given form of disability is a problem in practical work with school students.

## **9.9 Conclusions**

### **Individual – only a few have precise life situation analyses**

The insights into the educational careers of the migrants responding here and the interviews with the individual experts in the field give the impression that the families migrating to Germany are hoping for more from participation of their children/adolescents in the

educational programmes available here than seems possible in their countries of origin.

The examples of educational biographies presented here also show that the young people (and their families) are dependent particularly at the transition from school to work on support from mentors of the advisory services, because in many cases they do not have enough knowledge of the system to understand the complicated rules of German social legislation which are applicable in various legal areas. Access to the services set out in social legislation is at the interface between legislation covering right of stay, and legislation applicable to persons with disabilities. That leads to exclusion of migrants with disabilities from social services as a result of their specific situation of right to stay, duration of stay, and type of services (cf. Gag/Schroeder 2012, Gag/Voges 2014):

- Migrant families mostly have to pay for use of special family support services for households where there are children with disabilities (group offers, target-oriented individual services).
- Cost coverage of hearing aids, visual and mobility aids, etc., is not secured in all circumstances of right to stay.
- Persons with disability having foreign nationality are in some cases not eligible for employment at a workshop for people with disabilities.
- Young migrants with disabilities are also excluded from the benefits under SGB VIII (Child and Youth Support), where they do not have the conditions for normal stay in Germany (p.6 clause 2 SGB VIII).
- Entitlement problems for help in getting appropriate school education (S. 54 SGB XII), for example daycare centres for young people with disabilities, therapeutic programmes for children, adolescents and young adults with physical, mental or psychological impairments.

- There may also be obstacles in access to benefits under SGB III for participation of persons with disabilities in working life, as they are in some cases subject to the general rules of SGB III (S.59 SGB III).

As explained, there are major social exclusions in the interaction of right of stay and disability, and these will in future have to be examined in more detail. We therefore wish to have a legal expert report drawn up, giving a detailed overview of legal entitlements and exclusion mechanisms, and also helping to raise public awareness of social justice with relation to definition and interpretation of the terms *legal* and *customary* stay, in order to get the necessary reforms under way.

### **Institutional – more outstanding questions than insights**

Education support workers are reporting that students lose their *integration status* (unless they have a Disability ID Card) particularly on transition from general education schools (where pupils with a migration background in Hamburg have gone through the school system) to vocational training or further qualification; that integration status gives the pupil intensive support within regular school classes, and gives them more opportunities for learning times, and the staffing allocated to them is better; such integration pupils are in the minority. Opening up the VET schools for inclusion also involves a lot of stress, because the pupils with disabilities not only have to cope with their individual disabilities (learning pace, obstacles from operations and their consequences, language problems), but also have a lot of additional problems to deal with, which are everyday matters for other pupils there.

On transition to working life, they also have to face the traditional mechanisms and decision making processes of the administrative bodies in testing of their language skills and their general readiness for working life. The availability of staffing resources is

also dependent on the expert reports and on the VET format. If young migrants with special needs enter the regular Dual System after completing their general school education in inclusive learning conditions (with individual learning support), i.e. they are trained in a company, they have to cope with considerable competitive disadvantages, because the VET school classes are mostly large and in some cases the spatial conditions there are not compatible with their physical and health needs. At present there is no financially secure basis for models designed for integration of young people with disabilities in the general Hamburg employment market with the aid of learning support staff; current funding comes from the Federation and from the ESF.

Empirical studies (Pieper & Haji Mohammadi 2013) show that there is little inclination on the part of companies *to engage in regular employment of people with severe disabilities* (Pieper 2012, p.9). They consider that these people are more often sick, that they cannot be deployed in a flexible way, that it is not possible to terminate their employment, and that they generate prejudice among other employees. There is also criticism in professional circles (Kauczor 2004) of the fact that there are two separate structures providing support to migrants and to people with disabilities, not taking sufficient account of the overlap area between migration and disability – the programmes for migrants (e.g. migrant social counselling) on the one hand, and support for people with disabilities on the other hand. The professionals in the first area are generally not trained to deal with questions relating to disability, while professionals in the second area are not familiar with matters relating to migration.

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## 10. Conclusions – challenges and hurdles from a European perspective

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What did we learn from the analyses of biographies and comparison of VET systems in the partner countries?

The biographies show us the following common characteristics:

- The present case studies show that the educational and working biographies examined are already characterized by a high level of mobility. This refers to young members of vulnerable groups and/or in the context of family background: "late arrivals", unaccompanied minors or separated children, refugees and asylum seekers, migrants with special needs, migrants and children left behind.
- Growing up, learning and working takes place at different locations and in different countries. Family relationships are widespread, and dispersed and are in many cases located in different countries (transnational).
- It is evident from the biographies that social relationships (family relationships and other stable social links) have a substantial influence on the course of migration, education and

working life. This influence can be both positive and negative. Family ties, demonstrate among other things that the economic pressure of making a financial contribution to the family is often the initial trigger for migration and can be the driving force for subsequent onward migration within transnational networks.

- In spite of bureaucratic and legal barriers and difficult living conditions subgroups of vulnerables are able to develop their capabilities and take part in education and vocational training if they are supported by specialised services.
- Vulnerable groups are not homogeneous, they have heterogeneous conditions and problems and different requirements.
- Many of them have problems dealing with "everyday life".
- Interruptions in the course of education and/or insufficient education in their country of origin.

The table below illustrates the differing characteristics and legal frameworks of the VET systems in each partner country. Legal or pedagogical barriers have to be overcome in order to ensure participation of vulnerable groups in VET. In addition, it is crucial to consider whether the VET systems are exclusively school-based or if there are other actors at the workplace involved i.e. education providers in companies. When the responsibility for vocational training is divided amongst several actors individual vulnerable students may fall out of the system. Therefore, different approaches and strategies are required in order to stimulate the participation of vulnerable groups in the various training settings.

Table 10.1: Comparing VET systems in the partners countries – with regard to the participation of vulnerable groups

	What characteristics of the VET-systems?	What kind of legal framework?	What kind of pedagogical limitations (ability of teachers, teachers' framework, educational programme etc.)?
Finland	National policy; School-based	Access to basic educational, vocational institutions, same social benefit	Preparatory programmes are too short; needs to enable “late arrivals” to get access in VET; lack of understanding about life conditions and needs of the target group.
Ireland	33 Regional vocational education, committees; School-based	Type and duration of legal status determined the level of funding	Lack of language support, understanding immigration system and process, VET guidance
Germany	16 federal state, autonomy; School-based and apprenticeship	Problem in getting access to work permit, language courses, dual system and all kinds of VET opportunities	Formal and non-formal system is often separated; school management is not qualified, no recognition of informal competencies

Turkey	National policy, centralize, but significant regional differences (urban and rural areas); School-based	No legal restrictions for legal migrants to access school- and VET system	No specific educational (VET) policy for vulnerable groups (migrants' children, people with disabilities etc.)
Bulgaria	National policy, centralized; School-based	No legal restrictions	No special attention of problems which vulnerable groups have which hinders the transitions within the country

What kind of common patterns did we find?

- In some of the partner countries we found that the access to VET systems is more or less easy whereas in other countries there are legal obstacles in terms of access to education and employment.
- All partner countries identified problems relating to risks of exclusion. One of the central reasons for the existence of numerous exclusion mechanisms is the orientation of vocational education systems in general. Most are oriented towards the legal and educational standards which have become fixed in a national context resulting in the creation of barriers which members of vulnerable groups encounter when they enter the respective country system. These barriers often prevent the vulnerable groups from further developing their educational and working careers.

- As lateral entrants, they become outsiders because the educational programs and formats tend to be oriented towards homogeneous groups and because, as a rule, they are explicitly tailored to the requirements and normative rules of the labour markets of the respective host countries.
- Analysis of the VET systems of the partner countries confirmed that there are problems regarding the transition from school to vocation or employment. During the transition process, mechanisms of exclusion often cumulate and the target group is at risk of falling out of the system / getting lost.
- VET systems are not adequately equipped to facilitate access for lateral entrants. Problems were identified in relation to the learning of the national language the mother tongue, basic education, social services, managing of the transition in VET, studying and employment.
- In some countries a holistic approach is not being taken in relation to the problems and experiences of vulnerable groups. Problems experienced by vulnerable groups include issues relating to health, language, intercultural learning, networking and links between schools and the world of work, domestic circumstances and the separation of families.
- There is a lack of understanding of the rights, entitlements and other needs of vulnerable groups by education providers, teachers, counsellors.
- Financial supports and access to funding for vulnerable groups differ in each partner country. The achievement of a VET qualification can be dependent upon whether the individual is continually exposed to poverty or financially secure. However financial security does not always ensure success. The example of the 'children left behind' shows that they have other risks and needs despite the financial security provided by their

migrant parents. On a structural level, different financial conditions were identified in relation to the facilities of the various VET systems (quality of programmes, scope of curricular, funding to offer support for special needs).

## **Part IV**

# **Diversity of projects and approaches**

## 11. Study visits with on-site discussion – a transnational trip to VET estab- lishments in Europe

MAREN GAG

### **11.1 Introduction**

The main purpose of the European programme on Lifelong Learning is exchange of ideas on innovative concepts and approaches. The sub-programme Leonardo da Vinci (Partnerships) sets up VET co-operation projects, giving the players and teachers from various European countries a platform to reflect on their own practice and to learn from partners from other European countries. The idea is to obtain results which can be used for subsequent dissemination and further application. Specifically for institutions which so far have little experience in European cooperation, the programme is an excellent way of getting started on examination of their own field of work in a wider context. Special attention was given to finding out about relevant institutions in the various partner countries and exchanging good-practice models, as the work of TransVet is focused on inclusion/exclusion of vulnerable groups in vocational training and education and in the employment market. Thus the project gave the conditions to underscore analysis of the VET systems in the partner countries and get more detailed information at first hand. The visits helped to understand better the specifics of educational

and employment biographies of members of vulnerable groups and to identify mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion, and to compare them between the partner countries.<sup>1</sup>

## 11.2 Various visits to European partner countries

In accordance with these guidelines, the schedule of the TransVet partnership included a series of study visits with conduct of partner workshops. The focus was on visiting and practical exchanges with various players of VET institutions that were either involved in the project as partners, or belonged to the respective local cooperation structures in the partner regions.

### Finland

A partner meeting in Finland focused in detail on the Finnish partner institution itself; it comprised an interesting visit programme and practical exchanges with various teachers and students, giving in-depth insights. The partnership was also able to sit in on lessons conducted at the VET centre. An authentic aspect of this was that the project partners, in tandem with the students from migration backgrounds, acquired their first knowledge of the Finnish language in the process.

*Vaasan ammattiopisto (VAO) – Vasa yrkesinstitut (VYI) is a bilingual vocational institute owned by the city of Vaasa. The institute offers initial vocational upper secondary education (EQF level 4) and pre-vocational programmes. It is the task of the Vocational Institute to secure labour requirements and to act as a spearhead in safeguarding regional development in the fields it represents. There are about 2000 students and 270 members of staff in the institute. The two main areas of education are: technology and services education (includes business and communication, care*

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<sup>1</sup>See Country reports of Partner Countries in Section III of this book.

*and service, hotel and catering, beauty, media and security). The language of instruction is Finnish, Swedish and English. The institute offers 18 basic qualifications, of which eight are taught also in Swedish and one programme is in English. A study programme takes 3 years and includes at least 6 months of on-the-job learning. The region of Vaasa is international. There are plenty of international companies especially within technology (energy). Vaasa hosts the largest energy cluster in Northern Europe. The citizens of Vaasa represent 117 nationalities and 7 % are foreigners. 68% of the population are Finnish-speaking, 25% are Swedish-speaking and 7% speak other languages. This sets challenges but also possibilities to the education, the staff and the students. The international activities are lively within the institute, the aim being future employees that manage in the international labour market and in an international society.*

*Student welfare services play an important part of the institute. The aim is to prevent dropouts and to give all students, regardless of their background, the possibility to graduate and get a job. Many students at Vaasa Vocational Institute have special needs and therefore special education also plays an important role within the institute. There is an increasing number of students with migrant background and the institute is continuously trying to develop support to meet their needs.*

The partners were enthusiastic about the conditions with excellent facilities and state funding of this VET institution – particularly in view of the inequality of educational systems and their facilities within the European member states. We were also very impressed by the fact that Vaasa sends trainees out into the wide world. VAO has been conducting cooperation projects with a large number of countries both inside and outside of the European Union (e.g. Japan), in order to promote mobility and ensure that the trainees get transnational vocational experience. We were able to see for ourselves the transnational cooperation with various other countries, in the context of a meal prepared and served by the trainees, with Finnish specialities, to which VAO invited the colleagues from TransVet and

from other transnational cooperation projects. That gave the partners an opportunity for wider transnational exchanges on questions of vocational integration. At the same time, such practical projects give the trainees good preparation for *real life* in an everyday working environment.

We found high standards in terms of considering vulnerable groups in the context of our project subject, because VAO took the trouble to ensure that the context and educational concepts were both culturally sensitive and disability sensitive. At the same time, the partners were given an impression of the challenges faced by migrants who have just come to the country, and have to deal with two foreign languages, because people in the Vaasa region use both Finnish and Swedish on an equal basis. It is reasonable to assume that this fact increases the requirements for integrative programmes. We were able to visit further institutions in Vaasa, and convince ourselves that VAO networks very well with other institutions in the city, and that cooperation for example with the authorities of the municipality of Vaasa is essential. We also found in this context that, as VAO itself indicates, there are vulnerable groups (persons with mental disabilities, migrants with a very low educational baseline who are already young adults when they come to Finland and enter the educational system); their level of learning constitutes a major barrier to entry programmes and approaches at VAO, preventing them from getting a vocational qualification.<sup>2</sup> Unlike systems such as the dual VET system in Germany, the whole of the programme is conducted at the VET college. VAO has a large number of workshops for various professions, in order to provide training in practical skills. It also has a restaurant which is open to the population of Vaasa, providing opportunities for trainees in this area to apply the skills they have acquired in a practical and realistic situation.

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. contribution by Basendowski included in this book.

## Ireland

The site visit in Cork was to the City North College of Further Education (City North College), part of the Terence MacSwiney Community College campus.

*The City North College was founded in 2002 in response to the changing needs of the community in which it is located. The college is located in Hollyhill, Knocknaheeny – one of the most disadvantaged areas in Cork City. The college operates an open enrolment policy welcoming all comers and has hosted other organisations specifically targeted at young adults on campus including Youth Reach and Ógra to encourage adults and early school leavers to return to education.*

*The college offers Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) awarded courses. There are 11 courses in total offered by City North College with seven full-time courses and four part-time courses including care for the elderly, warehousing, retail skills and hairdressing. The courses are generally targeted at practical skills which provide the greatest employment opportunities and several offer work experience as part of the course. Several of the courses are linked in with the University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) and students who attain high grades in their course will be able to apply for places in relevant UCC and CIT courses. One example that was given at the site visit was the Community Healthcare Assistance (QQI Level 5) course. The course is open to students who have completed their Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate applied or a relevant QQI Level 4 course. For applicants over 21, any relevant work experience they have had may be taken into consideration in lieu of academic qualifications. It was noted that this was important for immigrants who may not have a recognised qualification from their home country but had significant work experience and who wished to work in the same sector in Ireland. The course is linked with Level 6, 7 and 8 courses in UCC, CIT and College of Commerce for those who wish to progress to further education but there are also employment opportunities available. The City North College have developed relationships with care organisations who give*

*presentations to the college students about employment opportunities in the area.*

The day of the site visit we were able to speak with several students of immigrant backgrounds who were enrolled in courses in City North College. For the five students we spoke with, they were focussed on getting the best education possible and finding work or progressing in their careers. None of them had completed their Leaving Certificates in Ireland and would otherwise not have been able to progress to further education or progress to the career path of their choice. It was sometimes difficult but all of the students we spoke with were delighted to be enrolled in the college and felt a sense of community and achievement from their participation.

The coordinator of the Further Education courses was able to give us a guided tour of the facilities which included two hairdressing salons. He added that the majority of their students were from various disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and they had an open door policy. They had a high number of immigrants who had come through their courses and they tried to facilitate them as much as possible. The entry requirement of allowing work experience in lieu of specific academic achievements was something that had benefitted many of the migrant students. He found that a major initial barrier for migrants was passing a language test before being able to enrol in the course – a certain standard of English would be required to complete all of the courses. The language test requirements were not overly onerous - Hollyhill has historically had a low rate of literacy and post-primary Irish national students may not be of a reading age matching their chronological age. Applicants who failed this test were directed to English language service providers and were able to reapply for the Cork City North course again in the next round of enrolment. He thought that the low attrition and failure rates for migrants who enrolled on their courses supported the language requirement. The college as an integrated educational centre with programmes both in general education and VET gives benefits, but also involves risks – we had the impression that interface management works better at the transition from general education to VET.

In addition, staying at one location also involves the risk that the students will miss out on socialising with a wide range of people – they will remain in their present structures, some of which are characterised by poverty, and in their parental homes, which sometimes lack affinity to education. We also learned that some of the students come from Traveller families, which have been present in this part of town for a long time. Some of the partners examined this issue in more detail, since we had learned that this ethnic minority is an extremely marginalised group in Ireland and there is repeated talk of an *explosive social situation* in co-existence between the Irish majority population and this ethnic group. The two German partners were very interested in finding out how far the Travellers participate in education, what exclusion mechanisms exist, and what the social problems are. Together with the Irish partner, the two German partners had a meeting with a staff member of the *Traveller Visibility Group* in Cork, mainly focusing on the debate on integration of this group in Ireland as a whole. The insights obtained there were supplemented by a visit to experts in Rathkeale, a county town in the south-west of Ireland where the Travellers now constitute the majority of the residents. The results of these two visits are documented in a separate article.<sup>3</sup>

## Germany

The Hamburg Institute of VET (Hamburger Institut für Berufliche Bildung - HIBB) is an independent state-run organisation of the Hamburg Schools and VET Ministry, and is responsible for all vocational colleges in Hamburg. The individual vocational colleges are spread over the whole of the city, but separated by vocations. The Partnership visited one of these schools because it has links with the Hamburg networks for vocational integration of refugees, and this target group, considered one of the vulnerable groups, examined by

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<sup>3</sup>See contribution by Gag, The Travellers in Ireland – Meeting with a particularly vulnerable group, in this book.

one of the German TransVet partners with respect to its social and vocational participation.<sup>4</sup>

*The Hamburg State VET College for Building (**Staatliche Gewerbe-schule Bautechnik Hamburg (G19)**) is one of more than 40 state vocational colleges in Hamburg, with about 1,200 full-time and part-time students and 55 teaching staff. The school programme goes from vocational preparation to vocational college (Berufsschule) and technical college, to two technical schools each of which covers different contents.*

*Basically the G19 is the training school for the building industry, within the dual VET system. The building industry comprises the classic skills of the three areas civil engineering (road building, asphalt, pipes and conduits, canals); construction (concrete & reinforced concrete, brickwork); and interior construction (plasterboard, heat and sound insulation, tiling, stucco). G19 also gives instruction in other craft trades relevant to building, such as glazing, cleaning, technical drawing, geomatics, surveying, etc. Alongside their vocational qualification, students can also earn a junior high school leaving certificate provided that they achieve sufficiently high grades. The vocational preparation section is divided into two areas:*

1. *VET preparation within the dual system ("AV-dual"). AV-dual recruits its students from two cooperating schools in Billstedt/Horn and Wilhelmsburg. The aim is to support the students in the eleventh grade of school in transition to training.*
2. *The preparation courses for migrants (VJ-M) are aimed at young people whose mother tongue is not German, and who have come to Hamburg at the age of 15 to 18 years, so they are still subject to compulsory school education. The VJ-M classes are designed to teach the students enough German language in a period of two years so that they can also enter the employment and training market, or further VET programmes.*

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<sup>4</sup>See Country report GERMANY – Focus: refugees and asylum seekers in this book.

*Both areas of vocational preparation enable students to get a first general school leaving certificate.*

*Between VET preparation and dual vocational training there is another school form entitled Vocational Qualification (BQ). It takes students who have not found entry to the dual vocational training system, and takes them on at G19 in cooperation with the VET centre for the first year of training; the aim is to arrange dual training access for them in the course of the year.*

*The Technical College (Fachoberschule) is the link between dual training and the Technical College. Students who have completed their training and obtained junior high school certificate can gain the necessary skills here to start studying for admission to Technical College.*

*The two vocational schools (Fachschulen) provide knowledge in building and environmental engineering. They mostly prepare adult students who have completed their vocational training and have several years of work experience and at least junior high school certificate to take up subsequent employment in middle management of their respective sector. The admission qualification for Technical College can also be obtained at both of these vocational schools.*

Although G19 is a sector-specific VET college, its VET courses provide contents related to transition to all vocational sectors. The TransVet partnership was able to see very well that the transition system in Germany with its various types of course is based both in the schools and with external partners outside the schools. It includes important partners who belong to other institutions and cooperate with G19, e.g. the Youth Migration Services, and programmes of the refugee networks, in order to provide assistance in social matters and to secure links with onward qualification and training; the adult education institute (Volkshochschule) provides language support for lateral entrants, to make up for the shortage of teaching staff with skills in German as a second language. The overall picture was completed for the partners by a visit to the partner *why not?* – an international church community café aimed at supporting refugees and asylum seekers; and KAROLA e.V., a coun-

selling institute that provides basic education courses for Roma girls and women. Both of these institutions operate programmes designed for the life situations of extremely marginalised groups, making an effort to arrange catch-up opportunities for refugees and Roma, in VET and employment. The TransVet partners were able to see how many Hamburg institutions are networked with one another, ensuring exchanges between the experts, and having a positive influence on the development of appropriate quality standards. The visit to practical institutions also showed the impact of such networking on sensitisation of regular state institutions and others to improve the participation of vulnerable groups.

## **Turkey**

Two study trips were made to Turkey, enabling the partnership to find out about two different school types. The first meeting with teaching staff and management was held in Antalya in a sector-specific VET centre for the tourism industry:

### ***Antalya Muratpaşa Vocational and Technical School***

*Antalya Muratpaşa Vocational and Technical School was established depending on the Ministry of Education General Directorate of Trade and Tourism Education to supply qualified employees for tourism and educate students for the university in 1984.*

*The education lasts for 4 years in the Hospitality and Tourism School. Speaking a foreign language is very important in the Hospitality and Tourism School, because tourism organizations need qualified employees who can speak foreign languages. Therefore, the school is an education institution which educates multilingual (English, German, Russian) and qualified employees and prepares them for the university and business life. The first foreign language is English. The students may choose a second foreign language from the 10th class. In the 9th class the students are educated in the different fields and they are educated in the fields they prefer after 11th class.*

*The students who are graduated from primary school are accepted to school if they can be successful in the central exam which is done*

*for choosing and placing the students in high school. Also, the Hospitality and Tourism School makes an interview with the students. The interview committee consists of the school administrators, vocational class teachers, Turkish and literature teachers, guiding teachers, a doctor and a representative of the sector. In this exam it is evaluated if the students have got a problem which prevents them from working in the tourism sector or if they are suitable for the tourism sector.*

*There are 23 classrooms in the school building, 9 of these classrooms are for practice, one of them is for computer courses and the rest of them are for the theoretical courses. Besides, there are a library, an auditorium, volleyball, basketball, football and tennis courts and an indoor sports hall. There are 64 teachers (21 vocational, 38 culture and 2 guiding teachers and 4 school administrators) in the school. 36 of the teachers are female (one administrator) and 28 of the teachers (3 administrators) are male.*

*The number of the female students is 198, that of male students is 368 and in total there are 574 students in the school. Although it is a vocational school, 70% of the graduated students win the university entrance exam. The number of the students for per student is 9.59. There are two main departments in the school:*

1. Food and Beverage Services
  - a) Service
  - b) Kitchen branches
2. Hospitality and Travel Services
  - a) Front desk
  - b) Operation
  - c) Floor services

*The students who choose their fields are educated in their branches after 11th class. The students go on a period of training (workplace skill training) in Antalya two times in the 10th and 11th class between May and October. The graduated students may both*

*work in the tourism institutions and continue their university education at the same time (There are also students who work part-time and continue their university education). The students are insured during the period of training and paid for the 2/3 of the minimum wage. Since 1986 there is a Practice Hotel which belongs to the school with 96 rooms, 200 beds, 2 restaurants, 4 meeting halls, 1 open swimming pool, mini football pitch and a tennis court. Central Hospitality and Tourism Vocational High School is a public school which depends on the Ministry of Education.*<sup>5</sup>

Training in this sector is important for the Antalya/Alanya region, because there are many employment opportunities available in view of its highly developed tourism industry, which means there is strong demand for skilled people. The partners were impressed by the situation at this state school, which is simultaneously linked with a hotel operation that not only offers inexpensive accommodation, but also provides a realistic working environment for students. We were surprised at the fact that the school had exclusively Turkish students, although we had been informed that there are many Russian immigrants who have settled in Antalya. When we asked about this we were informed that special importance is attached to the training of Russian immigrants because there are a large number of Russian speaking tourists who come to the region and it is important to give them good service. For this reason, migrants from the states of the Russian Federation receive training in the tourism sector – that training is held in Russian, and is funded by private investments. Admission there is also possible for children of bi-national families (Turkish/Russian), because many of them do not have sufficient knowledge of the Turkish language to gain access to the Turkish VET system. The following school, which is linked into TransVet as a cooperation partner of the Turkish project partner,

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<sup>5</sup>See [http://mebk12.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/07/19/969917/index.html?CHK=23a14207e69997c15655a6219c75f47d\unhbox\voidb@x\bgroup\let\unhbox\voidb@x\setbox@tempboxa\hbox{I\global\mathchardef\accent@spacefactor\spacefactor}\accent95I\egroup\spacefactor\accent@spacefactorndirilmeli tarihi:17.02.2015.](http://mebk12.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/07/19/969917/index.html?CHK=23a14207e69997c15655a6219c75f47d\unhbox\voidb@x\bgroup\let\unhbox\voidb@x\setbox@tempboxa\hbox{I\global\mathchardef\accent@spacefactor\spacefactor}\accent95I\egroup\spacefactor\accent@spacefactorndirilmeli tarihi:17.02.2015.)

is based in Alanya in the Province of Antalya, and was contacted in the framework of a later study visit.

### ***Rifat Azakoğlu Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi***

*It was founded in Alanya as a school for girls in 1962. In 1964, it was turned into an institution just for girls. In the 1990-1991 training and education period, with the opening of the Tourism Department, it started to be named "Tourism Anatolian Vocational School" and "Vocational School for Girls". At that time, there was the Travel Agencies Department. Later, in the training and education period of 1992-1993, the Office Management and Secretariat Department was added. In the 1994-1995 training and education period, the Confection Department, which is mostly based on foreign language education, was opened and the school name changed to "Anatolian Vocational School" and "Vocational School for Girls" was amended with the approval of the ministry. In the training and education period of 1997-1998, the Industry of Tourism and Services Department, which has mostly English language education, was added. Following transformation of the name to Anatolian Vocational School and Vocational School for Girls, Travel Agencies, the departments of Office Management and Services began to accept male students. The school consists of five departments as follows: Anatolian Vocational School, Vocational School for Girls, Formal Education, Face to Face Open School and Kindergarten Teacher Education School. Each section of the school provides education in different areas. Accordingly,*

- *The Anatolian Vocational School provides training and education in the field of Accommodation and Travel Services (operations and front office), Food and Beverage Services (service and kitchen), Entertainment Services (animator and children animator), Child Development and Education (early childhood and special education).*
- *The Vocational School for Girls provides training and education in the field of Craft Technology (decorative, hand and machine embroidery), Beauty Services, Apparel Manufacturing*

*Technology (modelling of women's clothes), Food and Beverage Services (service and pastry), Child Development and Education (early childhood and special education), patients and elderly care.*

- *The Formal Education unit provides training and education in the field of hand and machinery embroidery.*
- *The Face to Face Open School provides training and education in the field of early childhood education and modelling of women's clothes.<sup>6</sup>*
- *The Kindergarten Teacher Education School provides training and education in the field of practical education for the students who will become kindergarten teachers.*

*The school was named "Rifat Azakoğlu Vocational and Technical Anatolian School" in the education and training period of 2014-2015. Starting from this period, the name of "Anatolian Vocational School for Girls" has been removed from the name of the school and 9th grade students have started co-education. After that, all the students are accepted on the basis of their score in the exam.*

*The school has 1,550 students, which comprise of 1,175 female and 365 male students. There are 103 teachers, of which 67 are female and 36 male. The school management consists of a director and 7 assistant directors (7 male, 1 female). There are 28 classrooms, a science lab, a conference room, a library, 5 workshops, 2 computer labs in the school. Besides, for the sport activities and sport lessons, there are playgrounds, one for volleyball and one for basketball.*

*When some of the graduate students have employment opportunities just after graduation from the school, the others continue their higher education.*

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<sup>6</sup>To minimize the number of school dropouts, school students have the option of taking exams without attending the lessons (Open School). But if students aim to get certain qualifications (e.g. in kindergarten teaching), they have to complete some practical courses at the vocational school (Face to Face Open School).

*In the training and education period of 2014-2015, the number of students who finished the school successfully has been 315 students. 183 of them have started studies, 41 of these at university and 142 in a two-year technical school programme. 132 students have applied for jobs in the employment market.*

Following a welcome by the whole of the school management team, we were taken on a guided tour of the school and visited various workshops where practical teaching was going on. In view of the high proportion of female students, courses were limited mainly to skills that are associated with the traditional role of women (embroidery, sewing, hairdressing, cooking, childcare). However, the increasing proportion of male students is putting other subjects more in focus. Boys tend to prefer fields of activity such as tourism or cooking. We also found that *starting a business* is included in the curriculum, because self-employment in one's own micro-company is a very important factor in the region. A meal prepared for this visit was served to us by the students, giving the partners an opportunity to ask further questions and to exchange ideas with the teaching staff. We learned in the course of the visit and exchange that the curriculum is to be adapted as the school develops, and will in future for example include the subject of Care, because there is growing demand for it in the employment market here. We were told that these changes had already been applied for with the responsible ministry, but that the approval procedures were very long. The proportion of young people from migrant families is relatively small because the migrants who have come to Alanya are mostly people from Western European countries who want to spend their retirement here because of the low cost of living.

We were able to talk to some of the students whose educational biographies had been examined in the Turkish Country Report, and have heard in face-to-face discussions with them about the difficulties they had with their start at school. We learned that a large proportion of students complete the school with a leaving certificate that makes it impossible as a rule to get access to further university education, because that depends on successfully taking an ad-

mission examination for which they have not been prepared – the subjects covered at the Vocational College are too limited. That means those who complete their education here are dependent on demand from the labour market in the region. In view of that situation, we were particularly disappointed to hear that the Learning Support posts, responsible for vocational guidance and transition management, were not filled.

The film project planned by TransVet was also allocated to this school, to be conducted by the Turkish partner. As approval for film production has to be obtained via the official channels (education supervisory authority) this meant that not only the staff were involved, but the whole of school management had to examine this project. The preparatory talks with the teaching and management staff in advance of shooting, and the subsequent implementation of the whole project evidently showed that students have a wide range of conditions and learning needs, requiring more individualisation of teaching. The film gives the young migrants affected a chance to talk about the problems they experienced when they entered the school system in framework conditions which were foreign to them, and without knowledge of the Turkish language.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the statements of the teaching staff show the structural problems in the Turkish education system.

We learned in talks with teaching staff and school psychologists that the 12 years of compulsory schooling are not fulfilled by all students. That applies in particular to girls. Many of the young girls come from the surrounding rural areas, so there are problems of mobility. There is a school bus available, but it costs money, so it may be an obstacle to continued attendance. But in fact the reason often suspected is that students from a certain age onwards simply

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<sup>7</sup>The title of the film is "New World – New Hopes – New Problems". It illustrates the educational paths of young migrants, and problems associated with migration, in the context of transition from school to the world of work; it is made in Turkish with English subtitles. The film was produced by the Turkish partner Akdeniz University, Antalya. It is available at <http://akademikstok.com/new-world-new-hopes-new-problems-oku-277.html> Duration: 20 minutes.

stop coming to school because their families do not see any need for them to attend school. A frequent subject in the families is that it is more important for them to contribute to the family income, so the girls in the family are simply sent to work. Theoretically, they can still take the examinations, but preparation by distance learning is not enough. We were not able to determine in the course of our visit how far the dropout problem among female students is on the agenda of the school.

### 11.3 Learning outcome

In summary, the partner workshops with their presentation of and joint reflection on individual good-practice models, gave the whole of the partnership insights on the functioning of the VET systems of various European countries, both at the theoretical level and also in the practical facilities in the schools. It was instructive to get first-hand experience of how different the general conditions are in the various institutions, on the problems that VET institutions have to deal with in other places, and on the working cultures in practice in the other countries. Even though only limited direct exchange was possible with the teaching staff, the partnership was able to gain a great many impressions, which were then evaluated in the group in the course of a joint reflection session within the group.

It was not possible to set up visit contacts in Bulgaria and arrange specialist exchanges on site with representatives of institutions there, because the subject of *Children left behind* has not been discussed for so long in the Bulgarian partner organisation or in the country itself. Our impression is that more efforts will be needed in future to pursue this subject further on a transnational basis.

Our practical visits to Turkey were taken up by the local media, thanks to the targeted public relations work of the Turkish partner. The reports presented the European partnership, explained the reason for the visit, and made the subject accessible to a broad general public in the respective environment of the institutions visited. That

enabled all the partners to access experience on what role PR work alongside a project can have within a European project, and what preparations need to be made for that.

The project gave the chance to meet committed, motivated colleagues everywhere; it also occasionally addressed possibilities for future European cooperation, to find out whether new projects can be launched for the future. Another benefit for the partners from the transnational trip to the various institutions was that it also helped to increase their individual language skills and their own experience of mobility. Participants were able to verify their own perspectives in the course of a debate on differences and various problem situations in the partner countries involved, and examine them in various respects, including the fact of belonging to a common European educational area.

## 12. The Travellers in Ireland – meeting with a particularly vulnerable group

MAREN GAG

Travellers are an indigenous minority who have been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers have had a long and at time difficult history, cultural values, language, customs and traditions and have experienced discrimination in Ireland. They are not formally recognised as an ethnic minority group in Ireland. Travellers often live in family groups, were nomadic in nature often travelling the world. Due to the nomadic nature of the community coupled with institutional discrimination access to education presented challenges. Even today some Travellers live in difficult social circumstances. There have been repeated disputes with the Irish majority population in the past years. In the past many travellers taught their children “on the road” in their families, when families travelled for seven months a year. In the 1970’s the Irish Government were concerned at increasing poverty and health problems among the Traveller families, so they pursued the goal ”assimilation” getting them to give up their nomadic lifestyle and encouraging them to settle down at a fixed location. The data on the size of the Traveller population is also disputed – the government estimates their number at 10,000 whereas some NGOs and supporters of the Traveller groups estimate on the basis of their own research that the figure is about 40,000 in the whole of Ireland. Precise statistical data are not yet available.

In conjunction with their participation in the Partner Workshop

in Cork, the two German partners undertook an excursion into the world of the Irish Travellers. The appropriate contacts for that were set up by the Irish partners. Our first contact point was the *Traveller Visibility Group* in Cork, where we talked to a Group member who herself had a Traveller biography, she was responsible for establishing the centre and works to advocate for the rights of the Community. We also attended a meeting in Rathkeale. This town is not typical or representative of the general Traveller Community. We met with the Coordinator of the Community Centre, two priests, and two teachers from the local school. That was fascinating for us because it gave us insights into the life conditions of a segregated town with very clear Traveller and settled community residential zones.<sup>1</sup> The main focus of our meeting was questions of educational involvement of this group and their life situation, particularly in the context of discrimination against them by the traditional Irish majority population.

## 12.1 Following the Travellers in Cork

We learned from the member of the Traveller Visibility Group in Cork that a first study was published on the problems indicated above as early as 1963. Another was published in 1980, and more recently a programme was launched in 1993. In the 1970's many schools operated a parallel schooling programmes for the children, where specific classes or in some places also special schools were set up for these children. Traveller VET Centres were also set up to enable the target group to acquire basic education and practical skills, using carefully targeted concepts – the men learned metal-working, and the women were given more training in areas related to communicative skills. However, these concepts stagnated after a few years because the programme produced little effect, the participants failed to obtain the formal certificates, so did not go into follow-up programmes. That naturally gave rise to the question of

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<sup>1</sup>See Mediation Northern Ireland (2009): Rathkeale Assessment Report.

whether the investments had fallen short of their target, seeing that skill acquisition did not proceed particularly with the adults, and participants only reached a low level of literacy. In the past education and training measures were supported by programmes set up by the churches, but these were mainly focused on charity (vouchers for food, clothing, etc.), and were also linked with threats of sanctions such as eviction from their homes or with moral appeals, e.g. to refrain from drinking alcohol or not to get married at such an early age. In this context there were many discussions within the Traveller groups, with some yielding to the pressure to adapt and others trying to develop an emancipatory *Travellers' education* aimed at recognition and empowerment. Although the centres still exist, practice in the past three years or so has been to educate the children together with the other children in mainstream state schools.

Asked about the regional work situation, our contact reported (based among other things on the development in her own family context) that the economic situation was substantially better in the past and that the Travellers have been driven into poverty by increasing industrialisation and modernisation. Many of them used to travel around the country by horse and cart, settling for the duration of their return to their home region of Cork on unused grassland or fallow land; they stayed there until they were driven away by the Health Authority because uncontrolled settlement was not compatible with the hygienic requirements of the Irish health system. Recycling had been a traditional field of activity for the Travellers in Cork – they collected bottles, cleaned them and returned them to the factories; but with ecological modernisation, the Travellers lost this fundamental source of income. These trading chains had worked well – the “companies” were not set up on a formal basis, but the internal division of labour and networking of the individual operations worked well and generated a profit. That meant there were no social problems or poverty issues. The elimination of this field of activity led to the collapse of the structures in the community, and in some cases to impoverishment.

Our contact reported from the experience of her community that the Travellers are living in a parallel world. It is customary to marry young, usually at the age of 16 – the weddings are conducted by priests despite the fact that this is below the legal minimum age for marriage in Ireland. The family then expects the first child to be born within twelve months. That means job integration is not an important priority as it is with the settled community, but rather the families travel around and live spread out over the whole of the world. The Traveller Visibility Group in Cork is endeavouring to set up support structures for the families, while taking account of their views of family identity. The Group provides basic education programmes, a children's day centre, and reinforces relations of co-operation with the state schools and provides courses for continuing education of teachers. It calls for quality standards with a diversity oriented approach, respecting the interests of members of the Travellers community within the majority of society.

## **12.2 Rathkeale – an enigmatic town**

Another stage in our excursion was a visit to Rathkeale, which presents some very interesting facets. Rathkeale is a small town near Limerick in the south-west of Ireland. The outstanding feature there is the fact that the Travellers are the dominant community in the town. Our Irish partners drew our attention to the current reporting in the press, which describes a substantial degree of segregation in this region, and indicates that the settled community is increasingly moving away because the Travellers are perceived as successively *taking over* both the homes and the economic infrastructure. That motivated us to review our view of the situation of this minority in Ireland, examining which factors contribute to inclusion or exclusion of the non-settled community and the settled community. We were invited by the member of the Community Centre to take a tour around the town, giving us a first-hand impression of the parallel worlds of the two population groups.

The intermeshing of economic development and regional development cannot be overlooked. The town is now characterised by massive dominance of the Travellers in economic life. Apart from the many buildings which the Travellers have bought, the economic infrastructure has developed in a way that is driven by the specific services provided for the Travellers – in building, beauty parlours, pubs and hotels, and in men’s clothes shops. The exodus of the traditional settled community means there are practically no other ways of earning a reasonable living there. The activities of the Travellers *on the road* include a range of different things – trade in antiques, cigarette smuggling, onward selling of cheap products from China and other low-wage countries, onward sale of designer clothing. The business networks operate on a transnational or even global scale – as our guide informed us. There are Travellers at key points in various countries, and a major factor is smart time management from purchase of the goods to onward sale. Communication operates across national borders within the community, in the same sort of way as in a big corporation.

Not all the Travellers do in fact travel. Evidently the travelling members of the Travellers’ Community set up the structures, while the settled Travellers form the basis with which the local social services, churches and other regional developers try to establish links and achieve integration with the traditional settled community. Progress there is achieved only in very small steps. The traditional settled population mainly live on the other side of the bridge which is regarded as the informal boundary between the two communities. At the centre of the town, it is apparent that the houses and businesses are predominantly with new building projects being started by them, and only gradually completed. There are estates and groups of streets with half-finished new houses, which are enclosed by fences or in some cases closed off by boarding. Most of the Travellers are present only on an irregular basis, and completion of their houses moves at a correspondingly irregular pace. The increasing dominance and the nature of neighbourly cohabitation (often inconsiderate behaviour or rejection by the Travellers towards

the traditional population and vice versa) are causing an exodus of the traditional population, with some moving into the rural surroundings, and others to other towns nearby. Our tour of the town underscored the atmosphere described – there were whole groups of streets with bars and padlocks on the houses, which were left unoccupied. There is also an estate built by the public authorities in keeping with the needs of the Travellers. Very small houses have been built there on large plots of land, to provide new arrivals with heating, water and a roof over their heads in the winter months, and enough space for their enormous caravans. One of these buildings stands out by its external features (flowers, garden seating, etc.) – that is the home of a Travellers family which is no longer on the road and has settled down there. It was pointed out that the town is packed with caravans in autumn until past Christmas, so that the streets are blocked for traffic.

We heard different things about the education of the children. We were told that Travellers' children and other children were taught together in school. School attendance of children from Travellers' families was no problem in primary school (up to 8th grade) because in these first years the family stayed in town, and because school attendance is *compulsory*. This is a conflict situation which the teachers are also involved in, and that does not always lead to satisfactory results. We heard that, of the 27 children initially enrolled at school, only 6 of them are still regularly attending classes. Transition to secondary school is only rarely achieved by the Travellers, because the girls are mostly prepared for marriage from the age of 14, and as a rule they stop going to school. The boys also regard school attendance as *unmanly* from a certain age onwards, because from the age of 12 or 13 boys are traditionally initiated to the adult phase of life by their fathers and learn from them everything they need to know when *on the road*. There are individual cases where the families disregard these norms and send their children (both boys and girls) to further stages of education at the Rathkeale Education Centre. Experience has shown that practical vocational training is accepted where it is usable on the road (basic

knowledge of the PC, Internet and mechanical skills). At the same time, doubts are repeatedly expressed by funding providers as to whether this skill acquisition might be used in some areas simply to professionalise criminal activities.

Our contact partners said that the efforts made locally for better understanding between the two communities and for improvement of the educational situation of the Travellers can be supported by good cooperation between the two institutions involved. The common platform for this purpose is regarded as the link with the Catholic church. The players are trying to create a shared space there to establish communication between the two groups. Alongside the exclusively church groups, there are also seminars, for example to reflect together on *Attitudes to different lifestyles*. Great demand is perceived here, because many of the Travellers have health or social problems, and are becoming less mobile; that leads to instability in the community structures (in such cases the boys leave their families and are taken *on the road* by uncles). One statement gave clear expression to the view that the women among the Travellers have realised that the traditional Travellers lifestyle will be over within a few years and has no future. Another statement suggested that there was no point in trying to get the Travellers to become the same as the majority Irish population. There is also critical view of the vision that only one-hundred-percent-Travellers live independently in Rathkeale, because they would not have the skills to build their own community administrative structures. They would then have to adapt to the dominant society. These statements show that the Travellers' lifestyle is subject to a latent process of change.

The Coordinator of the Community Centre referred us to the *Education Centre*, which was built at the edge of the town for the Travellers and comprises exclusively containers. He said that showed what the dominant Irish society thinks of the Travellers. He also said the subject was only marginal at national level; Ireland provides support programmes for all other migrant groups, and offers programmes even to refugees, but neglects the Travellers. He also indicated that the state programme for Travellers in Rathkeale was

time-limited, and funding was not on a secure basis. It was also indicated that the group has no access to EU programmes because such programmes exist only for the Roma, but not for the Travellers.

The Rathkeale Travellers have a special position in national comparison. They are regarded within the Travellers movement, i.e. as aristocrats among the Travellers. All the other Travellers in Ireland are more threatened by poverty and are dependent on social benefits. The Rathkeale Travellers keep themselves very much separate from these groups, and more rarely marry outside their own community. At the same time, these data indicate that the population living in Rathkeale have a significant degree of vulnerability: *The percentage of population with no higher than primary education is two and a half times the national average (47.1% versus 18.9%). Unemployment rates for Rathkeale stand at more than double the national average for males, (19.6% versus 8.8%) and almost four times the national average for females, (30.9% versus 8.1%)* (Hughes & OBaoill, 2009, p. 24).

The problems between the population groups settled in Rathkeale are aggravated by the significant number of nomadic Travellers over the Christmas period. They come back to Rathkeale at this time to re-establish family connections, and that includes arranging and celebrating weddings (*ibid.* p.10). This can lead to overcrowded streets, making it impossible for traffic to get through; the feeling by some residents is that there is an excess of people from outside the town – that is the perception of the traditional Irish population. This town is very significant for the Travellers, because historical records show that some family clans have been resident in Rathkeale for more than 200 years. So it is not surprising that they feel at home there, and the rule is that *even those who were not born here or never lived here want to be buried here*, so our contacts informed us.

### **12.3 Conclusions**

Educational participation of the Travellers is problematic because nomadism, which is firmly linked to their lifestyle, is not compatible with the goals and conditions of the Irish educational system. That is confirmed by a study published in 2010, evaluating statements on the effectiveness of educational programmes for this group (Hourigan & Campbell, 2010). It shows that various efforts to include members of this minority group in VET programmes have so far had little effect. That applies especially to young adults, because the programmes are designed exclusively for the life situations of settled communities and pay no regard to cultural differences. The above study shows that the responsible stakeholders have also recognised the need for reform in mainstream education and its institutions – not just adaptation, but providing educational programmes with intercultural orientation, not least in order to stop neglecting the potentials of the Travellers for Irish society (*ibid.*).

### **12.4 Literature**

Hourigan, Niamh, Campbell, Maria (2010): The TEACH Report: Traveller Education and Adults: Crisis, Challenge and Change. Athlone, Ireland: National Association of Travellers' Centres. <http://hdl.handle.net/10468/254> [11.05.2015]

Hughes, Denise & OBaoill, Sean (2009): Rathkeale Assessment Report. March 2009. Published by Mediation Northern Ireland.

### 13. Unified training system versus complementary qualification routes: how the Finnish education system deals with vulnerable groups – from a German point of view

SVEN BASENDOWSKI

International school comparison studies have shown that all the educational systems in Europe are struggling to establish equal opportunities in at least four areas – gender, social situation, disability and migration background. These are the critical dimensions where individual differences between school students can cause educational disadvantages. These difficulties seem to have been resolved in Finland. But this view of the Finnish situation is ideologically narrow because there policy guidelines have been developed as well and are still being developed to establish more educational justice (Grubb and others 2005, Viljanen 2008, Virolainen/Stenström 2015). In Finland, as elsewhere, a number of social groups are subject to educational disadvantages and support achieves different levels of success in the various sectors of the Finnish educational system (Schroeder 2010).

### 13.1 Outline of the Finnish education system

Finland has nine years of compulsory schooling, which is not limited to schools like in Germany, though. But with very few exceptions of home schooling (Hes 2011), school students are taught close to their place of residence in municipal comprehensive schools. That also applies to the nearly 30% of comprehensive school pupils that have received special support – 12% are taught exclusively in a special group in special schools<sup>1</sup>. Graduating this school earns the students a certificate of basic education with which they can apply for higher general or vocational education or for a mixed form via an internet joint application system<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of school students who start initial vocational education and training after comprehensive school rose from 37% in 2003 to about 42% in 2012 (Stenström/Virolainen 2014: 28 et seq.). The school-based VET offers 53 general and 119 specific vocational profiles and 95% of all VET students qualify in these profiles. The other 5% participate in apprenticeship training, which has been legally established since 2014 as an alternative to initial vocational training (*ibid.* 19, 23, 27). This is a combination of "on-the-job learning and theoretical instruction. Accordingly, approximately 70-80% of the learning takes place under the supervision of an on-the-job instructor in the workplace, while vocational institutions provide the supplementary theoretical instruction" (*ibid.* 23). They are usually offered by the vocational schools for adults.

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<sup>1</sup>OSF 2013; [http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/2014/erop\\_2014\\_2015-06-11\\_tau\\_005\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/2014/erop_2014_2015-06-11_tau_005_en.html)

<sup>2</sup>*The joint application system for general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions is a national procedure that Finnish educational institutions use when selecting new students to general upper secondary schools and vocational institutions. [...] The joint application system allows you to apply to a maximum of five programmes using the same form. You should rank your programme preferences in the order in which you wish to be selected. [...] Selection of students to general upper secondary school is based on their grade point average for the theoretical subjects on the basic education certificate. Entrance and aptitude tests may also be used and students may be awarded points for hobbies and other relevant activities. (<https://studyinfo.fi>)*

The vocational curricula<sup>3</sup> in Finland are structured both for school-based VET and for apprenticeship training in three areas – a ”common part” (20 credits), a ”qualification specific part” (90 credits) and an ”individual study plan” (20 credits) (OPH 2011: 19 et seq.). These three areas are modularised with compulsory and optional components and are partly related to occupational fields and partly to occupations. For example, the second area comprises compulsory modules for bricklayers, skilled construction workers and skilled construction assistants in ”foundation works” (15 credits), specification modules in ”stone products and installation” (35 credits) and at least 4 optional modules from a general vocational selection field of 44 specialist subjects. Business management modules are additionally available. Successful completion of a module is certified separately via assessment that normally comprises vocational skills demonstration at workplaces and is marked in three descriptive levels of competence (*ibid:* 248 et seq.). The ”common part” includes compulsory and optional modules of core subjects related to one or more vocational fields. Following a reform to be introduced with effect from 1/8/2015, these are to be examined in accordance with the work-based learning approach by demonstrating at workplaces in future (Virolainen/Stenström 2015: 6).

Alongside these programmes leading to upper secondary vocational qualification at the vocational schools for youth and young adults in Finland, there are also special preparatory classes and VET institutions for students with special needs. About 7% of all VET students have certified special needs (Stenström/Virolainen 2014: 18). The special preparatory programmes are aimed at those who have completed comprehensive school but ”who are not able to make an immediate transition” (*ibid.*: 19). This includes those who cannot yet make a decision for a VET course or have insufficient capabilities to complete such a course. Other programmes cover ”rehabilitative instruction and guidance for the disabled”, ”preparatory

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<sup>3</sup>Internet access to vocational curricula via [http://www.oph.fi/english/curricula\\_and\\_qualifications/vocational\\_upper\\_secondary\\_education](http://www.oph.fi/english/curricula_and_qualifications/vocational_upper_secondary_education)

education for immigrants” and ”home economics” (*ibid.*: 20). About 21,000 students with special needs attended the special preparatory programmes in 2012 (proportion = 13%)<sup>4</sup>. By far the majority of this group of students received training in mainstream school-based courses; the curriculum requirements can be adapted for most vocational profiles and separate applications are possible.

## **13.2 Transition problems of young people in Finland, from school to employment**

Finland has for many years been successful in leading school students to basic education qualification – less than 1%<sup>5</sup> of the people leave school early without a leaving certificate for nine years of schooling. However, things are not as good for Finnish school graduates when it comes to their future after leaving school: About 40% of the 60,000 graduates of the nine-year compulsory schooling continued their educational career at vocational schools in 2013<sup>6</sup>, and about 1% attended a voluntary tenth year to improve their chances of transition to the vocational secondary level. But about one in twelve of these VET students drops out and about 90% of these dropouts do not start an alternative course<sup>7</sup>. Another 9% of the ninth grade students (5,301 young people) do not continue their studies, which would lead to a kind of certificate. Therefore, despite all those positive developments within the last years, school dropout is still a major education issue in Finland (*ibid.*: 94). In addition, Finland, like Germany, has a scale for vocational qualifications within upper secondary vocational education. However, it is not linked with a

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<sup>4</sup>OSF 2014; [http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/2014/erop\\_2014\\_2015-06-11-tau\\_009\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/erop/2014/erop_2014_2015-06-11-tau_009_en.html)

<sup>5</sup>OSF 2013; [http://www.stat.fi/til/kkesk/2013/kkesk\\_2013\\_2015-03-19\\_tau\\_002\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/kkesk/2013/kkesk_2013_2015-03-19_tau_002_en.html)

<sup>6</sup>OSF 2013; [http://www.stat.fi/til/khak/2013/khak\\_2013\\_2015-02-12-tau\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/khak/2013/khak_2013_2015-02-12-tau_001_en.html)

<sup>7</sup>OSF 2013; [http://www.stat.fi/til/kkesk/2013/kkesk\\_2013\\_2015-03-19\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/kkesk/2013/kkesk_2013_2015-03-19_tie_001_en.html)

course of studies but with the competence levels achieved within the compulsory modules. The description of qualifications notes only the difference between "qualification certificate" vs. "certificate of studies completed":

The same principles are to be applied in assessing special needs students as to other students. If a student does not reach in a module the Satisfactory 1 level objectives set in the qualification requirements, the training can be adjusted. When the skills requirements or objectives of a qualification have been adjusted based on the Act on Vocational Education and Training 630/1998, sections 20 and 21 (2 and 3), an entry must be made in the certificate. A student must receive a qualification certificate even if qualification objectives have been adjusted. [...] If a student's competence level falls considerably short of the skills requirements and objectives set, a certificate of studies completed must be awarded instead of a qualification certificate (OPH 2011: 255f.).

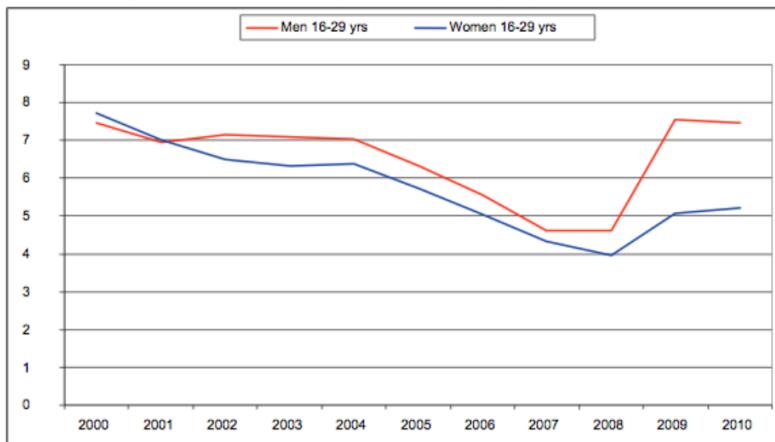
Consequently, the certificate indicates the level achieved at Level 1, 2 or 3 of each field of study, or below Level 1 in a wider sense. There are no instructions on allocation of candidates to the different levels (Stenström/Virolainen 2014: 28 et seq.). Fewer and fewer 20 to 24-year-olds are leaving school with an upper secondary education formally at Level 1 or better – the figure was about 16% in 2010 (Virolainen/Stenström 2014: 93). In this context it should be emphasized that only basic education is compulsory in Finland while attendance at an upper secondary school is voluntary but guaranteed. However, this voluntary approach can lead to financial disadvantages (Virolainen/Stenström 2015: 13):

Since 1996, in Finland, these tools include that youth under 24 years are obliged to participate in education or an apprenticeship training programme. They were not to

receive unemployment benefits if they did not have vocational qualifications (Aho & Vehviläinen, 1997). Furthermore, since 2013, the Finnish Youth Guarantee has been offering everyone under the age of 25, as well as those who have recently graduated and are under 30 years, a job, on-the-job training, a study place or rehabilitation (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013; Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2012).

Although the Finnish Youth Guarantee ensures institutional follow-up after the obligatory comprehensive school for "all", it comprises not exclusively VET in mainstream settings. Therefore, the school-based system of initial vocational and educational training has to guarantee "all" young people integration in one of the many VET programmes but this does not mean that there is a right to free choice of a specific school or a specific vocational training. Focussing work the employment rate of 25- to 39-year-olds differs by 25% between the upper and lower level (versus 33% in Germany). According to EUROSTAT, the youth unemployment rate in Finland amounts to more than 20% and is therefore nearly three times higher than in Germany. However, there are differences in method, e.g. apprenticeship training students are counted as 'unemployed' (Bacher 2006: 2). The statistics of "registered" (NSSC 2011: 87) youth unemployment therefore suggests that the ratio is about the same as in Germany. At the same time, it clearly shows the impact of the economic recession which affected Finland up to 2009:

Figure 13.1: **Development of "registered" unemployment in Finland**, Source: NSSC 2011, 89



Formal educational success, unemployment and marginalisation in Finland are to a large extent socially "inherited": "Studies showed that the connections between family background and dropping out are clear. The young drop outs were mostly from low-income families, less educated, and – from a labour-market perspective – in a weaker position than the population" (Julkunen 2007: 5). At any rate, the barrier between the educational system and the employment system have become a major educational issue because "the transition from school to the world of work is the most problematic turning point in the lives of young people" (Helve 2000: 134).

The present debate addresses the differences between the norm of achieving educational qualifications (Jahnukainen/Helander 2007: 472) and the life situations of young people:

The norm was seen as negative by young people who were very unclear about their study plans and by those who were determined to go to some specific place. These

young people considered a gap year as a better option. Thus, the inflexibility and lack of individual adjustments was criticised by the youth in question. Some young people who were obliged to study in a field which did not interest them found it demotivating. They considered their own reasons for participation purely instrumental. They only participated for the sake of the economic benefits and criticised especially the guidance counselling offered to them in the last years of compulsory education.  
(Virolainen & Stenström 2015: 13 et seq.)

The risk of dropping out of vocational schools is also "particularly high for those first-generation immigrant students who have gone to school in Finland only a few years, come from non-European countries and got but little education in their country of origin" (Teräs/Lasonen/Nuottokari 2014: 9). That means these young people are less frequently involved in general upper secondary education (ibid.: 10). Vocational qualifications previously acquired are hardly ever accepted and have to be obtained all over again in Finland. Furthermore, access to such programmes can fail due to language requirements. The supplementary preparatory trainings or classes for immigrants can barely do anything to compensate for that. The reasons given for the approximately 7% of dropouts in these courses are (ibid.: 17): "family leave or other family reasons" (50%), "moving away without further placement information" (39.5%), "employment" (34.2%), "no commitment to the course" (28.9%), "economic reasons" (21.1%), "health reasons" (13.2%), and "unspecified personal reasons" (13.2%).

### **13.3 The *Jupiter* project in Vaasa**

In the course of our workshop with our Finnish partner, we first got to know the *Vaasa Vocational Institute* (Vaasan ammattiopisto) and the regional VET centre at the Hansa as well as the Sampo Campus. It is an institution where young people (and separately adults) can

complete formal vocational training in a range of very different fields. Our discussions about the apprenticeship training resulted, almost incidentally, to the mentioning of the *Jupiter* project with which the VET school cooperates. This project is aimed at young people who, for various reasons, cannot be given enough support or are at risk of dropping out. *Jupiter* is an alternative VET programme for these young people. We received a spontaneous offer to visit this institution.

Apart from *Jupiter*, there is another institution in Vaasa which is aimed at this target group – the Resurscentret Föregångarna. According to its director, it specialises in teaching young people who have already been out of the educational system for months – even if not officially. Compared with Stamm (2012) these mainly fulfil a dropout type which can be described as being "tired of school" – a condition they rarely return from. The primary goal of the social pedagogy applied here is for these young people to start (re-)structuring their lives. It also aims, if possible, at getting them into employment or in a VET institution. According to the available statistics, 15 general education and 11 VET students under the age of 18 were supported by this institution.

The Jupiter Työvalmenus institution in Vaasa is funded by a local foundation (Jupiter-säätiö), which has the aim of supporting long-term unemployed young people in a difficult VET and/or labour market situation and providing rehabilitation for the world of work. It should be noted that the annual average unemployment rate (2013) in the Osterbotten region, to which Vaasa belongs, is at 7% and therefore relatively low; the unemployment rate for the whole of Finland amounts to 11.3%. Nevertheless, the regional employment market is not able to offer sufficient employment opportunities to all under 25 year olds and the long-term unemployed. Out of a total of about 8,100 people in this age group in Vaasa, more than 350 were unemployed in January 2012 (not counting those who were temporarily unemployed). For compulsory school attendees, the number of dropouts amounts to more than 10% in 2010 (AMCER).

*Jupiter* is located in a disused craft trade and services park in a

former workshop hall. There was a striking contrast especially between the Hansa Campus, where the VET school has very well kept school buildings and facilities, and the rather ageing industrial site of *Jupiter*. We entered the building and stood in a big hall, which gave the impression of a department store. The entrance area is a sales area for household goods, electrical appliances, clothing and furniture. Furthermore, there is a section on the side with a restaurant and offices. The project manager at the cash desk welcomed us. While we were being given our visitor passes, a young man and a young woman photographed us. We went through a windowless and thus rather dark restaurant into an office space, which was set up like a course room or seminar room of an adult education institution. Several desks were arranged in rows – facing the teacher's desk and a screen area for the projector. The room was flooded with light and had a number of photos on the walls.

The Jupiter Foundation was set up in 2001 when the individual projects conducted beforehand were not satisfactory in terms of funding and cooperation. The founders of Jupiter-säätiö are the City of Vaasa, the Municipality of Mustaari, the Socialpsychiatric Association of Vaasa as well as the Vaasa Association for the Handicapped, the Settlement Association, the Evangelical Lutheran Parish Union and the Regional Waste Management Company. Work departments are: Café Jupiter (approx. 150 lunches daily), carpentry and construction (including renovation of wooden furniture), handicraft (e.g. upholstery of furniture, recycling of clothes), a eecycle shop, cleaning (some work outside), IT and media (mainly printing and publishing), the *Ekocenter* (dismantling and repair of electronic equipment) and a truck and car wash including fixing and repair services.

These areas are organised in a combination of a non-profit and an integration company – Jupiter runs a budget of altogether EUR 3.5 million. Funding comes mainly from national sources (EUR 1.3 million) and the EU (EUR 1.3 million) plus funds which are provided by the function as a private provider of local services for vocational rehabilitation (projects for the unemployed, subsidised employment). In-house production, the selling of products and services, gives EUR

0.8 million per year. Thus, the area is not limited to just the 130 or so places and jobs, but also provides vocational guidance and preparation via personal counselling as well as advice, group activities and also brief further education courses for about 600 persons per annum. The period spent by the non-permanent employees in the "company" is between two weeks (internship) and two years (full training).

Following a joint coffee break, we were able to talk to two students of the Vaasa Vocational Institute that were at risk of dropping out. First a 22-year-old man, who told us that he had already successfully completed formal training in restaurant service including a stay of several weeks in Spain and had afterwards started a second training as a media designer. However, he was a victim of mobbing in his class at vocational school causing him to develop psychosomatically induced high blood pressure that was diagnosed by the medical staff at the school (big educational institutions in Finland each have a team of medical, health, nursing and psychological staff). It is a cause for concern and a danger to his health. Fear of going to school and high blood pressure caused him to miss numerous days at school leading ultimately to his dropout. He heard from a friend about Jupiter and applied there. The reasons for his motivation that he mentioned were the relaxed atmosphere in the team and the chance of completing his training there. The vocational school that is responsible for him has to pay for his external training and provide him with necessary learning materials. He also received a grant for travelling expenses. The supervisor is so enthusiastic about the young man that, at the first visit, she tells us of the idea of taking him on as a permanent member of staff and supervisor for interns after he has completed his training. – Following successful completion, the young man has been employed by a company in Helsinki in a position appropriate to his training.

Afterwards, the discussion turned to the young woman but unlike the young man she did not speak English; she just sat in the group so far without saying anything. She appeared to be less satisfied with her situation. During the birth of her daughter, she was still a minor.

So she interrupted her first training to look after her child. Even then, that training was not what she wanted because she wanted to do "something with animals" (formal sales training equivalent to the German profile as a sales assistant for animal and pet shops) but she did not get a training place and her grades were not sufficient due to a learning disability. At the present time, she has her eye on a shop in her hometown outside of Vaasa, which is evidently in financial difficulties, though, because she knew about the dismissal of one staff member. She clearly took her wish for this field of activity and training very seriously but also realised the obstacles of putting it into practice. The supervisor added positive comments about the abilities of the young woman in the production of short advertising films. Currently, she was also working in the marketing department of the foundation even though it is outside of her true vocational interests. A formal training, similar to that of the young man, was not mentioned. – One year later, research showed that she is currently expecting her second child.

### **13.4 *Youth schools*: Appropriate institutions at the transition from school to employment as promotion of educational justice?**

The term *youth schools* occurs in international educational theory especially from the 1980s onwards (Schroeder 2012: 242 et seq.). It is an internationally widespread concept which has been implemented for many years in countries like Denmark and France and also has a long tradition in Latin America. Finland has *youth schools*, too (Virolainen 1996; Sahlberg 2006). They are places of education and training, work and living – giving youth and young adults the chance to gain new experience and enabling them to make the transition from VET to employment.

"Justice is when equal treatment is given to what is the same and unequal treatment to what is different" (Gärtner 2012: 30). Without going into the philosophical and legal debates about equality and

inequality, this principle is also related to the question of educational equality after compulsory schooling. Two fundamental theories are to be taken from the intensive international debate (cf. Terzi 2008) (Lindmeier 2011), briefly presented below and used for a Finnish-German comparison based on the discussions and observations in Vaasa.

Equality of opportunity: This approach implies that everyone has the same and thus equal starting conditions (*ibid.*: 125 et seq.). Therefore, it cannot be applied to educational equality at the transition from school to work because in this case, for example, no-one should have more knowledge and ability or more useful social networks than all the others in the search for training and workplaces. However, equality and inequality can be modified. That puts the focus on school or employment abilities from formal VET certificates as the starting point for equal competitive opportunities. This criterion can be specified based on the educational trends of homogenisation in the EU, with indexed EQF (2008). Ultimately, that is a continuation of meritocratic logic with accumulation of the highest formal (vocational) qualifications and associated selection which controls allocation of vocational status (Guile 2003). Thus, on the basis of this single criterion, higher qualifications in VET are to be assigned to those who have higher formal and vocational abilities. Gender, ethnicity, origin, and disability should not distort competition for formal routes of qualification and would indicate unequal treatment of what is equal which would thus be unjust. The concept of fair and equal opportunities is associated with the position that these lines of differentiation lead to recurring disadvantages in social competition. Equal starting conditions could be established by giving additional rights, support and/or resources to vulnerable groups.

Equality of capabilities: Theories of "democratic equality" are opposed to materialisation of skills and abilities of persons that are in social competition with one another. Ethical/moral access to justice characterises a desirable society where, in principle, everyone is to be capable of making a valuable contribution. This is

expressed in the "capabilities approach" of Sen: "A person's capability set stands for the potential of achievable human development by which the individual can manage his/her own actual life in keeping with his/her own life plans and preferences" (Lindmeier 2011: 129). The social and, in particular, educational mission is to promote the capabilities of all and to enable transfer to actual activities which serves as expression of life management in a way that permits access. This requires basic education which enables the individual to participate in society and, at the same time, to make a conscious decision for their individual life management (*ibid.*: 126 et seq.). However, specification of this basic education ultimately depends on the understanding of the term "participation": Is participation linked to certain capabilities and not linked to others? What are the consequences regarding formal educational qualification as well as school and vocational capabilities? (cf. *ibid.*, Basendowski 2014).

Institutions like *Jupiter* work with young people and adults (not only young adults) who have more or less failed in the regular school and VET system, who have problems in transition from school to 'life' and who do not really succeed in developing a personal perspective for the future. Young people like that also exist in Finland, which is a country where access to school and VET programmes is very much in the hands of the state institutions. However, at the latest at the transition between the two phases of formal education, the meritocratic principle and therefore the logic of equality of competitive opportunity become apparent: Firstly, conventional social participation is closely linked to a formal school career in a higher school or continuing training. The offer to allocate the availability of sufficient training places and bonuses for "successful" transitions to schools underscores the favouring of certain regional training vocations. Secondly, this transition is regulated almost solely by school grades. If the desired training is in a trend area then, regardless of the respective aptitude, the chances are best for those who show the best school performance. The major influence of gender, ethnicity, origin or disability on appointment to a workplace is also apparent in the unemployment statistics in Finland. In Germany, access to

formal training in the dual system or the in-school VET system can already be seen as a manifestation of social competition in the educational system. This is reflected in the condition that there have not been enough places available from the 1970s onwards up to today. The impact can be described in the words of Hradil (2006: 137) with the following metaphor: Education can only change the order in the queue for the training and employment market, but never the length of the queue.

For those who favour democratic equality, Finland is fairer regarding the transitions within its educational system because it is at least based on a principle of equality. Wherever the threshold of school performance is placed, even in the sense of basic education, there will always be "losers". That means, also in Finland, not everyone can get into the vocation they feel they are capable of and are in fact capable of, at least not via the formal route. The two biographies outlined above also refer to the problem that successful access to a formal education is not monocoausally accompanied by successful educational support as described by Schroeder (2013) and Basendowski (2014). If educational systems basically have to expect "losers" in the transition to employment, which is the basic conclusion emerging from the analysis, the question of how to manage "failure" in the system will have to be raised. Youth schools are therefore considered a complementary part of the school and VET system related to the meritocratic system, which selects via the social characteristic of school performance capability.

The stringent system of modularity, which we found in Finland, permits an opening along the social characteristic of school/vocational capability because it is linked to the educational system only in certification. This opening is associated with the exclusion of a barrier and the structural smoothing of the way for some young people in a manner which is not fixed to a curriculum in "school years". Furthermore, it is not necessarily threatened by failure due to access being linked to certain conditions (including formal conditions) and not associated with narrow range of VET locations. The focus is on the vocational capability for an activity,

which is more or less specified by typical situational requirements from the logic of their practice. Thus, complementary educational programmes such as we have seen at a youth school in Finland, can also contribute to the social programme of inclusion by empowerment through socially accepted capabilities.

In the context of dropout, there is a major contribution to the reduction of VET exclusion in Finland in the past decades: On the one hand, complementary educational programmes associated with the relevant flexibility of organisation and content have essentially contributed to this reduction. On the other hand, they are clearly aimed against the requirements of supposedly inclusive VET for "all": "Despite the generally positive development at the system level, the learning environments of the different vocational fields seem to differ significantly from each other in this respect and they offer students different settings for on-the-job learning" (Virolainen/Stenström 2014: 34).

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## 13.6 Links

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Unemployment statistics in Finland: [http://www.tem.fi/files/38583/maakun2013\\_en.pdf](http://www.tem.fi/files/38583/maakun2013_en.pdf)

Municipal statistics in Finland: <http://vrk.fi/default.aspx?docid=6847&site=3&id=0>

BMBF – Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung; German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2013): <http://ec.europa.eu/equ/documents?id=113>

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OSF – Official Statistics of Finland (Education): [http://www.stat.fi/til/kou\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/kou_en.html)

Vaasa In Brief 2011: [http://www1.vaasa.fi/grafisetpalvelut/edock/tietoa\\_taskuun\\_2011/index.html#!2](http://www1.vaasa.fi/grafisetpalvelut/edock/tietoa_taskuun_2011/index.html#!2)

## 14. Cooperative social work with refugees and asylum seekers at the transition from school to work, and in employment in Hamburg

MAREN GAG

### **14.1 Refugee context in Germany**

Refugees without a secure right of stay were not included in publicly funded programmes for VET and labour market integration until just over ten years ago. For decades, German asylum and refugee policy was characterised by a substantial degree of exclusion, reaching its culmination in the 1990s when the inflow of refugees to Germany was even greater than it is today. The Federal Government and the States and Municipalities felt they were over-burdened in making arrangements to receive and look refugees and asylum seekers. Remains of this xenophobic attitude are still present today, favoured by the climate promoted in some of the media and by restrictive handling of standards set for public order regulations. At the same time, in recent times there has also been growing support by the civil population due to the current massive rise in flows of refugees.

It is also a fact that a considerable number of refugees have been living in Germany for many years, in some cases for decades. They are often at the margins of society and are very much dependent on

support systems in order to get just participation in society. The opportunities for participation in society are unevenly distributed in Germany, due to the highly complex legal situations in European law and German law, because they are dependent on the legal conditions set for their respective status, and applicable for the residence permit from the German bureaucracy. Those granted asylum within the meaning of the Basic Law (Article 16a, para. 1, GG) and the Geneva Convention on Refugees, and refugees received directly from abroad, have a priority right to participation in society, education and the labour market. In view of the hierarchically structured scale of disadvantage, this publication focuses with priority specifically on those refugees who have so far had considerably restricted rights: that is (1) refugees who are staying in Germany as asylum seekers, who are currently in the asylum process, and who generally receive permission to; (2) people with a subsidiary need of protection who mainly receive a residence permit pursuant to Section 5 §3 of the Residence Act [AufenthG]; and (3) migrants with tolerated status, whose asylum petition is rejected, but whose deportation to their country of origin has been suspended.

The formalities of the Asylum Procedure Act and the Asylum Seeker Benefits Act, to which these refugee groups are subject, and their legal status, means that their participation in society is limited and they cannot sufficiently exercise their rights to education and training (Gottschalk, 2014, pp. 219-235). They are prevented or substantially hindered in earning their own living. Instead, they are often forced to live from funding at a level below basic needs, to put up with restrictions in health care available to them, and to live in communal accommodation. The tolerated status is always issued for a short period only and is then repeatedly extended, because deportation is not possible for personal or legal reasons. Refugee organisations and churches in particular have been criticising for decades the fact that the legal conditions lead to chain extension of tolerated status, and that this group of refugees is left at the margins of society for decades due to the legally encrusted exclusion mechanisms, so that they have to live in conditions in Germany that

are often not compatible with human dignity. Long-term exclusion from education and training and from the labour market can also mean that they lose their employability because they cannot use the skills and qualifications which they brought with them from their countries of origin.

New perspectives were only introduced with European initiatives for improvement of the labour market participation of disadvantaged persons (2001), the right-to-stay regulations of the German Federation and States (2007), and ESF funding programmes of the Federation – these measures also included "tolerated" refugees and asylum seekers in integration promotion measures.<sup>1</sup> In the course of implementation of the publicly funded programmes, from 2008 onwards in particular, long overdue legal reforms were introduced, helping especially young refugees to gain easier access to vocational education, training within the dual system, and to the labour market. These stages of legal facilitation show that in the last ten years there has been a gradual, and very hesitant, change on the part of policy makers and administrations, and that individual areas of the regulatory system have been softened to give easier access to education and training and to the labour market.

## **14.2 Safe Haven Hamburg**

Cities and metropolitan regions tend to attract migrants and refugees, because they give opportunities to find work, to get into education and training, or to take up higher education studies. They are also the main attractions for new immigrants who arrive under the arrangements for family unification or because of the economic crisis in the Mediterranean countries. Alongside increased labour productivity, the existence of networks of ethnic communities is an-

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<sup>1</sup>This was in the EU initiative EQUAL (2001-2007) and the German ESF programme for labour market support of persons with a right to stay and refugees, for access to the labour market, introduced by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2008-2015).

other important factor, providing a support structure and bridges for integration. The same applies to family networks that are already present in the cities. The City of Hamburg is a typical metropolitan region, with a long history of migration (emigration and immigration), and with a claim to be the Gateway to the World. And for some decades it has also been a typical destination for migrants from *third countries* whose dependents belong to the marginalised groups which were in the past excluded from traditional integration programmes. Implementation of the above programmes has led to a change in policies. Since 2002 the Hamburg Senate has continuously funded network projects by providing funds and strategic cooperation.

A number of networks have been set up in Hamburg during the various funding phases, with funding from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Hamburg Senate, and from the European Social Fund<sup>2</sup>:

- Qualification initiative for asylum seekers and refugees in Hamburg [Qualifizierungsoffensive für Asylbewerber/innen und Flüchtlinge in Hamburg] (2001-2005), coordinated by passage gGmbH;
- Safe Haven Hamburg [FLUCHTort Hamburg]: Vocational integration for refugees (2005-2007), coordinated by passage gGmbH;
- Safe Haven Hamburg Plus [FLUCHTort Hamburg Plus] (2008-2010), coordinated by passage gGmbH;
- AQUABA (2008-2011), coordinated by why-not? Das Internationale Diakoniecafé;
- Opportunities for refugees [Chancen für Flüchtlinge] (2011-2013), coordinated by basis & woge e.V.;

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. [www.fluchtort-hamburg.de](http://www.fluchtort-hamburg.de)

- Safe Haven Hamburg Plus II [FLUCHTort Hamburg Plus II] (2010-2015), coordinated by passage gGmbH.
- Opportunities at Safe Haven Hamburg [Chancen am FLUCHTort Hamburg] (2013-2016), coordinated by passage gGmbH.

It was not until 2013 that the Senate and Parliament of Hamburg decided that the group of refugees and asylum seekers should be included in the Hamburg Integration Concept, which was previously designed only for migrants intending to stay long-term in Hamburg. That was established in the concept, and was a forward looking step to be implemented on an interdisciplinary basis by Hamburg's policy makers and administrations (Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2013).

### 14.3 Two examples from practice

#### **Example 1: project "Utkiek"**

The following example illustrates the practice of a sub-project of the network project "Opportunities at safe haven Hamburg", implemented by the very experienced youth work organisation basis & woge e.V., supporting young refugees at the transition from school to work in cooperation with four VET schools. In parallel to teaching in a vocational preparation course, the young refugees could also get advice and support and counselling for their training.

Table 14.1: Information about project "Utkiek" given by Franziska Gottschalk, basis & woge e.V.

<b>Country</b>	Hamburg, Germany
<b>Network</b>	<i>Opportunities in the safe haven Hamburg</i>
<b>Project</b>	<i>Utkiek</i>

<b>Description</b>	<i>Utkiek</i> is a subproject by basis & woge e.V. under the coordination of the network <i>Opportunities in the safe haven Hamburg</i> (coordinator: passage gGmbH)
<b>Contact</b>	basis & woge e.V., Steindamm 11, 20099 Hamburg Phone: +49 (0)40-39842655 Project management: franziska.gottschalk@basisundwoge.de

## Organisation

basis & woge e.V. is a non-profit, state recognised organiser of social services in Hamburg. The main focus of the work is on the intercultural aspect and on working with particularly marginalised young people, regardless of their national roots. Alongside further education and advice for multipliers, in social work and consulting for people with a migration background, basis & woge e.V. has set up a wide-ranging programme. It includes youth apartments, open offers, and health support, training projects for refugees and young adults with a migration background.

## Illustration of practice

This sub-project by basis & woge e.V. is aimed at juvenile and young adult refugees who are interested in qualification, employment or training. The focus of the project is aimed at school students in the preparatory classes for migrants (VJM) at vocational training schools.

Basically, there are three fields of action:

- 1. In-school educational and advisory counselling for transitional management in the school-leaving year**

School students in the preparatory classes for migrants (VJ-M courses) are the main target group for the project. Young refugees with insecure status of stay are given schooling in Hamburg in the two-year in-school training course "VJ-M", which aims to take them to the level of secondary school leaving certificate.

Most of the students in VJ-M classes have little knowledge of German, and some of them come from families with a poor educational background. The project provides support for provisions for transition management at the relevant schools. It provides regular counselling directly at the school location, in cooperation with the schools. These counselling sessions are held either in the class group or in individual interviews, depending on the subject. This counselling is based on an intercultural approach. It starts in a school class, mostly on the first school day of the last year of school. Brief counselling sessions held at the school are then continued with the participants at the external location of the project. A systematic cooperation relationship is built up and continued with the schools concerned.

Besides the counselling, workshops are held at the school location with the final year classes in cooperation with their teaching staff, on transition from school to work. The school teaching staffs are involved in the planning. The project is thus a fixed part of the school programme. Regular meetings are held with everyone involved to ensure close exchange between school and project.

A workshop comprises four lessons. The workshops are conducted in close cooperation with the respective teaching staff. The design of the workshops is based on the individual needs and learning levels of the respective classes and the individual students. The goal of the workshop is to give the students specific ideas of their work perspectives after leaving the school, and to draw up a realistic vocational plan.

The workshop programme is complemented by innovative approaches to work with role models.

## **2. Placement and support for young people in appropriate programmes**

In parallel to the workshops and short counselling sessions at the schools, the students also have access to individual training and employment preparation counselling/coaching. Experience shows that individually adapted placement often takes more than just one school year. This form of counselling is therefore available not only to current school students, but also to students who have already completed their schooling. Students get placements in keeping with their abilities in training and/or employment, with supporting or remedial teaching. The project staff helps to find individually appropriate internships and training companies. They also provide support once training or employment has started, up to the completion of the probationary period, in order to avoid dropouts. They maintain constant direct dialogue in order to clear up any conflict situations at the workplace and avoid possible future conflicts. Either the company or the participant can call on the project to mediate in any conflict.

## **3. Social advice and support**

The main focus of counselling is on social issues and social work and teaching, which are key elements in the project. They address matters related to rights of residence and work permits, and also financial issues; they also address the individual psychosocial situation of the students. They take a holistic view, so that counselling can be designed to fit the life situation of the student. They work with resource-based orientation, to help the students find ways to stabilise their life situation, which is essential for their integration in the labour market.

## **Most important milestones**

1. One of the key factors is active involvement of the teaching staff in the project work. This cooperation helps to better identify the individual needs of the students, and to draw up realistic vocational training plans in good time. This cooperation with the teaching staff enables the target group to get a much better sense of the relevance of vocational integration in everyday school work. It makes it possible to strengthen and maintain the individual abilities of the students, which in turn helps to stabilise the target group. This project helps to close the gap in transition management for less qualified young people.
2. An innovative module in this project is that young refugees (former students at the school) who are already in further programmes/training etc. are invited to the school classes as experts. They report on their educational career, and can act as successful role models for the students to plan their own vocational progress. The visits by these *role models* can be prepared in regular teaching (preparation of questions, finding out about the guest's vocational area in advance, etc.).

## **Most important hurdles**

In some cases the young refugees are prevented by their poor housing situation from making full use of their learning potentials. The housing situation may be problematic because of a large number of people from different origins living in the accommodation without enough rooms for them to be able to withdraw. There are always two sharing a room, and families have little more space. Any existing mental conditions may become worse due to the unfavourable housing conditions.

## **Networking partners (local, which types of organisation)**

The most important networking partners, and their roles, are as follows:

- Employment Agency and Hamburg Ministry of the Interior: clarification of individual rights of stay and work.
- Safe Haven Network *FLUCHTort Hamburg PLUS II*: cooperation in case-specific work and cooperation by joint networking.
- Counselling agencies from the refugees' relief and law firms: joint work on questions arising from social counselling, rights of stay and work, and debt regulation.
- Pedagogical/therapeutic centre: joint handling of questions from the teaching and psychosocial areas (e.g. traumatisation).
- A large number of contacts have been built up in the past with Hamburg companies, and that is a good basis for placement in internships, training and employment. These are being maintained and expanded.

## **Example 2: project "MULTI-Mädchen"**

The next example illustrates a project aimed at a particularly vulnerable group among the refugees. In recent times there have been a large number of young girls who migrate to Germany alone without their families, and arrive in Hamburg. Café "why not?" has taken up this issue, and is one of the many organisations in the church sector which provides an important support structure mainly via voluntary work, and also cooperates with many Hamburg organisations.

Table 14.2: Information about project "MULTI-Mädchen" given by Wiebke Krause, café "why-not?" Hamburg

<b>Country</b>	Hamburg, Germany
<b>Project</b>	Project <i>MULTI-Mädchen</i> is a sub-project by Internationales Diakoniecafé <i>why not?</i>
<b>Contact</b>	Internationales Diakoniecafé <i>why not?</i> , Marktstrasse 55, 20357 Hamburg Phone: +49 (0)40-43274526 Project management: <a href="mailto:wiebke.krause@why-not.org">wiebke.krause@why-not.org</a>

## Organisation

The "why not?" is a non-profit institution led by the charitable trust "Elim Diakonie" and was founded in 1992 to help migrants and refugees. The main focus of the work is to provide social service, consulting and German language courses. The Café is a low-threshold offer. Along with it there is a wide range of projects for special need groups.

## Illustration of practice

*MULTI-Mädchen* is one of these projects. It is aimed at **female** juvenile and young adult refugees who fled their home countries without their families/young unattended refugees. Girls in this situation are in special need of protection. Most of them had traumatizing experiences before and during their escape often on sex-based violence and brute force. We saw the need for *MULTI-Mädchen* as in 2011 there was no project for female juvenile refugees in Hamburg because the numbers of young unattended female refugees were comparatively low, but nevertheless we had girls coming to our open consultation.

The *MULTI-Mädchen* girls are between 15 and 18 years old and live in sheltered accommodation and attend public schools. They mainly attend the preparatory classes for migrants (VJ-M courses). The VJ-M is a two-year course which aims to take them to the level of secondary school leaving certificate.

As the social workers in the sheltered accommodation have limited resources to accompany the girls outside the accommodation, most of the girls spend their free time in their bedrooms. They had, therefore, no possibility to improve their German or get to know Hamburg and make future plans according to what they would be able to do after finishing school. So on the request and after prior consultation with the social worker of different youth accommodations, we started *MULTI-Mädchen* in August 2011.

Alongside the public school the project provides further German lessons with a qualified teacher plus volunteer women who help the girls to gain a foothold in Hamburg, by simply spending time with them. Twice a week for 3 hours the girls learn together and from each other, they go on excursions within Hamburg and they have the opportunity to ask questions in a stress free surrounding.

[MULTI: M – minderjährige/juvenile; U – unbegleitete Flüchtlinge/unattended refugees; L – lernen/to learn; T – trainieren/to train; I – integrieren/to integrate]

### **Most important milestones**

For us the important milestones are to see the girls opening up to the volunteers and teachers, to see them gain self-confidence and to see them enjoy life again. In 2012 the project won the "Hamburger Tulpe", an award for the contribution to raising intercultural awareness set up by the Körber Foundation endowed with EUR 10,000.

### **Most important hurdles**

The most important hurdle is to gain the trust of the girls. Most of them had traumatising experiences before and during their escape.

It takes a lot of reception to gain their trust and it is therefore important to have steady volunteers and teachers to work with those girls.

Another important hurdle is the structural difficulty in the transition from school to work. Within these terms it seems to be impossible to draw up a realistic vocation plan or find an apprenticeship. We could only overcome these problems by the concentrated efforts of the women volunteers.

#### **Networking partners (local, which types of organisation)**

- Safe Haven Network *FLUCHTort Hamburg PLUS II*: cooperation in case-specific work and cooperation by joint networking.
- Körber Foundation Hamburg: supporting the work and joint public relation.
- AWO – Arbeiterwohlfahrt Hamburg/workers' welfare organisation: joint work on finding suitable volunteers.

### **14.4 Networking as a quality characteristic**

The effectiveness of individual integration measures for vulnerable groups can be increased by conducting them in a networked way. Precisely tailored, needs-oriented support principles are used to ensure easy-access opportunities for participants and a flexible concept (Gag, 2014, pp. 280-300). The arrangement of various sub-projects in a project group permits implementation of an integrated action approach. The coordination of the individual makes it possible to harmonise the individual measures with one another, giving a wider range with better prospects of success for all the measures.<sup>3</sup> The organisations close to the refugees and the organisations close to the companies and the labour market have mutually related programmes

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. example of *Utkiek* in the Opportunities network group (Safe Haven Hamburg and Safe Haven Hamburg Plus)

to ensure access to the courses, and a modular system of entry to qualification and placement programmes at a higher level of qualification. The networking approach developed in the joint EQUAL initiative has also been applied in follow-up support (Federation and Hamburg).

The following diagram shows how the various network elements and fields of action are linked with each other, and what effects can be achieved by this form of organisation. Interventions by the players in the network are effected at different levels, both related to the subject, that is at operational level, and related to the refugees, and also related to structural policy in selected areas.

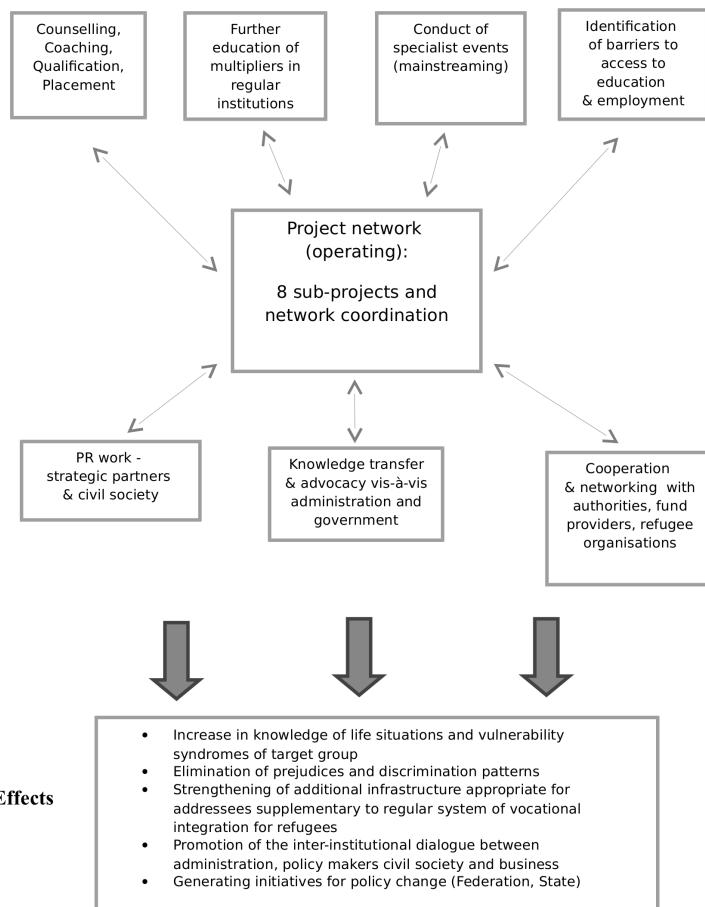
It is confirmed by network research that work in networks as such does not guarantee efficiency and improvement in quality. It is essential to develop functioning structures and a work culture which ensure that the target agreements are met and the basis created for cooperation between the players in a spirit of trust (Miller, 2005, p. 111–123). Good examples of this are the cooperative relations between the networks existing in the Federation-funded project network Safe Haven Hamburg, and the Hamburg-funded project Opportunities at Safe Haven Hamburg. In general terms it is essential in such networks to achieve a good balance between the formally organised individual interest of the funding providers and the overall goals of the network. Network control has to ensure that the ambivalence in belonging to different systems is kept transparent in an organisational form appropriate to the network, and to create a binding framework so that the network is functional.

Another element in the Hamburg network structures is the Hamburg Alliance Refugees, Migration, Work (Bündnis Flucht Migration Bildung Arbeit), where numerous funding providers – the fund providers for the projects mentioned above – cooperate in an extremely heterogeneous constellation, involving welfare organisations, integration centres<sup>4</sup>, educational and employment organisations, and

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<sup>4</sup>To promote and support the integration of adult migrants with a right to stay, Hamburg has its own integration centres (the only ones in Germany),

Figure 14.1: Structure and impact radius (own presentation, cf. Bauer & Otto, 2005, p.282); *Contents of this schematic diagram adapted by the author*



in particular also migrants' self-help organisations. The title of the organisation underscores its policy, putting refugees and asylum seekers explicitly at the focus of activities. The alliance acts as a forum to get important expertise from the non-formal and informal sectors of education and counselling into the discussion. That is a contribution to dissemination of the requirements for education and counselling programmes to take account of the needs of migrants and refugees. Within these structures, a diversity strategy is being tested in the Hamburg area, going beyond the specialist networks for a diversity strategy at inter-institutional level. It identifies social inequality as comprehensively as possible in the areas of counselling and education, and makes an effort to disregard the social differences between the individual migrant groups. In the course of re-orientation of the Senate's policy, the alliance was able to define needs in Hamburg's migration policy, and to put forward vital ideas and present recommendations, and to discuss these in face-to-face discussions with policy makers (Hamburg Alliance, FLUCHT MIGRATION Bildung Arbeit, 2011).

The networks strengthen the work of the individual projects in cooperation with the institutions responsible for transition from school to vocation or the world of work (schools, youth vocational agencies, companies, etc.). The interfaces between the systems are optimised, transitions facilitated for the young people, and working cultures between institutions of different identity are re-formed. The various players get together, with participation of the policy makers from Hamburg's government, administration and business community, so that the network structures are a platform for handling subjects and areas that are politically disputed. The aim is to eliminate barriers and to call for equal opportunities, so that young refugees can get an education and gain entry to vocational training and the world of work.

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funded by the Hamburg Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Integration.

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## 15. Supporting separated children in Ireland to access education

BETHANY WYNNE-MORGAN

### **15.1 Separated children in the Irish context**

Separated children (also known as unaccompanied minors) are those whom are under 18 years of age, outside of their country of origin and who have been separated from their primary caregivers (legal or customary). They arrive in Ireland alone seeking safety and protection from war, poverty or persecution in their own country. These children and young people face many challenges on their own without the care and support of their parents and family.

When a separated child arrives in Ireland, they are placed in the care of the Health Service Executive (HSE), who situate the child within foster care, 'supported lodgings' or long-term residential centre accommodation, while their application for refugee status is processed<sup>1</sup>. If Refugee or Subsidiary Protection status is granted while the separated child is still a minor, they are usually supported by the HSE care system and enjoy the provision of aftercare and support throughout the transition to independent living upon reaching 18 years of age. However, in cases where a separated child is still awaiting a decision on their application and turns 18, they auto-

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<sup>1</sup>Muireann Ní Raghdalligh (2013), 'Foster Care and Supported Lodgings for Separated Asylum Seeking Young People in Ireland: The views of young people, carers and stakeholders'

matically become known as ‘Aged Out Minors’ and are no longer considered as part of the HSE care system<sup>2</sup>.

Aged Out Minors must leave the HSE care system and enter the adult Direct Provision system operated by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA). In many cases, these young people are still in full time school education. They may still be completing their secondary school Leaving Certificate or have begun third level courses but must move to adult accommodation in Dublin or elsewhere around the country. Being dispersed to a new location creates many problems for Aged Out Minors. On a practical level, it is not always possible to get a place in another school or on the courses needed to finish their education. Emotionally too, it is very distressing to leave a foster family and the support network they have built. As separated children they had one or more key care givers allocated to them in addition to an agent of the HSE. As an Aged Out Minor they are moved from a community to a position where specialised support may not exist.

The system of Direct Provision is in stark contrast the care afforded to the young person under the HSE residential centres or foster placements. Residents in Direct Provision are accommodated in shared rooms (sometimes with a capacity of up to 5 persons). It is a full board service in which meal times are strictly allocated by the centre. Beyond these provisions, adult residents are eligible for just 19.10 EUR per week to cover any other needs. As such, the lack of

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<sup>2</sup>Section 45 of the Child Care Act 1991 allows for the child to remain in care until they reach the age of 21 if the Child and Family Agency (CFA) deems this appropriate and necessary. If they are in education, they may be allowed to remain in care until completion of the course. Ní Raghallaigh wrote that in the case of separated children, the CFA in the Leaving and Aftercare Services National Policy and Procedure Document, states that the child ‘may be eligible to access a Leaving & Aftercare service on the basis of their individual needs assessment’. Ní Raghallaigh also found that the CFA and the RIA had contrasting views of the process of determining the child’s vulnerability and thus access to aftercare within the context of the CFA’s individual needs assessment. Ní Raghallaigh noted that, in practice children were typically moved from care into Direct Provision when they reached 18.

privacy and quiet area for homework or study, restrictive mealtimes and financial constraints are some of the significant areas of concern for aged out minors within the direct provision system.

Aged out minors are a vulnerable group of care leavers and often feel isolated. They often become traumatised by the transition to Direct Provision and struggle to adjust to the new living environment which can lead to the development of mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. A limited number of NGOs in Ireland provide support to these children. NGOs are concerned about the welfare of these young people and aim to advocate on behalf of Aged Out Minors and look after their needs since most no longer have anyone allocated to do this for them by the state.

Nasc (The Irish Immigrant Support Centre) based in Cork, Ireland operates a dedicated programme providing financial and other social supports to Aged Out Minors to assist them in accessing education. Nasc also advocates for a change to government policy to provide aftercare to Aged Out Minors until at least the age of 21 whereby they are given the option of staying within their foster family or supported lodgings. In addition, Nasc has found that the best interests of the child are not being upheld when a situation of age-dispute arises and advises that the state must provide alternative, more appropriate accommodation for these vulnerable minors<sup>3</sup>

## 15.2 A practice example from Cork, Ireland

### Project/organisation

#### *Nasc Separated Children's Programme*

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<sup>3</sup>The Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill fails to adequately address the issue of age assessments. It proposes that immigration officers or members of the Gardai be solely responsible for assessing the age of the child. Barnardos recommends that when an individual's age is disputed they should be assessed by an independent panel of experts including a social worker, a general practitioner and a psychologist, who have expertise in child and adolescent behaviour and development and who have been trained in child-friendly interview techniques. Barnardos (April 2009), 'Separated and Trafficked Children'.

The Separated Children's Programme at Nasc provides a much needed holistic service to Separated Children or 'Aged out Minors' living in the asylum system in the Cork area and elsewhere. Over the past 2 years, Nasc has utilised a fund provided to us by the One Foundation to provide educational fee payments and to cover other related costs such as travel, books, materials and other related living expenses. Nasc provides personal and emotional support and act as an advocate on behalf of the Separated Children when the need arises. The project aims to support this vulnerable group of teens and young adults in developing self confidence, new skills and knowledge through access to education and other opportunities in order for them to have a chance at a brighter future.

### **Illustration of practice**

Aged out Minors are a vulnerable group of care leavers and often feel isolated. They can become re-traumatised by the transition to Direct Provision and struggle to adjust to the new living environment. This can lead to the development of mental health issues and result in the disengagement with education or other supports. Nasc is concerned over the welfare of these young people and aims to advocate on their behalf since they no longer have anyone allocated to do this for them by the state.

Primarily, Nasc supports access to education for this group of young people by providing:

- Financial support in the form of fee payments for educational courses including English Language provision, college courses at FETAC level 3 - 6 and University degrees where possible.
- Payments for the day-to-day needs such as food, study materials, books and transport.
- Personal support. The young people we support also drop into the office once a week which gives them the opportunity to raise with us any concerns that they have.

## **Most important milestones**

In 2013, Nasc supported 18 separated children in Cork as well as in the Waterford area through a partnership with the Edmund Rice International Heritage Centre. Of these young people we supported, all but one of them completed the course they had enrolled in or are currently still enrolled in a course and are performing well. At Nasc we are particularly proud of this success rate.

Some of the learnings that Nasc have gathered during the initial 2 years running of this project are:

- The importance of providing personal support to the young people – someone to be accountable to, someone to be interested in their grades / encourage educational achievement, to be a good mentor.
- Linking in with other support services and educational institutes in the City. For example, Nasc has developed a good relationship with the Cork Institute of Technology's 'Access team' and with St. Vincent de Paul who have provided additional supports to some particularly vulnerable students.

Nasc also operates a pilot internship programme with the Cork Electronics Industry Association (CEIA). Nasc selected two young people that we had previously worked with to join two other young Irish students to take part in this programme which aims to help these young people gain valuable work experience in the field of electronics through a mentoring system.

## **Most important hurdles**

- Asylum Seekers are required to pay international students fees which are extremely prohibitive. Nasc works hard, on a case

by case basis, to negotiate with local colleges and advocate for Aged Out Minors to be accepted<sup>4</sup>.

- A high level of personal support is required for the successful operation of this programme – ideally there needs to be a specific person dedicated to the fund in order to keep the young person engaged in education.
- Providing for indirect educational needs e.g. lunch, items of clothing etc.
- Often times, advocacy around related asylum issues must also be provided e.g. Issues with particularly isolated Direct Provision centre locations/ transfers/ complaints/ social payments
- Vocational courses / FETAC qualifications are much easier to access than University level, however we have been successful in getting two students access to a degree through the support of the college's Access Team and other NGOs.
- Emerging challenge: upon receiving residency – the transition from the asylum system to independent living is incredibly difficult particularly with regard to retaining educational courses.

### **Networking partners (local, which types of organisation)**

- Access Offices in vocational education institutions can provide essential support to Separated Children / Aged Out Minors
- Social Workers who have been assigned to the young person

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<sup>4</sup>Only recognised refugees are entitled to access the Free Fees Initiative on the same basis as Irish Citizens. Other forms of protection I.e. Subsidiary/ Leave to Remain may be considered for free tuition fees. Likewise, access to student maintenance grants provided by local authorities is also dependent on the same restrictions related to nationality, legal status and residence.

- NGOs working with migrant youth can identify suitable candidates for the programme
- Local charities have provided additional financial support to programme participants i.e. St. Vincent de Paul
- Private Industry has supported programme participants through an internship programme i.e. Cork Electronics Industry Association (CEIA)

### **15.3 Conclusion**

This programme continues to provide advocacy and access to education to some of the most vulnerable young people in Irish society. The impact and value of engaging in further education cannot be overstated. All of the Aged Out Minors and asylum seeking young people that Nasc work with, perceive education to be the main means through which to provide a brighter future for themselves.

Nasc has a dedicated Separated Children and Migrant Youth Intern to administrate the education fund provided by the Community Foundation and to provide information and advocacy. This programme is expected to continue for another year - until the end of 2016, however to continue beyond this point, further funding must be attained.

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## 16. Approaches from Finland in order to prevent dropout of young immigrant students in transition from school to VET

KATARINA SANDBACKA, TIINA SIRÉN-NUUTINEN AND SARI LEHTOMÄKI

The target group in the Finnish country report of this project is young immigrants arriving in Vaasa, Finland at an age when they are close to transitioning between compulsory basic education (ages 7-17) and second level education (vocational education or upper secondary schools; ages 15 and older).

Young people transitioning between one level of education to another are at particular risk of dropout from the education system. In this time of transition, each young person is in need of counselling and support in order to successfully find a suitable place. Special attention has been paid to this within the Finnish school system, and many local projects have constructed models and systems to optimize co-operation between local comprehensive schools and senior secondary schools and vocational education. Similar models and co-operation have also been constructed and put into practice for the city of Vaasa. The different actors within the transition system of Vaasa, however, realized that this model did not support the increasing number of young immigrants in the area, particularly *late*

*arrivals* or those who had not completed education from comprehensive school in Finland and young people with poor Finnish language skills.

From the beginning of 2010, the city of Vaasa took part in a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Interior with the aim of assisting municipals to identify and prevent problems in residential areas with large amounts of immigrants in order to improve services for the immigrants.

The focus of the project of the city of Vaasa was threefold: early childhood, support for young people in the transition from comprehensive school and finally the provision of cultural services.

The title of the project was *Maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisen hyvien käytänteiden pilottihanke*, that is *Pilot project for good practices of integration of immigrants*. The central aim of the project was to develop the means of support for the transitional stages of young immigrants with the aim of preventing exclusion. This was done by developing a new and innovative transition model for Vaasa. During the project a network of different stakeholders was formed and a project worker *immigrant co-ordinator* was employed to coordinate and support young immigrants transitioning from comprehensive school to vocational education. The co-ordinator's work proved to be so essential for the transition stage of young immigrants in Vaasa that her position was made permanent at Vaasa Vocational Institute on the completion of the project in 2010.

The vocational institutes have to rethink the target group of *immigrant students* and realize that they are a large heterogeneous group with very diverse backgrounds and needs. Responsibility is now largely given to the VET institutions to increase support systems and to develop teaching methods for the target group in order for them to succeed in their studies and to be able to enter the labour market. Co-teaching has been used and developed at Vaasa Vocational Institute for a few years and has shown to be a successful method in supporting young immigrants in their studies.

## 16.1 Example: immigrant coordinator

This example illustrates the work of the immigrant coordinator.

Table 16.1: Contact data for immigrant coordinator in Finland

<b>Country</b>	Vaasa, Finland
<b>Organization</b>	Vaasan Vocational Institute  Vaasa Vocational Institute is an education on the secondary level and is owned by the city of Vaasa. It offers the students different lines of professions within the educational programmes.
<b>Project</b>	The transition from basic school to VET and from VET to the world of work.
<b>Contact</b>	Immigrant coordinator Tiina Sirén-Nuutinen  Ruutikellarintie 2, 65100 Vaasa  Phone: +358 40 59 47 502

### Illustration of practice

The task of the school is to support students in their individual development and especially focus on the phase when students leave basic education and enter VET. Students who need more support and guidance, for example immigrants who have arrived in the country in their late teens, are being helped by the immigrant coordinator.

The immigrant coordinator has good contact with the students before they go to the basic school. She also creates a good network not only with the students but also with the rest of the family and the officials who are in close contact with the immigrants' lives.

Once the vocational institution receives the information about the students who gained a study place, the immigrant coordinator contacts those immigrants who did not gain a study place. She then

tries to find either a study place in the preparatory education or in the youth class for everyone in order to avoid leaving anybody outside the educational system.

Once the immigrant students get into VET, the immigrant coordinator provides support and guidance if special support is needed during the course of their entire education. She also acts as a cultural interpreter within the school.

When the student graduates and whenever they need special support in the transition to the world of work, she gives support and guidance. Furthermore, if necessary, she can accompany the student to the labour office.

### **Most important milestones**

The most important milestone was that the work of the immigrant coordinator was seen as so important that the position was made permanent. For us the important milestones have been to see the students gain a vocational education and see them prosper in the Finnish society with its responsibilities and rights. One milestone has also been that those immigrants who have been troubled in some way have gained more self-confidence and been able to stand on their own feet.

### **Most important hurdles**

To get all staff within the school to understand how they can benefit from the service offered by the immigrant coordinator in their work with students of immigrant background is essential.

The most important hurdle is to help students acquire adequate language skills in order for the immigrant to successfully pass VET. Another common hurdle is that immigrant students may often lack the skills to study and learn. Many times the immigrant student is so traumatized that it negatively affects the learning of the language and other subjects.

## 16.2 Example co-teaching

The next example illustrates the use of co-teaching as a method in classrooms where students of immigrant background are integrated:

Access to VET has become easier for students with immigrant background, but this has put a lot of pressure on the providers of VET, as students with, sometimes, very poor language skills and basic knowledge are admitted to their courses. Such students cannot be refused access to VET once they have a certificate from basic education. There is a demand for increased support for the "late arrivals" within VET in order for them to succeed in their studies and to prevent them from dropping out.

This example illustrates the practice of co-teaching.

Table 16.2: Contact data for immigrant coordinator in Finland

<b>Country</b>	Vaasa, Finland
<b>Project</b>	Co-teaching
<b>Organization</b>	Vaasan Vocational Institute  Vaasa Vocational Institute is an education on the secondary level and owned by the city of Vaasa. It offers the students different lines of professions within the educational programmes.
<b>Project</b>	The transition from basic school to VET and from VET to the world of work.
<b>Contact</b>	Finnish teacher Sari Lehtomäki  Ruutikellarintie 4, 65100 Vaasa  Phone: +358 40 719 72 26

## **Illustration of practice**

Co-teaching is a method of teaching where there are two teachers in the classroom at the same time. One teaches the actual subject matter and the other one is the Finnish teacher who helps the immigrant students with the Finnish language in order to make it easier for the student to understand and to follow the teaching. At Vaasa Vocational Institute this method has been put into practice, for example, in practical subjects such as cooking in the kitchen, in mathematics lessons, in computer lessons and nursing lessons. The objective with this type of teaching is to support the student with their vocational studies, to simply help them understand the different terms and words that might be easy for Finnish speakers. The Finnish teacher sits or works along with the immigrant student/students during the lesson the whole time. It is easy for the student to ask questions in privacy and also for the Finnish teacher to ask questions and check if the main things are understood. With this method the student does not have to worry about losing his/her face in any way.

## **Most important milestones**

That the education provider has acknowledged co-teaching as a successful method and is willing to allocate resources for two teachers in the same classroom at the same time is crucial. For the teachers the important milestones have been to see the students' progress in vocational studies and to apply the learning outcomes of the project in practice. A further achievement is also that the students gain more self-confidence as they proceed in their studies and learn more of the language and the subject.

## **Most important hurdles**

The most important hurdle is to find ways to help the teachers to understand that the Finnish teacher is an asset to both the teacher and the student, not a threat.

## 17. Children left behind: emergence of a new vulnerable group in Bulgaria

NIKOLAY POPOV; TEODORA GENOVA AND MARINA BAKALOVA

Challenges in the transition to vocational education and training or the world of work

### **17.1 Context of the current situation of children left behind by migrating parents in Bulgaria**

The issue of children left behind by migrating parents who are working abroad for an unspecified period of time is a relatively new topic of discussion in Bulgaria. This newly emerging vulnerable group has been formed and recognized by the society and state authorities only in the recent years as a consequence of high levels of labor migration. Along with the alarming tendency of growing numbers of children left behind worldwide on one hand, and the lack of global data on their exact number on the other hand, NGOs estimate that in the European Union member states like Romania, Bulgaria and Poland, for example, 500,000 to 1 million children are affected by parental migration and the press has dubbed them *euro orphans* (Nejzechleba, 2013). According to Eurostat data, Bulgaria takes the third place within the European Union after Poland and Romania in the

number of emigrants working abroad (UNICEF report, 2014). Experts say the migration flux of Bulgarians working abroad will not cease in the near future due to the unsatisfactory living and working conditions in the country. There are two significant research publications on the issues of children left behind up to the present moment in Bulgaria. The first one is the 2014 UNICEF report<sup>1</sup> and the second one is the Partners Bulgaria Foundation (PBF) project report 2015<sup>2</sup> implemented within the Grundtvig program of the European Commission.

According to the first UNICEF study carried out in 2013 for the purposes of data collection among pupils aged 12-18, 25.9% or 113 499 of the children in the study live in transnational families, which means that every fourth or fifth child in Bulgaria has a parent working abroad (UNICEF report, 2014). In addition to that, on the basis of the same study, Partners Bulgaria Foundation reveals similar statistics: around 22.5% of all children up to the age of 18 are children of migrant parents. With the total number of children in Bulgaria being 1 191 221, the children left behind are approximately 267 753 (PBF, 2015, p. 13). The consequences of parental migration have equally affected both the majority children of Bulgarian origin as well as minority children of Turkish and Roma background. UNICEF Bulgaria points out some remarkable findings. First of all, they underline that in Bulgaria 26% of minors have a parent working abroad; moreover, there are some trends in the migration flux, for example the majority of the migrant mothers come from the rural area while most of the migrant fathers come from the cities. The Turkish minority has particularly high migration rates: 70% of families have a member working abroad (UNICEF report, 2014). Children left

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<sup>1</sup>Непубликуван доклад: "Ефекти върху децата, оставени от родители, които работят и живеят в чужбина май-юли 2013, на екип на фондация "Риск-Монитор" с научен ръководител доц. д-р Петя Кабакчиева разработен по поръчка на УНИЦЕФ- България."

<sup>2</sup>Support for Children left Behind by Parents Living and Working Abroad, PBF, 2015, retrieved from <http://partnersbg.org/ver2/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Children-Left-Behind-Policy-Paper-FINAL-EN.pdf>

behind are a specific, varied group of children in Bulgaria. They are not identified as a separate and independent group by institutions and society and fall under the broader understanding of *children at risk*. A working definition of the term *children of migrant parents* has not yet been adopted and established in Bulgaria. While some of the children of migrants are classified as *children at risk, problem children* or *children requiring help/support*, others cope extremely well with the challenges their transnational family is facing (PBF, 2015).

Despite being described as a vulnerable group by definition, the group of children left behind in Bulgaria is identified as a possible group at risk by state representatives. In this respect, children left behind are constantly faced with the struggle to resolve their day-to-day problems which arise from their precarious situation. Parental deprivation and its substitute by relatives, siblings, or social institutions lead to tremendous negative impact for the development of children left behind. It finds expression predominantly in their psycho-emotional development, health status, and school performance. According to the same UNICEF study (2014), there exist serious emotional problems. Children with migrant parents feel much sadder than their peers living together with their parents. They feel more often scared, angry, and helpless; they make decisions very slowly and indecisively and are terrified of being alone. Likewise, the health status of children left behind is quite alarming in Bulgaria. Relatives find out about the health problem of the child later and they do not know how to react. The research reveals some serious cases of epilepsy, tremors, allergies, operations. In most cases parents do not come back to help their children, but only send money to cover the medical expenses. As far as their scholastic performance is concerned, PBF (2015) points out in their report that "there is some data, though not entirely conclusive, that shows school dropouts come mainly from families of migrant parents. It is important to note, however, there are children who cope exceptionally well with the school curriculum in the absence of their parents and proceed to enroll in and complete a higher education

as well. A positive side to this model of family life is the fact that migrant parents tend to invest a significant portion of their earnings into the education of their children” (pp. 13-14). This positive feature has also been confirmed by the work package biographies within the present TransVET project. In addition to that, according to the same report, a negative side of living in a transnational family is linked to the fact that ”sometimes children of migrant parents overshadow their peers in terms of sheer financial means. Not all studies conducted in the country back up this finding, but where they do, it is usually due to poor budgeting on the parents’ part. As a result, children become spoiled and undisciplined, cease to heed their grandparents or other relatives, charged with their care, start smoking, drinking, doing drugs, and eventually drop out of school. Thus, they become prime targets for criminals or sometimes find themselves involved in crime due to lack of better judgement, becoming familiar to the local police department or social work offices” (pp. 14-15).

The state authorities and policy makers in Bulgaria are currently facing the challenges of identifying and becoming aware of the importance of the issue of children left behind. Generally, institutions do not focus on working with migrant families and on providing adequate support services for them. PBF (2015) claims that it is evident the term children left behind by their parents, who live and work abroad – *Children Left Behind* has not been introduced and, therefore, is not used. The phrase is only used by the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP), who in 2013 created its own commission of experts tasked with identifying the issues of children of migrant parents and suggesting appropriate measures, including changes to the acting policies and regulations as well as developing a set of working methodologies. Unfortunately, over a year after the date set by the Chairman of SACP, there is still no evidence the commission has made any headroom in guaranteeing the rights and interests of children of migrant parents will be met (p. 13).

In the similar line of absence of any effective proper activities to be taken at state, regional, and local level, the education system of

Bulgaria and in particular the system of vocational education and training (VET) does not recognize the group of children left behind as a vulnerable group. Thus, it has no mechanisms or strategies to address their needs and develop their true potential for work realization and prepare them to be competitive on the labor market. In both comprehensive and vocational secondary schools there are no internal structures to support this specific group. In most cases, extra work with these children is done by the school psychologist (if the school has one) or the teachers themselves.

The present TransVET project within the Leonardo da Vinci program could well serve as a good example model and a decisive step further into identifying and supporting the disadvantaged position of this vulnerable group. Through using the instrument *Index for Integration* we believe that we will change the perspective and grasp the attention of all responsible parties involved in the process of young people's transition to the world of vocational education and training and/or to the world of work.

## 17.2 Presentation of two good practice examples

### Example 1: within the Grundtvig programme

The following example illustrates the outcomes of the project carried out within the Grundtvig program *Advanced training programme on transnational families support*, already mentioned above, by Partners Bulgaria Foundation between 2013 and 2015.

Table 17.1: Contact data for example 1 in Bulgaria

<b>Country</b>	Sofia, Bulgaria
<b>Organization</b>	Partners Bulgaria Foundation (PBF) is an independent, non-governmental organization (NGO).
<b>Contact</b>	2A Yakobitsa str., 1164 Sofia

Phone: +359 2 962 3174 / +359 2 868 8007  
E-mail: partners@partnersbg.org

## Introduction

Registered in 1998 under Bulgarian law, Partners Bulgaria Foundation (PBF) is an independent, non-governmental organization (NGO). Since its establishment PBF became part of the international network Partners for Democratic Change, registered by Raymond Shonholtz in 1989 in USA to promote the democratic reforms and a culture of peaceful conflict resolution in countries in transition. Responding initially to the monumental changes in Central and Eastern Europe, Partners for Democratic Change facilitated the establishment of local NGOs across Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. The goal of this work was to generate and support sustainable capacity and local competencies to address governmental, business, and civil society disputes, conflicts, and change issues through mediating processes and programs.

PBF's mission is to facilitate the process for democratic development in Bulgaria by supporting institutions, NGOs and specialists to improve policies and practices in areas like judicial law, social care, child protection, education, economic development and ecology. The organization works to improve the dialogue between the citizen body, the government and the business sector, while encouraging various underrepresented organizations, groups and ethnic communities to participate in the decision-making processes. Partners Bulgaria Foundation works toward achieving its goals through the following activities:

- Research, analysis, evaluation and recommendation for change in policies concerning socially marginalized groups (including ethnic minorities, children without parental care, children and youths at risk, under-aged offenders and others).

- Education on themes like: effective communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, mediation, civic education, leadership, organizational development, group consensus and others.
- Mediation as aid for individual people, groups and organizations in conflict resolution.
- Cooperative planning, facilitating meetings and public discussions as well as decision-making processes. PBF also aids in creating initiatives for conflict resolution on a local level.
- Campaigning for public awareness toward issues of common importance.

Partners Bulgaria Foundation is supported by foreign and local organizations and government agencies: USAID, OAK Foundation, the King Baudouin Foundation, Tulip Foundation, the British Embassy, the American Embassy, the Dutch Embassy, Save the Children Fund, Open Society Foundation, European Commission and others.

### **Illustration of practice**

Partners Bulgaria Foundation has developed an in-depth country analysis on the current situation of children left behind, producing a qualitative and quantitative research. Despite the lack of official data, it is evident that the phenomenon has been increasing in the last years in Bulgaria and elsewhere.

This phenomenon of migrant parents has been spreading, with consequences on family ties that need to be deepened and studied. PBF reported the first findings of the focus group with children of migrant parents and with the stakeholders working with minors in the town of Dupnitsa. The case presented was particularly interesting since it showed that in this community the children manage the separation from their parents quite well thanks to the class teachers who keep a contact with them.

The active involvement of the organization in the issue of children left behind has resulted in publishing a report which reflects the results of a survey conducted through document analysis and qualitative research on the topic of children left in the country by parents living and working abroad, conducted within the project *Advanced training programme on transnational families support*. During the two-year implementation of the project, PBF and their partners worked closely together to improve the quality of social networks for the support of family members living in different countries due to labor migration. The project has aimed at developing a training program for professionals working with migrants and their families who remain living in the country of origin.

The aim of the study is to record, analyze and present the current state of the problems of children left behind in Bulgaria by defining some basic trends and traits in the national context. On this basis some conclusions and recommendations have been made for improving work with these children and providing adequate support to their development by stakeholders. The study was conducted during the winter and spring of 2014 in the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Gotse Delchev, Montana, Varshtets, Sliven, Tvarditsa, Dupnitsa, Targovishte, Vidin and Lom.

To determine the difficulties children of migrant parents experience in their everyday life, the following qualitative methods were used:

- Desk research: impact of labor migration on children whose parents have emigrated.
- In-depth interviews with (N=6): children of migrant parents, immigrant parents, guardians of underage children (below 14) and trustees of minors (age 14 to 18).
- Focus group discussions (N=22): stakeholders and key persons bringing their inside perspective and knowledge about the issue.

## **Most important milestones**

The results of the study have led to understanding the impact of labour migration on children left behind by their parents. Due to the extremely dynamic nature of labor migration, there are three crucial issues which must be taken note of when conducting a study of this type.

Firstly, the data is lacking in terms of the exact number of Bulgarian nationals working beyond state borders. The chief reason for this is related to fairly unreliable source information as well as lack of official records. Secondly, there are important considerations to be made when defining migration as a social phenomenon, recognizing the lack of a consensus on the matter. There are many different definitions and points of view, various classifications, and analyses being carried out based on a number of theories and methodologies.

The third important issue to consider with respect to labor migration is the fact that studies in this field have mostly been based on economic analyses. They concern themselves mainly with the economic growth and, thus, take into account mainly the economic aspects and influences of labor migration on the country, economic practises and tendencies of migrants, etc.

## **Most important hurdles**

Even though Bulgaria is putting efforts to solve some of the problems of children of migrants, a well-functioning mechanism of interaction between stakeholders for working with them does not exist. At this point institutions are largely ineffective in solving problems, and some, like schools and kindergartens, are burdened with unrealistic expectations to make up for the absence of the parent/s.

## **Networking partners (local, regional, national level)**

The most important networking partners, and their roles, are as follows:

- UNICEF Bulgaria, a part of UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and a part of the big family of UN: a leading organization, working in more than 190 countries for the benefits of children.
- State Agency for Child Protection: a specialized body of the Council of Ministers which runs, coordinates and monitors the child protection system in Bulgaria.
- Junior Achievement Bulgaria: works toward educating young Bulgarians to value free enterprise, understand business and economics, develop ethical leadership and be workforce ready.
- Wishbox: provides upper-secondary school pupils and university students with an innovative and interactive web platform for career orientation.

**Products available in which language? Place of finding – link to web-sites**

Effect of Parents' Migration on Children Left Behind Report, available in English and Bulgarian, <http://partnersbg.org/ver2/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Children-Left-Behind-Policy-Paper-FINAL-EN.pdf>

**Example 2: the NGO *Teach for Bulgaria***

The second example illustrates an informal survey, carried out by the non-governmental organization *Teach for Bulgaria* for the purposes of the present project, focusing on their work with children left behind at school, and, in addition to that, some practical methods of career guidance orientation have been given.

Table 17.2: Contact data for example 2 in Bulgaria, Elitsa Geneva, a TFB teacher of the German language

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<b>Country</b>	Sofia, Bulgaria
<b>Organization</b>	<i>Teach for Bulgaria</i>
<b>Contact</b>	<p>19 Ivan Denkoglou str. 1000 Sofia      Phone/Fax: +359 2/ 9880688      E-mail: info@zaednovchas.bg      Project management – Evgenia Peeva:      e.peeva@zaednovchas.bg</p>

## Introduction

*Teach for Bulgaria* (TFB) was founded in July 2010 to facilitate equal access to quality education for every child in Bulgaria. TFB attracts and selects talented, ambitious young people from diverse fields who have the mindset and the skills that will allow them to become inspiring, transformational teachers with an innovative approach to teaching. TFB's teachers go through an intensive training in order to receive teaching certification. The certificate is issued by a partner university, which also helps to design and deliver training programs. TFB trains the selected candidates on how to plan lessons, motivate students inside and outside the classroom, involve parents in the process and also how to work with other teachers and school administrators to ensure the success of their students. TBF's teachers get employed in schools that work with students from socially and economically disadvantaged communities for a period of two years. TFB supports the teachers throughout their two-year work period at school. They go through a comprehensive professional development program that ensures their success as teachers and leaders in any professional field.

## **Illustration of practice**

Regarding the focus of the current project, a short informal survey among 38 teachers from Teach for Bulgaria has been made. The results show that 88% of the teachers state that they teach children whose one or both parents have migrated. Top three destination countries for the parents to migrate to are Germany, Greece and Spain. 100% of the teachers say that in their school there are no internal structures for support of this specific group of children. 74% of the teachers observe that the children left behind group faces difficulties in the learning process.

The teachers from TFB are fully aware of the fact that they work with children left behind and that these children need further attention. Regarding the question "In your opinion, what challenges do the children left behind face?", 74% of the teachers state that the lack of parental attention and control is a significant problem. Here are some quotations from the inquiry:

- lack of support and encouragement from parents, which leads to low motivation levels – they are just not interested in learning;
- decreased parental attention has negative effects – for the younger students this leads to continuous affection seeking and for the older students to the acquisition of harmful habits and the lack of role models;
- these children have less support at home for the school work and they need more self-discipline;
- fewer or lack of basic social skills, which are formed by parents at primary school age;
- some of these children are emotional unstable or aggressive;
- very often the people who care for these children do not follow their regular visit to school, "because they are too old and cannot bring the child to school";

- these children have traumatic experiences in preparation and participation in various community events, which previously included parents;
- sometimes limited access to additional resources;
- administrative problems (for example, regarding participation in an international seminar when there is no parent available to sign the agreement to travel).

59% of the teachers work on the career guidance for their students and help them to make their own career choice. Not every school in Bulgaria has a special program for career orientation. In fact, there is no school in Bulgaria which has created a structure for supporting children left behind and directing them to an appropriate profession, where they could demonstrate and develop their potential. Such guidance is provided mainly through the efforts of teachers, who include topics for career education in the classes or in extracurricular activities.

The teachers from Teach for Bulgaria realize the need of the children left behind to receive further attention and support. That is why it is a common practice to work with the children after school, outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school education. Many of the teachers use the opportunity to receive a financial grant under the national program "To make school attractive for young people", which is part of the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", financed by the European Social Fund. With this funding the teachers organize all sorts of clubs – cooking, photography, sports, etc.

In some schools there are *career guidance clubs* which help children to choose their own professional path. These clubs have different structures and curricula but what unites them is the role of practitioners and specialists who speak about their work and give advice on their field of expertise.

Sometimes part of the training is focused on self-exploration: in games children can explore a lot about themselves, their interests

and strengths. An important part of the career training is the presentation of different professions. This can be done by the teachers themselves, but more often it is done by guest-speakers. At the end of the year, each child should be able to write their own plan of action and to set its own goals. Another method of career guidance for the children is the implementation of the topic in the school curriculum. This practice is especially suitable for language classes – the teacher teaches children how to write a letter of motivation and a CV and includes all kinds of games, simulating a job interview. The children work on projects in small groups. Common practice are the so-called authentic assessments – assessments which aim to measure important skills for success in each profession, such as presentation skills, teamwork skills, time-management skills, etc. Professional Orientation Summer Camp is a two-week program for students in their 8th to 11th grades. The program is focused on introducing students to professionals from different fields and companies with a publicly recognized corporate culture. The ultimate goal is for students to present personal development plans where they pick a field, get their carrier aspirations and introduce a step-by-step plan to achieve it.

Also, it has been planned to set up from-students-to-students professional orientation booklets, which could be of great benefit for hundreds of other students outside the program, as well.

### **Most important milestones**

The goal of Teach for Bulgaria is for every child in Bulgaria to have access to quality education, regardless of region, type of school or socio-economic situation. Every child in the country should learn from teachers who support their students and help them to reach their full potential.

## **Most important hurdles**

The most important hurdle is the low motivation for learning and the lack of self-esteem in the children, especially in the children left behind. They often feel stupid, insecure and unnecessary and do not believe in their own abilities. They do not envisage themselves having opportunities for a better life or they do not think they deserve them. It looks like it is really hard for children left behind to picture a realistic career plan or to find an internship. The problem can be overcome by having talented and motivated teachers to work with these children.

## **Networking partners (local, which types of organization)**

Teach for Bulgaria has established various partnerships with relevant organizations. The partners focus on topics such as: professional ideas exchange, education problem analysis and finding proper solutions to address these problems, teachers financing, attracting volunteers, popularizing the educational inequality issues, etc.

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Science – letter of support
- Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
- Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski
- The Union of Bulgarian Mathematicians
- The Union of Bulgarian Teachers
- The union of employers for better nationwide education
- The union of the high school education directors in Bulgaria
- Here and There association
- Parents association
- Paideia foundation

- Minio Balkanski foundation
- Open Society Institute
- Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe
- American Foundation for Bulgaria
- National Children Network
- Sofia Holistic Coworking Company

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<http://partnersbg.org/ver2/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Children-Left-Behind-Policy-Paper-FINAL-EN.pdf>

Partners Bulgaria Foundation: <http://partnersbg.org/>

Teach for Bulgaria: <http://zaednovchas.bg/>

State Agency for Child Protection: <http://sacp.government.bg/>

# 18. The Vocational German Unit of the national funding programme IQ – Integration through Qualification in Germany

IRIS BECKMANN-SCHULZ

## 18.1 Problem description

The changes in the world of work have increased the demands for German language skills in practically all areas, both in the employment market and in initial and further education and training. The widespread use of IT in the world of work and the resulting high rate of innovation in companies has led to a dramatic increase in communication and language skills needed at the workplace. Communication skills are also increasingly in demand as the focus of employment moves towards the services sector. And not least important, new quality management processes are becoming established in all sectors and industries, which means that every employee has to be able to provide information for auditing purposes on what he or she is doing at any given time, with what aim, and how that fits into the overall organisational process. Communication skills have long since become an essential element in vocational abilities. Anyone lacking these skills is at risk of exclusion and job loss.

Language courses directed primarily at cultivating general linguistic ability in the second language have an important purpose,

giving migrants the necessary language skills to handle their everyday tasks and activities, for example in their roles as tenants, patients, customers and parents. But they are only of limited use in preparing migrants for the specific demands of the workplace. All this calls for tools to determine the migrants' language needs and the corresponding special education and training programmes.

## **18.2 Vocational German as an integration tool in Germany since 2005**

The Immigration Act of 2005 launched a nationwide language programme for migrants – giving both new arrivals and migrants who had been living in Germany for a lengthy period the opportunity or obligation to attend integration courses, with the goal of reaching level A2/B1 in German as a second language on the CEFR scale (Common European Framework of Reference). At the same time, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs set up a nationwide network project with the funding programme IQ – Integration by Qualification, aimed at testing and transferring model approaches for continuing education counselling and vocational qualification of migrants. The Hamburg organisation *passage gGmbH* undertook to try out the few available approaches and models of vocational language promotion for the first time, to develop course concepts for workplace-related programmes, and to conduct the first continuing education courses for teachers of vocational German.

Germany's first nationwide ESF-BAMF programme for vocational language promotion was launched in 2007, with courses for migrants targeted at the special communicative requirements at the workplace as outlined above, and at qualification for employment. The responsible authority BAMF was able to draw on the expertise and experience in vocational German accumulated and coordinated at *passage gGmbH* for programme development and for the supporting quality measures. In cooperation with experts throughout Germany, quality criteria were developed for vocational language

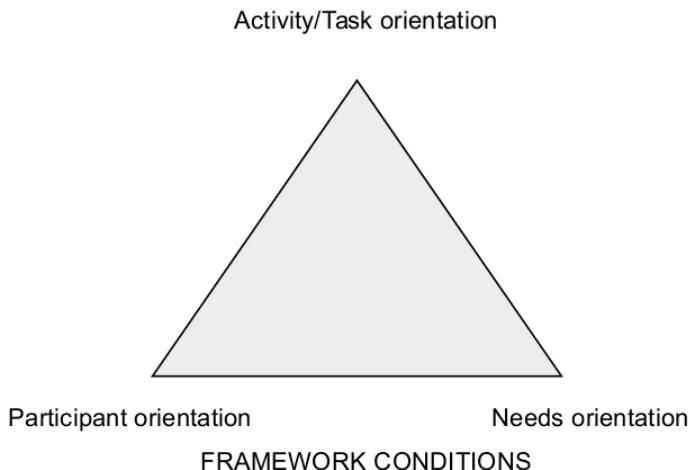
promotion, and a range of training programmes conducted for multiplication of the knowledge with course leaders and educational planners. These activities went beyond simple quality assurance for the ESF funded programme in that they include the strategic goal of establishing vocational language programmes in the regular options in vocational training and to link these with teaching the skills in specific disciplines.

The Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act (BQFG) adopted in 2012 extended the tasks of the IQ programme to include counselling for everyone seeking recognition of his/her qualifications. Since the beginning of 2015 ESF funds were also made available for a range of vocational adaptation qualification programmes within the 16 IQ networks in Germany's federal states. The goal of these programmes is to bridge the gap by compensating for the *major differences* between the vocational qualification previously achieved and the relevant qualification level in Germany, and thus to help migrants achieve full recognition of their vocational training. That can be done by specific subject-related training modules, or by in-company practice phases which have to be added in the course of the recognition process. That puts the focus for vocational German on integrated learning of subject matter and language, both for adaptation training and for in-company practice: How can the promotion of the second language be implemented in connection with training in the specific subject matter? How can in-company learning be organised so as to take account of the specific needs of the individual participants? The Vocational Training Unit is working on that in the present IQ programme funding period, in close cooperation with partners of the federal state networks, to develop and test new training approaches and to draw up appropriate training concepts for multipliers/disseminators.

### **18.3 Quality criteria for Vocational German teaching – with orientation to practice, participants and needs**

How can the wide range of demands for learning of vocational German be implemented in practice? The Vocational German Unit has been discussing quality criteria for vocational German teaching since 2008, and successively developing them in workshops and further training sessions with teachers and educational planners. They are based on the premises of orientation to practical application, to participants, and to needs. They are subdivided into questionnaires for different types of programme, helping to develop and verify a certain minimum quality of educational programmes (Beckmann-Schulz/Kleiner 2011).

Figure 18.1: **Quality Triangle for Vocational German** by Beckmann Schulz (2009)



## **What does this mean?**

### **Activity/task orientation**

*Activity/Task orientation* is implemented in teaching for example by exposing the student as a language practitioner to everyday situations which are as realistic and authentic as possible, and encouraging documentation of situations which pose difficult language problems for treatment in the lessons (bringing in specialist texts, complicated instructions, etc.). Activity/Task orientation also includes orientation towards specific tasks – the assignments in language teaching are to be based on real language requirements and to be meaningful for participants (Kuhn 2008, pp.151 et seq.). Company visits, realistic role play, and research assignments are suitable ways of linking the learning of German with the world of work. Interactive forms of learning, encouraging reflection, and the promotion of holistic learning, are also part of practice-oriented teaching.

### **Participant orientation**

Participant orientation puts students at the centre of activities. That means the teaching programmes are designed for heterogeneous groups and are correspondingly differentiated, i.e. they are oriented towards different learning routes and needs of the participants (Hal-lét 2006, p.48). The relevance of teaching aims and contents is comprehensible and transparent for students. The potentials, skills and life experience of participants are included in teaching as is their vocational expertise. The teacher is the expert at language teaching, but not necessarily at teaching the specifics of the individual subjects. The teacher supports and advises participants in their language learning processes, and at the same time promotes their role as experts in their own subjects.

## **Needs orientation**

Needs orientation arises from the content direction of the vocational German courses, and varies depending on qualification, vocational field, sector and company. It is essential to analyse the specific language needs for a training course or in-company programme in advance, in order to take account of the complexity of language and communication in vocational training and at the company.

### **18.4 Analysis of language needs – a central tool in vocational German**

An analysis of language needs is aimed at determining the objective language needs from the viewpoint of the players in continuing education and at the companies, i.e. the people responsible at HR, the Works Council, and the colleagues (cf. Grünhage et al. 2005; Haider, B. 2008; Weissenberg, J. 2012). It is also aimed at determining the subjective language needs of the learners in advance: What expectations and wishes do they have for their participation in language learning in the company? What prior knowledge and learning experience do they have, as a basis to build on?

Language learning can then be planned and implemented appropriately on the basis of the information obtained. Language needs and requirements in the company can be determined with the aid of questionnaires, checklists, interview guidelines, etc. The following diagram shows a simple but very helpful basis for determining language needs, subdivided into listening, reading, speaking and writing skills (Maurer 2006):

Figure 18.2: listening, reading, speaking and writing skills

What spoken language should participants be able to understand?	What written language should participants be able to understand?
What should participants be able to say?	
	What should participants be able to write?

It is of course not possible to separate the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing – for example a telephone conversation involves listening and spoken responses; but this matrix has proven itself in practice as a useful tool for rough description of language requirements. The following general questions are helpful to determine language needs:

- What activities do employees have at the workplace?
- What communication situations are relevant at the workplace (telephone inquiries and arrangements, working instructions, problem reporting, company meetings, . . . )?
- With whom do participants communicate in these situations, and how do they do that (hierarchies, language register, polite forms . . . )?
- What type of texts are participants expected to read (contracts, working instructions, forms, operating manuals ...) and what are they expected to write (CVs, work reports, covering letters, minutes . . . )?

The requirements for vocational language skills and the corresponding training programmes at the workplace can only be provided if the above quality criteria are met. That requires appropriate funding for design of programmes for vocational and qualification-related language promotion, and it also requires the appropriate skills on the part of educational planners and teachers. The Vocational German Unit sees itself as the interface between funding administration, academia and practice, and provides the relevant information, continuing education and networking to advance quality development and expert discussions in this field. The following diagram shows these levels of work and fields of activity:

Figure 18.3: levels of work and fields of activity

Cooperation with continuing education players & companies	Academia Politics Administration <b>Dialogue</b>	General expert public
IQ Practice level IQ Vocational German Unit	<b>IQ Vocational German Unit</b>	Continuing education for various multiplier groups
WG Healthcare & Nursing WG Continuing Education WG Trainer Pool Practice Forum "Integrated subject & language learning"		Language sensitive counselling Integrated subject & language learning Module series: Teacher training Vocational German German at the workplace Virtual learning worlds Language coaching DaZ Thematic continuing education courses
Workshop in cooperation with Counselling & Qualification Unit		
Consulting Knowledge Transfer		Public Relations Practical materials   print & web <a href="http://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de">www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de</a>
		Workshops Thematic Forums Specialist Conferences

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## **Part V**

### **Index of inclusion**

## 19. Fit for Purpose: examining the local VET system and the integration of vulnerable groups

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A comprehensive tool to assess the suitability of supports for vulnerable groups in transitioning from school to vocation and to the world of work.

### 19.1 Introduction

Educational and vocational research shows that there are considerable numbers of adolescents and young adults in the European Member States who are failing to make the transition from school to vocational education and training, or to the world of work. However, there are major regional differences both between and within the individual countries. At the same time, there is substantial demand for skilled people in the labour market. In many European countries the formal educational systems, e.g. schools, have made considerable progress in meeting the demand for integrative education and training concepts however there is a lack of corresponding progress in terms of targeting vulnerable groups, in particular

migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other minorities subject to discrimination, and their transition to vocational education and the world of work. Their risk of poverty is increased by precarious educational biographies and exclusion from training and vocational education and later from the labour market. In order to remedy this massive educational disadvantage, there is a need for concepts which are comprehensive, and at the same time adapted to the local, municipal and regional structures. In the framework of an EU project we have therefore set ourselves the goal of developing, testing and evaluating a practical tool to assist in identifying problems in the transition to the world of vocational education and training and/or to the world of work. This tool is a first step for targeted local and regional planning of education and training which takes account of social aspects and enables young adults in precarious situations to gain access.

### **About the function of the catalogue of questions**

Our tool comprises a catalogue of questions. Comparable tools are also described as an *Index*. The goal of an *Index* like this is to give transparency in what are sometimes complex structures at the interaction levels of the individual, the neighbourhood, networked organisations and social areas, with active participation of different interest groups aimed at a shared keynote idea (e.g. improvement of the educational system, creation of accessibility, etc.) and the different levels of effect.

The central methodological element of our tool is a list of questions designed to work out the status quo, the problems and obstacles, and the needs and recommendations. There are no *right* or *wrong* answers to these questions, but rather this is a systematic, structured analysis of the issues affected by the questions. The aim is that the list of questions will provide a space for discussion, reflection, monitoring and review of processes locally leading to opportunities for further development and suggestions for improvements. The purpose of the process is to develop a manageable catalogue of

questions which can be used in various institutions involved in the transition from school to employment. It is hoped that by means of the questionnaire, a process of discussion is prompted, mechanisms of exclusion identified and capabilities of self-evaluation of the respective actors fostered. Thereby, the questionnaire shall help to initiate a change of perspective which stimulates the inclusion of members of vulnerable groups.

## **Two relevant keywords: vulnerable groups and transition system**

### **Vulnerable groups**

There are people in all European countries that have to struggle with a range of disadvantages for access to education and training and to employment. Due to a lack of flexibility in the VET systems and an increasingly globalised and specialised world of work, these groups are often marginalised, perceived as having deficiencies in basic education and language skills, psychosocial attitudes, and in the way they manage learning techniques. The lack of material and social resources is also an indicator of the fact that they do not get through to the achievement oriented systems, so they are left on the sidelines of society.

#### **Vulnerable groups**

The term *vulnerable groups* is often used in European social policy. What is meant by that is that there are social groups *that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population.*<sup>1</sup> The definition of the disadvantaged groups in education and training in general as well as on a programme basis in Europe refers to the following sub-groups:<sup>2</sup>

- People with special needs
- People with disabilities

- Immigrants
- Ethnic groups
- Older learners
- Groups facing socio-economic disadvantage
- Prisoners and ex-offenders
- Refugees
- Other

Apart from the above-mentioned groups, the following additional groups were identified by various national agencies:

- People with poor literacy and numeracy skills
- Individuals with little or no formal education
- Part-time workers
- Workers approaching the pensionable age
- Under-achievers (especially teenagers)
- Travellers and Roma
- Migrant workers and the children of migrants
- Newcomers (who may not be the same group as refugees)
- Looked-after children (children living away from home, e.g. in foster care)
- Institutionalized children
- Children whose parents both work abroad

- People living in rural areas or deprived city areas (inner cities)
- Addicts
- The homeless
- People who have caring responsibilities
- Single parents with small children
- Other vulnerable groups (e.g. victims of violence, people with mental health disorders)

It is also highlighted that the above mentioned groups are not mutually exclusive and some individuals face multiple disadvantages.

### **Local VET system (transition system)**

Youngsters and young adults in all EU countries may have major problems in transition from the institutions in which general education is acquired to VET and the world of work. That is confirmed by the current data on rising youth unemployment in many European countries, and the large number of those who are unable to cope with the obstacles in VET.

The transition from school to the world of work is described in most European countries as an inter-related, multi-threshold process. In keeping with this problem situation there are different types of scenario such as *Return* (to the educational system), *Failure*, *Drop-out*, *Interruption* and *Bridge*.

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<sup>1</sup>Social protection and Social inclusion Glossary. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>ECOTEC (o.J.) Inclusion. Mapping of current state of participation of disadvantaged/under-represented groups in the Lifelong Learning Programme since 2007. Synthesis Report.

These long-term structural problems, with inability to cross the thresholds from school to employment, have led to the creation of support systems to facilitate transition. The *transition systems* from school to VET and work comprise a wide range of programmes and sub-programmes:

- Programmes of career guidance and teaching of first vocational skills are provided in secondary schools, and young people can do internships in companies, they can request vocational guidance from the job centres, etc. Many secondary schools work with VET schools to prepare the transition for young people from one sub-system to the next one in good time, and to support them in this process.
- If young people do not succeed in finding a job or getting into VET immediately after completing their general school education, they can make use of specific courses and education programmes designed to prepare school students for vocational training after they have acquired a final certificate from their general education school, or after the end of their regular schooling time at a general education school. These education programmes and courses are often conducted by non-governmental organisations.
- In some EU countries there are programmes run by school and out-of-school education providers that do not give full vocational training qualifications but include elements contributing to vocational qualification, and these can later be counted towards a certificate of vocational training or fulfil conditions required to enter full vocational training.
- The transition system also includes all programmes for additional language promotion (for illiterates, for migrants, etc.), job application training, computer courses, e-learning, etc.
- The transition system also includes all social support programmes – counselling, supervision, mentoring, housing

groups, residential schools, study grant programmes, etc., that are needed to secure successful vocational qualification.

Bearing in mind the life situations of particularly vulnerable groups, it is evident that the conditions and quality of the transition systems are often not appropriate to ensure successful movement into VET and employment. Transition research indicates that it is essential for the young people concerned to overcome often difficult personal situations (financial status, residence status, stability of social relationships, health, and opportunities for leisure activities) in order for them to participate successfully in vocational education and training.

Access and continued participation of the target groups addressed here in the transition system will remain a tightrope act until such time as appropriate pedagogical concepts and institutional conditions are set up to deal with the multiple problems they have to face.

## **How to deal with the questionnaire**

Our tool is intended to give ideas for reflection and a change of perspective. At its core are the questions intended for examination of the respondent's own practice in VET and labour market integration. This is linked with the goal of critical reflection on the extent to which participation of vulnerable groups can be realised under the prevailing conditions in the respondents' own institutions or in the local or regional professional setting.

This tool is designed in such a way that it can be used in various contexts, depending on the closeness and responsibilities for individual subgroups of participants. It may be used as the starting point for concept debates, or a useful aid for team meetings, a tool for quality management, for use in teachers' conferences, or it can be used for development and implementation of pilot schemes.

The questionnaire is suitable as a checklist to identify critical points in the system and in practice. It is aimed at institutions

and organisations, associations, initiatives and networks, and also at churches, educational institutions, business companies, and equally at voluntary workers and other individuals in civil society.

Before working with the questionnaire, it is advisable to describe the local transition system in tabular form by the *mapping method*, and if possible even to visualise it in a map. That gives a first overview of which of the institutions mentioned above could be included. It also helps in the decision on whether to start by going through the questionnaire with the individual institutions, or whether to set up a group to do this jointly. The *map* can be completed as the process continues, to give as up-to-date and complete a picture as possible of the local transition system.

## Scheme

Table 19.1: Mapping VET systems focused on the transition from school to vocational training/education for young adults

<b>Formal VET system</b> Types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Advantages – disadvantages</b>
<b>Non-formal VET system</b> Types of learning opportunities/educational programmes/structures	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Advantages – disadvantages</b>

## Catalogue of questions

The European partnership was inspired by the “Index of Inclusion”, which was originally developed by the British educationalists Mel Ainscow and Tony Booth and has been translated into many languages [<http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/inclusion-index-explained.shtml>].

The word *Index* has many different meanings. It can be a table of contents, a list, an indicator, a system of reference tags, or a table of key words. In our context it is to take on the function of a reference framework giving guidance in the setting of transition from school to work, with questions in six thematic categories.

The questions are intended to stimulate discussion and open up a dialogue, helping to examine professional standpoints and to plan and design changes to promote increased participation of vulnerable groups. The questions presented here are intended merely as ideas; they can be modified as required, or specified with relation to sub-groups of disadvantaged people, or widened. It is likely that the discussion process will be deepened by possible complex answers to questions, which in turn raise new questions.

The *Index* prepared in this project is focused exclusively on the setting of the transition from school to work. It is tailored to a selection of categories which have key importance in the experience of the participating experts. The authors decided to take this approach because they have learned from their own practice that institutional re-orientation processes are challenging and that time resources for their implementation are often limited by the pressure of practical everyday work.

### 19.2 Categories

The following is a list of questions for discussion, arranged in six categories:

- Categories 1 and 2 relate firstly to the educational subjects, and the special characteristics of the work setting in the transition system.
- Categories 3 and 4 relate to access routes and opportunities, and the educational concept.
- Categories 5 and 6 relate to requirements for the respondent's own institution and the local and regional cooperation environment.

This structure aims to set up a programme where all levels and dimensions can be handled, for reorientation to establish a diversity based concept, profile, and corresponding strategy.

### **Category 1: target group**

Individual life situations and specific disadvantage symptoms are as different as the overall spectrum of the vulnerable groups themselves. Relevant points include knowledge of their individual life situations, the relevant legal framework applicable to them, the responsibilities in the institutions, and target group relevant problems due to structural exclusion mechanisms.

- Which vulnerable groups are of particular importance in your local/regional context (see list, page 5)? Are there other vulnerable groups not mentioned in the list?
- Do you have any more information on the exact number of the individual vulnerable groups and their specific problems in the context of transition to the world of work?
- Could you provide some more exact and current data on the vulnerable groups in your institution?
- Have you identified all relevant vulnerable groups in your institution (e.g. migrants or disabled adolescents)?

- Are all relevant vulnerable groups included in the conceptual framework of your institution?
- What measures are taken in your region to ensure that other vulnerable groups are also able to find suitable programmes meeting their needs?
- What exactly are the problems of the particular vulnerable groups in their transition to the world of work:
  - Problems of access (e.g. due to legal regulations)
  - Problems of sustainability/early dropout (e.g. due to inadequacy of offers)
  - Problems of continuity and future perspectives (e.g. lack of apprenticeship places/employment)
- Do you as an institution regularly keep track of the development of the vocational training and labour market in your region? Are you aware of which groups encounter the most difficulties in finding employment?
- Do you conduct and evaluate regular follow-up participant surveys in your institution? Are, for example, the reasons for early dropout from an educational offer examined?
- Does your institution have the possibility to conduct follow-up surveys on the outcomes achieved by former participants, on their current situation? If so, what specific actions have emerged on your findings?

<b>Ideas – Examples – Recommendations</b>
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In the context of regular **social reporting**, many municipalities and local authorities publish current data on local vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, these reports are rather limited and do not provide comprehensive insight, as they focus on individual aspects only. There are education, disability or integration reports or social reports. Nevertheless, such sub-reports are useful to raise public awareness of the specific situation of vulnerable groups.

Moreover, many municipalities have a number of **monitoring systems** in place to identify educational disadvantages and to formulate recommendations for the political realm on how to face and alleviate such disadvantages. Although these monitoring systems also tend to focus on individual problems (ethnic monitoring, social monitoring, etc.), they may provide valuable basic information along with them.

For schools in the vocational training sector and other institutions of the transitional system, it seems useful to regularly assess how successful they are in ensuring equal opportunities and educational equality. These assessments may, for example, be conducted – in cooperation with universities – for free by students in the context of their master's or bachelor's thesis.

## **Category 2: institutional transition**

The main challenge in the transition system school/work is to ensure that youngsters or young adults with difficult life conditions do not get stuck in a programme loop, but get access to opportunities to bridge the gap and give them access to continuing education and training in the regular VET system. In order to respond to specific problems in the transition system, it is advisable to examine the specific institutions and systems at the transition phase from school to VET or the world of work. Close attention should be given to the nature of the interfaces, which can often cause young people to lose

their way as they move from one system to the other.

- Which formal institutions (vocational schools, secondary schools, job-centre, youth agencies etc.) and fields of activity are part of your local transition sector?
- Which non-formal organizations (projects, NGOs, locals networks etc.) and fields of activities are part of your local transition sector?
- Does your institution/organization have reliable alliances with regional companies? Which sectors of the labour market are in focus?
- Are all the relevant actors aware of and responsive to issues that concern the target group (i.e. attentive to issues of migration, disabilities, gender)?
- Have you identified specific hurdles for vulnerable groups between the different steps within the transition sector?
- Has your institution/organization developed any strategies to minimize problems in the transition sector?
- Are there any courses or modules available within the transition sector designed to facilitate access to vulnerable groups as they may not be able to meet the standard formal entry requirements (eg frontloading/upgrading courses)?
- What demands arise in the development of the transition sector?
- Is the transition sector capable of taking mobility of the vulnerable groups into consideration to guarantee connections to the gain of former education and former experiences?
- Is the transition sector capable of taking transnational mobility into consideration in order to open up access to further development in education and employment?

### Ideas – Examples – Recommendations

Within the European learning partnership *Integration of Refugees into the European Education and Labour Market: Requirements for a Target Oriented Approach, structures and conditions for the respective vocational education and training systems in the partner countries were surveyed in four cities using a matrix*, in order to identify success factors and disadvantage factors. Structural elements and existing programmes were listed under the headings of *formal VET system* and *non-formal VET system*, to determine whether asylum seekers and refugees have access to the VET system, or if applicable what structural barriers and success factors apply. The list form gives a clear impression of the respective structures and permits comparisons. This tool has proven helpful to develop four case studies for relevant indicators for asylum-related monitoring in European cities.<sup>1</sup>

Model approaches have been created in many regions, showing the way forward. One example of these is the Hamburg network SAFE HAVEN Hamburg – it demonstrates interlinking of refugee organisations, VET organisers and school institutions with business companies, the Jobs Agency, and specialist authorities in an **integrated social action approach**, oriented towards the life situations of refugees. It has developed and integrated specially tailored concepts taking into account the prior knowledge and circumstances of the target group. It includes consulting services, vocational preparation, coaching, therapy for people with traumatisation, language training, and social monitoring, all coordinated with one another, and giving the refugees access to qualification, training and jobs. Comparable examinations of life situation and corresponding good-practice models can also be used for other subgroups of vulnerable people, e.g. Travellers, people with disabilities, addicts or teenager mothers.

Migration research indicates that refugees and migrants are engaged simultaneously and long-term in social relationships in several places, across national boundaries. This pluri-local and **transnational lifestyle** means that people are interconnected in global networks, and also act globally in terms of their involvement in education and employment – as illustrated by this example of a refugee whose educational and vocational career was reconstructed in the framework of a project:

Table 19.2: Course of educational and vocational career, Hamed

1991-1997	Benin	Ecole centrale (7 years)
1998-1999	Togo	No school, no employment
1999-2002	Germany	Vocational preparation years with placement, Secondary School Certificate
2003-2004	Germany	Vocational Training School with focus on Health – broken off
2004-2006	Germany	Continuing education as nursing assistant with integrated placement at hospital
2004-2005	Germany	Several placements at old people's homes, one of them for 9 months
2006	Germany	Voluntary social year in an accommodation centre for people with disabilities

2006	Benin	No employment
2007-2009	Togo	Training as tailor (1,5 years)
2009	Togo	Training in garment care (6 months)
2009	Benin	Unsuccessful search for work as tailor, cook, moto-taxi driver
2010	Togo	Seeking work

### Category 3: access and assignments

Access to counselling and education programmes for vulnerable groups are particularly important for vulnerable groups (for lifelong learning, access to employment and participation in wider society) and it is important to consider whether their rights of participation are hindered by legal barriers. Arrangements for contact with support structures need to be arranged for easy movement through various programmes, because they build on one another and are linked with each other. In times of increasing globalisation, another important aspect is to see how far mobility and transnationality are important (both for migrants and *locals*), and what conclusions should be drawn from that.

- Does the institution provide a mentoring scheme or dedicated workers targeted at vulnerable groups?

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<sup>1</sup>Seukwa, Louis Henri (ed.) (2012). Integration of Refugees into the European Education and Labour Market. Requirements for a Target Group Oriented Approach. Peter Lang Edition. Frankfurt/Main. pp.188-193

- Does the institution actively engage with vulnerable groups in encouraging them to enrol?
- Does the institution provide fee waivers, scholarships or a scaling of fees to vulnerable groups?
- Is the institution aware of funding or grant opportunities available externally which could assist their vulnerable group(s)?
- Has your institution considered how your entry assessments (eg formal testing) impacts on vulnerable groups?
- How are other qualifications recognised by your institution? (eg ‘home country’ qualifications, life experience, informal qualifications etc.)
- Does your organisation have facilities in place for distance learning for vulnerable groups who may not be able to attend for some reason? (eg migration, internal relocation, disability)
- Does your institution require a specific immigration or residence status for a course of study which might impact on vulnerable groups?
- Does your institution have supports in place to assist vulnerable groups whose first language may not be that of the host country?
- Does the institution have a policy for evaluating its engagement with vulnerable groups?

#### Ideas – Examples – Recommendations

Local and national specialist NGOs or interest groups may have **additional information** on the vulnerable group and may be able to give advice on how best to encourage the **vulnerable group** to engage with the institution and target advertising/recruitment etc. They may also have details of funding

streams available or scholarships specifically for the vulnerable group.

Information on the residence/immigration status and the restrictions on the right to study or work may be available from the government department responsible for immigration. Institutions should be aware of maintaining maximum access to education and interpret any restrictions as narrowly as possible.

Student representatives from the vulnerable group may be able to provide valuable information for the purposes of evaluating engagement with the vulnerable group.

#### **Category 4: pedagogical aims – curricula**

Scientific research results have shown that contents of educational systems and the way they are arranged have key importance in whether opportunities for participation can be realised. Educational concepts have to be designed to take account of the heterogeneity of their target groups and respond to individual education and support needs. Relevant aspects may include not only unconventional learning settings, but also institutionalised support systems which ensure that participants can stay in the programme, the course or the job.

- Has the national curricula taken the vulnerable groups into consideration?
- Does your institution monitor its teachers' awareness of what is required of them by the curricula and how best to deal with students with traumatic experience such as accidents, violence, war, rape etc?
- How does your institution equip your personnel with the necessary skills to use and choose suitable teaching methods, material and equipment for the target groups?

- Does your institution make the students aware of what is required of him /her both in vocational education/ working life and in dealing with problems that arise outside school?
- Does your institution offer its students teaching in the national language/languages of the new country (second language) and in the mother tongue/ sign language/ other communication systems in addition to learning strategies and techniques?
- Does your institution offer the students and their representatives the opportunity to take part in the decision making that affects them?
- How does your institution ensure that the students' family backgrounds are taken into consideration when planning the students' progress and support needs?
- Does your institution make an individual plan of progress for each student; how does it promote the student's access to further studies and their transition to working life and how is this monitored?
- How does your organization ensure that your target group/ groups are integrated and included both in the school and in working life?
- Are there financial resources reserved particularly for the vulnerable group in your institution?

#### Ideas – Examples – Recommendations

When assessing the level of integration by the target groups into mainstream classes etc, it is **imperative that in addition to catering for the more obvious needs of the groups (language and second language supports), more holistic support is provided as well.** The student's learning strategies

and individual/family background and needs must also be taken into consideration as this will impact on the level of support they will require. Teachers should be aware of the possibility that the student may have a traumatic background and should be provided with the skills, teaching materials, methods and equipment to deal with this and to incorporate all the other students into the lesson plan so as not to further exclude or segregate the target group. Ideally these skills should be taught to teachers during teacher training. **The student and student representatives (where appropriate) should be engaged in the decision-making process regarding their educational needs** and should participate in putting together their personal learning/progress plan. Students should be facilitated with interpreters, if necessary, for this process. The education provider should be prepared to explain the educational system, the chances of progression and future vocations with the student and their families. Many vocations that are seen as highly skilled in developed countries may be seen as unskilled or may not even exist in lesser developed countries. This may lead to unrealistic expectations of the young student and his/her studies.

Looking beyond immediate education needs to future vocations, it is crucial that the student be equipped to deal with the **linguistic needs of the workplace**. That means language training has to refer to the specific communicative challenges at the workplace. In some European countries there are some innovative (transnational) approaches developed and tested: UK – Alex Bradell - *Language development through work*; DE – IQ Fachstelle Berufsbezogenes Deutsch (specialist department on work-related German as a second language) – *German at the workplace*; SE - Project ArbetSam – *Sustainable workplace learning for social care*.

It is advisable that the students in addition to the second language (of the host country) also are given the opportunity to study their **first language/mother tongue**. The mother tongue is the language learned first and that one self-identifies with. It provides a basis for the youngster's thinking and for the development of a stable emotional life. Good knowledge of the mother tongue is important for self-awareness and bonding within the cultural community. Knowledge of the mother tongue is also important for learning new languages and for the learning and adoption of new things. It may however be difficult to offer studies in the mother tongue as it may be difficult to find suitable teachers.

As part of vocational basic studies in Finland all students have to study mother tongue as a subject. According to Finnish law the education provider is obliged to **provide the student the opportunity to study their own mother tongue** whether it is one of the national languages (Finnish or Swedish) or a cultural minority language eg Romani, the Sami language or sign language. Whenever possible the education provider should arrange also access to study other mother tongues (L630/1198, 12§ 3 mom.). **This refers also to immigrants' mother tongue.** Access to training courses and teaching materials etc. in own mother tongue of immigrants' languages are provided but are mainly arranged in major languages used by major immigrant groups due to resource issues (costs and availability of teachers).

## **Category 5: questions concerning the organizational development**

Targeted strategies and action concepts are needed to ensure equality of access to opportunities for long-term participation and not just individual events or projects. Commitment to the promotion of

equality from all levels within the institution (participants and decision makers) is necessary to ensure that diversity is institutionalised and affirmed externally while appropriate supports and evaluation tools are available internally.

- Does your institution have a vision and a charter which explicitly addresses vulnerable groups? Do all employees feel committed to the inclusion of vulnerable groups?
- Are all relevant people across all hierarchy levels in your institution involved in the process of re-orientation and organizational development? Is that prioritized in your organization?
- Have you considered the resources needed for the strategy and development process in your overall planning?
- Is the institution as a whole, including its rooms, equipped and organized in such a way as to provide all members of a vulnerable group (people with disabilities, people of different religions etc.) with barrier-free access to educational opportunities?
- Is there some sort of *induction process* in your institution that explicitly addresses the topic of diversity?
- Do you make sure in promotion and external communication activities that all member of a vulnerable group are covered and feel addressed (multiple languages, plain language, accessible design etc.)?
- Do you have a complaint management system or strategy in place in your institution?
- Do you intend to organize an internal training programme to sustainably support the process of re-orientation towards vulnerable groups?
- Does your Human Resources policy ensure that members of vulnerable groups are equally considered when it comes to new hires?

- Are all standards and guidelines established to promote inclusion fully integrated into your institution's operational processes? Is there a system to ensure regular reflection to these standards?

### **Ideas – Examples – Recommendations**

A model strategy for overcoming disadvantages of vulnerable groups could be to pursue a diversity concept which takes an overall view of a range of differences, related to age, status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, origin, nationality, profession, religion and values. That could be associated with the goal of developing different views of discrimination and marginalisation. In Hamburg, the SAFE HAVEN Hamburg network operates in accordance with these principles, and has developed the action concept "Diversity Mainstreaming" for this purpose. It implements five action recommendations: (1) Development of a model; (2) Agreement on binding goals and responsibilities; (3) Installation of a control mechanism (Diversity Controlling); (4) Establishment of infrastructure (human resources, time and money). (5) Establishment of differentiated diversity know-how, for expert monitoring of the processes as quality assurance.

## **Category 6: networking and cooperation with external groups**

Practical experience over many years has shown that networking to support practical work brings a wide range of skills of the respective actors to the process, and thus improves the results of educational and social work. Cooperation of strategic partners at operating level and interlinking of targeted lobbying at local and regional level and beyond can establish working structures which promote long-term integration of vulnerable groups. Networking helps in transfer of

knowledge, and also provides a platform for joint work on politically disputed subjects and fields of activity.

- Is there a dedicated person in your institution responsible for the coordination of the networks?
- Has it been ensured that all relevant actors supporting the target groups are included in building up a network?
- Are the problems and VET needs of the target group known to municipal administration and jobs administration?
- Are the players in the VET system and employment services invited to participate as strategic partners in networking?
- Is there a strategy in the network recruit companies in cooperation?
- Do the protagonists in the network have contacts with political decision makers?
- Are the vulnerable groups empowered to know their rights and to advocate themselves?
- Is there a strategy which spread dissemination of networks activities?
- Are there clear structures (terms of references, management, work division etc.) for network management?
- Are there mechanisms for conducting self-evaluation of networking activities?

### **Ideas – Examples – Recommendations**

Networking activities should be examined to consider whether it is necessary to set up a **new** network on the subject, or whether it may be possible to include the subject in **existing local/regional networks**. Member led migrant organisations are important because they often provide advice, support and non-formal and informal educational programmes. They also give a framework for the development and expression of empowerment, and where the vulnerable groups can be given encouragement to raise their own voices. It is therefore important when setting up networks to ensure the involvement of **migrant led organisations, networks for support of people with disabilities, or associations such as those which support prisoners in re-socialisation**. It is essential in network management to ensure that all players get a chance to express their views. It is often advisable to check within the region, city or state, or in locations abroad, to see whether there are relevant models of cooperation alliances which can be used for learning lessons. For example, the European Community initiative EQUAL tried out successful networking approaches for the participation of diverse vulnerable groups on the labour market and installed some of them on a long-term basis, where **functioning structures** were set up and corresponding **work cultures** developed, ensuring that the target agreements were met and creating the basis for cooperation in a spirit of trust. Efficient interface management and self-evaluation from the perspective of various institutions and establishments can contribute to **quality improvement**.

## 20. Trying and testing *Fit for Purpose* – first feedback from the perspective of users

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After development of the Index of Integration, this tool was presented in five partner countries. Proposals were made in concept debates and on other occasions for its use in pilot projects. It was left up to the users to test the whole of the questionnaire, or only to select parts of it which are relevant to them. The intention was to gain initial experience on practicability of the tool and if necessary to revise the index and to include feedback in reflection on the project work.

Examinations were conducted in advance with the individual partner countries to find out what kind of institutions they could provide access to. Priority was given mainly to educational and other institutions which have career guidance programmes or conduct vocational education and training courses. In addition, a number of specific institutions were recruited which explicitly address the life situations of vulnerable groups, or which focus mainly on this target group.

The institutions approached by the partners were asked to give qualified feedback. A feedback form was developed by the partnership for this purpose, giving brief explanations on project background and use of the tool, asking what level was involved and who was using it, with what qualifications, and asking how far use of the

questionnaire started discussions and development of new strategies. Both projects, that is the awareness promoting tool itself and the feedback form, were translated into the respective languages of the partner countries, in order to minimise barriers to participation in the test. The following sections describe experience with testing of the tool at the various institutions, and report significant feedback by the users.

## 20.1 Germany

Eight institutions and key persons were approached in Germany and asked to test the tool. They were almost exclusively vocational schools and VET institutions in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein; in individual cases it also included multipliers involved in awareness raising at the regular institutions where inclusion of vulnerable groups is on the agenda. Some of the feedback included useful advice on the functioning and practical application of the categories and on individual questions which are listed in the index and are designed to help in the work.

Comments on the feedback form noted that it reflected the comprehensive range of subjects, and said it would willingly be used to help in internal organisation development within the institution. It was also reported that the development of new strategies and concept development regarded the *Ideas – Examples – Recommendations* as particularly useful and clear. It was noted as positive that work on the questions had contributed to the work of reflection conducted so far, and the users felt it confirmed their approach. At the same time, one of the respondents regretted that there was not enough time provided for effective evaluation of the internal processes. One respondent suggested that this tool should be used in companies to improve the in-house training processes.

## **20.2 Finland and Turkey**

The Finnish partner used the index within its own institution, and reported the following conclusions, following discussion of the catalogue as a whole, in all the categories: the tool was described as useful to *identify problems and shortcomings in the institution, as a base to develop ways of work as the index is enlightening what should be taken into consideration, gives topics for staff in-house training, as a base to allocate resources towards this particular group of students, also for strategic development and management decisions, make it as part of school quality work.*<sup>1</sup> In addition, *Fit for purpose* was sent out to numerous VET institution in Finland, but that they did not respond within the project period. It was similar with the Turkish partners, who sent the index to four institutions (research institutes, and a web portal), but received no responses. What made things even more difficult in Turkey was that it is not possible to send concepts and tools directly to the schools, because everything has to go through the proper channels, that is via the responsible education administration bodies.

## **20.3 Bulgaria**

The Bulgarian partner has translated and submitted the Index of Integration to six different institutions, five vocational schools within the country (two in Sofia, and three in the provinces) and to one non-educational governmental institution. Answers were received from three institutions out of six. Even obtaining answers from only these institutions was not easy.

Before discussing why this is so, let us summarize some common features of the received answers. All respondents answered to all categories of questions although they should have selected only the relevant categories for their institutions. The answers are conscientious; they reveal individual acquaintance with the issues at

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<sup>1</sup>See feedback sheet Vaasa Vocational Institute, May 2015

hand. But the concern stays *individual*. For instance, some of the answers given to the same question by respondents from one institution are different. This suggests that teachers' individual concern is not raised to an objective level through respective discussions within the institution. Along the same lines, the fact that none of the respondents selected relevant categories for their institutions probably matches a lack of clear categorization of vulnerable groups within the institutions. It is obvious that support and respective structures for vulnerable groups are not provided by the state. It is all in the hands of activities imposed by the EU.

Here is an illustration of this statement. Asked if their organization has financial resources exclusively for vulnerable groups, a respondent from the governmental institution answered: "Not directly, we get money for vulnerable groups only from projects". The same participant said that they do not dispose with a system of specialists working with vulnerable groups; they are not in a position to secure any help concerning educational fees for members of vulnerable groups either. However, their institution is well acquainted with the existing external financial resources and scholarships for people from vulnerable groups.

Concerning reactions to the index, we cannot be sure about the exact reasons of diminished interest toward it. Some clues are: difficult life conditions in Bulgaria produce a great number of vulnerables, so problems of mass education cannot be clearly distinguished from problems of vulnerable groups as defined in the index. This is why our target groups are not first in the list. After their initial unsuccessful attempts to promote the index, the Bulgarian partners added a short description about the purpose of the index at the beginning of the questionnaire. However, the attitude of institutions has not changed as a result of that.

A second and related problem is a *prima facie* lack of understanding of the general purpose of the index and some of its terms given the non-existent related structures within the country<sup>2</sup>, and

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<sup>2</sup>such as well-established networks, educational policy concerning migrants

hence a natural unawareness of the potential benefit that an institution might have by using it. A respondent from a vocational gymnasium, for example, says that the index stresses questions that are not normatively regulated within their institution and is not adequate to the real situation within the country concerning normative basis, material and technical support needed for taking concrete decisions. Parts of other questions cannot be related directly to their job – they do not work with migrants, people with disabilities and kids with special needs.

We can generalize the results of trying and testing the index in Bulgaria in the following way:

1. The problems of vulnerable groups, as defined in the index, are not sufficiently analyzed and known at an institutional level in Bulgaria.
2. Handling the related problems is left in the hands of individual agents and in the hands of European projects that occasionally help.
3. It seems that the index of integration is too alienated, and possibly too sophisticated a tool for its purpose for countries like Bulgaria where no discussions on the topic are raised from within.
4. Finally, concerning our evaluation of the index, we see two major problems: a problem of content of the index and a problem of its form. On the content side, some of the terms are not known and not in the everyday vocabulary of teachers and institutional workers in Bulgaria. This does not mean that the index lacks potential of boosting awareness about the problems of vulnerable groups. We believe that the agents who did answer are now more aware about the problems of vulnerable groups with which they work. The index as a form of influencing solutions to problems of transition from school to work

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etc.

related to vulnerable groups seems to be too indirect as a tool for countries like Bulgaria where no institutional structures for solving this problem exist in advance.

## 20.4 Ireland

Nasc is not an education or a vocational education provider and so they had to rely on their network links to distribute the index among local organisations. They used email, social media and personal contacts to distribute the index.

Nasc made a list of organisations that the index would be particularly relevant to in Cork City. They looked in particular at vocational educational schools in areas of high disadvantage, English language schools and adult education providers. Emails were sent to a variety of organisations with a brief description of the project, attaching the index. Unfortunately Nasc did not receive feedback from any of the organisations contacted by email. Follow-up emails were also unanswered. They believe that this may have, in part, been due to the time of year that the index was sent out. In Ireland, the spring/summer terms are particularly busy because of exams and teachers and management may not be free to dedicate the time to the index. So, they believe that the response might be more successful at the very beginning of the academic year when schools are more likely to be evaluating the previous academic year and their current admissions policies.

Nasc wanted to ensure that the possible range of respondents was as wide as possible. Nasc posted a very brief summary of the index on our website with an invitation to employers or educational institutions to contact Nasc if they wished to partake in the pilot project of completing the questionnaire. Unfortunately, again, no positive responses from this were received.

Nasc had a better response when using their own networks of contacts. Nasc have had three positive responses from this. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, one participant was un-

able to complete the index before the testing date expired but has committed to doing so afterwards. The two other participating projects/organisations tested the index with the assistance of one of the Nasc legal officers.

The feedback received from the respondents was that the length of the index would initially be off-putting for management or staff to use on a regular basis and some of the language was a little academic. All the respondents appreciated having a one to one with a project participant who was able to give a little more background on the project itself and on the categories of questions. All the respondents indicated that they were more likely to complete the form with assistance than if they had just received it by email.

All the respondents indicated that while time-consuming, they could see the value of the index. Both organisations said that it had prompted them to think in a different way about issues of access and this would influence decisions about future communications and advertising. All the respondents agreed that the questions were thought provoking and while they felt that their organisations were inclusive, it did give them an opportunity to reflect on how they could make any further improvements especially in terms of external communications (advertising/media work.) One participant indicated that it might be useful to have a scoring system of some sort so organisations could over a length of time evaluate any progress that they had made in becoming more inclusive.

## 20.5 Conclusion

Experience has shown that simply sending a tool to various players is not enough to test it. The programme format of the learning partnerships is such that there are not enough staff resources to invest more time in it and present the tool personally, for example in specific information events with expert groups in the partner regions, or to publicise it in cooperation with the *silent partners*. That was also noted by some organisations which referred in particular to

the *inertia* or the everyday pressure on the institutions, and mentioned these factors as barriers to taking up external stimuli. One continuing education specialist noted critically that too many of the questions could also produce negative effects because the range of questions was so extensive – that would be negative for those institutions which have not started working on this subject, as they would have to answer NO to too many of the questions. It was suggested in a number of the answers that the questionnaire that the form would be more appropriate for use in guided re-orientation processes, with a personal introduction of the tool, and with a chaired discussion by the whole group of staff involved. It is also possible that the individual translations have led to inaccuracies in the versions in languages of the partner countries, adding to the problems in understanding application of the tool.

## **Part VI**

# **Conclusion/perspectives**

## 21. Lessons learned – closing comments and recommendations at European level

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The European partnership has gained useful insights into the functionality/dysfunctionality of the VET system from analyses of the life situations of people from a wide range of vulnerable groups, with respect to ensuring unobstructed access and self-determined participation, in particular at the transition from school to VET or the world of work. Based on the analyses already presented in this publication, review of various fields of practice in the partner countries and other good-practice models, and in the context of preparation and testing of a tool to launch change processes at VET institutions (Fit for Purpose), the following sections give some final comments summarising the lessons learned by the partnership, outstanding questions, and desirable steps, and recommendations at European level.

## **21.1 Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of transition systems**

The transition problems of disadvantaged youngsters and young adults are very well known in all the partner countries, with the numerous difficulties that many young people have to face in transition from school to VET and/or work. The response in some countries is to set up a vocational transition system, where the VET schools together with the business community, school and labour administration and the children's and youth services try to join up the interfaces between the various subsystems better and to develop tools for transition management. In some cases there is also intensive work in progress on transition teaching, that is education for young people and adults which takes account of the very heterogeneous life situations and learning paths of vulnerable young people aged between 15 and 25 years, and takes their wide range of education and training needs seriously, developing convincing curricular ideas, didactic concepts and methodology to fit their situation. However, such well organised transition systems also involve a risk of setting up closed-circuit 'parallel systems' alongside the VET system.

It is also apparent that some countries are setting up very specific education courses for the various target groups. That shows the ambivalence of transition systems – on the one hand they can provide very effective support in vocational preparation and training, but on the other hand they tend to create separate 'columns'.

## **21.2 Definition of *inclusion* is too narrow**

Looking at the sub-target-groups covered by the term *vulnerable groups*, we in the partnership have gained the insight that *inclusion* is mainly used to refer to participation of people with disabilities. That is because the term was created by the movement which campaigned for human and disability rights in the 1960s, and the debate which accompanied the ratification of the UN Convention on Rights

of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) reinforced the use of this term in many European countries. Inclusion thus stands for comprehensive understanding of participation with equal rights of all persons in society and for respect for diversity, regardless of the differences between individuals. The project has focused specifically on migrants of various categories and young people living in families whose parents have migrated, were left behind in their countries of origin, or in some cases are moving to and fro between country of origin and host country, so they are affected by migration in a different way. Analysis of these target groups shows that the heterogeneity of the individuals and their initial situations is a major factor for the impact of exclusion mechanisms in the transitional areas of the VET systems in the partner countries involved.

A general European debate is needed to examine and widen the term inclusion and to develop new profiles which also take account of the diversity of persons with disabilities. A number of factors need to be considered: socio-demographic attributes (ethnic origin, gender, religion), specific skills and abilities of the individuals, attitudes to sexual orientation, world views and life concepts, differences between different life situation and access to cultural, health, social and financial resources.

### **21.3 Widening of the term *inclusion* could lead to new exclusions**

As shown particularly by the Country Report on Disability in Germany, and as indicated by experience of the VET systems in some partner countries, a broad definition of *inclusion* involves a risk of overlooking special challenges faced by youngsters and young adults with a physical or mental disability or a serious impairment of sense organs in their transition to the employment system. While efforts are clearly being made in all partner countries to ensure accessibility in terms of eliminating architectural and technical barriers, there is a lack of systematic attention to digital accessibility. As the

example of Germany clearly shows, there is very good provision of measures for persons with disabilities provided that they have German nationality – but the situation is very different for migrants with disabilities. TransVet draws therefore concludes that a very detailed analysis is needed of the various exclusion mechanisms – an analysis which is often too superficial if it approaches these matters simply from the viewpoint of *diversity* or *heterogeneity*.

## 21.4 The term *migration* is too narrow

A wide range of different types and motivations for integration are described in all partner countries – permanent and temporary employment migration, educational migration, forced migration, remigration, transmigration. Internal migration within a state, in particular migration from rural to urban areas, involves great risk of exclusion, in some partner countries at any rate. An example of that is the *Travellers*, an indigenous minority in Ireland. The life situations examined in the partnership show how important it is to take a transnational approach to analysis of migration causes, status and requirements for the source and host countries in terms of VET systems and employment markets, the mobility practice of the individuals concerned, etc.

This transnational dimension is needed in order to adapt the framework conditions within the VET systems to match the transnational lifestyles and increased mobility of various migrant groups. At the same time, it is important to consider national specifics and in particular regional differences (urban conglomerations versus rural areas) and to differentiate accordingly. In view of the wide range of vulnerable groups and the complexity of their social problems, it is not always possible to avoid disadvantages for one especially vulnerable group in favour of another sub-group.

## **21.5 Can social inequalities between the member states be eliminated?**

Exchange of experience within the European partnership and learning in-house in the institutions of the partner organisations involved or with other institutions of the various partner regions has often faced us with the problem of the prevailing socio-economic inequalities in the European member states – they have a major influence on priorities in national policy agendas. That applies in particular to support for people with disabilities, action against poverty, and VET and employment market policies. So it is not surprising that, for example in Bulgaria, public attention is gradually increasing for the situation of *Children left behind* as a current phenomenon and result of a migration pressure that forces family members to emigrate in order to help support their families. That is quite different from other partner countries with a relatively high economic standard, and that has an impact on possibilities of establishing practical projects and programmes for participation of vulnerable groups in various fields of policy.

This imbalance often causes discussion in the partnership to come to a dead end, especially when it comes to discussion of the tools and methods appropriate to generate impulses at local level in order to generate awareness of what is needed and to import and export good practice. More national support is needed here in economic crisis countries within the European Union to enable institutions to participate in European cooperation projects on a long-term basis.

## **21.6 European strategies to enhance VET for vulnerable groups**

The European Commission's guidelines *Europa 2020* include the target of increasing the employment rate for the population aged 20-64 to 75%, by getting more people, especially women, young people, older people, low-skilled people and legal migrants into employment,

and of reducing by at least 20 million the number of people living in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The decline in the working-age population in Europe is a very important aspect here, meaning that a smaller number of employed persons have to fund the social security systems, e.g. to support the non-working population. The economic crisis has also led to high youth unemployment rates in the Southern and Eastern European countries, in some cases more than 21%. Even before the crisis, 80 million people were at risk of poverty, including 19 million children. 80 million people in the Eastern European countries have only a low level or basic educational qualification, and benefit less from the programmes for lifelong learning than do people with a higher level of education.<sup>1</sup>

These facts show firstly that the framework conditions in a number of European countries make it difficult to initiate and/or implement inclusive concepts for more participation of vulnerable groups, especially because of the change in the employment markets in the past decades, moving towards atypical employment (part-time, seasonal and time-limited employment). And secondly, these dramatic findings also show that increased efforts are needed to ensure that the little funding which is available for these purposes really does get to the regions affected.

It is regrettable that the member states do not make it possible to conduct enough transnational programmes to promote practical cooperation at transnational level, so that they could set up and support a lobby for the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/priorities/inclusive-growth/index\\_de.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/priorities/inclusive-growth/index_de.htm)