Specific career counselling for refugees - the key to tapping a significant potential of skilled workers

in:

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1. To begin with: What we need to unlearn:

In Germany, the discourse in everyday life, the media and politics is dominated by a view of immigration that does not agree with the demographic facts, especially regarding immigration, the German labour force potential, the country's economic strength, the efficiency of state institutions, society's integrative strength and an actually economic way of thinking. This mindset is reflected by the generally accepted term "refugee crisis" which is used frequently at present in relation to the migration of refugees. The term is more evocative of danger than of the positive evolution it also includes. It is the view of a fearful (economic) giant.

It is important to outline this phenomenon of mentality and politics at the beginning of an essay on specific career counselling for refugees, because such basic views and assessments held by the counselling specialists but also by the persons that decide about counselling resources and those designing the framework conditions of counselling can jeopardize the quality and success of counselling. In particular, they jeopardize that the potentials of advice-seekers are identified as comprehensively as possible and the ambition to make the most of these potentials for their personal growth interests.¹

1.1 "We can't manage!"

The exceptionally high numbers of refugees that migrated to Germany in 2015 seem to have been a one-year phenomenon. For various reasons, the number of refugees to Germany dropped by more than two thirds (from 890,000 to 280,000 persons) already in the following year 2016 (and this lower annual figure for 2016 still includes three months of high refugee numbers in the first quarter; afterwards from April the drop is even more pronounced).²

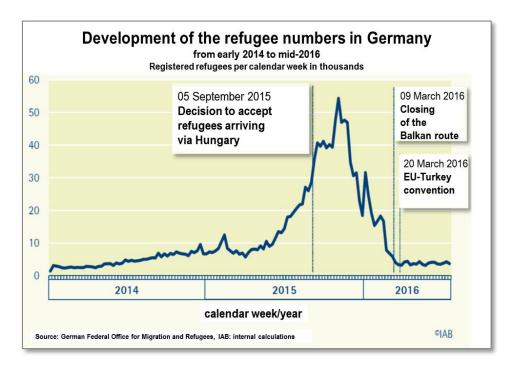


Chart from: Brücker et al. 2016c: 3

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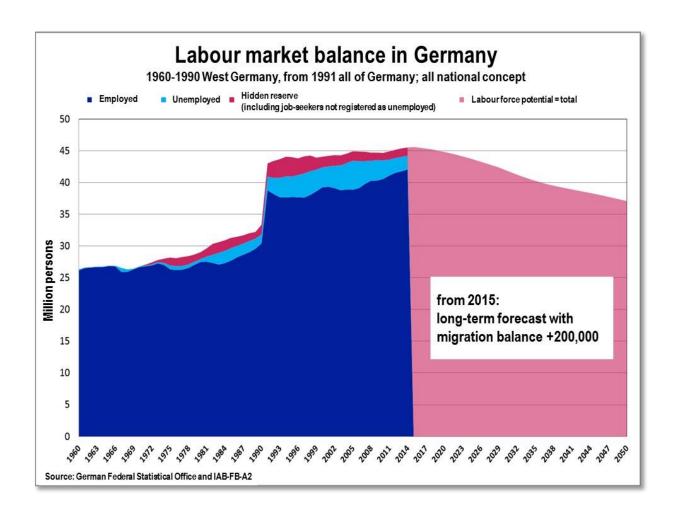
¹ cf. the essay on general career counselling in this manual (Kohn 2014a)

² cf. BMI 2017

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Looking at the situation of new immigrants to Germany to be integrated as whole, this exceptional peak is almost the same as the immigration level in the early 1990s over a much longer period: In 1992, 1.2 million foreign immigrants came to Germany, including a high proportion of refugees from the Yugoslav Wars. Additionally, well above 200,000 ethnic German repatriates had to be integrated into the German society and economy each year. Germany coped with this challenge in an overall economic situation marked by unrivalled upheavals, a situation in which the entire national economy of the former GDR had to be transformed, enormous state investments into building new infrastructures were necessary with underemployment in the labour market being nearly twice as high as today.3

Against this background, it is hard to understand the criticism of the German chancellor's appeal: "We have accomplished so much – we will manage!"4, which was highly prominent in the public discourse and was at times sarcastic and militant. Additionally, the statement that we do not have too much but too little immigration to Germany becomes plausible when looking at the labour force potential that will be needed in Germany in the future. This is illustrated by the following long-term portrayal of the decisive labour market figures:



³ The consideration of underemployment reveals the whole extent of the problems in the labour market. It includes both unemployed persons that are registered and persons who are not counted as unemployed because they are participating in labour market measures and additionally people who are looking for a job on their own initiative but are not registered as unemployed. The data basis for the quantifying statement is based on the figures of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB).

⁴ The full wording of the appeal goes as follows: "Germany is a strong country. Our attitude when tackling these things must be: We have accomplished so much - we will manage! We will manage this and when we encounter obstacles, we will have to overcome them, we will have to work on them." (Merkel 2015)

This graphic, first published in Becker / Kohn 2015, initially shows that the development of high unemployment and underemployment in the past was not caused by disappearing jobs in total. Rather, the number of employed persons increased with significant growth rates. Until the current margin, however, the labour force increased even more significantly resulting in a deficit of jobs relating to the growing number of job-seekers. In the two years 2015 and 2016 (i.e. after creating this chart), the number of employed persons continued to increase noticeably (by 2.1 percent from 2014 to 2016 - Fuchs et al. 2016:10), the labour force potential again by just under 1.3 percent (ibid.). If the economic demand for labour continues to develop in a comparable manner and the demography will shrink the labour force potential so significantly in the medium run as depicted in the chart until 2050, the total supply and demand will not only develop towards a shortage of skilled labour but also towards an absolute lack of skilled labour. There are good reasons for both assumptions: The German economy did not only suffer in the years of crisis after 2007. Starting from an already high level, it has emerged from the crisis with even more competitive strength in the international markets driven by exports that continue to grow noticeably. Additionally, domestic demand has regained momentum over the past years after years of sluggish performance. On the other side of the market, the exceptional immigration numbers of 2015 brought only temporary relief for the labour force potential. For one thing, the current migration numbers are clearly declining again and are not able to change the long-time average migration balance of just under + 200,000 persons each year in the medium to long run. At least not if the German immigration policy does not take a turn towards much more openness, which is hardly to be expected given the current political debate. The fearful giant feels threatened by immigration, rather takes a course towards curbing immigration and in reality does not even have the influx of immigrants which the proponents of an "upper limit" of 200,000 migrants call for.⁵ But such a low level of immigration would presumably cause the skilled labour shortage to grow by multiple millions. The key date for this development will be the retirement of the high cohort of baby boomers from the labour market when they reach retirement age from the mid-2020s on.

As a consequence, the following connection seems plausible, which is contrary to the public perception⁶: The German economy and also the German society, as has been demonstrated frequently in the past, are very well capable of successfully absorbing the very high refugee numbers of 2015 and the declining numbers afterwards. For the following decades, the stabilisation of both the economy and the society can only be accomplished if we have more immigration than previously. The strong demand for German goods and services from other countries and the strong demand in the domestic market can only be harnessed productively if the labour force potential remains about constant or decreases only very moderately if we assume continuing moderate productivity rates⁷ as are to be expected for a highly developed economy. That such a scenario is a good basis for the political and societal objectives can be illustrated again in two respects using the example of the retiring baby boomers from the mid-2020s onwards: Firstly, a stabilisation of the properly functioning economic cycles in Germany would be important to generate the capacity to finance pensions. Secondly, consumption of this strong generation of pensioners, which is also fed by a historically high (inherited) fortune, will assure that (without more influx) the domestic demand will decline much later for demographic reasons than the working population. However, in order to keep the labour force potential about constant, we would need a positive migration balance of just under + 500,000 persons from non-EU states to Germany each year (cf. Fuchs et al. 2015).

⁵ Not if this quantified claim is understood on the basis of the immigration balance; even less so if this should only refer to the influx figures. Since 2000, significantly more than 500,000 foreign persons on average are moving away from Germany each year.

⁶ cf. Hermann et al. 2016

⁷ The working hour productivity in Germany grew 1.2 percent on average from 2010 to 2015 (cf. Fuchs et al. 2016: (10):

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1.2 "We already failed in the past."

Certainly, it is impossible to cover the broad discourse about the success or failure of integrating migrants into the German society in an appropriate and sufficiently extensive manner at this point. However, this debate all but disregards one major aspect: Already in the past, high levels of immigration as a result of the recruiting of migrant workers8 in West Germany enabled that economic cycles as well as transfer benefits from social insurance could be established and stabilised⁹ at a high and growing level despite considerable demographic deficits in the labour force potential¹⁰.

For the relevant connection with the topics of labour market policy and counselling on education, career and employment¹¹ aimed at releasing potential, I want to rebut an argument which is frequently encountered in the current debate on refugee migration and which is the basis of the hypothesis covered in section 1.3: The argument goes that we already failed in the past to produce today's skilled staff from previous immigration. Some proponents of this view explicitly refer to the second generation, the children of the migrant workers. In the more favourable case, this argument is used to reshape intensified integration efforts to avoid repeating past mistakes. In the more destructive case, it can be used to support the claim "We won't manage this!".

Many people will probably find the argument used in the highly negatively biased German integration debate plausible at first. But it can be verified and rebutted unequivocally by looking at the qualification structure of the largest ethnic subgroup of the former generation of "migrant workers" discussed most frequently: A specific study on the "integration of the second generation in Germany" (Sürig / Wilmes 2011) determines the level of employment in addition to a number of other integration topics. The employment rate of the "second generation" with Turkish roots is 72.9 percent¹². Of the respondents who are active in the labour market just under 13 percent only are employed below the skilled worker level; 6.5 percent work in scientific jobs or leading positions; 12.5 percent work at the medium skilled labour or management level and more than 68 percent are employed at the skilled labour level after vocational qualification¹³.

These results demonstrate the highly successful vocational integration and also a high career advancement considering the general education and professional qualification structure of the parent generation. That this fact receives so little attention in our integration policy debates is a real problem, leads to wrong perceptions and false conclusions. The (frequently ignored) reality is that this high number of skilled workers of Turkish origin forms an essential part of our society and our prosperity.

1.3 "The wrong people are coming."

The fast change of the attitude towards refugees from the war zones of the Middle East is probably due to the lack of recognition of the performance of the population with a migration background in the integration policy debate and in the awareness of the population as a whole. When at first university graduates and academically qualified skilled persons from the Syrian education and employment system featured

⁸ To a much lesser extent, this also applied to the contract workers in the GDR two decades later.

⁹ The recruited industrial workers were young, healthy and fully employed and paid into the social insurance systems over a long period of time.

¹⁰ among others due to the lack of male workers in industrial jobs also as a result of casualties or invalidity in WW II.

¹¹ Among experts, the term "counselling on education, career and employment" has become established as a more descriptive formula for the legally standardized phrase of "career guidance". It illustrates both the topical breadth of this service and the structure of the advice-seekers who are eligible for benefits, which comprises young people and adults alike. (cf. Kohn 2014b and Kohn 2014c)

¹² Sürig / Wilmes 2011: 79

¹³ all figures according to Sürig / Wilmes 2011: 91

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predominantly in the perception, today's view focuses more on the generally sub-average qualification structure of the refugees.

The results of the survey of refugees jointly designed by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and the German Institute for Economic Research show in fact that the proportions of vocational education are rather low: "19 percent of refugees went to universities or colleges; 13 percent acquired a university degree. An additional 12 percent participated in vocational training in companies or in other forms of vocational training; 6 percent acquired a vocational qualification" (Brücker et al. 2016b: 6). So around a fifth of the people already have vocational qualifications and only need to have them recognized officially.

But the fact that the other four fifths of refugees do not yet have such qualifications is no major impediment for developing their skilled labour potential given their age: Just under 73 percent of persons applying for asylum for the first time, i.e. three quarters of this group of persons, were younger than 30 years; more than 58 percent were younger than 25 years¹⁴. They are hence at the beginning of their education and employment career. The fact that they have not acquired any vocational qualification yet is among others due to the circumstance that there are virtually no formalised vocational training systems in their countries of origin and that a smooth transition from school to vocational training was not to be expected in the first place given the disastrous living situations leading to their flight. But the refugees' educational aspiration is high (Brücker et al. 2016b: 7). Therefore, any investment in education, guidance and measures aiming at labour market integration for the refugees but also for the German economy and society will pay off in the medium to long run (cf. Bach et al. 2017).

People occasionally object that it could take ten years and more until young refugees have completed the various phases of education - learning the German language maybe followed by acquiring the German general school leaving certificate and subsequently vocational training (dual, school-based or academic). However, this argument does not weaken the above statement. The new skilled workers thus trained according to the state of the art would be available to the German labour market just at a time when the market would be in great distress due to the retirement of the baby boomer generations. Although this compensation would not be sufficient (cf. section 1.1), it would significantly mitigate the situation and would have to be rooted in concrete potential-based guidance and integration today.

¹⁴ proportions: internal calculations related to all first-time asylum applicants from the years 2015 (441,899 persons in total; data source BAMF 2016: 22) and 2016 (722,370 persons in total; data source BAMF 2017: 7), over which the high migration wave was distributed due to the time delay of registering the applications.

2. Mature actions: What we can learn

In order to tap and harness virtually all (educational) potentials of this large pool of young new arrivals in Germany, the potential-based guidance on education, career and employment plays a central role. ¹⁵ Only when it is provided with an empathic, advocating, trusting and encouraging attitude without any hasty steering interests or other control concerns not relevant for counselling (cf. dvb 2016), can the personal growth interests of the persons seeking advice be translated into appropriate educational careers allowing human capital to unfold as a result (in an economic sense) which can also support the implementation of the growth interests of companies and the economy in Germany (cf. Kohn 2014a: 13ff.).

But if this new group of advice-seekers comes from countries with different educational systems and different (labour) markets, if they have no or only rudimentary command of the German language, if vice versa counsellors do not speak their native language and if finally traumatising life events, experiences of war and flight dominate the advice-seekers' minds, then even professionally sophisticated job guidance faces new and demanding challenges. And just like all infrastructures and social services, public profitoriented and non-profit actors, counsellors on education, career and employment can only use these challenges to fortify their professionalism and future qualification if they are willing to acquire new skills and have the necessary flexibility.

This second part of the essay intends to outline in which professional branches of vocational guidance learning progress is necessary. The counsellors' newly acquired and extended skills can then be beneficial not only for refugees that seek advice but also for other groups in need of guidance – in particular long-term residents of our country who have also experienced exclusion and have therefore stayed behind their possibilities, for example, people with a migration background or children and adults in socially precarious living situations from educationally disadvantaged ¹⁶ families.

At present, no empirical research is available on the identification of the specific challenges and areas of professional qualification for the counselling of refugees¹⁷. In 2011, however, a Delphi study was presented that surveyed and presented specific topics and needs of advice-seekers with a migration background (Kohn 2011). Although this study was designed and conducted for advice-seeking migrants who had lived in Germany for a longer period of time, it still seems plausible to use its results as a basis to identify and illustrate the present challenges. The intersection of comparable specifics should be large. Adjustments and supplements on the results of the Delphi study will be worked out and illustrated heuristically in the following.

¹⁵ cf. Brücker et al. 2016a: 12

¹⁶ on the term "educationally disadvantaged", see Allmendinger / Leibfried 2003

¹⁷ An EU-funded research project aims to close this research gap. Six European countries collaborate to conduct a comparable Delphi study and develop learning contents on its basis that will help prepare counsellors for the new challenges. The project is titled *Counselling for Refugee and Migrant Integration into the Labour Market – Development of Courses for Higher Education and Public Employment Services (CMinaR)*. It was launched in autumn 2016 and is set to run for three years. At the time this essay was written, no publications were available yet. Information can be requested through the author.

2.1 The challenge of knowledge handicaps of advice-seekers and counsellors

Guidance on education, career and employment is a form of social counselling. To succeed, counsellors need a thorough understanding of the psychology and sociology of their advice-seekers' living situations (more on this in section 2.4) and they have to be able to use this knowledge to develop deep empathy and master advisory communication techniques. What sets this solution-focused counselling approach apart from therapeutic and social counselling in other areas of life is the highly complex subject matter and profound knowledge of the extensive systems of education, career and the labour market which counsellors must have. After all, the goal is to identify the advice-seekers' concern in this subject area, to assess their aptitude and eligibility for different education and employment routes, to identify a differentiated profile of the advice-seekers on this basis and manifest it in suitable form to discuss appropriate options with the advice-seekers.¹⁸

Producing knowledge as a basis of making career decisions is a highly demanding task already when both parties in a counselling setting have the same cultural background, have passed through the same educational system and relate their options for vocational training and employment to the same economic system and the same labour market to which they both belong. Knowledge in this context refers to the result of a selection and of putting together individual pieces of information about education, career and employment based on the advice-seekers' individual concern as well as disposition and aptitude and which is adequate to accomplish the goal of counselling, namely to increase the advice-seekers' competences to decide and act. For this purpose, counsellors need profound technical knowledge in addition to the communication techniques mentioned above. When presenting the respective contents, they can build on a more or less extensive existing knowledge base of the advice-seekers.¹⁹

The challenge of this task becomes even greater when not just one but both sides of guidance have serious deficits in their knowledge about the respectively other education and job system. For instance, refugees seeking advice can hardly be expected to have any previous knowledge of the German system, just as counsellors are not likely to be able to assess how the system in the countries of origin is structured without special further training²⁰ and which presumptions they might bring to the guidance interview.

To illustrate the skills to be acquired additionally by employment-oriented counsellors²¹ in order to master the challenge described above, the corresponding excerpt from a study concept on academic education and further training of counsellors of refugees will be presented in the five following subsections 2.2 to 2.6 of this essay (Kohn 2016b). The study concept has been designed by the University of the Federal Employment Agency and has not been published yet. The concept contents are presented as key points and give a good first impression of the differentiated competence requirements and how they are related in terms of content. Presenting these contents in detail including the underlying ideas exceed the quantitative scope of the present essay.

¹⁸ cf. Kohn 2014d and section 2.5 of this essay

¹⁹ cf. Kohn 2008 in this context.

²⁰ a circumstance that becomes the central challenge in counselling on the recognition of vocational qualifications and certificates acquired abroad (cf. section 2.3 of this essay)

²¹ The term "employment-oriented counsellor" is occasionally used by experts as a short form to refer to the wide range of counselling occasions and topics from the general education and vocational training systems, qualified professions and practised professions as well as the occupational labour market segments (cf. Kohn 2011). Alternatively, the term "counselling on education, career and employment" is used. This has become necessary because the term "career guidance" (Berufsberatung) as defined by Sections 29 and 30 SGB III in this full topical breadth is frequently used as a synonym of the employment-oriented guidance of young people at the first threshold between general education and dual training in everyday language and in the Federal Employment Agency (cf. Kohn 2014a, 2014b and 2014c).

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The submodule as an answer to the outlined knowledge handicaps consists of the following contents:

Submodule W

The challenge of knowledge handicaps

W1

Contents to reduce the counsellors' knowledge handicap on the living situation of refugees and on the education and employment system in their main regions of origin

o W1.1

Current structures of refugee migration to Germany, main regions of origin, main reasons for fleeing, social structure of the newly arrived refugees, current living situation of the refugee migrants in Germany

o W1.2 Educational system in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea²²

W2

Contents to reduce the knowledge handicap of advice-seeking persons about the German education and employment system

o W2.1 Responsible authorities for relevant concerns and living environments of refugee migrants

o W2.2

Specifics of the German education, training and employment system compared to other countries, especially the main countries of origin with a special focus on the significance of the dual training system, dual studies and the two-tier university system

W3

Methods of knowledge transfer to advice-seekers

W3.1

Receptors in guidance communication to detect misunderstandings and prejudice

W3.2

Methods and media to convey the corresponding contents in the guidance interview and working with groups (vocational orientation measures)

²² The four countries of origin with the highest proportion of refugees (here: from 2015) are analysed whose members have a high probability of staying and being granted asylum in Germany due to the political situation in their country.

2.2 The challenge of language and intercultural communication

The problem of language is frequently addressed in connection with the support and integration of refugees for obvious reasons. However, frequently only individual aspects are examined. But counselling on education, career and employment is associated with a number of questions and challenges to be derived from them. These questions are: What level of proficiency do advice-seekers have in their native language, in English and German? What possibilities arise from this level of proficiency for the guidance service which is after all a highly differentiated communication service? Only afterwards can we look for answers to the question which possibilities this provides for general education or vocational training in Germany, taking up employment or for the support in vocational training and labour market measures²³.

Accordingly, the submodule of the mentioned study concept contains the following topics:

Submodule S

The challenge of language and intercultural communication

- S1
 Use of interpreters in guidance interviews (possibility of provision and financing, challenge for guidance communication)
- S2
 Guidance communication in simple German or English
- S3
 Possibilities to visualize topics discussed
- S4
 Raising intercultural awareness

In addition to the general challenge of discussing highly differentiated topics in a language other than the advice-seekers' native language, there is also the possibility of multiple misunderstandings. This can occur at all levels of communication that are (also) important in guidance: the verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal level. And it can occur both when transmitting verbal content and when bridging different culturally acquired patterns of acting and communicating. The multiple interconnections between all these levels and in all subject matters mentioned above requires the counsellors to have highly developed senses and communication marked by awareness and (self-)criticism on both sides.

²³ For an overview of the wide range of supporting measures of education and training policy, see Kohn 2015 in this manual. For an overview of all labour policy support options, see Kohn / Göckler 2014.

2.3 The challenge of right of residence, recognition of vocational qualification, labour market access

A digression: Complexity and patience

At this point, I would already like to introduce what will be summed up in the final section of this essay: Describing a range of complex and intertwined challenges in relation to the specific counselling of refugees easily creates the impression of an inevitable challenge of all actors involved. This effect must be prevented, and this essay certainly has a constructive intention: it wants to contribute to name the challenges that lie ahead so that they can be tackled. To do so, it will be necessary to proceed step by step, to see the time required to accomplish the goals and to have sufficient patience for everyone involved and to not announce failure prematurely – patience with the institutions involved, patience with the counsellors and of course patience with the refugees. The learning agenda is remarkable, but it does not describe something that is impossible to accomplish. As with all tasks in social counselling, we can expect multiplier effects and effects of scale the more experience we gather with this topic. And just like the intertwined challenges initially make the routine work more difficult, progress in one of the fields of specific challenges can trigger additional learning effects in other subfields.

We have placed this digression at the beginning of subsection 2.3 because the collection of topics presented here, namely the entire network of legal framework conditions directly related to the training and labour market, frequently causes the persons involved to feel unable to cope and even desperate. The network of legal regulations in this field is highly complex, structured interdependently and marked by considerable dynamic change over time. Frequently, options are overlooked or not addressed because of this. Guidance is needed by the advice-seekers, the counsellors as well as companies that are willing to hire and integrate and want a sound basis for their investment into education. Insofar, a programme to teach skills for the specific educational and vocational guidance of refugees is also a programme for corresponding employer guidance²⁴, which addresses actors in the company that want to train or hire refugees or are already doing so.

The scope of the learning agenda in this legal subfield results from the following key items:

Submodule A

The challenge of right of residence, recognition of vocational qualification, labour market access

- A1
 Right of residence and access to vocational training and the labour market (contexts, procedures, legal situation for subgroups of migrants)
- A2
 Guidance on recognising vocational qualifications acquired in other countries (network partners from the concerted recognition counselling, frequent reference occupations, methods of finding less common reference occupations, guidance on multi-optional thinking and acting, pertinent authorities, experiences from recognition practise)

²⁴ about the legal entitlement to such employer guidance and its contents, see Kohn 2016a in this manual

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The topics mentioned under A1 alone include varied detailed regulations which can almost be characterised as fluid over time and have resulted from the history of the immigration policy in the Federal Republic of Germany which was not very restrictive. Different resident statuses associated with different rights to take up training or work have been changed over the past decades and are being changed all the time to accomplish such controlling effects with them which a coherent immigration concept and law would have to satisfy if it were in place. In sum, we can say, however, that noticeable opening measures were taken in the years before the high refugee migration of 2015. For instance, the idea was abandoned to (temporarily) close the training and labour markets for asylum applicants and persons entitled to asylum to emphasize that their stay in Germany is only temporary and avoid inviting further immigration. For example, even rejected asylum seekers who were only tolerated as a result were given access to training (cf. Schreyer et al. 2015). The fact that there have been initial signals of closing again recently²⁵ should not deter us from harnessing the overall noticeable paradigm shift towards opening the training and labour market also for new migrants for humanitarian reasons both for the refugees themselves and in order to meet the demand for skilled workers of companies. To this end, the specific vocational training and career guidance for refugees and companies should provide an up-to-date overview of the possibilities.

Topic A2 illustrates to what extent the skill requirements described here are intertwined. The interaction of skills in aptitude diagnosis as well as legal and occupational knowledge is required here to identify options to tap the full potential. The key to providing guidance with regard to recognising professional qualifications and certificates acquired abroad is to identify the so-called reference occupation or possibly different reference occupations by comparing the activities practised in the two different occupational systems (counselling skills from the competence area described in 2.1) and by comparing them with the methods of the potential analysis to be outlined in section 2.5. The reference occupation decides which authority will be responsible for the formal step of recognition. This can be a chamber, a state examination authority or a university. Several federal states have established information centres specialised in providing guidance on recognition issues in the meantime. Here and in many other cases, however, the different guidance counsellors – e.g. in recognition guidance and career guidance – have to work together to achieve best results.

²⁵ due to the introduction of access rights to training specific for countries of origin

2.4 The challenge of discrimination and trauma

Delphi study on migration-specific counselling of advice-seekers who were no refugees (Kohn 2011) already dealt extensively with the topic of discrimination. We know from various findings of employment-oriented discrimination research that most people with a migration background, including those born in Germany, have made (multiple) experiences with discrimination - also and particularly so in public institutions for education and counselling and in the labour market.

An empathic and self-critical guidance counsellor will have to account for this circumstance when designing communication. The new large group of refugees seeking guidance further exacerbates the challenges by requiring guidance counsellors to deal with traumatising experiences. Experiences of trauma and discrimination change the expectations and attitudes which advice-seekers have vis-à-vis counselling services. Questions of building confidence arise but also questions regarding the advice-seekers' capacity to think and act clearly. How can I recognize causes of discrimination and trauma that could block communication? How can I respond to them to initiate solutions? What psychological conditions and clinical pictures are there and how do they manifest initially? Which persons can I involve in the supporting network to initiate support in the form of therapy? All these challenges have to be overcome which also present a mental burden for the guidance counsellors.

The study concept includes the following contents for this:

Submodule D

The challenge of discrimination and trauma

- D1
 Experiences of discrimination of people with a migration background in Germany
- D2
 Experiences of trauma of refugee migrants
- D3
 Effects of discrimination and trauma experiences on the self-concept and the activity level of persons seeking advice
- D4
 Dealing with experiences of discrimination and trauma in counselling communication
- D5
 Network partners to cope with problems arising from experiences of discrimination and trauma

2.5 The challenge of analysing potential and empowerment

The topic of analysing potential was already addressed. To provide a sufficient basis to find and discuss vocational training and employment options that tap all potentials, we need an analysis that identifies all potentials as well as a comprehensive and differentiated illustration of all potentials. Undercoverage is possible, especially if there are linguistic and cultural differences between the testing and counselling agents, who have frequently attained a high level of educational achievement and are often from a well-educated middle class, and the persons seeking advice from them. This equally applies to advice-seekers who have lived in Germany for a long time or were born here and are from educationally disadvantaged families or have been unsuccessful in the German educational system.

To identify potentials of advice-seekers with an empathic attitude, two factors are important: well-differentiated proficiency of the German language as the basis for counselling communication and for most of the tests and attributing skills to and placing trust in the advice-seeking persons. The guidance counsellor's own experiences play a role in this psychological mechanism as well as culturally conveyed group-related images, or simply put: expectations and prejudice. Someone who is insecure about the language and how to deal with institutions will find it particularly difficult to eliminate these expectations. To successfully counsel refugees, it is therefore particularly important that the counselling specialists reflect their own actions, are supervised professionally and know the methods of encouraging intervention (empowerment) and apply them by taking the specific language, culture and biography into account.

The study concept provides for the following contents to this end:

Submodule P

The challenge of analysing potential and empowerment

- P1
 Methods of language and culture-neutral testing and identification of skills
- P2
 Network partner for testing and skills identification
- P3
 Methods to empower and encourage advice-seekers with fresh migration experiences and possible traumatic experiences (knowledge handicap, personal regression, empowerment)

2.6 The challenge of migration-specific support

Promoting employment according to SGB III and basic provisions for job-seekers according to SGB II provide a powerful and highly differentiated set of tools to support (in terms of finances and contents) integration into vocational training and employment.²⁶ The employment-oriented guidance counsellors in the Employment Agencies and Jobcenters make the decision to provide support or not – usually a discretionary decision. This structure makes sense because specific need for support results from the individual

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²⁶ cf. Kohn / Göckler 2014; Kohn 2015

profiles of the advice-seekers, which are determined during individual and in-depth counselling communication. On the other hand, additional career options can be opened up for advice-seekers by taking the respective funding possibilities into account.

The fastest innovation progress in the sphere of vocational training and labour market support with the aim to integrate refugees seeking vocational training and employment was probably made in designing corresponding measures. ²⁷ Various measures were made more flexible and their contents were upgraded in this respect. And some experts and socially committed political actors have developed such measures and asked for them to be implemented also for other target groups for quite some time. The trend lines along which innovations are taking place are delineated by early activating offers before the final residence decision, language-neutral profile analyses at the beginning of support measures, didactic conclusions from the ability to speak a foreign language and from the biographical ruptures of the participants, integration of language acquisition and other "general education" contents in labour policy measures, modular qualification placement that can be adjusted to the individual potential profiles of the supported persons. All this has to be designed and performed in an existing supporting framework of complex legal interactions – coordinated closely between the (sometimes different) providers of support and counselling services, the parties deciding about the support and the institutions that organise the measures.

Accordingly, the study concept covers the following topics:

Submodule F

The challenge of migration-specific support

- F1
 Contents and methods to specifically design support measures for advice-seekers with a migration history
 - F1.1 Language acquisition
 - F1.2
 Didactic methodology in foreign language teaching because it is held in German or English
 - F1.3
 Typical contents for adjustment qualification for participants with a migration background
- F2
 Legal aspects to support migration-specific vocational training measures and labour policy measures
 - F2.1
 Use and combination of standards for active employment promotion according to codes SGB III and SGB II and other support standards
 - F2.2
 Collaborating with network partners in terms of content and finances to organise and design migration-specific support measures

²⁷ in this context cf. BA 2016a: BA 2016b; Aumüller et al. 2015: 80ff.

2.7 Mastering complexity: Learning to navigate the interdependency of challenges

Just listing the above challenges shows the complexity of the learning and innovation agenda. But the new demand for guidance in vocational training, career and employment only becomes really apparent if we consider that all single dimensions are interwoven in multiple ways and that the successful mastering of one challenge can be the indispensable basis to tackle another challenge. An example: I will only be able to register and recognize all aspects of the potential of advice-seeking refugees if all barriers to expression and perception have been eliminated previously. Such barriers may result from (1) language-related or (2) cultural misunderstandings, (3) a lack of knowledge about the comparability of achievements accomplished in the country of origin, (4) reservations or scepticism vis-à-vis government institutions or (5) retarding effects from experiences of trauma and discrimination. The recognition of one hindrance may be blocked by obstacles at another dimensional level. For example, a counsellor will attempt to identify possible trauma by employing gentle linguistic means with both parties using their respective native languages. But how can this attempt succeed if the variety of expression is restricted by different native languages or the use of an interpreter (either trained academically or "on the job")?

The learning agenda outlined here hence presents a major overall challenge for vocational training and career guidance. It will need time to develop and we are only at the beginning of this process in Germany. Its specific subject matter is certainly sufficient to fill a complete study programme, for example with a dedicated area of specialization in academic career guidance. Ultimately, however, it is a programme that is capable of addressing and promoting all advisory competence areas at the same time.

3. The implementation: developing and fostering a concerted culture of openness

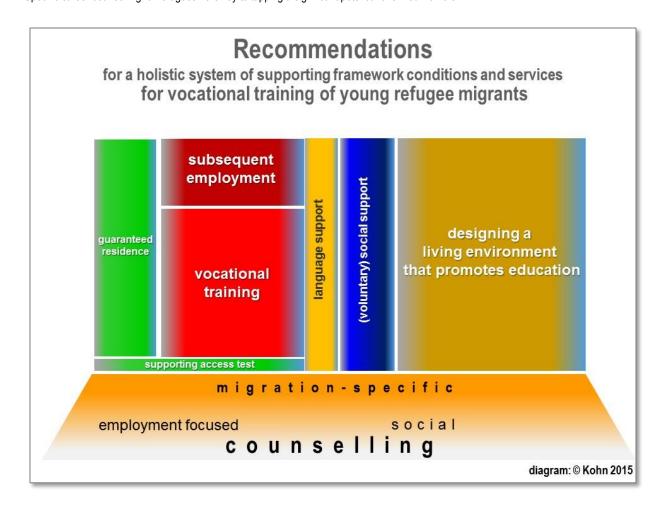
Taking concerted action to achieve joint progress and trigger and promote processes of prosperity has a long tradition in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. Only when different actors operate in concert (each pursuing their own interests), can powerful driving forces unfold that trigger sustained effects of social market economy: striving for social balance and a peaceful society on the one hand and aiming for economic success and yield on the other hand. When integrating refugees²⁸ into the society and labour market, also media and educational institutions should be involved more in the network of actors that operate in concert. The learning and maturing process outlined in the second section can only succeed when also the deficits in attitude and mentality in the surrounding society mentioned in the first section are tackled.

But in order to assume the task of counselling and integration in a narrower professional sense, multiple actors and supporting services also have to be activated that need to operate in a concerted manner to achieve sustainable success. In this context, it is crucial to consider the entire relocation process of refugees. Integration into vocational training and employment can only succeed if people are also integrated into the living environment, which means that people not only gain a foothold in the labour market, but also settle in with their new domicile, experience acceptance, support and appreciation and have contact not only to institutions but also to other people in their new private environment. This insight was also gained during the MobiPro-EU support programme. During the programme's first phase, numerous young people from Spain tried to live and work in Germany, but many of them soon abandoned the project and returned to their home country because of insufficient integration into their social environment.²⁹

Already before the immigration peak of 2015, a study was conducted on the vocational training of young people who were granted exceptional leave to remain. The results also pointed to the significance of designing the living environment outside the vocational training context for the success of integration into employment (Schreyer et al. 2015). Subsequent to this study, the following illustration of a holistic integration concept for vocational training was designed:

²⁸ in the future, hopefully also immigrants that arrived in our country over different rationally and legally defined ways.

²⁹ It was this insight among others that led to amendments of the promotion guideline in 2015 as a result of which the funding policy was switched from individual to project support so that the necessary "carer" structures of social work could also be financed.



It shows the framework conditions which are also necessary besides vocational training:

• The apprentices and the companies that train them need guarantees that the apprenticeship and its completion will not be jeopardized by a premature termination of residence in Germany. This has a purely material reason, but may also include an even more important psychological background: Uncertainty makes it more difficult to find companies that are willing to train in the first place and do not want to jeopardize their investment into young trainees for understandable reasons³⁰. Moreover, an uncertain resident status makes it difficult for apprentices (and their trainers) to stay motivated and focused on their demanding vocational learning process.

The desired positive motivation is increased by the promise that successful completion of vocational training provides a realistic chance to stay in Germany and work in the trained profession on a permanent basis.

Vocational training (usually with the support funds of vocational training market policy³¹ according
to the Social Code) should be accompanied by continuous German language instruction both for
the job and everyday life situations. A certain level of language proficiency is a prerequisite for
taking up vocational training, and the levels supported there are certainly not sufficient to successfully live and work in Germany in the long run. Fortunately, there have been positive devel-

³⁰ Companies, too, are frequently ignorant or unsure of the complex network of residence and labour market regulations (cf. section 2.2).

³¹ cf. Kohn 2015

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opments recently in the funding of language courses through the welfare state. But it is still possible that different institutions are responsible for this task in terms of funding and content or become responsible in the process. Voluntary activities by individual persons and associations can make a major contribution to this task. However, it is important that this offer is consistently accessible for the learners and does not require any complex management efforts between the different actors. Language assistance must be organised consistently with the contents building on one another in a meaningful way.

- Sponsorship in the sense of social assistance provided by voluntary initiatives or welfare state institutions has also proved to be efficient. For all the new obligations and claims vis-à-vis state institutions and for all other problems and tasks newly arrived migrants face, they need intensive personal support from people who have the necessary knowledge and empathy. As with language learning, there are different actors here as well and concerted actions must be taken to assure continuity and seamlessness.
- After all, a living environment that supports the vocational processes or makes them possible in the first place is an important framework condition of successful integration into employment. For example, a living environment is vital that allows the person to concentrate on learning also outside the company or educational institution. But also social contacts are crucial that back learning processes and provide personal support in the event of failure.

The advocating guidance outlined above must pave the way for this system of supporting integration into vocational training or employment. Optional vocational proposals have to be tailored to the respective advice-seekers and backed with the corresponding funding guarantees. This calls for both (as shown: highly complex) employment-oriented counselling services and guidance focused on the social living environment of the persons seeking advice (for example by solving the housing situation, guardianship of minors and organising sponsorship and support for all advice-seekers). It is optional whether these two decisive counselling services can be provided separately (e.g. the employment-oriented service in an Employment Agency or in a Jobcenter and the service with a social focus in a community or with a social agency) or whether both services can be combined in one case management. But it is essential that for each refugee there is one central and committed institution that oversees the entire process and makes sure that all activities to be performed simultaneously and successively are actually provided to obtain a seamless overall concept.

The goal of this essay was to show that the integration of refugees in vocational training and employment places great demands on professional guidance and integration work. Taking on this challenge – even though mastering it will require much time and resources – will, however, support major innovations in all important subsystems of the social market economy. These innovations in turn are indispensable if we want to achieve a sustainable culture of openness without which prosperity in Germany would be impossible to assure for demographic reasons both in cultural and economic terms.

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