

*Bertelsmann Stiftung (Hrsg.)*

## **Ankommen im neuen Zuhause**

**Flüchtlingsintegration als Chance für weltoffene Kommunen**

## Abstract

A lot has happened since 2015, when municipalities across Germany faced the challenge of managing the influx of 890,000 refugees coming to the country. Since then, one-third of these new arrivals have acquired jobs or started training.

In a statement by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg, “significant progress has been made in terms of integration” – despite unfavorable framework conditions. For the refugees, this means they are benefiting from improved German language skills as well as greater participation in working life, education and training: “Some 20 percent of the refugees who arrived in Germany in 2015 were employed in 2017. According to the employment statistics of the Federal Employment Agency, this share had risen to 35 percent by October 2018,” according to the IAB Short Report 3/2019.

Municipalities across Germany as well as many full-time local actors and local volunteers have proved invaluable to this encouraging development. After all, many of those who fled war and political persecution in 2015 and 2016 are now living in these cities and communities.

How have these municipalities managed to integrate the refugees into education, the workplace and society? That was the question posed at the outset by the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s “Arriving in Germany” project.

“It takes a whole village to raise a child,” is a much-quoted statement. But it also takes the entire community to successfully integrate refugees. This includes full-time and voluntary workers, city administrators and welfare associations, public as well as private institutions, employers, and people with and without a migration background. But how can this be achieved without the various institutions working at cross purposes? Or without underestimating what it is that refugees really need? How can a community or communities coordinate integration services or even bundle them through a single source?

Beginning at the end of 2015, the Bertelsmann Stiftung supported 23 communities in Germany over a period of three years in pilot programs designed to establish cooperation among actors from different sectors and administrative levels of organization in developing and implementing strategies and concepts aimed to integrate refugees. We would like to thank the JPMorgan Chase Foundation for providing financial support in the areas of education and work. We are also very grateful to have

been able to team up with our cooperation partners, the IQ Support Programme and the Familiengerechte Kommune association.

This publication features all the lessons learned, good practices and excerpts from evaluation reports that emerged through this work. An additional book of photographs depicts the individual hopes, challenges, needs and support of refugees living in Germany. The project identified both the conditions for and hurdles to successful integration, whether this involves the challenges of cross-institutional data exchange or the limited access to integration courses for refugees whose prospects of staying in Germany have been uncertain.

All in all, it can be said that the road remains rocky – but German municipalities are now better prepared for the future as they have developed a much clearer focus in recent years and now have a smoothly functioning network of actors upon which to build.