

Global citizenship education in adult learning and education.

Addressing learning needs of migrants: Lessons from the BEF Alpha Scheme (Germany)

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Global citizenship education in adult learning and education – Addressing learning needs of migrants: Lessons from the BEF Alpha Scheme (Germany)

Ilka Koppel

The concept of global citizenship education is based on the perspective of lifelong learning. Adult learning and education (ALE) is therefore an essential part of this concept. Adult education aims to create educational and learning opportunities to enable active citizenship, usually as community, popular or voluntary education (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7). Disadvantaged groups of people and people who are less educated tend to participate less in adult education, but at the same time, the demand for skilled workers in Germany is high. Individual prerequisites and disadvantaged groups of people should therefore be considered to a greater extent when offering continuing training. Adult education can make a significant contribution to the success of integration processes, especially in the context of integration efforts for migrants.

The project 'Education Year for Adult Refugees with Little or No Language and Writing Skills' (BEF Alpha) is aimed at further education institutions such as adult education centres, church educational institutions, vocational training institutions and other independent institutions. The educational institutions should develop and implement offers that provide participants with a good linguistic, cultural and professional basis for their further integration. The aim is not so much to place the participants directly in the labour market, but to provide them with the medium- and long-term benefits of a good knowledge of German and a good basic education for further integration into a profession.

The BEF Alpha project is financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) within the framework of the education chain agreement between the federal government and the state, and implemented conceptually by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport of Baden-Württemberg. Financing will be continued until 2020, and an extension is planned.

This report aims to derive the learning needs of migrants from the experiences of BEF Alpha. To this end, the experiences of the BEF Alpha project are systematically analysed and placed in the context of global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2015) and adult learning and education (UNESCO, 2016).

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ALE | Adult Learning and Education |
| BEF Alpha | Bildungsjahr für erwachsene Flüchtlinge (Education Year for Adult Refugees with Little or No Language and Writing Skills) |
| GCED | Global Citizenship Education |
| NWS | Nationale Weiterbildungsstrategie (National Continuing Education Strategy) |

1. Global citizenship education in adult learning and education for migrants

The concept of global citizenship education (GCED) is based on the perspective of lifelong learning and encompasses all forms of learning (informal, non-formal, formal). UNESCO formulated key learning outcomes to achieve GCED. They are assigned to three domains (UNESCO, 2015): cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural.

Key learning outcomes in the cognitive domain are:

- Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and population;
- Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis.

Key learning outcomes in the socio-emotional domain are:

- Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights;
- Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

Key learning outcomes in the behavioural domain are:

- Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world;
- Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions.

One focus of GCED is on adult learning and education, or adult learning objectives. Adult learning and education comprises all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work (UNESCO, 2016, p. 6). It is the organised, goal-oriented continuation of the learning process alongside or after professional activity (Siebert, 1972, p. 10).

Migration means, a person relocating their centre of life, of international migration when this happens across national borders (Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat and Bundesministerium für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2019, p. 37). This report only considers the group of people who migrate internationally. A migrant might therefore be a doctor who comes from abroad and takes up a job here, or a person who has come to Germany from abroad and is looking for work, or someone fleeing his or her home country because of a war. The explanations in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 refer to any and all migrants from abroad. Wherever aspects refer specifically to refugees, the term refugee will be used explicitly and intentionally.

Consequently, the aim of adult education for migrants is integration into the education system and the labour market through social and cultural participation in all areas of society (according to Brücker, Rother, and Schupp, 2016, p. 15).

In the following, the relevance of adult education and the legal framework conditions for migrants will therefore be discussed.

1.1. Relevance of adult learning and education for migrants

In the view of UNESCO, adult education:

includes education and learning opportunities for active citizenship, variously known as community, popular or liberal education. It empowers people to actively engage with social issues such as poverty, gender, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility, justice, equity, exclusion, violence, unemployment, environmental protection and climate change. It also helps people to lead a decent life, in terms of health and well-being, culture, spirituality and in all other ways that contribute to personal development and dignity. (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7).

In Germany, these objectives are executed at the national level by the National Continuing Education Strategy (NWS) (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). Further training is, therefore, an investment in social participation and equal opportunities. To this end, the 'Federal Government and the federal states [...] want to better dovetail their continuing education policies and, with the involvement of other partners, make continuing education offers and funding opportunities more transparent and more easily accessible for all, and – where necessary – expand them' (ibid., p. 2). In the context of migration, continuing education is considered to play a key role in the social and professional integration and social participation of immigrants and their descendants in Germany (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2018, p. 6). The Adult Education Survey shows, however, that further training behaviour is strongly dependent on the educational background of individuals and whether they have a migrant background. For example, the participation rate in non-formal training is 35 per cent for people with a low-grade school-leaving certificate and 60 per cent for people with a high-grade school-leaving certificate (Bilger, Behringer, Kuper, and Schrader, 2017, p. 50). Overall, migrants¹ participate less in continuing training (40 per cent) than people with a migrant background² (43 per cent) or people without a migrant background³ (51 per cent) (Bilger et al., 2017, p. 50). An even greater difference can be seen with regard to continuing vocational training in the private sector: migrants (32 per cent) or people with migrant background (38 per cent) participate in continuing vocational training in businesses to a much lesser extent than people without a migrant background (52 per cent) (Bilger et al., 2017, p. 60). Even though there are clear differences between the groups

¹ The Adult Education Survey (AES) uses the term 'foreigner' for people without German citizenship. In the context of this paper the term 'migrants' can and will be used instead of 'foreigner'.

² In Germany, the definition of someone with a migrant background is a person with German citizenship but whose first language is not German.

³ In Germany, the definition of someone without a migrant background is a person with German citizenship who has learned German as their first language.

with regard to their further training behaviour, no clear conclusions can be drawn about the causes. According to previous findings, individual (low formal education, low occupational status and lack of knowledge of German), structural (lack of occupational needs and excessive training costs) and social (family responsibilities) factors have an influence on further training behaviour (Öztürk, 2018, p. 33). Structural change and automation are likely to lead to the loss of jobs, in particular for low-skilled workers in entry level jobs (OECD, 2019). This may increase the need for further training (retraining) for people who work in entry level jobs in order to remain in employment. However, this group of tends to participate less in further training. It should also be noted here that several factors are responsible for migration, not necessarily nationality and motivation.

As result of this development, individual prerequisites and disadvantaged groups must be increasingly considered in shaping further training on offer. At the same time, the demand for skilled workers is high (Bonin, 2019, p. 60), which means that more people qualified for skilled work are needed. Integration and vocational qualification of migrants would be one way of dealing with this need. A particular urgency arises for people who come from countries of origin that are not safe and whose chances of returning are low. In many cases traumatisation is present. Therefore, individually oriented support measures have to be aligned against the background of these very heterogeneous preconditions.

It is also known that women are a particularly disadvantaged group: female refugees tend to have a lower level of education than male refugees (Liebig, 2018, p. 8), but nevertheless participate less in integration measures than men (Liebig, 2018, p. 31). At the same time, immigrant mothers who do take up work are associated with significantly better labour market outcomes for their children, especially for daughters (Liebig, 2018, p. 10). In many cases, integration into the labour market requires attendance on an integration course. This leads to the conclusion that integration courses for women play a central role in increasing their chances of permanent employment and thus offering their children a better prospect of employment.

Even though the preconditions are quite heterogeneous, a recent study shows that the educational orientation of refugees is high (BAMF, 2016)⁴ and that motivation to learn (sometimes very pronounced) can be assumed. The values of democracy and equality strongly depend on the country of origin: while, for example, 92 per cent of all refugees⁵ and the German population believe that women have the same rights as men, only 67 per cent of refugees from crisis countries⁶ agree with this statement (Brücker et al., 2016, p. 57). This points to a difference that can lead to conflict. The

⁴ https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse5_iab-bamf-soep-befragung-gefluechtete.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=11

⁵ In this study, refugees are adults who entered Germany from 1 January 2013 to 31 January 2016 and applied for asylum.

⁶ Algeria, Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Yemen are defined as crisis countries.

study draws attention to the fact that there may be considerable differences in the acceptance of abstract norms and the values actually lived in everyday life (Brücker et al., 2016, p. 59).

It can be deduced from previous explanations that there is a strong need for further training: From the employer's perspective, structural changes require the further qualification of (potential) employees and skilled workers are needed. Especially for migrants,⁷ there is a need to learn about local and national structures, to deal with values and diversity, and to actively and responsibly integrate into society. Due to manifold preconditions and social challenges, integration for this target group through comprehensive integration, which is not merely oriented towards rapid integration into the labour market, seems promising. The aim of BEF Alpha is therefore not so much to integrate migrants into the labour market as quickly as possible, as to prepare them for long-term, lasting social participation. Thus, the BEF Alpha project seems to contribute to the achievement of GCED in the context of ALE.

The aim of this paper is, therefore, to discuss the learning needs of migrants in the context of GCED and the response given by BEF Alpha. The basis for the achievement of the objectives is the experience gained from the BEF Alpha project, which is intended to facilitate the integration of refugees by providing participants (refugees) with a good linguistic, cultural and professional basis for their further integration. The experiences from the project will be analysed descriptively and analytically and prepared with regard to the report's objective. Based on the legal framework for migrants in Germany, BEF Alpha will be presented to analyse the experiences from the project empirically and to draw conclusions about the learning needs of migrants.

1.2. Legal framework for migrants in Germany

The legal framework for migrants is regulated by the Residence Act 'AufenthG §44' (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, 2019). The following discussion refers to first-generation migrants most of whom entered Germany owing to political persecution, war or other insecure circumstances. A foreigner who resides permanently in Germany is entitled to one participation in an integration course, if he or she is granted a residence permit for the first time for the purpose of gainful employment, family reunification, humanitarian reasons, as a long-term resident, or a residence title. As a rule, permanent residence can be assumed if the foreigner receives a residence permit of at least one year or has held a residence permit for more than 18 months, unless the stay is temporary.

There is no entitlement to participation in an integration course for children, adolescents and young adults who are starting a school education or continuing their previous school career in Germany, if

⁷ Of course, this can also apply to other groups of people.

there is little need for integration, or if the foreigner already has sufficient knowledge of the German language (usually, a language institute carries out an initial diagnosis to decide on the need for integration). A foreigner who is not or no longer entitled to attend a course may be admitted to a course within the framework of availability of places subject to certain conditions (§44 Paragraph 4). In the case of an asylum seeker who comes from a safe country of origin (§ 29a of the Asylum Act; Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, 2016), it is presumed that a legal and permanent residence is not to be expected. A foreigner may be obliged to attend an integration course under certain conditions (e.g. if the residence status is given and language skills are low and/or he/she receives benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act). Within the framework of BEF Alpha, registration is usually made via an employment agency, a job centre or an administrative district. This means that no further legal examination is necessary on the part of educational institutions.

2. BEF Alpha – concept analysis

In Baden-Württemberg, the BEF Alpha project is implemented conceptually by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. The courses have been financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) since 2016, within the framework of an education chain agreement between the state of Baden-Württemberg and the federal government, and are being continued annually until the agreement expires in 2020, though an extension is planned. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport aims to distribute the courses as widely as possible within the state of Baden-Württemberg. It is allowed for one continuing education institution to take over several courses.

The rest of Section 2, discusses the goals of BEF Alpha (Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3), and its significance for GCED for ALE (Section 2.4).

2.1. Personal level

The target group are people between the ages of 20 and 35 who have fled to Germany since 2015. Their origin may be countries with a high probability of death or injury from conflict, but they may come from other countries. The target group will tend to be people with little or no literacy skills (primary illiterates) as well as to people who are literate in their native language (secondary learners). Their German language level at the beginning of the course is usually under A1. In the courses operating under BEF Alpha since 2018, women with children have been the main target group. One of the reasons for this is the realisation that the integration of families without the participation of women or mothers is rarely successful (cf. e.g. Liebig, 2018) and mothers, who are mostly responsible for childcare, can support their children in school. Since the birth rate rises one

year after entry and, traditionally, women are mostly responsible for raising children (cf. Liebig, 2018), BEF Alpha offers the possibility of financing childcare, in accordance with the OECD recommendation that child education must not be an obstacle to participation in integration courses. In addition, there is a high demand in the municipalities in Baden-Württemberg for corresponding courses for women with children under the age of four. Through this approach, the project is also trying to make a contribution to the strengthening of gender equality. The number of participants is usually between ten and 15 per site. If the number is less than ten, additional participants may only be admitted in the first two months of the course.

2.2. General objectives of BEF Alpha

BEF Alpha is aimed at further education institutions such as adult education centres, church educational institutions, vocational training institutions and other independent organisations. The institutions are expected to develop and implement offers that provide participants with a good linguistic, cultural and professional basis for their further integration. There are three learning areas in the courses:

- the development of literacy and language skills;
- early professional orientation, with practical approaches and internships;
- the important cultural, democratic and social basic factors in Germany.

BEF Alpha is intended to adjust refugees to the needs of the labour market. The aim is not so much to get people into entry level jobs as quickly as possible, but rather to provide them with the medium- and long-term benefits of good German-language skills and a good basic education as a foundation for further integration into a profession.

The goals of BEF Alpha can be usefully examined at the personal level of the target group (Section 2.2) and at the curricular level (Section 2.3), in addition to the general goals detailed above.

2.3. Curricular Level

BEF Alpha comprises a total of 980 hours over 35 weeks of tuition. There are two components of the course: *course offerings* and *five weeks of internships*.

BEF Alpha promoters and teachers have a positive attitude towards the participants and their culture. In the case of intercultural challenges that cannot be met by a teacher or only to a limited extent, a specialist is called in. In principle, exclusion of participants is only possible in the case of serious and repeated disruptions and, in particular, resort to violence.

2.3.1. Course offerings

The *course offerings* comprise 28 hours per week, divided into:

- 18 hours of literacy and language training;
- 6 hours of vocational orientation/ vocational preparation;
- 2 hours of everyday skills;
- 2 hours of social studies/ basic political education.

The apportioning of these lessons into the weeks of instruction can be arranged flexibly, though literacy and language promotion should be at the forefront of all thematic areas. Vocational orientation is supplemented by an internship of five weeks.

BEF Alpha focuses on learning the Latin alphabet and promoting German-language skills. It is characterised by a high degree of heterogeneity among the participants, ranging from primary to functional illiterates, and secondary learners. Individual promotion and internal differentiation are therefore absolutely necessary. It is also possible to divide up a group within the framework of special promotion, as a rule on one or two days a week. Accordingly, teachers need to be highly qualified (see below). BEF Alpha enables students to take part in classes in a virtual classroom.

The teaching of writing and language skills is geared towards everyday life and the world of work.

The basic aim is to improve language skills until A2 is reached. If it is foreseeable that participants will have difficulties in achieving this goal, remedial teaching is called for, with special exercise units for those concerned. Professionally qualified teachers are strongly preferred.

The courses begin with carefully documented profiling of the participants by the course provider, appraising their linguistic, social and professional skills. The aim is to classify each participant's competences, which will be updated through the course. It is strong preference to set up target agreements for the course between the project executing agency and the participants.

BEF Alpha makes progress transparent to the participants by means of intermediate examinations.

These are expected to be based on the level and certificate system of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The diploma awarded at the end of the course (validated by telc⁸) contains statements on linguistic, professional and social competences, as well as on the internship. Even if a participant has achieved A1 level, a meaningful certificate in the sense of a learning development report should be provided. This certificate should also indicate the further steps towards integration that would be most useful to the participant. A certificate of participation alone is not sufficient.

Language teaching is based on the pronounced heterogeneity of the courses. In order to introduce people who are not used to learning how to learn, an important part of the course is the topic 'learning to learn' and instruction about learning strategies. To encourage and promote exchange of

⁸ The 'telc' institute offers diagnostic tests based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages See: <https://www.telc.net/pruefungsteilnehmende/sprachpruefungen/pruefungen/detail/telc-deutsch-a1.html>

conversation between each other, and to practice speaking German, division of learners into groups according to their nationalities is forbidden. The formation of learning and working groups should above all enable remedial teaching or else be oriented towards subject content.

Vocational orientation is already implemented at the beginning, at the same time as language acquisition. In all areas of teaching, right from the start, language acquisition is linked with vocational orientation and practical work, for example in workshops or in cooperation with vocational schools. Participants will thus be able to apply progress in language development to vocational orientation in a timely and low-threshold manner. Vocational orientation should be clear, practical and memorable, with pictures if necessary. It is not permissible to postpone vocational orientation to the second half of the course: multiple excursions to companies are an integral part of vocational orientation. The teaching and learning methods in BEF-Alpha are not specified. For basic political education, however, images are provided by the Landeszentrale für politische Bildung (State Agency for Political Education).

The aim of teaching about everyday life and basic political education is to convey the values and norms of European society. This is done through practical applications in the course, as well as through role-playing and videos. The lessons aim to break down prejudices, promote acceptance of equal rights of the sexes, rejection of antisemitism and expand tolerance towards other ways of life. In addition, non-violent strategies for conflict resolution are taught.

The basic and advanced training of course instructors is essential for course success. Therefore, BEF Alpha expects instructors to possess a Master's degree or a partial qualification in adult education, as well as proven qualifications and experience in the field of literacy and basic education, e.g. through BAMF certificates, participation in the basic qualification (ProGrundbildung) of the German Adult Education Association, or equivalent qualifications. Within these qualifications, GCED's learning objectives are pursued – not always systematically, but regularly. Willingness to participate in further education and training within the framework of the project is essential. For course leaders, compulsory further training is offered on the topics of democracy-building, internal differentiation,⁹ dealing with traumatised refugees and intercultural competence.

2.3.2. Internship

For the **internship weeks**, as many participants as possible are placed in local companies, which can also be socially oriented. Despite the participants' language difficulties, this has generally been successfully achieved. Two prerequisites are necessary for the internship to be completed successfully: participants have to be well prepared for requirements in practice and companies'

⁹ Internal differentiation is a collective term for didactic, methodical and organisational measures in educational work designed to promote individual learners in a learning group.

needs; and the project executing agency must ensure that the company is provided with detailed information about the participants in the run-up to an internship. A target agreement between all three parties makes sense. Participants receive a meaningful assessment from the company at the end of the course.

The course of the week can be changed to accommodate a larger involvement of women with children; after a minor re-arrangement the course may thereby be prolonged altogether, without any effect on the funding amount. The fundamental goal remains to orient the course towards performance. Childcare makes it possible for mothers to reach a higher language level.

2.4. Significance of BEF Alpha for global citizenship education in adult education

BEF Alpha supports the achievement of GCED goals in many ways. In presenting the significance of BEF Alpha with regard to GCED, the following systematic approach is based on the competence domains and learning objectives of GCED of the UNESCO Framework (UNESCO, 2015). Individual learning contents can be used to achieve several learning objectives from different domains simultaneously.

2.4.1. Cognitive domain

Cognitive and, especially, communication-related learning goals are primarily pursued through language promotion. The participants of the courses have different biographies and include primary and functional illiterates as well as secondary learners. The courses should therefore be designed in such a way that they can be flexibly adapted to different learning needs. Due to the fact that division by nationalities is imposed and teachers are called upon to react to intercultural tensions, respect for diversity, heterogeneity and intercultural understanding are promoted. In addition, further subject-related content is learned through the internship. Democratic values and knowledge about living together in Germany are explicitly taught in social studies and basic political education, and these matters go hand-in-hand with pointing out possibilities for conflict resolution. In most cases, it is presumed, there is also training in interaction-related competences such as collaborative work and problem-solving skills.

2.4.2. Socio-emotional domain

The skills of empathy, respect and solidarity are trained in relation to this domain. BEF Alpha promotes these skills through both courses and internships. In the heterogeneous courses, participants learn that cultural differences are to be reacted to with respect and empathy. By promoting competencies related to everyday life and talking about them, the course trains participants in sensitive handling of local culture. Intercultural competencies and the sharing of common rules and values are promoted through integration into social, sporting and cultural activities. At the course level, for example, this is done by arranging schedules, setting additional

studies and persuading participants to inform the course in advance when they are unable to attend. The availability of childcare brings an advantage in terms of content, since the course topics on health, nutrition, hygiene and sexual education attract a lot of attention, especially in relation to children.

2.4.3. Behavioural domain

During the course and internships, participants should learn to establish and adhere to rules in the community. In this way, they can learn to take responsibility not only for life in the community but also for their own learning success. The courses and the vocational orientation are intended to motivate participants to complete an internship and implement what they have learnt in the course (both in terms of language competence and everyday skills). By learning about basic rights, the social system and other support services, participants should get to know and be able to make use of their ability to act.

In addition, BEF Alpha attaches great importance to the promotion of equal rights, in line with UNESCO's overarching priorities (UNESCO, 2015, p. 16). BEF Alpha has a particular aim in promoting women, who tend to be severely disadvantaged with regard to their education and the right of co-determination in the family. BEF Alpha makes a significant contribution to gender equality by providing basic political education and taking GCED's goals into account.

3. BEF Alpha – analytical review of experience

Two data sources are used in this section to analyse the experiences of BEF Alpha and to derive learning needs of migrants from the experiences with refugees:

- Statistics from educational institutions, providing information on participants' socio-demographic background, language level and whereabouts after attendance at the integration course. These statistics are evaluated descriptively and presented in Section 3.1.
- Self-reports from the educational institutions in which they describe the course, special challenges and solutions, and reflect on them. These reports were subjected to qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2010) and evaluated based on deductively and inductively obtained categories. The concept of GCED was the basis of the deductively formed categories. The inductively formed categories refer to special challenges and approaches to solutions. Nine self-reports were selected for evaluation on the basis of defined criteria which included the scope of the information on GCED-relevant aspects and information on the learning needs of migrants.

The experiences of the educational institutions and participants drawn from the self-reports were assigned to the cognitive (Section 3.2), the socio-emotional (Section 3.3) and the behavioural domain (Section 3.4).

3.1. General experience

So far there have been four cohorts in the 2016–2020 period. BEF Alpha was conducted at 12 locations in 2016/2017, 16 locations in 2017/2018, 31 locations in 2018/2019 and 41 locations in 2019/2020. Around 40 courses are again expected for 2020. The number of participants has risen from 200 (2016) to around 600 (2019). The analysis in the following paragraphs is based on figures for the first three cohorts (2016/2017; 2017/2018 and 2018/2019).

A total of 985 participants started a BEF Alpha course in its first three years. Where indicated, 408 were women and 357 men. The proportion of women increased significantly from 38.8 per cent in course 2 to 61.6 per cent in course 3. Of these participants, we know that 421 were primary illiterates and 469 were secondary learners (no information was given on the remaining individuals). Participants' educational background comprised the entire qualification spectrum from primary illiterates without school attendance to secondary learners and academics. About two-thirds of participants, 663 people, completed the course, 322 had an early departure documented. The most commonly cited reasons for discontinuing the course were taking up work, moving house, dropping out from the integration course, pregnancy and illness. With regard to school experience, it was documented that 328 people had no experience, 220 people had one to three years schooling and 400 people had four years or more. At the beginning of the course, almost all participants were found to be at level A1 (written and spoken) or lower. During the course, only a few participants did not experience an increase in performance. Most people improved considerably within level A1, some reaching A2 or B1. An internship was completed by 497 persons, 75 per cent received positive feedback from the host company. Regarding retention after the course, 335 persons attended a subsequent course, and 173 persons entered the labour market (for training or employment). The progress of the remaining individuals was not recorded.

3.2. Experiences with reference to the cognitive domain

The *cognitive domain* is assigned experiences that provide information about curricular aspects and the transfer of knowledge.

At the curricular level, the focus was on language teaching. In addition, according to statements from educational institutions, learning objectives, everyday knowledge and education-related knowledge

all had to be built up. This procedure included the topic of education and leisure activities, as well as waste separation and dealing with authorities. Also, there was feedback-linked development on components of the Basic Law and further basics of common living together.

The teaching of basic political education and the school and training system in Germany was particularly difficult due to participants' poor language skills. This goal probably proved to be an additional challenge because the German education system differs greatly from most countries of origin. This challenge was met by repeating and increasing the use of picture cards.

The topic of communication was dealt with on a permanent basis. Special features of language use such as 'Du' and 'Sie' (informal and formal use of language)¹⁰ as well as the topics of courtesy and respect, in general, were dealt with as early as possible. This helped the participants to break down communication barriers.

In Germany, however, the participants are not only confronted with language barriers, but also with different bureaucratic structures that are only comparable to a limited extent to the ones in their countries of origin. Coping with such issues, and the procurement of lost documents, were integrated into the courses and used as learning opportunities. Everyday situations such as telephone calls were practised in realistic scenarios.

Critical thinking was stimulated by pointing out differences between the country of origin and Germany. Even though some institutions reported that it was not possible or only possible to a very limited extent due to language barriers, discussions on the topic could take place at the end of the course.

Some institutions stated that during the mediation of cultural, democratic and social basic values, female participants in particular took care to reflect on their own gender-specific perspectives and to break down existing role stereotypes.

The teaching and observance of rules was dealt with continuously – in most cases over the entire course. For example, in order to support the participants as well as to improve the chance of punctual appearance at the beginning of lessons, an individual overview of the departure times of public transport at each participant's place of residence was helpful.

The internship was particularly challenging when, for example, safety regulations were to be taught. Thus, internship-related content could be used as learning material in the course. However, in isolated cases it proved difficult to overcome communication difficulties during internship owing to the spoken dialects of instructors. Some institutions reported that it made sense to do the internship on four days a week and to use one day a week for the educational institution part of the course. This

¹⁰ In Germany there are two forms of 'you'. Usually, one form of you – 'du' – stands for a more friendly and family atmosphere. The other form of you – 'sie' – is used in a distant and respectful manner.

helped to maintain language acquisition, to clarify uncertainties and enabled the use of experiences from the internship as learning opportunities.

In order to establish a connection between childcare and the course, some of the contents of the course were also practised playfully with the children (e.g. vocabulary learning, nutrition and hygiene).

3.3. Experiences with reference to the socio-emotional domain

Statements about heterogeneity and participation are assigned to the *socio-emotional level*.

The over-riding goal in various courses was to develop an understanding of being part of a community with shared values and responsibilities. In particular, some learning experiences led to major challenges: the courses were attended by people who had already studied as well as people who had hardly ever attended school. For people unaccustomed to learning, it was particularly important to learn to learn. The capacity to acquire new competences and new knowledge was also very variable. This challenge was met with internal differentiation and/or individual support. Division of the participants according to competence did not lead to the targeted learning successes and was not carried out if at all possible. The level of motivation could be quite different within courses, but overall motivation tended to be high. Low motivation in some learners was due to fear of deportation and was sometimes found to have a negative impact on other course participants. This was counteracted by comparing the participants' ideas of German culture and the German social system with reality.

Expectations regarding possible gainful employment were also compared with circumstances. Due to participants' lack of evidence of professional knowledge and communication difficulties, it was particularly important to develop realistic perspectives with them.

In individual cases, potential internships were rejected by the participants due to insurmountable inhibitions (e.g. a woman will on occasion have to touch a man in the context of nursing activities). Women tended to focus their interest on activities such as cooking, cleaning and child supervision. The educational institutions emphasised that they paid particular attention to encouraging female participants to engage with basic cultural, democratic and social values, and this helped to reflect on gender-specific perspectives, both of learner and teacher, and break down existing role stereotypes. Several institutions reports that cooperation with local institutions and administrative structures made a significant contribution to success.

3.4. Experience related to the behavioural domain

The *behavioural level* is assigned statements that provide information about concrete actions and intentions.

Overall, educational institutions report that they applied learning content directly at the course level where possible. For example, the values anchored in the Basic Law were lived and implemented in the courses. If intercultural or religious tensions were observed in the courses, the institutions reacted with clarifying discussions. The content of basic political education could thus contribute to reducing tensions, so that learning groups and friendships could be formed in the course of the course regardless of individuals' origin or religion.

However, the traditional understanding of roles in the countries of origin could also lead to various challenges, which had an impact on internship and career prospects. Religiously motivated rules such as that women may not have any physical contact with men led to the rejection of internships. This challenge was met by finding internships that were compatible with cultural and religious backgrounds. This situation was also used as an occasion to discuss equality and the Constitution. For many women, the course and internship were only possible because childcare was also offered.

All educational institutions report that the topic of understanding rules (e.g. punctuality) was regularly addressed and implemented in the courses, not only by discussing the rules at a theoretical level, but also applying them directly in the course and internship. Agreed apology procedures, for example, were helpful in learning how to deal with rules. Incentives for a high attendance rate were created, for example, by reimbursing travel costs for an attendance rate of 80 per cent.

With the creation of individual CVs and mediation in how applications were written, several participants were able to apply independently to an employer for an internship or a job.

With regard to social behaviour, the aim of the courses was both to strengthen direct contact between the participants in German and to convey a greater sense of security for behaviour in everyday life. The courses used services such as the World Café or the joint preparation of food.

In addition, participants showed interest in joint activities and also took advantage of opportunities outside courses in which they made contact with people from different countries or different religions (e.g. intercultural weeks, sports courses, music school, or manual work group). Participants were willing to take on tasks that required communication with people from different countries.

Some participants expressed the intention to improve their German-language skills after the course. This can be interpreted as an indication that they had the will and responsibility to participate deeply in society.

Regular off-course activities helped to ensure that learners were able to use their language skills outside their course. If they did not take part in any off-courses activities, language acquisition for many was completely limited to the time in the BEF Alpha course, as they neither used the language in everyday life nor had learning strategies at their disposal to repeat and consolidate at home what they had learned on the course.

According to the self-reports from the educational institutions, participants showed during the course that they were increasingly assuming responsibility for the well-being of the entire group. This is reflected, for example, in their increasing adherence to agreements. Participants were made aware of their room for manoeuvre through the mediation of and discussion of the legal bases, the school system and support offers. This enabled them to assume and implement their responsibilities.

3.5. Teaching and learning methods and other teaching-related experiences in BEF Alpha

Different methods were used in the courses: books (various textbooks, e.g. from the regional centre for political education¹¹), pictures, picture and word cards, films, songs, computers (writing emails, VHS learning portal), posters, partner work, role-playing (e.g. to practice for job interviews), practising of communication strategies as well as visits to authorities, companies, counselling centres and regular meetings in, for example, clubs. Even small projects such as a barbecue were realised. Images with pairs of opposites (e.g. depiction of a dictator and a demonstration), but also other instruments such as an election of a course president during the course or a visit to the memorial of a former Prison from the period of National Socialism in Ulm, proved particularly useful for the formation of democracy. The teaching and learning methods for the field of basic political education came from the State Agency for Political Education. The ministry is in regular contact with an expert from state headquarters to identify suitable materials and reflect on their use. The expert also conducts training courses for teachers on the subject of learning about democracy.

In addition to films by the Federal Employment Agency, visits to companies and enterprises were particularly helpful for career guidance, as the participants were given an authentic impression of possible fields of work and were able to make contact with the people working there.

Care was taken to use as many methods as possible that enabled a transfer to the everyday world of the learners – if necessary through reference to the learning of everyday tasks as well as through visits to institutions and facilities – and participants were jointly tested in everyday situations (shopping, visits to authorities, etc.).

All social forms were used: plenum group work, partner work, individual discussions, individual work; and the lessons that took place were – as far as possible – internally differentiated.

Diagnostic methods used included interviews (particularly for career guidance), profiling sheets and standardised tests (e.g. telc).

¹¹ The following textbooks were named as examples: *Hamburger ABC* (published by Herma Wäbs), *Leben in Deutschland* (State Agency for Political Education [Landeszentrale für politische Bildung]), *Deutsch als Fremdsprache im Unternehmen A1* (Klett-Verlag), and *Schritte plus NEU* (Hueber-Verlag). The VHS Learning Portal, <https://vhslearning.org/>, was used.

In summary, the institutions report that when selecting learning methods, care must be taken first and foremost to ensure that they fit the learner.

4. Conclusions from BEF Alpha: Learning needs of migrants

The experiences presented above are summarised and paraphrased in Tables 1, 2 and 3. In a next step, the learning needs of migrants can be derived based on these summaries and paraphrases. The derivation of learning needs is systematically based on the three domains, and the domains can in turn be fed back to the learning objectives of GCED. The tables show in the first column the learning needs that arise in the context of GCED on the basis of BEF Alpha's experience. In the second column possibilities for action are formulated to meet these learning needs, based on the experiences of the educational institutions. Or to put it another way: What can contribute to achieving these learning needs? In the third column the relation to the learning objectives of GCED is established. Although many derived learning needs reflect the learning objectives of GCED, the presentation in the three tables does not claim to be exhaustive.

In general, the educational institutions consider the interlinking of courses with the various topics of language, basic political education, vocational orientation, company internships as well as topics related to everyday life to be promising, since the content learned can be directly linked to and applied in practice. Experience suggests that placing learning content in a larger context can promote motivation and learning. This can also be transferred to the language didactic level: learning letters seems to be more effective if words are directly added to the letters.

Structurally, participants' different places of residence and (among other things) family obligations led to difficulties in the organisation of time. Childcare has proved to be very supportive for the (especially female) learners; indeed, for many women this was the only way to participate in the courses. It was important that the parents' learning rooms were close to the children's care rooms, and, especially at the beginning, it would be helpful if parents and children could keep visual contact in order to build trust.

The tables show that various learning needs exist in the context of GCED and, according to reports from educational institutions, can be met in different ways. In this process, teachers perceive further training on the topics of political basic education, internal differentiation and intercultural competence as extremely supportive. Some methods and approaches have proved particularly effective in the context of BEF Alpha and are therefore listed as options for action in the tables. Overall, however, experience shows that learning approaches must be found on an individual basis.

5. Summary

The significant increase in the number of educational providers and the positive feedback from the learners and institutions indicate that BEF Alpha is a successful concept. Based on the experiences of BEF Alpha teachers and learners the learning needs of migrants can cover all aspects of the GCED concept. However, the extent to which the individual aspects of GCED are emphasised to learners must be individually identified and promoted. It was found that it is productive to link language, career orientation/internship, and topics about democratisation and everyday life at an early stage. The competences acquired in the course (language, values, political aspects of basic education) can be directly applied in practice, which in turn can lead to an increase in motivation and self-esteem and an improvement in everyday experience.

Summarised – based on the experiences of BEF Alpha, and from the supply perspective – success factors for integration courses are:

- combination of language course, vocational orientation, everyday knowledge and democracy education from the very beginning;
- internal differentiation with individual funding opportunities;
- highly qualified, experienced course instructors
- flexible teaching structure, leading to creative adaptation to local possibilities
- local childcare during the course and internship periods to increase the involvement of women
- further training for course instructors in central course contents
- cooperation with local structures and institutions
- financial support to reach the course location.

BEF Alpha shows that migrants are strengthened in their long-term participation in society through the combination of acquired competences and experiences from vocational orientation and internships.

6. A reflection on analysis methods

The learning needs of migrants can be derived from the statistics and reports from the educational institutions. It should be noted that there is a double context-dependence in this analysis: classification in the context of GCED, and classification of experiences from the perspective of educational institutions.

Firstly, it would be interesting to include the attitudes and convictions of teachers in the analysis. Secondly, it would be instructive to ask the learner's directly about their perspective. This could broaden the picture of the extent to which the concept of GCED and ALE is anchored in society.

Table 1: Learning needs of migrants in the cognitive domain derived from the experiences of the BEF Alpha project

| Learning needs Cognitive domain | Ways to meet learning needs derived from the experiences of BEF Alpha | GCED objectives |
|---|---|--|
| Language switching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating or using application occasions outside the course • Breaking down language barriers through role-play • Using current events as learning opportunities • When conveying letters, combining them with words | Learners gain knowledge about local, national and global aspects and their inter-relationships |
| Getting to know the Basic Law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the facts with lots of illustrative material, perhaps with pairs of pictures showing contrasts (e.g. dictator and demonstration) • Cooperation with the State Agency for Civic Education • Reactions in the courses related to the occasion, for example on the topic of equal rights | |
| Transfer of values and standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of values and standards and comparison with values and standards in countries of origin with illustrative material • Exchange on educational goals and objectives • Cooperation with the State Agency for Civic Education • Excursions to town halls, churches etc. • Occasion-related explanations, e.g. about Christian celebrations | |
| Getting to know the school and vocational training system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the system with schematic representations that are repeated several times or are permanently visible in the course | |
| Mediation of rules (e.g. waste separation, punctuality) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint development of the function of rules • introduction of a catalogue of rules and debt relief procedure • Conclusion of a contractual agreement between the participants and the project-executing agency | |
| Getting to know the safety regulations in companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the safety regulations in the courses • Representation in films | |
| Exchange of experience on cultural aspects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use heterogeneity as an occasion for discussion and offer opportunities in which all cultures can get involved, e.g. through a barbecue and the preparation of food from the respective countries of origin | |
| Learning communication strategies and rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of role-plays and practice of concrete communication situations | |

Table 2: Learning needs of migrants in the socio-emotional domain derived from the experiences of the BEF Alpha project

| Learning needs Socio-emotional domain | Ways to meet learning needs – derived from the experiences of BEF Alpha | GCED objectives |
|---|--|--|
| Development of a sense of social participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the participants' scope of action and area of responsibility • Excursions • Joint celebrations with volunteers and club representatives | Learners experience a sense of belonging with shared values and a sense of responsibility |
| Development of realistic expectations regarding social participation in Germany | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of realistic perspectives based on nationality and individual learning and work experience • Inclusion of graduates of previous BEF Alpha courses | |
| Development of an open attitude towards heterogeneous learning conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally differentiated instruction (no external differentiation according to learning level) • Learning in different social forms • Support of weaker participants in terms of performance through association with stronger | Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity. |
| Development of an open attitude towards religious and cultural diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using heterogeneous role understandings as reasons for discussion • Stimulating reflection through conversation and role-play • Excursions to churches and museums | |
| Experience with different levels of motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pointing out perspectives by conveying basic rights as well as by vocational orientation • Strengthening the cohesion of the group through the implementation of joint projects • Inclusion of graduates of previous BEF Alpha courses | |

Table 3: Learning needs of migrants in the behavioural domain derived from the experiences of the BEF Alpha project

| Learning needs Behavioural domain | Ways to meet learning needs – derived from the experiences of BEF Alpha | GCED objectives |
|---|--|---|
| Use of various offers outside the course | Regularly offer activities outside the courses/ draw attention to them | Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a peaceful and sustainable world. |
| Acting responsibly regarding the achievement of project goals in the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of joint projects, e.g. barbecues and intercultural weeks • Involvement of volunteers | |
| Responsible action regarding learning success in the course, e.g. compliance with rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions for apology in the event of prevention • Contractual agreement between participants and promoters on compliance with rules • Reference to possible sanctions for very frequent absence (exclusion) | |
| Acting responsibly towards oneself and society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out an internship • Identifying internships that are compatible with religious/ cultural backgrounds and physical conditions • Respectful handling of culturally conditioned inhibitions • Information on fundamental rights | |
| Maintaining/ increasing motivation to act on one's own responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in dealing with bureaucratic structures • Pointing out the scope for action • Practice of communication situations • Support with childcare through local offers • Support with vocational orientation | Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary measures |

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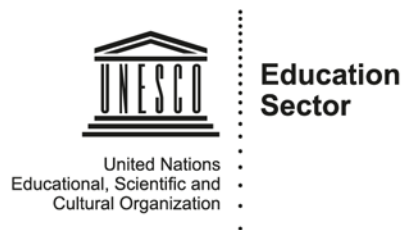
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