

Case WORK

COUNTRY REPORT

COUNTRY

“SITUATION AND NEEDS OF THE VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS”



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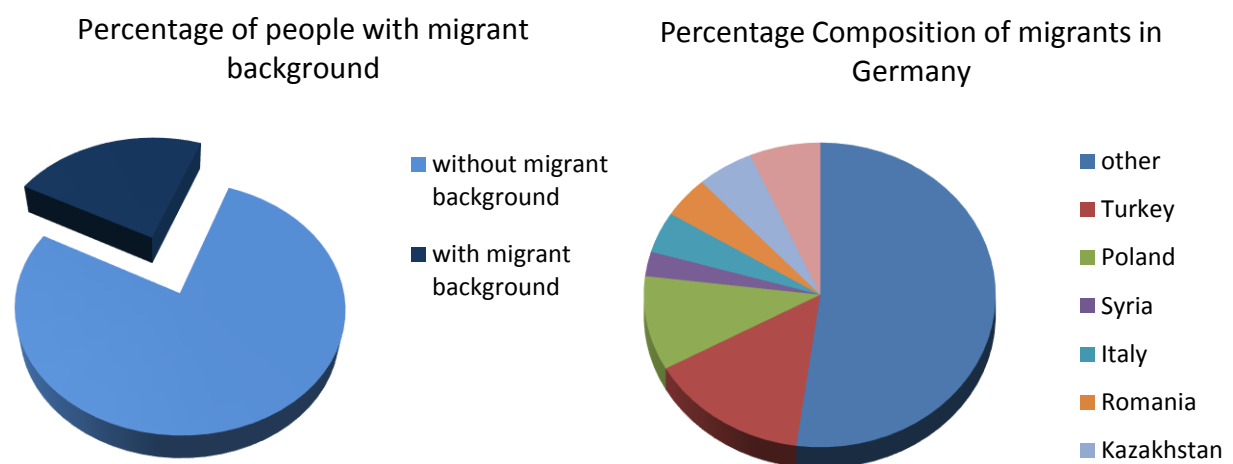
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1. Context and Background of Migration

1.1. Main characteristics of the migrants presence: an overview – numbers, evolution and trends

Germany has 82.4 million inhabitants. Recent numbers reveal that more than 18 million people have a migrant background. An overview from 2016 shows, that the largest group is represented by people originating from Turkey (2.8 million). One third of all people with a migrant background comes from non-European countries. The following illustrations show the percentage composition of Germany's population and reveal the proportional distribution of different nationalities.¹



The regional distribution of migrants in Germany is quite heterogeneous. The majority lives either in Bremen (30.5%), Berlin or Hamburg because, compared to other regions, these cities provide good job opportunities. The average migrant is 35.4 years old and thus is significantly younger than the average citizen without a migrant background (46.9). People who immigrate to Germany can be differentiated into two groups: those who originate from countries within the European Union and those who come from so-called third countries. In 2016 42% of all migrants were EU-citizens.² In 2015 their percentage distribution dropped to 28 % because of the sharp increase of asylum seekers applying for asylum in Germany and among the European Union as a whole.³ According to the European Parliament, 1.26 million people applied for asylum in 2015, wherefore that year is referred to as the beginning and the pinnacle of the European Migrant Crisis⁴. In 2015 the majority of migrants came from Syria,

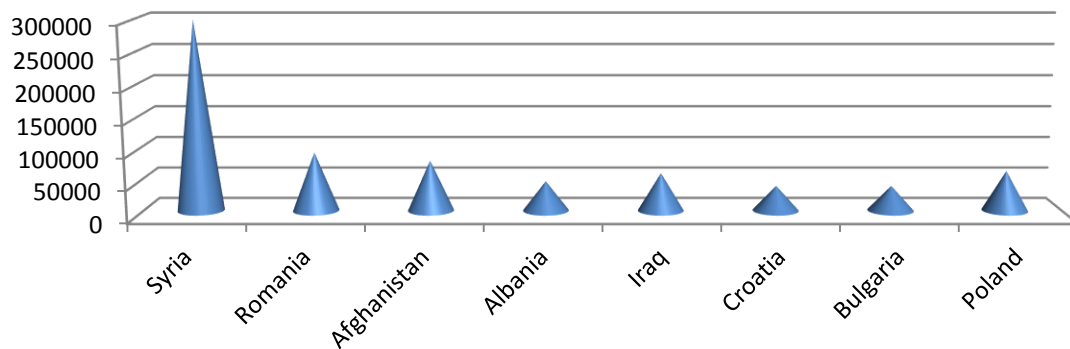
¹ Cornelia Schu (2017): Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration: Fakten zur Einwanderung in Deutschland, p. 1 [online].
https://www.svr-migration.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SVR_Fakten_zur_Einwanderung.pdf [04.05.2018]

² Ibid. P.3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ News. European Parliament (2017): Europe's migration crisis, [online]
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170629STO78631/europe-s-migration-crisis>
 [03.05.2018]

Afghanistan and Iraq. More than 1.011.700 migrants arrived by sea, and almost 34,900 by land. Although the vast numbers of immigrants in Germany were especially caused by the conflicts in Syria, many migrants also came from Iraq, Afghanistan and many other countries.⁵ The following chart gives an overview of the main origin countries of all immigrants in 2015 (not only asylum seekers)⁶:



Although media presence might have declined, Germany and the EU are still struggling with migrants for two main reasons. First of all, asylum seekers whose applications were accepted in 2015 and the following years are still an issue today because they have to be provided with various integrational measures.⁷ The European Union offered asylum to 292,540 refugees in 2015 and more than one million applied for asylum during the same year.⁸ Second of all, the number of recent applications is still on a very high level. Although the EASO states that - compared to 2016 - there are 43 % fewer applications for international protection, 707,000 applications still reached the EU in 2017⁹.

1.2. Recent situation of the “refugee crisis” in the country

In the course of the European Migrant Crisis, Germany received the highest number of asylum applications of all European countries in 2015.¹⁰ According to the BAMF 476,649 asylum applications

⁵ BBC News. Europe (2016): Migrant crisis. Migration to Europe explained in seven charts, [online] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911> [03.05.2018].

⁶ Cornelia Schu (2017): Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration: Fakten zur Einwanderung in Deutschland, p. 3 [online].

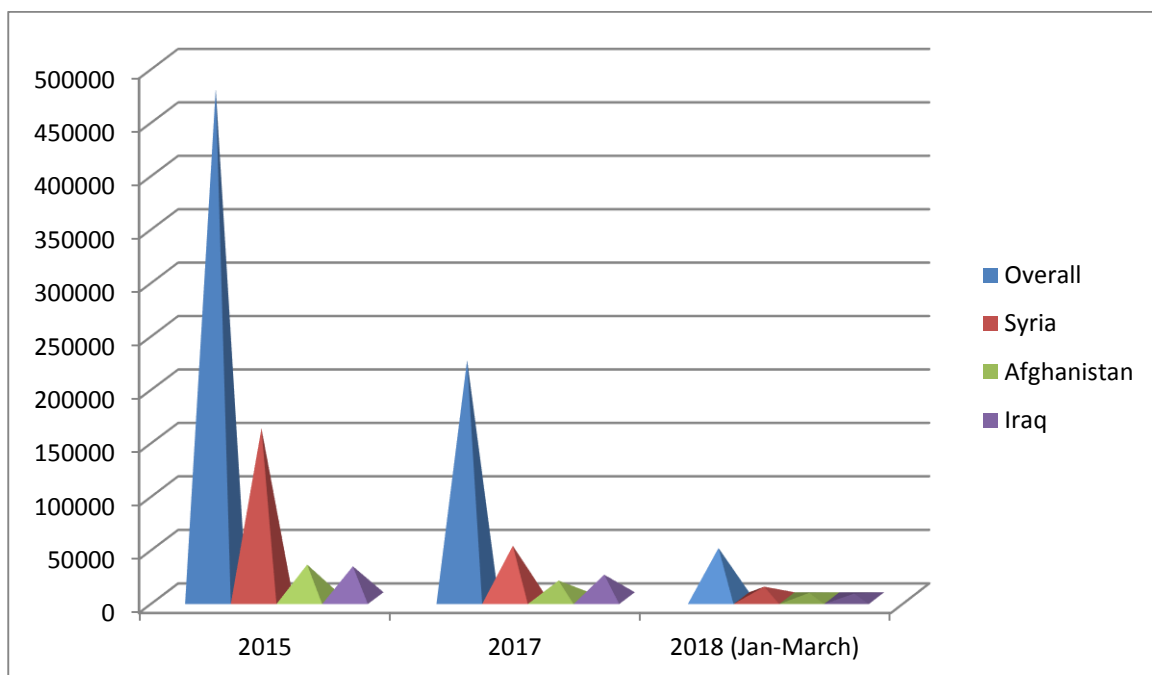
⁷ Konar, Özlem; Kreienbrink, Axel; Stichs, Anja: Bundesamt für migration und Flüchtlinge (2017): Zuwanderung und Integration. Aktuelle Zahlen, Entwicklungen, Maßnahmen, [online]. <http://www.bamf.de/DE/Service/Top/Presse/Interviews/20170704-kreienbrink-fachartikel-bpp/kreienbrink-fachartikel-bpp-node.html>

⁸ BBC News. Europe (2016).

⁹ Eurostat News Release (2016): Asylum in the EU member states, [online]. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6> [03.05.2018]

¹⁰ BBC News. Europe (2016).

were counted.¹¹ However this number can be confusing as in fact far more people entered the country. “[...] German officials said more than a million had been counted in Germany's "EASY" system for counting and distributing people before they [made] asylum claims”.¹² In 2017 BAMF has listed 222.683 asylum applications for Germany which, compared to 2015, shows a decline of first-time-applications of more than 50 %. Nevertheless the numbers of asylum seekers reaching the country are still on a very high level, considering that in 2010 only one fifth of this was counted.¹³ Most asylum seekers who reached Germany in 2017 came from Syria followed by Iraq and Afghanistan. During the first three months of 2018 the most frequently counted origin country is again Syria with 23% of all applicants followed by Iraq (10.7%) and Nigeria (6.6%).¹⁴ The following chart illustrates the distribution of origin countries and the overall numbers of immigrants applying for asylum in 2015, 2017 and 2018, so far.



Despite the general decline, the situation in Germany is particularly challenging. As was already mentioned for the European Union in general, the main issue concerning migration in Germany shifts from initial reception and providing first aid and nourishment to long term tasks affecting many different structures of the country. Necessities such as education, employment or language proficiency result in several integrational measures and programs.¹⁵ Another major issue is the fact that more than 300.000 relatives are expected to enter the country.¹⁶

¹¹ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl (03/2018), [online]. http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-maerz-2018.pdf?__blob=publicationFile [03.05.2018]

¹² BBC News. Europe (2016)

¹³ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018)

¹⁴ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018)

¹⁵ Reimann (2017)

¹⁶ Focus Online (2017): Flüchtlinge: Ab 2018 können 390.000 Syrer ihre Familien nach Deutschland holen, [online] <https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/antragsflut-fuer-familien-visa-fluechtlinge-ab-2018->

1.3. Asylum system

There are various reasons for people from other origin countries to come to Europe. The majority of migrants from non-European countries come to Germany in order to apply for asylum.¹⁷ Some of them are hoping to find better living conditions, economic security, or - in the case of refugees and asylum seekers - they are people in need fleeing from their home countries due to political conflicts, war or other crises.¹⁸ Depending on the respective situation, different terms have evolved which are defined in the following:

A **refugee** is defined as someone “[...] with a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, politics or membership of a particular social group [...]”¹⁹. He / she fled from his / her country of origin and is unable to return.²⁰ Therefore the EU sets certain guidelines for assigning international protection for people who need shelter out of the named reasons.²¹

Asylum seekers are those who have made a formal request for asylum because they feel that their lives are threatened.²² In countries with individualized procedures their claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker.²³

In order to provide equality for all asylum seekers the system has been standardized for all European countries (GEAS = Gemeinsames Europäisches Asylsystem). The first step for all asylum seekers arriving in Germany is to register at public organizations or to report their situation to the police. They will receive a temporary document which is essential for any following asylum procedure. With the help of the German distribution and counting system called “EASY” the asylum seekers will be distributed among the federal states of Germany and sent to the corresponding reception center. Once the asylum seeker has arrived at the reception center in charge he will be provided with food and first aid. The center will inform the closest federal office. There the migrant has to claim for asylum in person. The civil servants will gather all missing personal information and inform the asylum seeker about his rights and duties within the asylum procedure.²⁴

koennen-390-000-syrer-ihre-familien-nach-deutschland-holen_id_7525769.html [03.05.2018]

¹⁷ Schu (2017), p. 4.

¹⁸ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): Europäischer Kontext, [online].
<http://www.bamf.de/DE/Fluechtlingsschutz/EuropaKontext/europagrundlagen-node.html>

¹⁹ News. European Parliament (2017): Europe’s migration crisis, [online]
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170629STO78631/europe-s-migration-crisis>
[03.05.2018]

²⁰ Amnesty International (2017): What’s the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker?, [online]
<https://www.amnesty.org.au/refugee-and-an-asylum-seeker-difference/> [03.05.2018]

²¹ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): Europäischer Kontext, [online].

²² News. European Parliament (2017)

²³ Amnesty International (2017)

²⁴ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): The stages of the asylum procedure, [online]
<http://www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylv/ablauf-des-asylverfahrens-node.html> [03.05.2018]



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): Ablauf des Asylverfahrens; [online]

The so-called Dublin-Procedure determines which European country will be responsible for further examining the asylum application at hand. Within the frame of a personal interview the applicant is given the opportunity to explain his or her personal situation and fate. Because this process forms the basis of any following decision, the asylum seeker is welcome to take as much time as he/she needs to illustrate his or her personal reasons for leaving his/her home country. After reconsidering the interlocution and all official documents the federal office decides whether the application will be accepted or not. Also, the Federal Office will check each individual asylum application on the basis of the German Asylum Act as to whether one of the four forms of protection – entitlement to asylum, refugee protection, subsidiary protection, or a ban on deportation – applies.²⁵



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018): Ablauf des Asylverfahrens; [online]

In case of rejection the asylum seeker can take court actions against the Federal Office and the forms will be checked again. The final decision of the Federal office is followed either by the right to stay or by the obligation to depart. In the former case two different varieties can be distinguished: “[the] right of residence or [...] [the] right to remain”.²⁶

2. The state of Art of Volunteers’ work with Asylum seekers and refugees

2.1. Main characteristics of volunteer “phenomenon” in the country (kinds of associations, main sectors, evolution and trends)

In Germany, voluntary work can be described as a form of civic engagement which is non-profitable, charitable and - as the term already suggests - is carried out on a voluntary basis.²⁷ Traditional forms

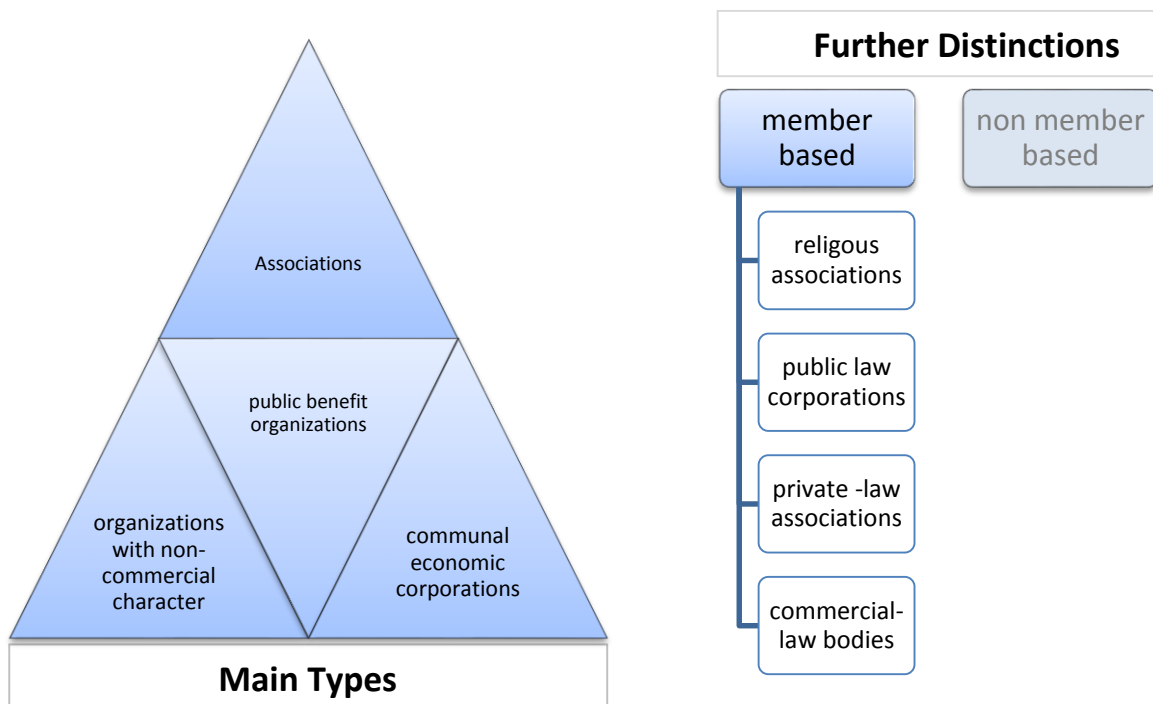
²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Für soziales Leben e.V.; Ehrenamt Deutschland: Ehrenamt

of civic engagement (in German: Ehrenamt) imply a rather permanent membership and often take place within the framework of large-scale organizations, e.g. churches, unions, political parties, sport clubs or welfare organizations. This form of civic engagement is predominantly carried out in order to help others in need and must be differentiated from so-called volunteering activities (in German: ehrenamtliches Engagement). In those cases people engage themselves in different rather short-term projects, self-help groups, ecological projects or non-institutionalized political campaigns in order to acquire certain competences and abilities.²⁸

Generally speaking, in this country civic engagement takes a very important role. Recent numbers reveal that about 30 million people are engaged in voluntary organizations or projects, which means that 40% of the overall population is involved.²⁹ There are numerous different organizations, associations and sponsors and the system is quite heterogeneous. Thus the terminology can be confusing and is sometimes used interchangeably. On a very basic level, the following categories can be defined³⁰:



In Germany there are many various types of organizations engaging volunteers which take different functions within the civil society infrastructure. **Volunteers centers or agencies** promote the involvement in volunteering and make a contributions to the development of social capital within the

<http://www.ehrenamt-deutschland.org/> [03.05.2018]

²⁸ European Commission (2014): National Report – Germany, p. 3, [online]
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_de_en.pdf [03.05.2018]

²⁹ Bundesregierung (2017) Ehrenamtliches Engagement [03.05.2018]
<https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Infodienst/2017/12/2017-12-05-ehrenamt/2017-12-06-ehrenamtliches-engagement.html>

³⁰ European Commission (2014): National Report – Germany [03.05.2018] p. 12

individual regions. **Volunteer centers affiliated to welfare associations** are focused on the recruitment of volunteers for member organizations. **Volunteer centers for elderly people** aim at empowering the elderly to play active parts in the society. **Community foundations**, which emerged in the 1990s provide “[...] financial support in order to promote social capital and to foster volunteering activities in non-profit organisations and within municipalities.” Additionally there are different **foundations**, e.g. Citizens for Citizens (in German: Bürger für Bürger) and **different umbrella organizations**, e.g. the federal association BAGFA (Federal Working Group of Volunteer Agencies) or the regional association LAGFA, trying to represent the specific needs and interests of volunteer centers at the federal political or regional level.³¹

One of the biggest surveys about voluntary work which was carried out in 2014 revealed that civic engagement has constantly increased since 1999.³² The survey suggested that voluntary work differs according to the individual regions in Germany. The highest percentage of voluntary workers lives in western Germany. Considering that the pinnacle of the European migrant crisis took place in 2015 it can be assumed that the numbers rose dramatically during that year. What will be explained later on is that recent developments rather point to a decrease of voluntary helpers, at least within the migrant sector.

There are countless different areas in which voluntary engagement takes place. In 2014 most volunteers got active in the sports sector (16.3 %) followed by education, school and preschools (9.1%) and cultural areas (9%).³³ Unfortunately there is no current survey or data available but the developments in 2015 and the following years suggest that the distribution of volunteers might have changed towards the migration sector to a very high degree.

2.2. The role of volunteers in organization hosting/working with refugees and asylum seekers

In Germany volunteer work and civic engagement is seen as the “motor” of integration. In 2015 every 10th citizen committed himself to volunteer work in the migration sector which means that more than 8 million citizens were temporarily active as voluntary helpers.³⁴ Especially at the beginning of the European migrant crisis a movement of volunteers formed to help asylum seekers and refugees in need.³⁵ Many citizens identified with the moral model of ‘the helper’ prescribed by media and government.³⁶ Several interviews with key actors of organizations in Germany point to the fact that in

³¹ European Commission (2014): National Report – Germany [03.05.2018] p. 16 f.

³² Bundesregierung (2014): Freiwilliges Engagement in Deutschland: Zusammenfassung zentraler Ergebnisse des Vierten Deutschen Freiwilligensurveys. P.7. [03.05.2018]
<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/113702/53d7fdc57ed97e4124ffec0ef5562a1/vierter-freiwilligensurvey-monitor-data.pdf>

³³ ibid.

³⁴ Brunner, Katharina; Rietzschel, Antonie (2016): Jung, weiblich, gebildet - Flüchtlingshelfer in Zahlen, [online]
<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/engagement-jung-weiblich-gebildet-fluechtlingshelfer-in-zahlen-1.3118324> [03.05.2018]

³⁵ Mediendienst Integration (2018): Zahlen und Fakten. Ehrenamt, [online]
<https://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/flucht-asyl/ehrenamt.html> [03.05.2018]

³⁶ Hintermeier, Dieter (2016): Ehrenamtliche Flüchtlingshelfer. Die Unentbehrlichen, [online]
<http://www.fnp.de/nachrichten/politik/Ehrenamtliche-Fluechtlingshelfer-Die-Unentbehrlichen;art673,2163878> [03.05.2018]

2015 the tasks that were carried out predominantly by volunteers were fairly easy to get involved in. Volunteers were mainly responsible for first aid and short-term tasks at initial reception centers, e.g. the distribution of food and clothes.³⁷ Especially at the pinnacle of the European migrant crisis voluntary helpers formed an essential support for local communities and federal states having to deal with vast numbers of refugees.³⁸

With the decrease of asylum seekers and refugees reaching the country, the overall number of voluntary helpers has also declined.³⁹ Some federal states such as Rhineland-Palatinate are struggling with the low number of voluntary helpers in local communities and other organizations.⁴⁰ In spite of this marked decline in certain regions several interviews with representatives of organizations located in Bavaria suggest that other areas of the country are experiencing a fairly positive development with stable numbers. One interviewee explained that the number of younger volunteers is even rising due to the digitalization among the organizations. While the development of civic engagement in the migrant sector seems rather ambiguous the general consensus is that it is getting harder and harder for volunteers to engage for two main reasons:

First of all, the migrant sector is facing a general shift in the range of tasks. As was mentioned before, short-term tasks are substituted by long term ones and while it used to suffice to take care of first aid and initial help at reception centers, voluntary helpers have to provide personal attention and individual support.⁴¹ Therefore volunteer work is getting more challenging and time consuming so that many volunteers are not able to accomplish such demanding tasks any more. The key actor of a local organization in *Fürth* pointed out that the situation might even deteriorate. While most pensioners, who form the majority of volunteers at the moment, have enough spare time and money nowadays the general direction points to people having less and less time and looking for short-time tasks. Therefore many organizations and associations are already having trouble filling long-term positions. **Second of all**, the general acceptance of volunteers working in the migrant sector has dropped because of a more negative political and media representation of the situation. More and more voluntary helpers are even confronted with rejection and hostility. This leaves volunteers frustrated and facing a fairly difficult situation.

At the moment volunteers take active parts in many different areas reaching from social and educational issues to legal ones. Results of the online survey carried out in the means of this project reveal that they are mainly involved in integrational measures. In the means of successful integration language barriers must be eliminated or at least minimized. Therefore, language courses and tutoring is a great part of the daily work of a volunteer. The time dedicated to such activities depends on how many individuals are being supported by one volunteers and therefore reaches from a few hours to

³⁷ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2016): Weniger Flüchtlinge, neue Sorgen, [online]
<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/bericht-ueber-sinkende-zahlen-weniger-fluechtlinge-neue-sorgen-14145888.html> [03.05.2018]

³⁸ Hintermeier (2016)

³⁹ Mediendienst Integration (2018)

⁴⁰ Thomas, Denise (2018): Weil es zu wenige Helfer gibt, vereinsamen Flüchtlinge und greifen zu Drogen, [online]
https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/zweieinhalb-jahre-nach-willkommenseuphorie-pfarrer-klagt-an-weil-es-zu-wenige-helfer-gibt-greifen-fluechtlinge-zu-drogen_id_8738671.html [03.05.2018]

⁴¹ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (2016)

several days a week. Additionally volunteers organize social events, dinner- and tea-parties or even small trips which are carried out on a more or less regular basis and take up a lot of time. Voluntary workers also try to monitor daily activities such as making appointments, health care, making contracts, shopping and apartment hunting. Some have specialized in child care, support for elderly people or unaccompanied juveniles.

Although the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees has decreased volunteers are a keystone in the process of integration in order to minimize isolation and to provide opportunities to asylum seekers to develop their human potential and skills. For a better help on both sides it is crucial to provide these motivated volunteers with information, knowledge and emotional support.

3. Volunteers' needs

3.1. Who are they? Knowing and analyzing volunteers' motivations, needs, attitudes, skills, expectations and beliefs

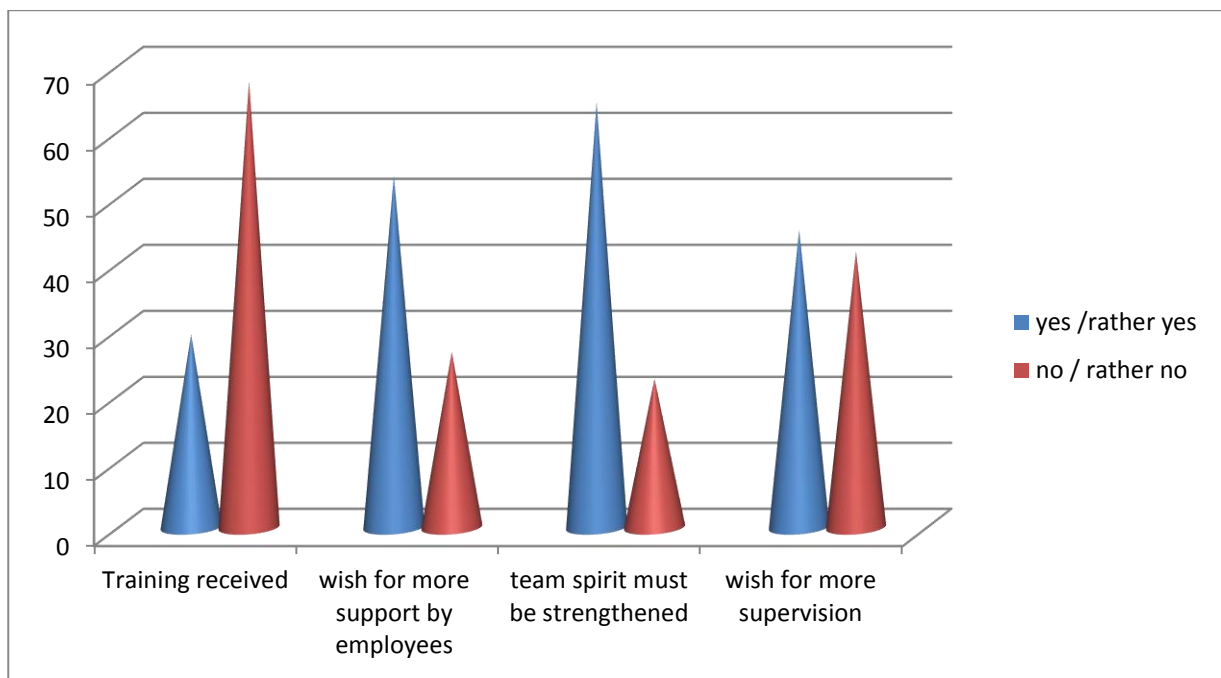
The following data is based on several personal interviews with representatives of local organizations and an online-survey carried out in the means of this project. More than 30 volunteers working with refugees and asylum seekers participated.

The average volunteer working in the migrant sector is female and older than 60. Although this is not mirrored in the online survey, representatives of local organizations stated that the number of young, working volunteers is increasing due to the ongoing digitalization among organizations which supports the projects idea of providing an online training seminar for volunteers. At the same time a learning environment has to be user friendly, self-explicable and easy to access in order to meet the needs of elderly helpers who might not have much experience with digital devices. Besides the offer should not be time consuming or too demanding because, as was explained above, volunteers are increasingly getting involved in long term tasks. Useful information and support should therefore be accessible at any time and place.

The remaining question is whether volunteers need any additional support through an online learning environment in the first place and if so, which information should be included. One out of three volunteers considers him- or herself as rather experienced in his/her field of work and almost forty percent (38.46) of all interviewees stated that they have been working as volunteers (in the field of migration) since 2015. Representatives of local organizations explained that many volunteers – especially beginners – are lacking knowledge concerning the asylum system in Germany and the individual structures of the organization. According to the organizations that were interviewed the following topics were requested by volunteers repeatedly:

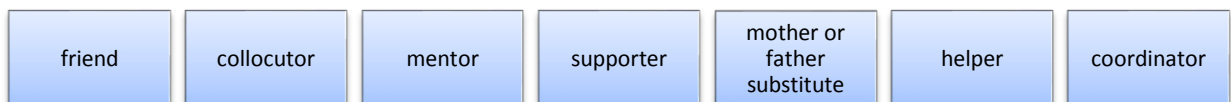
political situation in origin countries	current developments	law of asylum	bureaucracy	cultural aspects (what is allowed in other countries)	law and order
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Although there are some training offers for volunteers covering the basics for working with migrants, e.g. by Caritas, the majority of participants stated that they haven't received any training program and thus haven't been prepared for their upcoming tasks at all. Representatives of local organizations state that the participation at existing training offers is very low. It is assumed that volunteers might be ashamed of their own need of support and that those training offers being accessible at any time without having to demand them directly might be used more frequently. Additionally 64.51 % of all participants think that the team-spirit between employees and volunteers should be strengthened and that some of their activities should be supervised by other employees. The following chart sums up the results concerning the mentioned topics:



This suggests that many volunteers are insecure when it comes to issues requiring specific or professional knowledge such as legal, organizational or administrative rules, bureaucracy, the political situations of the refugees' home countries and cultural aspects. Therefore one way to support voluntary helpers would be to offer such general information so that they get enabled to support asylum seekers in the best way. The project caseWORK wants to provide such information within the first of three training courses. Its main aim is to enable volunteers to accelerate and facilitate the asylum procedure and thus to prepare newcomers for a successful long-term integration.

Being asked how volunteers see themselves the following terms were named most frequently:



This shows that volunteers do not consider themselves as distant or impartial supporters but on the contrary as emotionally involved helpers with personal bonds to the beneficiaries. Although most volunteers stated that they feel generally satisfied, inspired and appreciated working with asylum seekers and refugees some also explained that they are having problems with keeping a healthy

distance between themselves and the beneficiaries. Accordingly some of the interviewed organizations observed that especially beginners are having problems with setting clear boundaries. They are frustrated when, in spite of all their effort, situations cannot be improved and problems cannot be solved. Although most volunteers participating the survey stated that regarding this no help is required, the foregoing results imply that volunteers facing such problems might need psychological support. Representatives of several local organizations have observed the same phenomena and explain that many volunteers do not ask for psychological help directly because they are ashamed of the situation they brought themselves into. Some interviewees stated that the threshold to accept psychological help as part of an online training seminar might be lower and thus a success.

Being asked which qualities, skills and abilities a person working with refugees and asylum seekers should have, participants answered the following:

intercultural competence	politeness	tolerance	openness	respect	love	interest in foreign cultures
courage	empathy	resilience	endurance	keeping a certain distance	reliability	patience
openmindedness	self confidence	psychological knowledge	cultural knowledge	language skills	political knowledge	knowledge about law and order in Europe and Germany

On the one hand this shows again that there is a general need for information about political and legal issues, law and order or administrative procedures in Europe. As was already mentioned, caseWORK will try to cover this lack of information by the first training course. On the other hand volunteers mentioned intercultural competence and skills which are closely related to it, e.g. tolerance, openness, empathy or cultural knowledge. This suggests that volunteers feel the need to strengthen their ability to handle cultural barriers such as political and religious beliefs, different mindsets and lifestyles. In order to meet those special needs the third area of the online course aims at providing volunteers with the necessary sensitivity and awareness for their work with people from different cultural backgrounds. They get enabled to act as mediators between different cultures, understanding the cultural background, thinking and acting patterns of the refugees and to carefully introduce them to the cultural standards of Europe.

In conclusion the results of the online survey as well as the interviews conducted with key actors of several local organizations suggest that an online training course providing general information, psychological support and intercultural competence meet the volunteers' needs, especially if provided as a flexible and easily accessible learning environment.

3.2. What are the key factors for successful integration? And what the critical points?

Two very basic factors of successful integration are language skills and cultural understanding. Explaining cultural differences, German beliefs and lifestyles helps refugees and asylum seekers to understand the foreign environment. Most importantly, language barriers must be eliminated. Without a common level of communication misunderstandings will evolve and a successful integration will be almost impossible. Representatives of local organizations explain that it does not only depend on the kind of input asylum seekers receive but also on the way it is provided for them. It was stated that personal bonding and friendships between beneficiaries and volunteers are both – a very successful measure of integration and a fairly critical point. Integration often happened to be a success if volunteers cared for the beneficiaries individually and on a personal basis. Visiting asylum seekers at home, offering trips and other leisure-time activities or supporting them during their daily challenges provide a highly prolific basis for integration. On the other hand many volunteers are struggling with such close relationships because they feel extremely responsible for other people's problems and are unable to set clear boundaries.

As a consequence thereof volunteers are keystones for successful integration themselves. Although full-time employees are able to handle the basic conditions such as legal or organizational aspects, they cannot afford the amount of time to deal with asylum seekers individually and most importantly on a personal level. It is the volunteers who are able to provide such flexible, active and individual support promising the best results. Despite all the effort, volunteers are often faced with frustrating situations and disappointments. As was stated by voluntary workers themselves and key actors of organizations, some refugees and asylum seekers feel patronized and do not want to accept any help offers. The following boxes present examples for both, successful integration and difficulties or obstacles during the process.

(1): A refugee supporting an elderly woman had to find an apartment very urgently. As she saw him as her step-grandson she helped him to move in an apartment in the same building she lived.

(2): Female Iranian, single mother, was living in a reception center for 6 months and then immediately found a job in the hotel sector

No specific incident was mentioned; following difficulties occurred:

- refugees' expectations are too high
- psychological help cannot be provided by volunteers alone
- coping with addictions and traumata of refugees and asylum seekers is very difficult for volunteers

All in all it became clear that volunteers as one key factor within the integration process should be supported all the more. As they already have time consuming tasks they should be provided with useful information and helpful training courses on a flexible and voluntary basis. The training courses should not be compulsory or demanding but they should function as an easily accessible source for support.

4. Conclusion and considerations/suggestions

In conclusion, the European Migrant Crisis is not a bygone issue of 2015 but an ongoing problem which has to be solved by each country individually and by the European Union in general. Although the numbers of first-time-applications are declining, the aftermaths of the so-called flood of migrants in 2015 are still present. The numbers of voluntary helpers is decreasing in several regions and in addition to that the focus has shifted from handling the initial reception of refugees towards long-term tasks, e.g. providing integration, education and employment. This suggests that more demanding tasks have to be carried out by less voluntary workers. As if the tasks as a volunteer working in the migrant sector weren't demanding enough, the acceptance of civic engagement in this sector is declining due to negative media presentation and the political situation. This leaves volunteers in a difficult situation which can be discouraging.

Because full time employees cannot afford the amount of time to take over long term care and support, motivated voluntary workers are a keystone in the process of integration. Through flexible and personal support they are able to minimize isolation and to offer opportunities to asylum seekers to develop their human potential and skills. Therefore it is crucial to provide voluntary helpers with information, knowledge and emotional support. Not only Germany alone, but Europe in general needs shared approaches and solutions for the integration of asylum seekers. Therefore European countries must collaborate, accomplish shared learning progresses and gain competences to cope with this very topical subject.

As was shown in the foregoing chapters, an online training course providing general information, psychological support and intercultural competences meet the volunteers' needs, especially if provided within a flexible and easily accessible learning environment. As volunteers would not be obliged to directly demand training offers or psychological help, key actors of several organizations assume that the acceptance of such an online training seminar might be very high. The project can make a decisive contribution to a healthier working atmosphere and therefore might even reflate civic engagement in the migrant sector in general.

Annexes

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Transcription of Interviews:

We have conducted 5 personal interviews via telephone. Key actors from the following five different local organizations working within the migrant sector were interviewed: EFIE, LAGFA Bayern, Reception Center Bamberg, Freiwilligenzentrum Fürth, Sozialamt Stadt Erlangen;



Key actors

interview_1_eng.doc



Key actors

interview_2_eng.doc



Key actors

interview_3_eng.doc



Key actors

interview_4_eng.doc



Key actors

interview_5_eng.doc

Summary of online survey:

Additionally we have created an online survey for voluntary workers. More than 30 volunteers working in the migrant sector participated.



CaseWORK_Summary_Survey.xlsx