

# REPORT

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# CODETERMINATION AND INTEGRATION

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## AT A GLANCE

- A society that to a considerable extent defines itself in terms of work also integrates people by means of work.
- In our view, two elements are key to integration: (i) codetermination as active democracy in the workplace and (ii) workplace training and further training, which in Germany are traditionally a social responsibility of the company.
- Codetermination and vocational training can exert a considerable influence on whether a country of immigration can be described as such purely in a geo-economic sense or in terms of a socially integrated immigration society, that self-consciously defines itself as such.
- Trade union and works council integration efforts have long involved action against racism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism. Codetermination and its practitioners – trade unions, works councils, shop stewards and personnel directors – thus play a key role.
- If there is a favourable framework companies with codetermination can make important contributions based on their experience with integration and highly developed training infrastructure.
- Currently, company ‘training experts’ are developing their integration tools in close coordination with company codetermination. Employment promotion and the various tools used by the state to promote labour market integration make available good ways of tackling current integration needs.
- Finding work is a particularly demanding process for refugees. All those involved need perseverance. Success stories and good practice should be passed on as soon as possible.
- When refugees enter the workplace as employees codetermination has to demonstrate its ability to handle conflict: religious and ethnic identities are factors of stability for people who have had to flee their homes. This requires increased sensitivity from all those involved.

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## INTRODUCTION

‘Successful employment of asylum seekers and refugees is beneficial to host societies, in that the state has fewer costs providing social assistance, and societies are more likely to be cohesive, as employment is linked to other areas of integration. Access to the labour market is also important to the individual. It helps reinstate a sense of self-worth, is crucial to human dignity, facilitates recovery from trauma, and encourages financial independence.’

Council of Europe opinion, March 2014. Report on ‘Refugees and the right to work’.

The economic and social integration of people coming from war or crisis zones, who may be severely traumatised, is an urgent task for Europe and, in particular, Germany. This task is not an easy one. But it is not a new one, either. Even though the magnitude of the current challenge could not have been foreseen there are historical parallels. Accordingly, the current debate on the integration of refugees is rich in historical references, with company representatives justifying their commitment on behalf of refugees in terms of their own personal experiences or the German Institute for Economic Research drawing parallels with previous periods of migration between 1990 and 2010. In particular, however, it is the experience of labour migrants and their offspring that frequently comes to mind today.

Looking into the past can really help in getting things straight and searching for solutions. Unfortunately, many Germans or people who have made their homes in Germany have personal experience of flight movements as a consequence of the Second World War or more recently as a result of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Germany was and remains a target for migratory movements and indeed has itself been a point of departure for flight. The German Emigration Centre in Bremerhaven tells an impressive tale of at least part of Germany’s his-

tory of emigration: war, harvest failures, famine or religious repression drove people to leave Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Europe and in particular Germany appears to have become much more attractive again. ‘Germany is [...] a country of immigration’ (Angela Merkel, 1 June 2015, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*). Peace, prosperity and work draw people from all over the world. Germany is one of the richest countries on earth, but rich also in social experience, in particular characteristics and institutions that help to make integration easier. Germany has it in it to become a successful immigration society if it manages to integrate people via work. Our introductory quotation from the Council of Europe underlines this important condition of success.

Western societies define themselves to a considerable extent in terms of work – they are, as it were, work-based societies. Whether they are also able to turn themselves into immigration societies – in other words, whether integration works and immigration becomes an important part of their social self-description – will be decided above all in the world of work.

In this report we examine two elements of the working world, along with their significance for integration: first, statutory codetermination by works and staff councils in companies and administrations with their trade union backbone (cf. Müller/Schmidt 2016); second, workplace occupational training and further training, which in Germany is traditionally part and parcel of a company’s social responsibility. We argue that both elements can exert considerable influence on whether one comes to talk of a country of immigration purely in the geo-economic sense or of a socially integrated immigration society, that self-consciously defines itself as such.

# 1 SITUATION IN GERMANY

Dealing with immigrants has long been part of everyday life in workplaces and administrations. In 2015 over 17 million people were statistically designated “with a migrant background”, 7.7 million of them employees (cf. Destatis 2016).

The initial influx of refugees and displaced persons to Germany came after the Second World War. From the mid-1950s workers were recruited for skilled and unskilled work in industry, heavy industry and mining. Officially, recruitment ended in 1973, but various exemptions enabled immigration to continue.

There was also immigration in the GDR, albeit to a much smaller extent. From 1966 workers were recruited from, among others, Vietnam, Poland and Mozambique. Up to the mid-1970s a few thousand refugees from, for example, Chile, Spain and Greece were given asylum. With the demise of the GDR these people largely had to return to their countries of origin. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the number of so-called “Aussiedler” (literally “resettlers”) rose. Wars in the former Yugoslavia and other countries led to a refugee increase.

Infobox 2

## Information

In 2014 765,605 foreigners migrated from Germany (cf. BMI 2016: 110). The number of EU citizens among these emigrants from Germany in 2014 was 511,888 (cf. BMI 2016: 33). Most were Poles. The Central Register for Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister, AZR) estimates 472,315 emigrants. The data on emigrants differ from migration statistics because in the Central Register for Foreigners (AZR) short-stay migrants with sojourns of below three months are not registered (cf. BMI 2016: 111). A total of 75.3 per cent of emigrants remained in Germany less than four years.

Infobox 1

## Information

The distinction between foreign and German citizens provides no information on whether someone immigrated or not. To enable us to make valid assertions we use the classification used in the Micro census since 2005 and since 2012 in the labour market statistics of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit). The term “with a migrant background” is controversial and definitions vary. Comparison of the various statistics is not possible without further ado. Furthermore, the term can have a stigmatising effect, as it is an external attribution.

In the early 1990s there was a series of arson attacks on houses and refugee accommodation in Germany and racism and xenophobia were very much in evidence. The Aliens Act, the Asylum Act and the Federal Expellee Act were amended. As a consequence of this “asylum compromise” to this day the options of those seeking asylum in Germany are limited. By contrast, the so-called “Green card initiative” between 2000 and 2004 was supposed to cover the need above all for qualified IT workers. Far fewer people took this route than had been expected or hoped for, however. Although in 2005, with the Immigration Act, integration was

legally enshrined as a key task of the state for the first time, the numerous exceptions and protective measures were not relinquished. In particular the recruitment of highly qualified workers thus remains an important issue. Even though between 2010 and 2015 increasing internal migratory movements were identified in Europe (“Re-Europeanisation of immigration”, cf. Thränhardt 2015) the inner-European immigration rate in Germany has remained comparatively low and tends to cover low level jobs. Most qualified immigrants leave Germany again or remain for a shorter time than planned (cf. Welt Online, 6 September 2016).

A central area of tension is thus becoming conspicuous: we desire and need the immigration of highly qualified people. However, this desired development remains largely unrealised. What we are in fact getting – more or less unwanted – is the immigration of sometimes traumatised refugees with obscure educational profiles. What is to be done?

Also evident from the current refugee debate is the fact that in Germany many refugees wait months for a place on an integration course. At the same time, monitoring of the effectiveness of existing rules and provisions is lacking (cf. Bertelsmann 2016). Coordination with regard to different job programmes run by municipalities, regions and private initiatives is capable of improvement.

All too often the resources are lacking to suitably adapt support programmes in the face of the rising number of refugees. Immediately open job vacancies, language courses, targeted educational options and training qualifications are needed (cf. DIW 2016; FES 2016). From our perspective institutions of workplace codetermination and workplace training and further training, together with those responsible for them, are key entities in the

### Preliminary facts about the situation



- In 2015, 1.1 million people fled to Germany from war, violence and persecution (cf. Bertelsmann 2016: 68; Brücker et al. 2016b: 9).
- From January to September 2016 the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees received 643,211 initial applications for asylum, an increase of 134 per cent on the previous year (cf. BAMF 2016: 2). A total of 196,862 people were recognised as refugees during this period. At the end of September 2016 579,314 application procedures were still ongoing, almost twice as many as in the previous year (BAMF 2016: 7).
- A total of 71.1 per cent of asylum seekers in 2015 were below 30 years of age and more than two-thirds were male.
- From July 2015 to June 2016 just under 19,400 people from the eight highest-entry asylum entry countries made the transition to employment (of the kind subject to social insurance contributions), more than 20 per cent in temporary employment agencies (see Federal Employment Office 2016a: 9).
- In September 2016 367,000 refugees were looking for work, 157,000 of them unemployed. Of these, 116,000 were recognised refugees, 38,000 had a temporary residence permit and 2,600 were tolerated (Federal Employment Office 2016a: 10).
- In June 2016, 53,000 people – 40,200 more than in the previous year – were sponsored from non-European countries; 73 per cent participated in an activation measure and occupational integration, in addition to which refugees were assisted in BAMF integration courses (Federal Employment Office 2016a: 13).

Robust data on the qualification structure of refugees in Germany (cf. Worbs 2016: 4; Brücker 2016: 3) are either not yet available or not representative. In this report we therefore put data on the qualification structure of refugees to one side. From our standpoint data obtained via surveys are in any case only modestly robust in this context. We urgently recommend that the skills of those seeking asylum here be identified and supported both on an individual basis and in terms of their value to the economy.

successful realisation of such plans.

The key to tackling the problem lies in how policy can be shaped to integrate as many people as possible, primarily in and through the labour market.

## 2 ROLE OF CODETERMINATION AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

Since the first targeted recruitment of foreign workers in the 1950s equalising the treatment of German and foreign employees in terms of labour and social law has been an important task for the social partners, although it is not without contradictions. The trade unions first brought the integration of workers and their families with a migration background onto the political agenda and into negotiation processes in the early 1970s. In 1972 integration became a component of the Works Constitution Act and in 1974 of the Staff Representation Act. Specific tasks with regard to interest representation and company management are derived from them. Trade union and works council integration work include activities against racism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism. This is a standing feature of organisational work in the DGB trade unions. Guest workers and refugees became colleagues and trade unionists. However, there are differences between

the demand for labour and social law equalisation and the actual practice of integration in the workplace and in society (cf. Trede 2016). Nevertheless works councils and institutions of workplace codetermination are representatives and proponents of a “workplace universalism”, which means, among other things, equal rights for all employees regardless of their origin. “The institution of the works council as a uniform representative of employees in the workplace makes forms of particular, even ethnically oriented interest formation less promising” (cf. Schmidt 2006: 259). In this way works councils help to consolidate the status of “citizen of the workplace” and to strengthen fair treatment and workplace social policy (Kotthoff 2009: 330). At the same time, in the current situation these activities are unlikely to lead many refugees to level out the ethnic-religious identity that is so important to them; so to speak, to become “de-ethnicised” (Schmidt 2007: 348).

Many companies demand a partnership approach and equal opportunities, which they also incorporate into their corporate mission statements. Company agreements on equal opportunities emphasise the employer’s and employees’ common task, based on social partnership, to support equal opportunities for all employees and to prevent discrimination. In many companies and administrations fair treatment of immigrants has long been routine, in particular when responsible actors put it

on the workplace agenda. In the wake of the Works Constitution Act the works council has been tasked with promoting the integration of foreign workers in the workplace and cultivating understanding between them and German workers and also with implementing measures to combat racism and xenophobia in the workplace (§ 80 para 1 BetrVG [Works Constitution Act] No. 7). Since 2006 this task has been complemented by the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG). Some companies were already ahead of the EU directive against discrimination and the AGG.

#### Infobox 4

### EU directive against discrimination

Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation and the Directive amending Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women.

Agreements to combat racism were concluded primarily from the 1990s onwards in the shadow of the racially motivated attacks in Germany. They are understood primarily as a declaration of intent to send a signal against racism and to nail the country's colours to the mast. They are not always accompanied by concrete measures.

In 1995 the European social partners agreed, in the so-called "Florence Declaration", on joint action on an active equality policy: "The social partners affirm the great significance they attribute to realising a democratic, pluralistic society in Europe, characterised by solidarity and respect for the dignity of all. The elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities are basic values of the common cultural

#### Infobox 5

### Florenzer declaration

Joint Declaration of the social partners on the prevention of racial discrimination and the promotion of equal treatment in the workplace, endorsed at the summit on social dialogue on 21 October 1995 in Florence.

inheritance and a component of the legal tradition of all European states".

In the following years the options available in Germany for integrating people with a migrant background in the workplace were improved by conferring on works councils the task of promoting integration. In accordance with this, more information can be obtained from employers and – on the employer side – voluntary works agreements can be concluded. Similarly, in the case of xenophobic activities in the workplace improved action and sanction options are available. This was brought about in particular by the amendment of the Works Constitution Act in 2001.

Although agreements aimed directly at promoting the integration of people with a migrant background are rare, they are not unusual. However, measures and regulations that single out individual groups and aim at eliminating discrimination concealed in organisational structures are not very widespread, especially in the private sector. It seems that specific enterprise cultures, available experience and integration instruments play an important role in a company's ability to integrate different people. "In particular, workplaces that, for example, have no or little experience with migrant workers have a tendency in case of doubt to decide in favour of native German workers because they are considered easier to handle" (DGB Bildungswerk 2016).

## 3 REGULATORY CONTEXTS IN WORKS AGREEMENTS: GOOD PRACTICE

### Works agreement: Awareness-raising against Racism – Rheinbahn AG

At Rheinbahn non-German citizens make up 12.59 per cent of the workforce (as of 2013). More than 40 million passengers of foreign origin use the services of the local public transport company each year. In a booklet the company describes its intercultural activities as follows: "From these two perspectives Rheinbahn identified the integration of migrants early on as an opportunity to develop the company. Co-existence and working together in a society that had to integrate migrants and, at the same time, can benefit from their special abilities must also receive further support in the company" (Rheinbahn AG 2012: 1). In 2004 a company agreement was concluded that focused on conflict resolution in the case of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination. In the agreement the board of directors and the works council emphasise the protection and promotion of the free

WORKS AGREEMENT: AWARENESS-RAISING AGAINST RACISM - RHEINBAHN AG



development of the personality for everyone in the company. If conflicts such as bullying or discrimination arise, a procedure for resolving them is laid down. Also, how to handle sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, protection for victims and superiors' duty to act are supposed to be incorporated in occupational training and further training (cf. Dälken 2015).

Rheinbahn AG also exhibits a positive and exemplary approach to activating young employees. Trainees regularly develop their own projects: intercultural exchange, lectures and information events, such as visits to mosques or churches, promote intercultural understanding. On top of that there are trips to memorial sites, training courses and much more.

### **Works agreement: Equality Report – Krupp Mannesmann Steel Mill (HKM)**

Company personnel policy is of particular importance for equal treatment at work. In accordance with the Works Constitution Act the works council has a right to information: the employer is obliged to make available to it the documents it needs to perform its tasks. However, the Works Constitution Act does not go into detail on how the information is made available or what data it has to contain. In company practice systematic evaluations of company personnel data are rare. Data protection law concerns are particularly responsible for this because it involves sensitive personal data. On the other hand, against the background of the lack of data structural inequalities of treatment in relation to the employment of people with a migrant background can scarcely be detected. Countermeasures are conspicuous by their absence.

Against this background Krupp Mannesmann Steel Mill (HKM) is something of a pioneer. For some time now it has presented a detailed report on its personnel structure. The basis for the report is provided by implementation of a works agreement concluded in 2010. Besides producing the personnel report this agreement provides for the establishment of a parity-based migration, integration and equality committee. This committee is supposed to promote the equal opportunities and integration of workers with a migrant background, as well as equality for men and women, the disabled and older workers. The committee is convened a maximum of four times a year (cf. Dälken 2015).

The results of the report on personnel structure were surprising, even to the works council: it turned out that the proportion of employees with a migrant background was almost double what had been assumed. Previously only the share of foreign employees had been known. On top of that it turned out that the higher one goes up the management hierarchy, the lower the proportion of people with

a migrant background. It's true that they occupy leading positions in production, but they are scarce in administrative positions. Both the works council and the top management have learned lessons from the report: the proportion of employees with a migrant background has now increased at all management levels, not only among production foremen. "We've really managed to bring about a change in culture and in many areas", confirmed the chair of the HKM works council Ulrich Kimpel (cf. IG Metall 2013).

### **Works agreement: training of cultural mediators at ThyssenKrupp Steel**

If the aim of (further) training is to advance integration, not only employees with a migrant background should be targeted, but all employees in the workplace, especially human resource managers. Background information can be disseminated by means of intercultural training courses and information on equality, which could influence future developments in the company. At ThyssenKrupp Steel further training has been available for years for employees to become so-called "cultural mediators". A works agreement was the starting point for this training.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 the works council felt that the atmosphere at the workplace changed. Misgivings and confrontations between employees increased. In order to implement the works agreement more actively it was proposed that contact persons be trained who could play a preventive role in the workplace and mediate in the event of conflict. The training of cultural mediators arose out of this, within the framework of a project, implemented initially by IG Metall from 2001 to 2004.

Various providers have conducted this training since then. In order to be able to operate independently of the company, in 2007 the cultural mediators set up their own association. The trained cultural mediators act as contact persons at the company: they mediate in the event of disputes and are available to give advice. They also provide intercultural information, for example, on such questions as: what is the meaning of Ramadan? Why do some colleagues pray during the lunch break? Conflicts need to be nipped in the bud, as far as possible. They try to find out whether it is really an intercultural conflict or whether some other problem is the real source of the dispute. The cultural mediators also sometimes mediate when language problems arise and handle anti-racism. In 2001 the training of cultural mediators was backed by the personnel director, who directly invoked the

WORKS AGREEMENT: TRAINING OF CULTURAL MEDIATORS AT THYSSENKRUPP STEEL

WORKS AGREEMENT: EQUALITY REPORT - KRUPP MANNESMANN STEEL MILL (HKM)

works agreement. It was his doing that even today employees are released for training, to the extent that it's operationally possible (cf. Dälken 2015).

## 4 THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION IN SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

Proper access to work and even more so (adequate) availability of work are key to integration via work. This is the Achilles heel of the work-oriented society: if work runs out in the work-oriented society (Dahrendorf 1978) the framework conditions of the integration debate change. If that doesn't look likely in Germany today some xenophobic arguments are predicated on this fear. "They're taking our jobs" is already a standard right-wing populist lament.

This notion even plays a role with regard to the training measures recently initiated for refugees. Some companies try to placate native workers by offering additional training places for German youths (for example, the children of employees) for each new training place for refugees (cf. Müller/Schmidt 2016: 42).

The dual training system is a key part of the German success model. However, the problem of the "availability of work" and difficulties pertaining to access to work are evident precisely here. The training market for would-be trainees has been tight for several years; indeed, today only 21.7 per cent of enterprises in Germany provide training at all. In 2013 the number of training contracts fell to its lowest value since 1977 and remained stuck at this historically low level of 563,055 places in 2015 after another collapse in 2014, alongside an actual demand of 602,886 (BMBF 2016: 20).

This means that competition for the available places is all the greater. The transition to training has become more difficult particularly for young people with lower secondary or secondary qualifications: just under a third of applicants end up stuck in clearing in the transition system and all too often fail to get into training that provides them with full occupational qualifications. The chances of young people with a migrant background are even worse. For years, the rate of new trainees among young people with foreign citizenship has been only around half that of young Germans.

A work-oriented society integrates people via work, but on the other hand it excludes people when no work is available. That applies to natives and native-born with a migrant background, as well as to refugees. Such a work-oriented society thus has to offer solutions for all groups in need of integration. It does this by means of so-called employment promotion.

### Employment Promotion in Germany: "Tradition Oblige"

The concept of employment promotion has a long tradition within the framework of Germany's welfare state. Furthermore, since the Job Placement and Unemployment Insurance Act (Gesetz über Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, AVAVG) of 1927 it has also built on the long cultivated basic principle of involving the social partners in managing the relevant authorities.

However, active employment promotion, linked to the growing importance of qualifications, was introduced in Germany only with the Employment Promotion Act, which superseded the AVAVG in 1969. Since then it has come to involve not only job placement and insurance, but for the first time also integrational approaches. Rising unemployment in the 1970s provided something of a laboratory for these new ideas and German reunification provided its first large-scale test. In terms of the labour market, reunification was accompanied by further training and retraining measures for just under half a million workers from the former GDR. In the late 1990s the principle of "fordern und fördern" (literally "demanding and supporting") was introduced. It included first and foremost compulsory participation in (qualification) measures and entailed considerable "changes in the corporatist-bureaucratic network" because here "more flexibility and individual case management were demanded" (Schmid 2009: 6). The imposition of obligations on the individual also required a further professionalisation of the "integrating" institutions. The far-reaching and stealthy management of the financial market crisis in the late 2000s, which involved measures ranging from qualification elements to so-called "return to learn" schemes – see the WeGebAU (Weiterbildung Geringqualifizierter und beschäftigter älterer Arbeitnehmer in Unternehmen) programme run by the Agency for Work and Training during Short-time Working (Agentur für Arbeit und Bildung in Kurzarbeit) – is an important indicator of this system's enhanced integrational heft.

The main aim of this employment promotion, oriented towards people's individual knowledge and capabilities, is to avoid unemployment or bring it to an end (§1 SGB III). The Social Code (Employment Promotion) III (Sozialgesetzbuch III [Arbeitsförderung]) includes a whole series of labour market policy measures and support instruments, for example, on activation and occupational integration (§§ 44–47), choice of occupation and occupational training (§§ 48–55) and also on occupational further training (§§ 81–87). The Social Code II (basic insurance for job seekers) (Sozialgesetzbuch II [Grundsicherung für Arbeitssuchende]), §16 a - f, also provides numerous options for labour insertion. Whether it be pre-vocational measures, entry qualifications (Einstiegsqualifizierungen, EQ) or

EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION IN GERMANY: "TRADITION OBLIGE"

occupational training in establishments outside the firm (Berufsausbildung in außerbetrieblichen Einrichtungen, BaE) there are a plethora of support approaches; at Land level there are also tried and tested practicable approaches to bundling different measures, such as the “third way into occupational training in North-Rhine Westphalia” (“3. Weg in der Berufsausbildung in NRW”) (cf. Becker et al. 2011).

Besides publically supported training and education within the framework of the Social Code various other statutory regulations are aimed primarily at preventing unemployment. They are thus also important within the framework of the refugee debate. They include, for example, options for external examination on the basis of proven work experience (§45 Vocational Training Act) or the possibility of a mastership examination, for example, after taking an aptitude test in accordance with the Act on Establishing Occupational Qualifications (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz), Art. 3 para 7 sentence 5).

### Vocational Education and Training is Strong in Germany

Based on these multifarious promotion and support options Germany has a training infrastructure specialising in labour insertion – often not only in the free and publically funded provider landscape, but also a good deal closer to the free market. Many larger companies or groups, for example, have training centres that have an important foothold in the labour market integration of target groups and thanks to their close relations with the parent company and sometimes also with regional SMEs even in the past stood out with high insertion and placement rates.

To take examples from the now fairly small – it has now shrunk to below 80,000 workers across Germany – steel industry one might mention ArcelemMittal Eisenhüttenstadt’s business qualification centre (Qualifizierungszentrum der Wirtschaft, QCW), ThyssenKrupp Steel Europe’s training firms, Salzgitter AG, Saarstahl and Dillinger Hütte and many others. For the chemical industry one might mention training firms such as the BASF training association Rhein-Neckar or the Berufsbildungswerk (vocational training centre) Burghausen (BBiW). These companies are typically characterised by the following:

- close links and regional networking with the relevant employers. Often these training firms offer training in cooperation with one another;
- good contacts with regional chambers of industry and commerce and vocational schools. The firms often provide members of examination committees on a voluntary basis and get involved in committee work;

- long-term cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency and with municipal job centres. In some cases firms are certified in accordance with the Accreditation and Authorisation Regulation on Employment Promotion (Akkreditierungs- und Zulassungsverordnung Arbeitsförderung, AZAV) and in this connection also offer a broad range of training approaches to adults;
- good networking via association and network activities, for example, with the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, BiBB), the Steel Institute (Stahlinstitut, VdeH), the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung and so on.

There are a number of companies that have always provided training in excess of the region needs. They bring the necessary know-how and routines to refugees’ integration. The Society for Innovative Employment Promotion (Gesellschaft für innovative Beschäftigungsförderung, GIB) reports three successful examples of how young refugees can be helped into work and training (GIB 2016: 36). One of them is E.ON’s project “Getting started with energy”, carried out in cooperation with the Essen job centre and TÜV Nord Bildung. The latter has its origins in the training infrastructure of the coal and steel industry company Ruhrkohle AG. All protagonists of the three projects are agreed: “it doesn’t matter where refugees are on the conveyor belt [...] they need a principal contact person who is constantly available” (GIB 2016: 36). Continuity here is as important as empathy and socio-educational skills.

These business-oriented training companies are well set up to tackle difficult target groups and/or trainees with a migrant background, language problems and even psychological problems. They employ social education (“special needs”) teachers, trainers are trained with intercultural challenges in mind and quality requirements are formulated, for example, in relation to student/teacher ratios. The range of products is also customised in relation to complex support needs: among other things, modular additional qualifications and individual exam preparations are made available. To enrich their provision these companies also make active use of external resources (for example, debt counselling, psychologists and so on) and labour market support instruments, such as occupational training in establishments outside the firm, the “3. Weg in der Berufsausbildung in NRW” scheme (cf. Becker et al. 2011), the introductory training year (Einstiegsqualifizierungsjahr, EQJ) and so on (see section “Employment promotion in Germany”). The vocationally oriented training firms we are talking about here form an important node with regard to integration work.

Many of the integration measures for refugees tie in with experiences gained working with young

VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING  
IS STRONG IN  
GERMANY



people without qualifications. In particular, introductory training and work experience are the means of choice to lower the threshold to initial training. Many of the firms investigated by Müller/Schmidt (2016) merely expand their existing provision with additional places for refugees and additional provisions for language support and imparting intercultural skills. In this way structures, processes and, above all, know-how can be used effectively. One programme that has already been used and was simply extended is “Starting your career” (“Start in den Beruf” – see Infobox).

Although refugees are likely to be some way behind when it comes to speaking German they are often more motivated than the usual “Starting your career” participants, who sometimes lack motivation and a desire to acquire training. It is therefore helpful to mingle the groups in the training centre: in this way the participants are able to learn from one another – for example, a refugee can help a German youth with their maths (Müller/Schmidt 2016: 97). Using and expanding the existing support system can offer multiple synergies.

### Integration via Training: Examples from the Steel and Chemical Industries

Infobox 6

#### Collective agreement “Future through training and starting a career”

“Starting your career” (“Start in den Beruf”) is part of the social partner initiative and a component of the IG BCE/BACV collective agreement “Future through training and starting a career”. It was launched in 2008 and after further development was relaunched on 1 July 2016. It states that “the parties to the collective agreement hereby continue their joint training commitment. The initiative is aimed at providing people who are not eligible for inclusion in occupational training with occupational skills and competences that will enable them to perform a professional activity or to get into occupational training or otherwise to make it easier for them to enter the world of work. This includes, in particular, overcoming linguistic and educational obstacles and fostering social inclusion.”

Also laid down in the collective agreement is that young people up to 25 years of age shall participate in vocational integration measures, for which they will receive a payment of 450 euros, and guided by masters, trainers and other suitable persons. On completion, transition to a training place may follow.

Other regional measures are intended to promote training, placement and first job.

In particular, larger companies with an extended training infrastructure not only furnish exceptional conditions in which to support refugees but they also regard it as their social responsibility to make a contribution. Müller/Schmidt (2016) have presented this value-oriented aspect in detail, with impressive examples from companies with well developed co-determination. One HR manager and currently personnel director is quoted as saying that it is important “to convey the values we practice here [...] to these young people because the German codetermination system is almost unique. We also have to be able to convince people of the importance of getting along with one another” Müller/Schmidt (2016): 69.

This company’s contributions are also often extremely diverse and not always directed solely to vocational training. Many also function to promote social integration by, for example, granting work release to employees who try to help refugees. They also support the work of initiatives, associations and municipalities with donations, offering municipalities, among other things, company housing or the services of company doctors. Besides social integration measures companies primarily take action to integrate refugees in the world of work: they provide work experience, enable language courses or make additional training places available for refugees. In what follows, by way of example, we present some instances from companies implementing vocational training measures.

INTEGRATION  
VIA TRAINING:  
EXAMPLES  
FROM THE STEEL  
AND CHEMICAL  
INDUSTRIES

In the opinion of the training manager from the chemical industry there is “sufficient room [...] to assist the participants on an individual basis, to develop ideas on the employment marketplace in Germany and to improve their knowledge of German” (Müller/Schmidt 2016: 85).

Müller/Schmidt (2016) were informed by a contact partner from a real estate company with strong codetermination that the secret of this programme’s success is to get people to mix.

#### Taking Social and Psychological Challenges Seriously. Salzgitter Takes Them On – Routinely and with Sensitivity

According to Dr Florian Löbermann, head of vocational training at the Salzgitter group – where it is a matter of course – “Social policy projects have long been a familiar part of our training”. In keeping with this the training department has amassed many years’ experience in this area. Networking with the relevant partner organisations and internal

departments, as well as the involvement of special needs teachers have proved to be particularly important.

Because of its multicultural workforce Salzgitter Flachstahl GmbH takes a sensitive approach to religious and cultural diversity. However, Mr Löbermann characterises the refugee initiative as an “experiment”: “naturally, some circumstances are similar and it is possible to take advantage of existing experiences. On the other hand, before we launched the initiative we couldn’t really tell what we were in for. Besides the expected linguistic and cultural challenges it was unclear, for example, what kind of experience the participants would bring with them and whether they, for example, might suffer from trauma due to their experiences in their country of origin or flight”. Against this background the “dual integration assistance” is supposed to make it easier for refugees to enter the world of work, especially through occupationally specific language teaching with practical elements. The aim of the programme is to improve language skills, in particular by boosting their technical vocabulary in order to prepare the participants for job-specific communication. Besides that, the aim is to familiarise them with a broader range of work contexts and enable them to cope with everyday life in the workplace.

With regard to cooperation with the works council and the youth representatives Löbermann remarks that the issue was soon recognised as being politically and strategically important; for example, refugees were invited to a youth meeting. Their account of their experiences in the course of their flight from their homeland left a lasting impression on Löbermann and gave him the idea for the initiative. Together with internal and external partners the steel company’s training experts worked out an approach that they subsequently further developed in the course of the programme in close coordination with the works council and with the youth and trainee representatives. For example, after basic career orientation the possibility of going into particular jobs more deeply was offered in order both to accommodate the inclinations of the participants and also to impart to them the necessary information and the relevant vocabulary. The involvement of an interpreter – which to begin with made things run much more smoothly – could later be reduced.

Within the framework of the dual integration assistance Salzgitter Flachstahl provides work experience tailored to vocational orientation, while in the course of three days the external partner furnishes the requisite supplementary help, such as language and cultural input and coaching. According to Löbermann “it is one thing to make oneself understood in German and quite another to be able to exchange views on occupational and technical matters”. In keeping with that the evaluation of language skills plays a key role in the programme

also in terms of safety at work; job-specific language competence is also a core element of the programme. In particular, close cooperation with internal partners, like safety at work, represent one of the crucial success factors without which such an initiative would be difficult to pull off.

The programme is by no means the norm and requires corresponding expenditure – “it is rather a voluntary exercise”, as Löbermann puts it. After the end of the programme a summary is drawn up and advice is given on what to do next. The expense – so much can be said already – was well worth it: already during the course of the programme four participants accepted a job or a study opportunity in the region. Furthermore, it is already clear that some of the refugees within the company will continue with existing programmes.

### **A Board that Listens, More Patience and Training Know-how. That’s What Conti Has Come Up With**

Recognising someone’s knowledge and capabilities and fostering them effectively constitute the best integration assistance imaginable. However, the (integration) performance of a company providing training is difficult to capture in quantitative terms. In September 2016, instead of the planned 50 apprentices the firm Continental in Hannover began to train only eight refugees directly, as well as 22 more in introductory training (cf. Welt Online, 6.9.2016). Those responsible are not used to making false promises and now have had to curb their initial euphoria somewhat. “I was naïve enough to assume that with 1 million refugees in the country we would be taking 50 or so trainees”, recalls Conti personnel director Ariane Reinhart. She soon learned otherwise from her training specialists. That is another feature of a sound training culture: keeping what is feasible in view and avoiding overload.

Those in charge of training at Continental quickly identified language skills as the biggest hurdle to be overcome and prepared a placement test at the outset: they decided to provide the selection test in the job applicant’s native language in order to fathom their potential. This improved matching substantially: as a result they were able to identify 30 per cent of the 200 applicants as, in principle, suitable for training instead of the less than 2 per cent they had come up with initially. However, they also had to come terms with the fact that the whole business was likely to take a lot longer than expected. Continental now faces this challenge – not least because the firm has years of experience

**TAKING SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES SERIOUSLY SALZGITTER TAKES THEM ON - ROUTINELY AND WITH SENSITIVITY**

**A BOARD THAT LISTENS, MORE PATIENCE AND TRAINING KNOW-HOW. THAT’S WHAT CONTI HAS COME UP WITH**

with introductory training, which is closely tailored to applicants' individual needs.

Matching – and that means, as the case may be, also (somewhat faster) preparation for training activities – is enormously important and can be carried out only by business-oriented service providers. Appropriate categorisation and assiduous support are in the refugee's own direct interest: economically, interrupting training has much more negative consequences for a refugee than direct entry into a low paid or low level job, because the possibility of occupational training at a later date cannot be ruled out.

### **Business as (un)usual: ThyssenKrupp Steel Knows Something about Integration**

Volker Grigo, head of talent management and thus responsible for training at the international steel group, with its roots in the Ruhrgebiet, puts it in a nutshell: "In the Ruhrgebiet, integration has been the norm for decades. Today we face the challenge

of integrating large numbers of refugees: we'll manage that, too." He knows what he's talking about. By September 2016 just under 20 refugees had been taken on as apprentices in various locations in the steel region and there had been 100 instances of work experience. The Ruhr group's training centres offer a wide range of possibilities, including work experience, intro-

ductory training, assisted training, regular training and dual study, as well as language courses for trainees (B2 level) and intercultural training courses for trainers.

By means of the programme "we.help" ThyssenKrupp AG managed to implement over 40 training contracts with refugees across the group. In total, 150 training places and 230 additional work experience opportunities are to be provided for immigrants over the next two years. That is a considerable achievement, although that's usual in heavy industry in many respects. Oliver Burkhard, personnel director at ThyssenKrupp AG, describes the group's commitment as follows: ThyssenKrupp is not motivated solely by its perhaps even naïve hope of solving its manpower problems.

**BUSINESS AS (UN)USUAL: THYSSENKRUPP STEEL KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT INTEGRATION**



**"THE PEOPLE WHO COME TO US ARE NOT IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENTS FOR THE WORKERS WE URGENTLY NEED. THAT IS TOO SIMPLISTIC."**

Oliver Burkhard, personnel director, ThyssenKrupp AG, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 25.7.2016

In his view, integration entails not only solving recruitment problems or giving refugees a chance on moral grounds, but much more, such as putting across our society's values and, at the same time, finding ways of tackling resentments, prejudices and worries in society. "In this way a company is a society's mirror image", Burkhard declares and the first port of call as far as integration is concerned, including all the difficulties and challenges that entails.

ThyssenKrupp is one of the founding members of the integration initiative "Wir zusammen" (We together), launched by German businesses to make refugees' integration easier through work opportunities.

### **BASF's Many Years' Experience with Integration Pays Off for the Regional Labour Market**

BASF SE, in particular with its affiliate BASF Jobmarkt GmbH and associated training establishments in Ludwigshafen, has tried and tested structures at its disposal. "Starting your career" ("Start in den Beruf") represents an approach that has long enabled young people even without school qualifications to get into training. Those who manage to complete this programme have the possibility of commencing training at a partner company of the BASF training association or at BASF SE. For those receiving their training within the framework of this training association the theoretical part takes place at BASF. The practice module takes place at the partner company, which in the best case gives people a job when training has been completed. By means of the training association BASF wants to make young people in the region suitable for training and to help firms to meet their need for skilled workers.

In 2013 BASF also launched a pilot project for the training of 20 young people from Spain. They complete dual training in accordance with the German model: after successful completion there is a possibility of being taken on at BASF Ludwigshafen. In 2016 the fourth group of Spanish youngsters started training as chemical workers within the framework of this scheme.

From the outset all the abovementioned activities were supported by the BASF SE works council, the responsible training and further training committee and the youth and trainee representative body (JAV). The works council, its committees and the JAV have workplace codetermination rights at BASF Jobmarkt GmbH. They are involved in all training activities at the company.

Building on these multifarious experiences in October 2015 "Start Integration", a programme also coordinated by BASF Jobmarkt GmbH, was launched for the integration of refugees and linked

**BASF'S MANY YEARS' EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATION PAYS OFF FOR THE REGIONAL LABOUR MARKET**

to existing structures and processes. The chair of the training and further training committee expressly welcomed the commitment: "BASF, as an international company, has long promoted the integration of refugees and has extensive experience and resources to meet the relevant challenges. That applies to both the integration of native disadvantaged youth and the integration of refugees."

More than 300 places were available as this year's training began in the three start programmes "Starting your career", "Start Integration" and "Anlauf zur Ausbildung" (Launchpad to training). The latter prepares young people who do not meet all the technical and personal requirements for direct entry into occupational training for training with the training association. Around 70 per cent of participants in the "Starting your career" and "Launchpad to training" programmes from the previous year are this year starting training at a partner firm.

BASF is continuing the "Start Integration" programme this year with up to 50 refugees. It is oriented towards refugees with strong prospects of remaining in the country and is aimed at integrating participants in the labour market of the

Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region (cf. BASF press release, 14.9.2016). At present 19 people are taking part in the one-year vocational preparation. Among other things they receive language assistance and intercultural training.

BASF, with these diverse activities, is not only making a substantial contribution to the integration of refugees but also to meeting the need for skilled workers in the regional environment.

### **The Long View, Creativity and Business Orientation. The Business Qualification Centre in Eisenhüttenstadt**

Eisenhüttenstadt is a German steel town steeped in tradition and with an eventful history, characterised by massive redundancies, especially shortly after reunification. This is also the kind of challenge that the Business Qualification Centre (Qualifizierungszentrum der Wirtschaft, QCW) has had to face since its establishment in 1990 and still has to cope with today. From the very outset, integration through employment has been the "business" of this 100

Infobox 7

### **More examples: from various branches that implement occupational training measures**



**BMW:** At the end of 2015 the BMW Group started with 40 refugees within the framework of the initiative "Work here!", which is a nine-week practical programme (cf. Mach meinen Kumpel nicht an! e.V. 2016a). Qualified refugees are to be provided with assistance in social and occupational integration (cf. press information, BMW Group, 19.11.2015). Refugees below 25 years of age are helped to obtain an introductory qualification with the aim of getting them ready to undergo proper training. The works council played an active part in implementing the programme.

**EnBW:** An integration programme was launched at the Karlsruhe and Stuttgart sites in early 2016 that prepares people for possible training at the enterprise; in the course of this, four new training places were created (cf. Integrated Report 2015, EnBW, p. 35).

**STRABAG AG:** Since January 2016 the company has been participating in the project "Berufsstart Bau" [Starting a career in construction], which prepares young refugees for training in a construction trade (cf. Business Report 2015, STRABAG AG, p. 19). Its aim is to enable around 20 young immigrants to undergo training. In this way the construction sec-

tor hopes to be able to solve its need for workers further down the line. In the second quarter of 2016 a mere 10,100 apprenticeship contracts were concluded in skilled trades (cf. press release, Deutsche Bauindustrie, 3.8.2016) – too few to meet the rising need for trainee staff.

**Deutsche Bahn AG:** At nine new locations young school leavers who have yet to find a training place can undergo intensive preparation for training (cf. Integrated Business Report 2015, Deutsche Bahn AG, p. 112). In the reporting year 2015 "Chance plus" was also opened up to young refugees.

**Henkel AG:** Besides taster work experience and courses lasting a few weeks, as well as work shadowing, coaching, language courses and job application courses are also on offer (cf. press release, Henkel AG, 21.4.2016). Works council member Rüdiger Schlüter underlines the importance of foster programmes to support refugees in a newsletter issued by the association "Mach meinen Kumpel nicht an! – für Gleichbehandlung, gegen Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Rassismus e.V." (2016c): "Everyone who lives here has to have the opportunity for training and work. That's why it's important to help these young people."



THE LONG VIEW,  
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per cent owned affiliate of ArcelorMittal Eisenhüttenstadt GmbH. According to QCW head Ralf Hillburger, what was learned within the framework of job creation schemes in the 1990s still applies today: “first of all, we have to get people ready for training and only then can we make them employable with the right qualifications”. That means, first of all: early involvement in practical operations. In his opinion, integration courses with their sometimes too narrowly focused curricula pay attention to business consid-

erations too late in the day. According to Hillburger, language is important, “but understanding is every bit as important for key processes and also the core cultural norms in the world of work”.

QCW is able to provide practical links to the working world. The company provides training for over 30 regional companies. Via the parent company ArcelorMittal there is also good access to the big steelmaker’s service providers. For Hillburger this is a key factor in successful integration. “Experienced trainers and teachers specialising in social education play their part in this, as does regional networking with the relevant institutions, but above all taking account of business needs.” That is also very important for the transition to work.

The basic conditions are fine at QCW, then, but not everything in the garden is rosy. At present the most recently started integration course is only half full. Participants often don’t turn up but QCW has no way of sanctioning them. Only a few refugees take the next step: the MOVA course (“Maßnahmen zur Orientierung und Vorbereitung auf den Arbeitsmarkt” or “labour market orientation and preparation measures”). Currently, nine people are studying various trades here, ranging from metalwork training to retail. The courses, which are designed for 15 participants, are no longer really viable from a business standpoint.

Only after the integration course and MOVA are refugees in a position to take the next step and acquire technical knowhow. Ralf Hillburger describes two ways: “if the participants have relevant job experience or specific aptitudes we find it out and build on it. In particular older refugees, 30 years of age and above, then receive modular training and can be made ready for the labour market as welders or crane operators relatively quickly.” In most cases, “relatively quickly” means at least two years after starting the integration course. The other group, whose members’ age makes them more suitable for initial training, can, as an alternative, get into regular training via an introductory training year. Including the following two and a half to three and a half years’ training, people in this category remain in the hands of the QCW and its business

partners for a good six years.

These long periods are necessary, but they make training expensive, time consuming and prone to drop outs. Hillburger sees a further problem here: “success stories are important for integration. Opportunities to earn some quick money in a fast food outlet are more persuasive than the tedious process of getting a job in industry as a skilled worker, even though the latter is much more viable in the long term.” Perhaps some thought should be given to company-related qualifications without an IHK certificate, thinks the QCW head. Not, for example, as a long-term solution but to gain valuable time and provide some tangible success at an early stage.

## 5 SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

After over 50 years of immigration to the Federal Republic of Germany legal equality at work is now a matter of course for people with a migrant background. The institutions of codetermination – works councils, trade unions, shop stewards and personnel directors – have a considerable share in all this. In firms a great deal of practical experience has been accumulated in terms of living and working together. People with a migrant background are getting involved and standing up for their rights. At the same time, actual inequalities of opportunity continue to hinder integration within the firm and a wide range of skills remain unused.

Associations that promote equality of opportunity and combat racism are opening up opportunities to confront xenophobia and racism and tackle unequal treatment. Opportunities to register complaints in the case of existing discrimination, as well as measures and sanction options can bring about changes in work organisation, company culture and dealings with customers. In this way they contribute to an open work climate in the workplace. A company integration policy that also seeks to satisfy social policy needs will succeed, however, only if it dares to change structures, redistribute resources and call for additional resources.

While in the case of invited immigration jobs appropriate framework conditions were largely in place or at least clear, making it highly likely that work would be found for all, refugees in 2016 face a number of obstacles. Apart from anything else, neither jobs nor adequate conditions can be counted on. Works councils and codetermination will not be able to influence people’s integration in the company via work if those people remain unemployed (Kotthoff 2009: 329 f). This decisive obstacle must first be overcome before codetermination actors will be able to help in the task of giving refugees “an identity as workers”. People have to be brought into the workforce. And given



the various challenges that will be possible only at considerable expense. Because needless to say it has to be decent work. Given the evident erosion of "simple [unskilled] work" education is more than ever a condition of access for participation in the labour market and thus for participation in social life. Whether Germany can meet its urgent need for skilled workers via the integration of refugees largely depends on their motivation and aptitude. Many refugees certainly have all the motivation in the world, even though it can be stifled by tortuous bureaucratic procedures.

Companies bear a major responsibility in the process of integration in work. Many of them actively embrace this responsibility despite all the obstacles and problems. In cooperation with codetermination they rely primarily on the integrational powers of occupational training. Integration via training is a universal approach in Germany based on many years of experience.

Today we can take advantage of this knowhow. The approaches presented here make it clear that Germany's training professionals have set out their stall. But it will require much more energy and resources than in the past to integrate those at the margins of the labour market. Their lack of language skills and qualifications are considerable:

and on top of that there are cultural barriers, not to mention various forms of trauma.

There is still a long way to go and no quick fix can be expected in terms of training's contribution to integration. Experiences from the world of work can be used for refugees' social integration if everyone involved pulls together: politicians, society, employers, training experts and, above all, workforces and their interest representatives.

And the latter – works and staff councils – will have to continue the integration work in the enterprise after integration into work has been achieved.

Integration at the enterprise level thus works best if there is a broad common basis of understanding and, at the same time, differences are not underplayed or swept under the carpet. Where integration in and via work proves possible it has a positive influence on people, not least for the development of a fundamental grasp of democracy: through the rights to vote and to stand as a candidate within the framework of codetermination people who have fled from dictatorships can experience democracy within the company. Not only that, but workplace codetermination wields its integrational powers best where what people have in common is skilled and decent work.

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