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Positionspapier aus der ARL 124

MIGRATION AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

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MIGRATION AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introductory remarks

The high influx of refugees confronts Germany with a variety of tasks and problems. In addition to short-term challenges such as geographically allocating and accommodating refugees, longer-term tasks involving housing, regional and integration policy also need to be addressed. Notwithstanding heavy financial burdens, claims that capacity limits will be exceeded, and growing problems with acceptance, refugees are people with a right to protection and to an individual review of their wish to stay. Many of the refugees already in Germany will not be able to return to their home countries in the foreseeable future due to the precarious situation there, so integration strategies with at least a medium-term focus need to be developed. The extent to which it is currently appropriate for migration policy to also support long-term settlement strategies is a matter for separate discussion.

Excursus 1 – Use of the term ‘refugee’

In this Position Paper, the term ‘refugee’ is used to designate all persons who have been registered in Germany as asylum seekers, are in the midst of an ongoing asylum application process, or are residing in Germany after being granted asylum status. Legally speaking, the term ‘refugee’ designates a person who has been recognised as having that status due to persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion as stated in the Geneva Convention (cf. section 1 of the GFK [Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees]; section 3 of the Asylum Act [*Asylgesetz, AsylG*]). This applied to a total of 135,107 people (47.8 per cent of asylum decisions) in 2015. Alternatively, in Germany there is a fundamental right to asylum in cases of political persecution (Article 16a of the Basic Law [*Grundgesetz, GG*]) (2015: 2,029 or 0.7 per cent of all asylum decisions). However, since the problems and perspectives described above are related less to the legal status of the people in question than to their actual presence, in this Position Paper we use the broader sense of the term as initially defined above.

Whereas migrants typically move their domicile to another country voluntarily in order to improve their prospects (cf. Schmitz-Veltin 2014 for a delimitation of the term) even when there are push factors such as poverty or environmental problems, migration is forced in the case of refugees.

These persons are entitled to submit an asylum application because of threats to life and limb in their home countries; such threats can stem from political persecution, torture, (civil) war, terrorism, the death penalty, sexual orientation, rape, epidemics, hunger and natural disasters.

This Position Paper focuses on the local and regional levels and discusses approaches to the social and economic integration (cf. Excursus 2) of those refugees who have the opportunity to live in Germany for at least a few years, i.e. who have prospects of staying. Accordingly, this Position Paper only addresses a certain subset of the numerous questions raised by the admission of relatively large numbers of refugees from different cultural backgrounds over a short time (cf. Excursus 3). Other issues, such as federal government policy, coordinated processes in the European Community, or short-term organisational challenges, are only considered in the context of their consequences for successful local integration. In addition to the territorial authorities at the municipal, regional and state level, private businesses and associations, professional associations and intermediary organisations also assume responsibility in efforts to successfully integrate refugees in local communities. Civil society, whose volunteer potential must be managed responsibly, is also involved.

Excursus 2 – The concept of integration

Integration is the subject of considerable discussion in academic circles (cf. Gans et al. 2014). The traditional approach to integration in Germany (Esser 1980; Esser 2009) sees integration as having four dimensions: acculturation (knowledge about society), placement (the fundamental dimension, becoming established in the housing and labour markets), interaction (integration and also participation in social networks) and identification (sense of belonging). Placement is a prerequisite for the other dimensions, and identification initially plays only a very minor role for refugees. Criticism of this approach is directed at its one-sided view of the new arrivals without sufficient consideration of both support and resistance in the host society. The term integration is also called into question in order to accommodate diverse identities and cultural influences (cf. West 2014), with internationality, hybrid identities and cultures, transnationality and diversity taking its place – also in light of the need to engage in a broad debate on perceptions of urban society and to readjust participation and equal opportunities. However, we consider it justified to speak of integration in this context in order to make clear the importance of footholds in the educational system and the labour and housing markets as core elements of an independent and self-determined life, and because the term resonates with stakeholders.

The considerations that follow are based on research findings (mainly migration research) or are derived from practical experience gained in recent months, in part at a full-day workshop organised by the ARL. Our objective in this Position Paper is to identify challenges and available options in housing, education, infrastructure and the labour market at local and supra-local levels and to address stakeholders at municipal, regional and state levels, as well as associations.

We discuss three aspects of integration policy at the local level in more detail below:

- housing as a major problem for large cities and densely populated areas,
- starting points for a more integration-oriented regional policy in sparsely populated regions,
- particular integration-related social issues that call for innovative solutions with a longer-term focus.

The Position Paper concludes with some recommended actions to address the issues discussed.

Excursus 3 – Facts and figures

The number of refugees arriving in Germany has risen sharply since 2009. In 2015 alone, net migration was 1.2 million people. Though the number of new arrivals has decreased since the closure of the ‘Balkan route’ in the spring of 2016, it is uncertain how the number of asylum seekers in Germany and Europe will change in the future. In 2015, 476,649 asylum applications were filed in Germany (BAMF [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees] 2016: 4), and there were 181,405 from January to March 2016. The largest group of asylum applicants in 2016 came from Syria (88,774 initial applications), followed by Iraq (25,721) and Afghanistan (20,162). The overall recognition rate for 2015 was 49.8 per cent. Of 630,000 refugees in 2015, nearly one-third (178,000) were in the midst of an ongoing process, meaning they had temporary residence permits. Another 198,000 (also nearly one-third) were granted asylum, refugee protection or subsidiary protection. For the remainder, deportation was suspended, i.e. they were granted exceptional leave to remain on the basis of hardship (200,000). In addition, there were 50,000 resettled refugees, i.e. those who cannot remain in the first country they fled to and are admitted to a third-party country, and the remainder were obliged to leave the country (*Robert Bosch Stiftung* 2016: 10). Based on previous experience, the typical time scale for successful integration strategies is at least five to seven years.

1 Housing provision in metropolitan areas

Current studies show that most refugees have a clear regional preference for densely populated areas, primarily in western Germany, where ethnic migrant communities have become established. These communities often have personal kinship networks that, thanks to their extensiveness, play an important role in assimilating and integrating the new arrivals, who also expect that jobs are most likely to be found there.¹

Both refugees and the host society are confronted with the challenge of finding accommodation before the asylum application process can be completed, and before the refugees can attend a language course, find a school for their children, obtain qualifications or arrange for their qualifications to be recognised, and to find work. Most of a refugee’s day is spent in a flat or other accommodation and its immediate socio-spatial environment, where the first contacts between established residents and new arrivals take place and where the foundations are laid for later coexistence. The usually lengthy asylum application processes, the complex legal situation, and the different residence permits with their varying durations and prospects for permanent residence are a crucial problem for both refugees and local communities. The residence permits, which are often of short duration, offer no certainty with respect to vocational training and the labour and housing markets for refugees (and their families) or for the relevant institutions. For municipalities and also for housing construction companies, uncertainties arise with regard to planning and building new housing since it is unclear whether the planned capacity will still be needed after the asylum application processes have been wrapped up and whether subsequent uses are feasible.

¹ After staying in an initial reception centre operated by one of the federal states (since October 2015 for up to six months), refugees are allocated to a municipality. The municipalities have had varying degrees of success in finding acceptable accommodation at reasonable prices (*Robert Bosch Stiftung* 2016: 10). Due to the short time frames for creating housing, every kind of property in the municipalities was being considered from the second half of 2015: tents and containers, vacant barracks, sports halls, former commercial properties and individual rented flats. Qualitative studies have shown the negative effects of accommodation centres on the physical and mental health of their residents. This is largely due to accommodation which is poorly built, with generally inadequate sanitary facilities and cramped conditions without privacy, in remote locations with insufficient infrastructure (*Robert Bosch Stiftung* 2016: 32).

In densely populated areas, it is mainly the core cities that need to make arrangements for a large number of refugees; they will also need to account for this new phenomenon in their urban development strategies. A major challenge in metropolitan areas will thus involve organising an equitable allocation of the refugees between core cities and the surrounding areas, with housing policy potentially playing a significant role. It will be important in this context to use the envisaged housing policy incentives (special depreciation, investment subsidies, etc.) in an appropriately targeted and managed manner, i.e. to provide particular support to the areas surrounding the core cities. Given the low interest rates, the outlook for investments in rental properties is generally favourable, but potential investors must be offered longer-term rental prospects.

Low income is the primary impediment to accessing the housing market, making it nearly impossible for individual refugees to afford rented flats on their own. Language deficits and the bureaucratic processing of rental agreements and other contracts (e.g. for utilities) are also significant obstacles, especially given that rental housing is completely unknown in many countries of origin.

Housing companies, in particular municipal housing associations, have increasingly taken steps to stabilise neighbourhoods in recent years and aim to step up such efforts in light of the influx of refugees (cf. *GdW* 2015). Nevertheless, there is empirical evidence of discrimination, with the consequence that migrants are often only able to find substandard housing at excessive prices. In both urban and local development, spatial segregation processes and cases of fragmentation will demand increased attention.

It is estimated that 400,000 new dwellings will need to be built, of which 80,000 should be reserved for social housing (Federation of Social Housing Associations, including the German Renters' Association [*Deutscher Mieterbund*] 2016). The reform of the Federal Building Code (*Baugesetzbuch, BauGB*) in October 2015 (2014 II) is a major contribution to facilitating the accommodation of refugees as it allows building in non-integrated locations (section 246(10) of the Federal Building Code). However, this raises the issue of the need to avoid the concentration and segregation of refugees. Measures being taken to alleviate the housing shortage in cities include building new housing, making land available for building under favourable terms, reducing construction costs to around €2,000/m², and subsidies, but without abandoning the goal of ecologically and socially sustainable building in integrated locations. Moreover, consideration should be given to which properties scheduled for demolition may be suitable for refugees, especially in the large settlements and old building stock in eastern Germany, but without encouraging segregation. For humanitarian reasons, decentralised accommodation of refugees in normal flats is to be preferred. This applies in particular for especially vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors; the disabled, elderly, infirm or mentally impaired; pregnant women; single parents; families; and victims of torture, robbery and rape. However, due to the large number of new arrivals within a short time in 2015 and early 2016, the share of those being housed in community facilities (which are also being used for longer than is desired) has increased. Decentralised housing prevents concentration, segregation effects, and possibly also attacks on refugees, and it promotes acceptance among the residents of the neighbourhoods where the refugees are housed.

Particular attention should be given to the traditional industrial cities that were once dominated by industries such as mining, shipbuilding or textiles and are now undergoing profound structural change. As a rule, these cities are scarcely involved in current reurbanisation processes and have been witnessing a continuous population decrease for many years, accompanied by high housing vacancy rates. It is precisely these housing stocks that could be suitable for occupancy by refugees since the urban infrastructure in these cities is essentially functional, though its viability is threatened. Moreover, these cities also have extensive experience with social integration and interactions with different cultures due to previous immigration (e.g. 'guest workers'). Existing

structural policy approaches and support strategies for training the labour force and improving social integration would need to be enhanced but not completely relaunched. Such cities in the northern Ruhr area that are under consideration in this regard also have good transport links to the centres of dynamic labour markets in relative proximity.

For all the advantages cities of the type described above have for the integration of refugees, it is of course essential to avoid both pronounced spatial segregation and competition with poorly qualified and often unemployed segments of the local population. For the aforementioned reasons, these cities need supportive strategies that aid them in adequately exploiting the advantages of existing low-priced housing in otherwise vacant stocks in municipalities with extensive integration experience.

2 Towards a more integration-oriented regional policy in sparsely populated regions

In the context of the regional objective of evening out imbalances, one could ask to what extent the refugees and the additional resources the federal and state governments will in any case have to muster for integration can be purposefully put to use to provide, at least to some degree, new prospects for development in rural regions with decreasing populations. If successful, this would tend to increase the degree to which balancing policies achieve their goals while also reducing the high influx of refugees into the densely populated areas. Moreover, the insights gained can lead to general reconsideration of the regional balancing policy measures used thus far because migrants have long-term potential that should be better taken into account in a regional policy focused on correcting imbalances. Perhaps less densely populated areas even offer better conditions for the rapid and effective long-term integration for some of the arriving refugees? In combination with appropriate refinement of the measures, the expenses that would in any event be incurred for an integration policy could be particularly worthwhile.

It should firstly be noted that the less densely populated areas in Germany are themselves not homogeneous. Accordingly, assessments of the outlook for successful integration are likely to differ according to the existing situation in each region. In addition, the total number of refugees who come into question is certainly not sufficient to bring about a sweeping turnaround in spatial trends in the Federal Republic of Germany. Nevertheless, in the context of the desired integration of refugees and the funding that will have to be provided for that purpose, it appears worthwhile to look for new regional policy approaches as over time they could enable the development of a new strategy combining migration policy and regional policy.

Providing housing is not of primary importance in less densely populated areas, where new construction is less of a priority than conversion and structural upgrades of vacant residential properties. In principle, the same housing policy incentive instruments can be considered as in the cities, with the difference that the purpose of the incentives needs to be more strongly focused on conversion and structural upgrades. Given the more fragmented ownership structure, additional informational and motivational instruments need to be developed and implemented.

Key strategic factors for the successful integration of refugees in less densely populated areas include:

- creating jobs and/or integrating the refugees in the labour market or, more generally, establishing a self-sustaining economic base;
- developing educational and social infrastructure that meets local needs.

These two strategic factors are not mutually independent; the latter factor is a prerequisite for effective labour market policies.

Based on currently available information, it can be assumed that approximately 8 to 10 per cent of the refugees are university graduates. There is reason to expect that most of them will seek and find work in the densely populated regions. In contrast, the vast majority of working-age refugees has a very low level of education compared with local labour market requirements. Surveys by the *IAB* (Institute for Employment Research) indicate that up to 80 per cent of refugees who are able to work have not completed any kind of vocational training (though it should be noted that the dual education system familiar to us is a special feature of Germany but was used as an indicator) (*IAB* 2015: 5); they often lack a relevant educational background.

This is the main group that must be kept in mind in discussions about admitting and integrating refugees in less densely populated regions. In this respect, an appropriately designed and broad-based educational programme that is available nearby is crucially important and must not be neglected. All segments of the education sector – language courses, school, vocational preparation and training – need to be involved, along with the associated social integration opportunities.

From a financing and capacity utilisation point of view, such a programme can probably be implemented best in the central places, which would then take on a special role – at present against the backdrop of the refugee situation, and possibly in the longer term as part of an active migration policy, to the extent that such a policy is to be developed further as part of a regional policy for evening out imbalances. The focus in this case is on the middle-order centres, though relevant infrastructure also needs to be maintained or expanded in the lower-order centres as well. From a vocational perspective, training and continuing education are likely to be aimed primarily at the trades and the small business sector, especially since, according to the findings of the KfW Group, migrants tend to start more businesses than would be expected given their share of the total population (cf. *KfW* 2016). The aim in this regard should be an approach that is tightly coordinated, especially with the chambers of trades, which is recommended as part of a regional (i.e. ‘bottom-up’) management structure that can best take into account the particular concerns in each locale (see below). These initiatives would need to be supported with a minimum of bureaucracy, for example when hiring refugees or placing them in training programmes where temporary protection against deportation needs to be granted.

Linking integration policy and regional balancing policy can be more successful if it is accompanied by a realignment of regional policy measures, thereby creating additional potential for jobs. Two perspectives need closer consideration in this context: firstly, the fact that the refugees and migrants retain international networks and have international experience and special professional skills, and secondly, increased attention to the integration of family groups and the diverse needs this implies. A realignment will mainly involve selectively strengthening regional economic cycles with the aim of exploiting the new potential demand and creating additional markets, thus increasing local creation of value. Increased aid for business start-ups could be used in this context, for example. The opportunities that SMEs and refugee-founded businesses provide for sparsely populated regions could be more actively supported and interconnected. The extent to which specific infrastructure for older people could be located and developed in the larger centres of these regions, if a suitable workforce is available locally, should be considered. The siting of and purchasing policies for public institutions could also be reconsidered; for example, decentralised sites for educational institutions or relocations of public authorities are conceivable. This Position Paper on migration and spatial development can only name some examples of starting points for such a realigned regional policy strategy; if needed, a corresponding strategy could be drawn up and dovetailed with rural development measures such as ILEK and LEADER (cf. *ARGE Landentwicklung* [Land Development Working Group] 2016).

It should not be overlooked that in exactly the sparsely populated types of area mentioned above, the unemployment rate remains relatively high in some regions. As a result, competition in the labour market segment under discussion could increase, with a risk of rising social frustration costs and possibly even negative wage effects (cf. Dustmann 2016). In this respect, cautious political support for such an approach is advisable, as is the extension of the integration strategies to the various groups of people in comparable social situations in the region, and the involvement of all affected local groups in strategic and operational activities.

In order to prepare the eligible groups among the refugees for the challenges of working life, personal coaching is advisable in addition to the indispensable language courses, and measures to strengthen employment should be more flexible with individualised fine-tuning focused on personal development potential. This means information needs to be collected about the practical skills of individuals, which in some cases can be more important than formal qualifications, and the various legal situations for taking up work must also be considered. Particular attention should be devoted to very young refugees, who receive support through youth welfare measures but also need intensive continued assistance beyond the age of 18 (cf. IAB 2015). Integrating female refugees into the labour market also poses a special challenge, mainly due to traditional gender roles and a lack of professional qualifications.

Public and private assistance measures for the integration of refugees, particularly when they involve investment, need medium-term prospects so that they can be justified politically and economically. The recently adopted allocation of refugees to places of residence, which figured in migration policy in the past and is linked to the granting of social benefits, can only contribute to successful integration if housing, jobs and education are available. These resources must be accompanied by adequate transport services and social openness where the refugees are settled. If these requirements are met, residence allocation will temporarily ensure the required utilisation of the infrastructure to be created while encouraging investment. However, it still offers a degree of regional flexibility by allowing a change of location if a job and housing are available in another region. Relevant regional limits for such residence allocations must be reviewed carefully; in principle they can be linked to cities, districts, government regions or, in some cases, even the federal states.²

Local measures needed for integration must be financed primarily by additional funding from the Federal Government and the federal states since such measures primarily benefit society as a whole and locally available funding to provide the services would vary widely. If local funding were to prove insufficient, this would run counter to requirements to ensure equivalent living conditions. In this respect, the costs associated with integration must be regularly assessed at all levels of our federal system. An intergovernmental burden-sharing system must be established and regularly reviewed. Current proposals, for example that the Federal Government and the federal states establish and pay into a fund from which local authorities and districts could request and receive grants depending on their financial burdens, are to be welcomed. A similar model has also been proposed for the European level; the advantage is that it could be established relatively quickly and that local authorities that demonstrate an above-average commitment to receiving refugees would receive above-average financial compensation. In addition, elements of a horizontal redistribution within the fiscal equalisation system at the level of the local authorities could be established; the necessary funds would need to be raised by the individual federal states on the one hand (vertical effect) and on the other, it could ensure the desired flow of funds horizontally through suitable additional transfers of funds or specific grants based on the individual burdens of each local authority. However, fiscal equalisation at the level of the local authorities is admittedly a complex financing system and changing it would involve considerable frustration and resistance in the political sphere.

2 As an instrument of regulatory law in spatial planning and because of its impact on integration, residence allocation is the subject of controversial discussion (cf. Knieling/Dehne 2016).

As mentioned above, the central-place theory should be given greater importance among the instruments of spatial planning. In middle-order centres in particular, the required utilisation of the infrastructure to be developed and the expansion of existing facilities are achievable, especially when satisfactory public transport connections are ensured.

Increased use – especially by working people – would provide an additional argument in favour of maintaining and even expanding public transport in rural areas.

Another spatial planning instrument could be a coordinating management body established at the municipal or regional level through which the diverse sectoral integration policy measures would be coordinated among various public, semi-public and private institutions (adult education centres, employment agencies, social welfare offices, vocational schools, state ministries and regional governments, etc.). Each of these institutions has gathered its own special experience and has developed its own innovative strategies, but there is a lack of coordination among the institutions, resulting in duplication of effort and a failure to exploit synergies. The civic engagement of action groups and other (informal) groups should also be included in the coordination mandate. Such a regional management body would need the ability to exert influence during the strategy development phase and would also need political backing. It should also be provided with its own financial resources for project funding so that it can lend weight to the coordination efforts.

3 Social aspects of integration

As with the other current tasks that arose with the arrival of the refugees, apart from the availability of affordable housing, there are no fundamentally new problems, but rather an exacerbation and transformation of existing problems such as segregation, deserted spaces, high rents or inadequate living standards. As a result, the mood in the populace is mixed, ranging from a welcoming culture and helpfulness to envy and rejection.

According to a study conducted by the Allensbach Institute (*Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, IfD*), foreigners are perceived by 71 per cent of the population as insufficiently integrated (as of 2014), and responsibility for this is generally perceived to lie with the foreigners themselves rather than with the host country, Germany (cf. IfD 2014: 28, 30). Growing xenophobia, directed not only at refugees but also at aid workers and politicians, is a huge social problem. Recently published figures³ from the Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt, BKA*) make it clear that this issue needs to be addressed in connection with planning for refugee accommodation and living conditions. Political institutions at all spatial levels need to take a clear stance against structural discrimination, everyday racism and any form of violence. Training in intercultural skills, languages, religions and legal issues should also be part of the infrastructure to be developed.

Germany's new integration legislation emphasises restrictions (residence allocation, suspension of benefits, approval requirements); it becomes an obstacle to speedy integration when opportunities for networking, education and social activities are impeded. There is a risk that frustration and resignation of refugees will increase and missed chances for integration will lead to considerably higher future costs (social benefits, lost taxes and social security contributions). The social consensus to help the vulnerable can swiftly turn to resistance and obstruction if integration in the education and labour markets is unsuccessful. To help make integration efforts successful and reduce or avoid possible social frustration costs, it would be helpful to use

3 Cf. the reporting on the issue in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 28 April 2016: 'Bundeskriminalamt spricht von "Klima der Angst" in Deutschland' (Federal Criminal Police Office speaks of a "climate of fear" in Germany).

arguments about the immediate benefits such as investment and increased purchasing power with demand in the trades and the retail and construction sectors. Also, the medium- and long-term opportunities and benefits such as a growing workforce and increased social security contributions should be more forcefully emphasised, but the start-up costs should not be concealed either. Historical episodes of the successful admission and integration of large numbers of refugees and migrants should also be mentioned.

Given the inequalities that already exist in Germany, particularly in its educational system, social integration now urgently needs a review of existing structures with regard to their accessibility and permeability. What is needed are innovative, longer-term solutions that help to reduce inequalities and make existing structures more flexible in light of changing requirements. For example, social workers should support refugees of all ages in key transitions, especially those in relation to education, and the supervision of refugees should be standardised across departments and territorial jurisdictions. A pragmatic approach and a solutions-oriented perspective are needed, such as shortened vocational training for refugees or schooling beyond compulsory education instead of the usual highly formalised rules and requirements. This requires raising awareness of the refugees' personal and professional skills and improving how such skills are assessed, as this has thus far been difficult using our logic of formal qualifications. From an integration perspective, personal advisory services for a refugee's current living situation and coaching to introduce social and work-related norms and improve intercultural skills are key services. Experience from various municipalities shows that focusing on the family as the smallest social unit is of crucial importance, so what is needed is coaching that takes the overall family situation into consideration. This in turn requires improved cooperation between stakeholders in the educational and work sectors. Also, complicated and very formal administrative language is often an unnecessary obstacle.

Mutual tolerance, openness and civil manners are called for in our diverse and globally interconnected society so that refugees and other migrants can participate in social and cultural life. Typical everyday life for refugees initially consists of eating, sleeping, meeting friends, watching TV, taking walks, doing shopping, doing individual (not club) sports, visits to the immigration office, playing cards, etc. and effectively amounts to enforced orders to just 'hang around' (cf. Robert Bosch Stiftung 2016: 39). Opportunities for contact are most likely to occur in community facilities and are supported in part by the housing sector in cities. Smaller municipalities often have community centres and meeting places; the meetings and activities that take place there should be opened to refugees. Arranging for accommodations and long-term housing should be part of a socio-spatial strategy that promotes decentralised accommodation (cf. Köhnke 2016). Providing housing in unintegrated settings can be only a temporary solution at best. Mediators can assist in neighbourhood integration and in conflict resolution between people in refugee housing or with neighbours.

A key approach for successful integration is to encourage refugees to show initiative and get involved locally; private initiatives often play a very important role here. Municipalities have had good experiences with the increased involvement of volunteers in refugee neighbourhoods and a wide variety of integration opportunities in the community and the local labour market (cf. Hollstein 2016). These efforts have to go hand in hand with the local activation and coordination of opportunities for integration into civil society. Prospects for medium- to long-term financing and staffing should be established for structures to coordinate the activities (cf. ARGE Landentwicklung 2016).

Outstanding examples of successful integration should be publicised regularly (e.g. the *Menschen und Erfolge* contest for integrating migrants in small municipalities, BMUB [Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Construction and Nuclear Safety] 2016).

A perspective aimed at socialisation, i.e. the integration of new arrivals into society, requires a nuanced view of refugees as people with their own backgrounds and experiences. Immigration also confronts the host society with fundamental questions about its own workings and self-image and how it deals with plurality; the latter should be the subject of a systematic and constructive public discussion.

‘One way of looking is also a way of overlooking’ (Burke 1954: 40, cited in Yildiz 2013: 20), i.e. merely focusing on the integration of refugees also limits one’s perspectives and excludes many aspects of our social development, shared problems, and opportunities for refugees. According to Yildiz, it might therefore be better to speak of socialisation instead of integration. In particular, the role of the media and the images conveyed by language have a strong influence on how the issue is perceived; terms such as ‘waves’, ‘floods’ and ‘crises’ foment prejudices and fears and lead people to forget that refugees are also people with their own stories, desires and values.

4 Recommended actions from a spatial planning perspective

The high influx of refugees has dominated both public and political discussions in recent months. In particular, promising strategies for integration policy at the local level are being sought. From a spatial planning perspective, the following can be seen as key strategic factors for a successful integration policy:

- creating jobs and a self-sustaining economic base
- providing required housing
- overcoming social barriers by activating and fostering the potential of civil society and improving local governance with cross-sectional and decentralised management.

Against this backdrop, the following key actions are recommended:

1. **Drive the creation of housing in densely populated areas with intermunicipal cooperation**

In order to create the required amount of housing in densely populated areas, a more balanced allocation of refugees between core cities and their surrounding areas should be pursued using small-scale steering instruments.

2. **Create housing options that facilitate integration**

When housing is being developed, accessibility for refugees must be improved while preventing their concentration and segregation. Affordable housing should be created while taking socio-spatial approaches and quality standards into consideration. More opportunities to earn a living and develop self-reliance in proximity to their accommodation need to be included in planning, which includes creating and maintaining environments that offer the benefits of an urban setting. Municipal housing associations are key stakeholders in this regard.

3. **Expand job opportunities in peripheral areas**

Integration measures should focus more on sparsely populated areas than they have in the past since the chances for social integration and the conditions for creating an economic base for refugees to become financially self-reliant appear good there, and also to relieve the metropolitan areas. More flexible and personalised measures to strengthen employment and aid for business start-ups that is adapted to the special qualifications and needs of refugees will be very important for better integration of refugees in the labour market.

4. **Strengthen suitable infrastructure in the middle-order centres**

Success strongly depends on well-developed and adapted (further) education programmes. From the point of view of capacity utilisation and return on investment, it is best to concentrate such programmes in the middle-order centres which are easier to oversee and where a good range of programmes can be offered. This underscores the fundamental requirement of regional balancing policy to ensure acceptable accessibility through appropriate organisation and pricing of local public transport.

5. **Finance extra migration-related costs for municipalities separately**

With increasing integration concerns, the central-place theory will take on a new function and can be financed by a special fund established by the federal and state governments and possibly also by means of topping up (vertical aspect) and by horizontal distribution arrangements (additional transfers of funds, specific grants, etc.) in the system for fiscal equalisation at the level of local authorities.

6. **Interdepartmental coordination of integration measures at local and regional levels**

Local coordination of the diverse integration measures by a special decentralised regional management body with staff function is advisable. This regional management body must be able to effectively coordinate the different measures of the various public, semi-public and private institutions, exploiting synergies while avoiding conflicts. Having discretion over its own financial resources could be useful, especially to stimulate joint projects.

7. **Review the effectiveness of residence allocations**

Excessive demands on local authorities must be taken seriously. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to tie the residence requirement to the availability of jobs, social services, adequate housing, and qualified staff with cultural awareness. The effects of this will need to be reviewed.

8. **Encourage refugees to show initiative**

A key approach for successful integration is to encourage refugees to show initiative and get involved locally. Prospects for medium- to long-term financing and staffing should be established for structures to coordinate the activities.

9. **Support key transitions**

In the educational sector in particular, refugees of all ages should receive support that is standardised across departments and territorial jurisdictions. The accessibility and permeability of existing arrangements should be reviewed and innovative, longer-term solutions developed.

10. **Encourage relevant research**

Academic institutions should swiftly launch research projects and long-term studies to provide decision makers with new findings that are as applicable in practice as possible. Above all, this requires rapid and extensive improvement of the available data. Research should be trans- and interdisciplinary and concentrated in existing networks.

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