

Refugees on their way into training – what support do they want?

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The integration of refugees in training is currently one of the key socio-political challenges facing Germany. But how successful has this been so far? In the 2016 migration study, which was conducted by the BIBB in cooperation with the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA) [Federal Employment Agency], around 1,600 vocational education and training (VET) applicants from a refugee background were surveyed about their current situation and on their views and opinions. The results highlight the problems perceived by refugees on their way into training and the areas in which they would like to have support.

Current situation of refugees

Of the applicants surveyed who fled to Germany from one of the non-European asylum access countries, around one third stated that, at the time of the survey, they were in vocational training leading to a full qualification or taking

a degree (vocational training in the dual system: 30%, full-time school-based training: 2%, degree: 1%). Almost one quarter of respondents completed a partly-qualifying activity at the end of 2016/start of 2017 (introductory training: 8%, placement: 3%, other transitional activity such as pre-vocational training year: 12%). A further 16 per cent were on a German course or integration course and four per cent were attending general education schools. Around one in every five had not yet succeeded in entering the German education and training system: ten per cent of respondents stated at the time of the survey that they were working or doing casual work and a further eleven per cent were unemployed.

Refugee support needs

In which areas would the refugees surveyed have required greater support? What type of support are those refugees in particular, who are yet to make a successful transition into training, asking for? In order to address this question, respondents were shown a series of items which had proven to be relevant in preliminary discussions with careers advisers and refugees. Respondents were asked to tick all support requirements which applied to them and to openly specify any further aspects.

Virtually all respondents (91%), regardless of whether they had been successful in finding a training place or not, stated that they needed more help. According to their statements, the most urgent need for support was in learning the German language. Even though, being registered as applicants, they are officially deemed to have "training maturity" and therefore to have sufficient knowledge of German, almost 50 per cent expressed the need for more support in this area. Of those refugees who had successfully entered training leading to a full qualification or were taking degree, 44 per cent would still have liked this support.

Significant differences are evident in terms of access to information and making contact with companies between

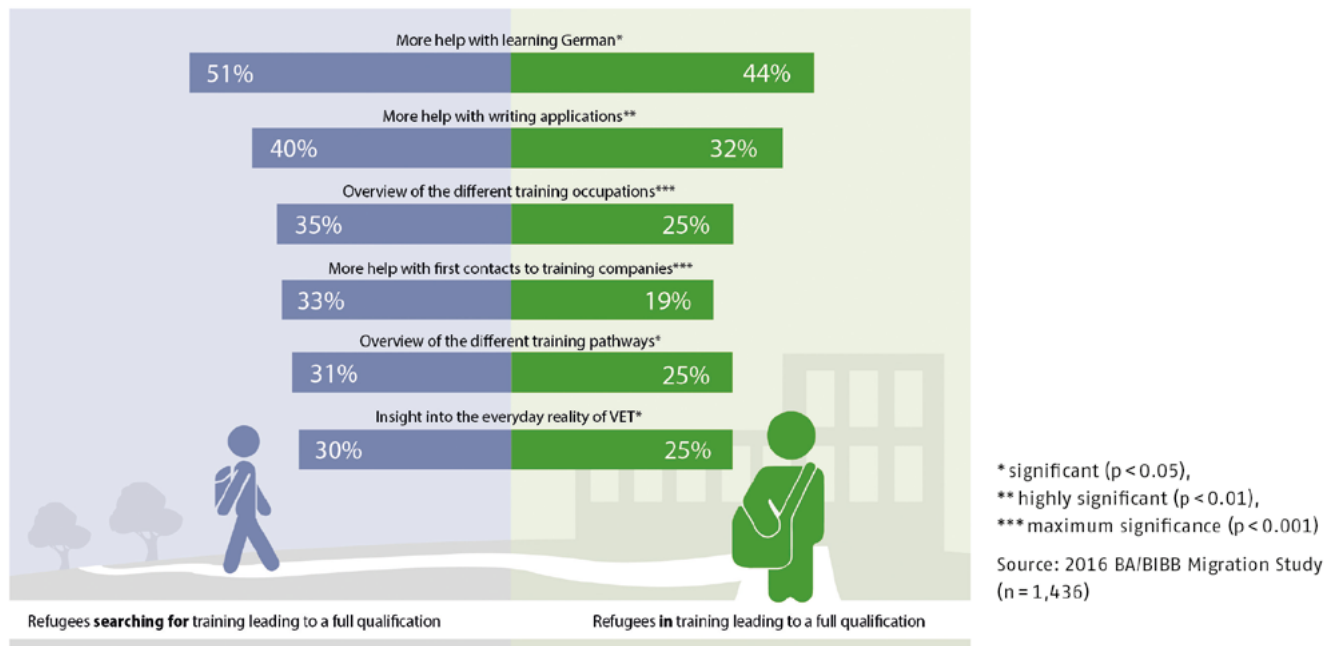
BA/BIBB-migration study 2016

In cooperation with the BA, BIBB conducted a written, postal survey of applicants from a migration or refugee background registered with the BA. The population comprised 65,445 young people and young adults without German citizenship who had been registered for training or continuing education in the reporting year 2015/16. By means of a disproportionate sampling approach, particular consideration was given to individuals who were nationals of the asylum access countries. Self-reporting of country of birth and of the asylum applications submitted made it possible to differentiate between people with and without experience of migration and with and without a refugee background. The following analyses only consider refugees from non-European asylum access countries (Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria).

Detailed information about the study is available at: www.bibb.de/de/59586.php (retrieved: 07.09.2017)

Figure

Support requirements on the way into training



those who have successfully entered training leading to a full qualification or are taking a degree, and those who have not yet succeeded in making this transition. In each case, around one third of applicants who had not yet been successful stated that they needed a better overview of the various training pathways and training occupations, insight into the everyday reality of vocational education and training, and more help when making initial contact with training companies. 40 per cent of those who had not yet entered training leading to a full qualification or enrolled on a degree would like help with writing applications. The proportion of applicants who have successfully entered training or study and who saw this as relevant was significantly less but was still between 19 per cent and 32 per cent (cf. Figure).

Regardless of their success in searching for a training position, around one quarter of refugees would also have liked more school-based preparation and an overview of financial support. Revealing feedback was provided by around one third of respondents who stated they required more help from authorities or in dealing with authorities. The open responses provide more specific insights in this regard.

Greater support required with everyday organisation

Around a total of 140 individuals made use of the opportunity to openly specify additional support requirements. The information indicates that the search for a training position is not always the most pressing concern but that ini-

tially there is a much greater need for support with everyday organisation and integration in Germany. For example, a noticeably large amount express the desire for greater help with finding language courses, when searching for accommodation and childcare, when corresponding with authorities, and with the asylum procedure in general.

It therefore seems important that young refugees are supported early and in a way that is appropriate for the individual concerned, in order to ensure the conditions are in place which allow them to actively search for a training position. For individuals in particular who have not been in Germany for so long, help is required both for everyday practical matters (for example searching for accommodation) and in terms of helping them to understand and find their way in the German training system. Proven regulatory instruments are an important basis for vocational guidance and contacting companies, however they need to be adapted to the specific requirements of this target group. Ongoing language support is particularly important in this respect.

The analyses presented show that the commencement of training does not mean the integration process is complete. Even those refugees who have successfully made the transition into training continue to express the need for support. Proven instruments such as assisted training or training support measures should therefore be increasingly used because they facilitate individual support for young people and for companies. ◀