

# **Social Diversity, Migration and Social Innovation: A New Vision of Society Constructed by Grassroots Movements in Germany**

Ewa Bacia

*Technische Universität Berlin*

ewa.m.bacia@gmail.com

[https://www.paedpsy.tu-berlin.de/menue/ueber\\_uns/team/wissenschaftliche\\_mitarbeitende/dr\\_ewa\\_bacia/](https://www.paedpsy.tu-berlin.de/menue/ueber_uns/team/wissenschaftliche_mitarbeitende/dr_ewa_bacia/)

## **Keywords**

*social diversity, inclusion, post-migrant society, social innovation, Germany, grassroots movements*

## **Abstract**

This article analyses inclusion activities directed at migrants and refugees undertaken by members of German civic society. The context for analysis is a debate linking social inclusion and post-migrant society with the concept of social integration. The article provides examples of actions that take the form of social innovation. These examples highlight a change in the German vision of society. Hierarchical social systems in which incomers needed to adjust to existing conditions are increasingly being replaced by horizontal, open structures. Their common denominator is an acceptance of social diversity, horizontal, communication and mutual exchange.

## **German Synopsis**

Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit den zivilgesellschaftlichen Aktivitäten, die auf die Inklusion von Migrantinnen, Migranten und Geflüchteten in Deutschland abzielen. Die Analyse wird im Kontext der aktuellen sozial- und bildungswissenschaftlichen Debatten über Inklusion und postmigrantische Gesellschaft geführt. Wenn Heterogenität, gesteigert durch Mobilität und Migration, zur gesellschaftlichen Normalität wird (vgl. Bade und Oltmer, 2004; Vertovec, 2007), verändern sich soziale Strukturen, worauf die Gesellschaft schnell reagiert. Bürgerinnen und Bürger initiieren Programme, individuell, in kleinen Gruppen, formell oder informell, die nicht nur an Migrantinnen und Migranten gerichtet sind, sondern an die ganze Gesellschaft, die sich als offene Gesellschaft verwandelt und postmigrantische Strukturen entwickelt (Foroutan, 2015). Neue Rahmenbedingungen schaffen soziale Herausforderungen, die zu sozialen Innovationen führen. In diesem Beitrag werden Beispiele von sozialen Innovationen präsentiert, die eine neue Vision der Gesellschaft vorstellen. Hierarchische Ordnungen, in denen sich die Migrantinnen und Migranten an die bestehenden Strukturen anpassen mussten, werden immer häufiger durch horizontale, offene Strukturen ersetzt. Ihr gemeinsamer Nenner ist die Anerkennung der sozialen Heterogenität (*Diversity*), die horizontale Kommunikation und der gegenseitige Austausch. Die sozialen Innovationen, die in diesem Beitrag präsentiert werden, zeigen, dass die soziale Integration in einer postmigrantischen Gesellschaft als offener, inklusiver Prozess durchgeführt werden kann. Es ist bekannt, dass zur pluralistischen deutschen Gesellschaft nicht nur auf Inklusion eingestellte Gruppen gehören, sondern auch Bewegungen, die sich gegen Migrantinnen und Migranten wenden. Die sozialen Innovationen, die auf offenen, demokratischen Strukturen beruhen, sind jedoch in Deutschland so stark sichtbar, dass sie hier als Analysegegenstand aus bildungswissenschaftlicher Perspektive betrachtet werden.

It is estimated that in 2015, net migration was positive in Germany, amounting to around 1.1 million people (<https://www.destatis.de>). Determining the exact number is impossible as the scale and type of migration to the Federal Republic of Germany has reached an unprecedented level. Asylum applications are filed mainly by refugees from Syria, Albania, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. The majority of asylum applicants are young people under the age of 40. Children and young people under the age of 15 are the largest group. Two out of three incomers are male (<http://www.bamf.de>). A majority of the incomers does not speak German and does not have the competence required to integrate socially or vocationally into their new condition and circumstances. The existing situation presents a huge challenge not only to German state institutions and existing social structures; it also requires a shift in the perspective towards migration policy and presents new challenges to civic society. Moreover, it forces reflection on a new vision of civic society. In Germany, as in other European countries, animated debates have been taking place regarding the issue of refugees and their prospects of successful integration. Some German citizens adamantly reject Chancellor Angela Merkel's policy of taking in refugees. Strong anti-immigrant and nationalist leanings are observed in the environment connected with the PEGIDA movement, whose aim it is to combat the Islamisation of Germany. At the same time, grassroots civic movements which advocate a new approach to migration, social diversity and social integration are also very strong.

The migration phenomenon in Germany is not new; what *is* new is the scale and the pace of the influx of incomers. While the theme of refugees is a worldwide political issue, Germany is the European country that accepts the highest number of refugees. Here, migrant policy has been a key issue influencing the country's functioning for some time. For years, migrants have been co-creating German society. In 2014, 16.4 million people from migrant families were living in Germany, making up 20.3% of the country's population (<https://www.destatis.de>). A majority of these people (56%) had German citizenship. Between 2011 and 2014, the number of people with migrant origins increased by 1.5 million. One in three German children is raised in a family where at least one parent comes from a different country. In cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, the ratio of these families amounts to 46%. Migration experiences and social mobility are nothing special in Germany—on the contrary, they are a normal state of being.

This article analyses inclusion activities undertaken by members of civic society in Germany towards migrants and refugees. The context for analysis is a debate linking social inclusion and

post-migrant society with the concept of social integration as it is currently held among social researchers in Germany. The article offers examples of actions that take the form of social innovation. These examples highlight a change in the German vision of society. Structures of a more open nature, whose common denominator is an acknowledgement of the social diversity of citizens, are being formed at a grassroots level. This process is supported by the development of horizontal communication and by enhancing social interactions. At the same time, we observe a decline of the hierarchical social systems in which incomers needed to adjust to existing conditions.

The emergence of open social structures stands in contrast with the presence of anti-immigrant, nationalist movements, such as the PEGIDA association. These movements are developing in a parallel manner, inspired by a highly different system of values. It would be difficult to expect members of the PEGIDA association to acknowledge that social diversity is a positive social factor and to support the formation and enhancement of structures based on diversity. However, the social actions that support and develop open structures in Germany are strong and visible enough to merit an in-depth analysis, which will be the focus of this work.

## **Integration in a post-migrant society**

For years, the concept of integration has been a key word in the German migration debate in its political, vocational and social dimensions. Debates regarding the integration of refugees who may hail from cultures that are very different to the German one have been taking place both in politics and society. While many politicians call for more extensive integration actions, others claim that integration is impossible because of various cultural differences and differing levels of education.

In the summer of 2016, the German Parliament passed the integration law (<https://www.bundesregierung.de>). This provides refugees with quicker access to language and integration courses and facilitates their entry into the labour market. Hence, politics defines integration in the context of education and work, both of which are intended to enable migrants to become part of German society.

German social scientists who explore issues of integration and migration criticise such a limited approach to the topic of integration. Professor Naika Foroutan of the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research labelled the integration law *Lex Refugee*—that is, a law regulating actions towards refugees, which is not equivalent to an integration law. Moreover,

she alleges that the legislator unduly (i.e., irrelevantly to the contemporary situation) limits integration to migrants' problems (<http://www.wissenschaft-im-dialog.de>). This conceptualisation was shaped in Germany in the 1970s, when there was a very strong distinction between incomers ('foreign ones') and the host society, which was stable and perceived its task largely in terms of integrating migrants—that is, teaching and adjusting them to living in the existing conditions in the host country. In this view, migrants are considered a foreign element which should be shaped and changed in order to fit in with the majority. Integration is then a coordinated process designed to facilitate the achievement of this outcome efficiently. Based on such a definition, we focus on migrants' individual traits which prove their level of maladjustment with the dominant society. If integration is unsuccessful, the reasons for the lack of success are sought in migrants' individual and cultural profiles.

Naika Foroutan points out a mistake in this mode of thinking. The current German society, as the author argues, is a post-migrant one. The 'post-' prefix does not indicate the end of migration but refers instead to processes of social change taking place as a result of intensified levels of migration. Post-migrant societies are societies where (Foroutan 2015):

- due to social changes, diversity is politically acknowledged as a distinctive feature of the social structure. The statement that 'Germany is a country of immigration' pronounces a fact which cannot be called into question, regardless of one's positive or negative attitude towards it;
- migration is assumed to be a phenomenon that significantly influences the shape of society and, as such, is the subject of debates, discussions, and regulations in numerous domains of social life;
- social structures, institutions, and culture are gradually shaped and adjusted to the realities of post-migrant society. On the one hand, this promotes an increasing availability of structures and enhanced social advancement. On the other hand, it brings about reactions of opposition as well as attempts to protect the previous structures.

One in three German citizens has migrant origins. Although migrants' identity has been partly shaped in a different culture, many migrants possess German citizenship and feel German. In 2012, three journalists proposed labelling this group 'the new Germans' instead of 'migrants' (Bota, Pham, Topçu 2012).

At the beginning of 2015, the first Congress of New German Organisations (Bundeskongress Neuer Deutscher Organisationen) took place in Berlin. 'We are German and

we want to co-decide' was the message that its participants formulated (<http://neue-deutsche-organisationen.de>). People originating from immigrant families become politicians, journalists and doctors; however, their participation in these vocational groups is less common than that of people originating from families with no migrant past.

Eradicating this underrepresentation requires extending the concept of integration so that reasons for the existing state of affairs are attributed not only to people with a migrant past but also to social structures. In post-migrant times, the whole society changes, requiring the elites to open up to new social groups that sometimes represent different cultures and values. In this way, cultural systems are subject to slow change.

According to the new social model, integration is not only an instrument for differentiation and exclusion, as a part of which the incomers—the 'others'—are contrasted with the German majority. In the new approach to society, 'integration' means that sharing in the social goods has been secured for all people who live in a given society, irrespective of their social or ethnic background (Georgi 2015, p. 10). Therefore, integration is based on participation; equal access to the labour market, education, and healthcare system; and legal and social protection. Its success depends on both parties' openness to change because integration is a dynamic process concerning every individual who lives in a society that hosts migrants. Accepting such a viewpoint opens up the possibility to shape a social reality which ensures benefits for all parties involved (<http://www.wissenschaft-im-dialog.de>).

## **From integration through social diversity to inclusion**

When migration and mobility are treated as a normal state of affairs (Bade, Oltmer 2004), migration policy becomes a social policy that is important for the whole of society. The post-migrant society is at least as diverse as the migrant one, which should be analysed along numerous dimensions, such as: the reasons for migration; a migrant's legal status, religious affiliation, age, education and vocational qualifications; or relationships with their country of origin. Ethnic characteristics are only one element of the heterogeneity within migrant groups, in the same way that ethno-cultural identity is merely one aspect of the 'multidimensional diversity' of Germany as the host society (Vertovec 2007). In a diverse society, attempts to organise reality along the lines of the distinction between 'ethnic majority–migrants' become pointless. In the face of the enhanced phenomenon of transnational bios, common mobility, or the recent refugee wave, an understanding of integration that is restricted to thinking in national terms becomes irrelevant to reality (Riegel 2009).

In 2004, the Board for Migration proposed a definition of integration which was later adopted by the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration:

Integration is a measurable participation of people with and without migration experiences in the main domains of social life, such as pre-school education, school and vocational education, access to the labour market, to legal assistance and social security, as well as participation in the political life (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration 2010, p. 13).

In line with this definition, it is difficult to deal with integration in all domains. Integration actions carried out by a given institution or organisation are usually focused on integration in one or two domains of social life, or they focus on the recipients' particular characteristics, for example vocational competences, age or sexual orientation.

This is where the concept of integration meets the concept of social diversity. The English concept of *diversity* refers to various overlapping levels of belonging to diverse groups in terms of characteristics such as gender, ethnic and religious affiliation, citizenship, sexual orientation, physical and mental health, social background, and age. Pluralistic identities and belonging to numerous coexisting groups are a natural phenomenon from the perspective of *diversity*. The very concept of *diversity* has positive connotations; it is imbued with respect for the pluralism of models and life situations that treats diversity as a resource for society (Georgi 2015, p. 11).

The term 'diversity' combines integration as previously defined with the concept of inclusion, which—similarly to the concept of integration—initially possessed a very narrow meaning. Following the adoption of the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Journal of Laws 2012, Item 1169) in 2006, debates on inclusion took place mostly with reference to people with disabilities. However, inclusion is, as a matter of fact, each individuals' human right; hence, it is not limited to the issue of disability. Conceptualised more broadly, inclusion means eradicating barriers and forms of excluding people who find themselves in different starting positions depending on individual differences that result from social diversity. An individual's social starting position may, for example, depend on their socioeconomic status, ethnic background, or sexual orientation (Georgi 2015, p. 12).

The aim of inclusion is to form social structures and to bring about a legal state in which the discrimination between starting points is eliminated and participation is enabled. The concept of inclusion also entails acceptance and acknowledgement of, and appreciation for, social diversity. The starting point and driving force for inclusive actions are individuals' needs

and their participation in various spheres of societal life. Hence, the central point is not connected with the people and groups who are to be integrated with the majority, but rather with structural and institutional changes in important domains of social life. In order to enable participation and self-determination on the individual's part, these structures need to be opened up and become sensitive to diversity (Merx 2013). Inclusion requires the state to be active and to adjust its structures and legal system so that each individual gains the chance to participate. Inclusive policy means shaping activities aimed at carrying out the ban on discrimination included in the first chapter of the German constitution, where article 3 announces that '[n]o person shall be favoured or disfavoured because of sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith, or religious or political opinions.'

When interpreted through the lens of social diversity, integration has a lot to do with inclusion policy, which is increasingly a central point in the debate on issues of migrant movements in Germany. As a result of acknowledging the value of social diversity, the implementation of integration actions leads to inclusion policy, which is underpinned by a certain vision of society. According to this vision, the multitude of life models and combinations of individual members of society's characteristics are a resource which can be leveraged. In order to make this possible, society needs to develop its structures and open them up to individuals and groups.

## **Social innovation as a grassroots response to the refugee issue**

Since 2015, the issue of refugees in Germany has been labelled as a crisis by many commentators. It is unclear what is at the core of this crisis; whether the crisis is the number of people seeking support in Germany, the overburdening of public institutions, or the efforts required to address the challenges they are presented with. Accepting and integrating socially such numerous groups of refugees and migrants requires a mobilisation of forces. Restricting these actions to the domain of standard public tasks does not suffice. The scale and socio-cultural scope of this phenomenon require new ideas and unconventional solutions—that is, innovation both in the technical and social spheres (if this distinction still makes any sense). Each technical innovation needs to be embedded in social practice and thus acquire a social dimension (<http://www.changex.de>). It is particularly visible with regard to the refugee issue, where the differences between groups who enter into relationships are not only concerned with

cultural and social issues but also with technical competences. Social innovation for refugees is an example of a broad approach to social integration and innovation.

Social innovation is a [...] configuration of social practices in certain fields of action [...], initiated by a certain group of social actors [...], deliberately reconceptualised [...] [and] carried out in order to solve problems and satisfy needs better [...] than it would be possible based on the existing practices. [...] Innovation is not limited to the medium of technological artefacts— it is carried out on the level of social practices (Howaldt, Schwarz 2010, p. 54).

German researchers who analyse social innovation in various countries and regions of the world have formulated the hypothesis that alongside the transition from industrial society to a society of knowledge and services, a change takes place in the innovation system paradigm (*ibid.* p. 8), as a result of which the relationship between technological and social innovation changes significantly.

The significance of institutional and social networks is increasing in the new paradigm. Linear solutions are replaced with interactive models. The interwoven institutions' representatives and social actors continuously interact and develop, test and diffuse new modes of acting. Another distinctive feature of the new paradigm is the increasing role of individuals. Formerly science was the driving force for innovation: political programmes of social development were constructed based on scientific diagnoses and recommendations. Nowadays, a new model is beginning to emerge in which society is becoming the focal point of innovation.

In the European Union, social innovation is treated as a mode of empowering people and driving change.

Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. [...] [these are] new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society's capacity to act (European Commission 2010, p. 9).

In Germany, actions aimed at the social integration of refugees are taken by numerous diverse institutions and organisations. The state strives to construct the so-called *Willkommenskultur*, that is, to create conditions in which incomers will feel welcome in Germany. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees supports projects that offer refugees help with adjusting to their new conditions. Federal offices encourage social work for refugees and offer free training and courses for volunteers as a part of integration actions. Both Germans and migrants who came to the country earlier may engage in volunteering activities (<http://www.bamf.de>). Church organisations such as the German Protestant Churches' *Diakonie* actively provide help

(<http://www.diakonie.de>). Many initiatives originate from German schools and academic institutions. State institutions collaborate with major non-governmental organizations, including foundations with significant financial capabilities and political influence, such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation, or the Bertelsmann Foundation.

However, the analyses which will follow focus on initiatives inspired by individuals or small groups of people who notice the need to introduce certain changes to existing structures. Five exemplary initiatives are described. They differ in their origins, subject areas, target groups, and the methods employed, scope, organisation and funding. The shared themes in these initiatives are: including the social needs connected with the influx of refugees to Germany; introducing social innovation in a grassroots manner; and the underpinning vision of the society.

#### **First example: Summer academy for young people**

The Leuphana University of Lüneburg, in collaboration with the Vodafone Foundation, carries out three-week summer camps during which young people receive an all-day educational and coaching programme connected with both vocational preparation and sports activities; in addition, they prepare and stage a musical. The work is organised like a project. It is aimed at combining theory with practice and at developing competences as a result of taking actions supported by professional teachers and trainers.

The camps have been organised for the past 10 years; a total of 1,800 people have participated so far. The original concept of the programme was targeted at young people facing various problems with completing their school education. 'We have a colourful mixture of young people: both very shy and withdrawn as well as ones with aggressive inclinations,' explains Maren Voßhage-Zehnder, the programme coordinator. 'Children from difficult families, children with learning problems and [those] motivated to learn, children who, for various reasons, found themselves in a dead-end street and, as a result of that, need robust support and coaching.'

In 2015, young refugees joined this group. Along with young people from German schools, they underwent a three-week educational and coaching programme as well as an intensive German language course. 'Refugee children are mostly very ambitious and incredibly eager for knowledge,' the coordinator adds. The projects are carried out in international groups, and the collaboration between German young people and refugees is very close.

Source: <http://www.leuphana.de/sommerakademie.html>;

[http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_17\\_sommerakademie](http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete_17_sommerakademie)

### **Where does social innovation directed at refugees originate?**

Some of the social programmes originate from the initiative of individuals who notice the problem of refugees' integration in Germany and wonder how they might help. The initiators of new solutions, such as Malte Bedürftig (third example) or Thomas Batsching (fifth example),

frequently come up with innovative ideas rooted in their own competences, experiences, and contacts that can be utilised to help. Malte Bedürftig and Thomas Batsching are professionals with many years of professional experience and extensive contacts. By making use of their contacts and their own competences, they developed initiatives connecting people in need of help with individuals who may offer professional help.

In the second example, the prime originators of the new programme were students—that is, people motivated by a willingness to help, yet without any work experience. The starting capital which the students had at their disposal was only their willingness to help, their inventiveness, and their organisational skills. The students proved to be effective and convincing in their actions, as a result of which their actions were formalised, and, shortly after, the university became involved in organising the programme.

The activity of educational institutions is frequently the result of social innovation directed at refugees. This is the case in the following examples, where possibilities for action were created at a university (first example) and in a school (fourth example). In the case of programmes organised by public institutions, it is important for the institutional framework to serve as a support rather than a limitation and to leave opportunities for individuals and groups to develop innovative ideas.

**Second example: tun.starthilfe für flüchtlinge**

‘tun.starthilfe für flüchtlinge’ is the name of a students’ initiative which gave rise to an association that organises numerous activities for refugees. Members of the initiative hold the view that refugees’ rights to take part in social life can be realised only when actions at the political level are accompanied by actions from within civic society. The initiative involves activities such as: organising German language courses in refugee camps; carrying out educational workshops for various target groups (e.g., refugees, pupils, and students); supporting the development of the competences of volunteers who are willing to help refugees; running information and social campaigns aimed at combating stereotypes; increasing the awareness and transcultural acceptance of refugees in German society; and holding workshops on art, crafts, music and acrobatics in collaboration with refugees. The highlight of the programme is the summer festival organised and held by the local community and refugees in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, student groups, and employees of the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. Since the academic year 2013/2014, students of this university have had the possibility to receive credits for activity within the programme as a part of the EduCulture module, which includes a series of lectures, an internship, and an accompanying seminar.

Source: Information materials of the *tun.starthilfe für flüchtlinge initiative* are presented on the following website: <http://www.tun-starthilfe.de>.

## What are the domains in which innovation is implemented?

Social innovation directed at refugees appears in all domains in which demand for new solutions exists. Incomers from other countries and cultures initially need comprehensive support: from formal and administrative issues (fourth example), through learning the language (first, second and forth example), to vocational integration (fifth example). While refugees need help with determining who they may turn to for support and for what matters (third example), in order to achieve full social integration, it is also necessary for refugees to participate in social life in all its various dimensions. Hence, initiatives appear in which concerts, exhibitions or other cultural and sporting events are organised in collaboration with refugees. These events have an open nature and integrate people (also newcomers) in the local community (first and fourth example).

### **Third example: GoVolunteer online platform**

The GoVolunteer online platform was founded by Malte Bedürftig, a McKinsey consultant who had wanted to help refugees for a long time, and who had been asking his friends and family if they would also be willing to help. When he found that many were willing to help, Malte Bedürftig created an online platform for coordinating the actions of numerous volunteers. In November 2015, he founded the GoVolunteer public benefit organisation in collaboration with Henryk Seeger, another entrepreneur who had been socially active for years. The platform connects volunteers with helping organisations. Social organisations use the website to seek potential volunteers in the local environment. These potential volunteers may later gain access to the actions coordinated by these organisations with just one click. 'We want to offer easy access to information for anyone who wants to help. At the same time, we reduce the coordination effort for the organisers, who, as a result, may focus on their main task: helping refugees,' the initiative's founder explains.

Two months after the platform's launch, there were a hundred initiatives for volunteers to join. The originators have been developing the platform and plan to reach hundreds of organisations and thousands of volunteers in all regions of Germany as well as other German-speaking countries. 'We want GoVolunteer to become a central platform for communicating in the domain of helping refugees in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Our software allows fitting the actions perfectly to the organisation's needs. The platform is founded on the *crowdfunding* formula. Introducing solutions arising from the community into the structure and development of the initiative is intended to ensure its longevity. The aim is to "make helping a community experience",' Malte Bedürftig explains. 'Not only for a few months, but for years!'

Source: <https://govolunteer.com>; [http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_12\\_govolunteer](http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete_12_govolunteer).

## **Who do the actions target?**

An important distinctive aspect of the examples presented in this article is the fact that they are not targeted solely at refugees. The programme targeted at young people who are experiencing various school problems that has been carried out for a decade (see the first example) is of particular interest in this respect. The reasons of failure at school might be highly diverse—ranging from family problems, through health problems, to psychosocial maladjustment. Migrant origin and traumatic experiences connected with a refugee past might be factors that undermine educational success. As the number of people with such deficiencies is growing in German society, the summer academy for young people with problems has been extended to include the refugee children. However, they are not the only recipients of the benefits of the camp, and educational benefits are also derived by children from German families.

As a result of the robust refugee influx into Germany, German society is changing. Members of German society who have been living in the country for a long time also need support in adjusting to the changes. For this reason, many actions within the innovations discussed here are targeted at German citizens, for example: students (second example), pupils (first and fourth example), volunteers (second and third example), job counsellors (fifth example), or non-governmental organisations that intend to learn about the most efficient modes of providing support in the new social situation (third example). Local communities are the recipients of many programmes as they are being targeted by information and social campaigns that present the importance of the question and issues connected with it (second and fourth example).

#### **Fourth example: Service Learning at the Albrecht-Thaer School in Hamburg**

Pupils at this Hamburg school acquire knowledge on refugees' circumstances in Germany and in their particular district during their lessons (*learning*) and, at the same time, become involved in teams that act on the needs of refugees in their area (*service*).

Ikra and Shirin wanted to provide support for refugees who struggle with the language barrier. They understand the problem as they originate from families with Turkish and Arabic roots. Their mother tongue was useful in their initial contacts with refugees, which were facilitated by collaborating with non-governmental organisations that had long been active in the domain of helping migrants. Initially, the girls did minor translations and supported the refugees in running administrative errands. Then, through one of the organisations, they got to meet two refugee families. As a result, they helped these families to learn German and assisted their children with doing homework for six months. 'We will probably continue to do so even when the school obligation is no longer in place. This help is not an obligation to us—to us, the issue is very close,' one of the pupils explains. Another group of pupils takes interest in refugees' housing conditions. Young activists visited refugee centres and took part in debates with the mayor and in workshops organised by the local organisation. They held a fundraiser in order to finance further equipment for the refugee centres and are now planning to organise a tournament and summer concert in collaboration with refugees.

Source: Materials of the Netzwerk Lernen durch Engagement network; *LdE-Projektbeispiele zum Thema 'Flucht und Willkommenskultur'*.

### **How are the actions carried out?**

The actions are carried out through various methods and with the use of various tools. While some of them take more traditional educational forms, such as courses or training (second example), active working methods such as workshops and coaching are frequently used (first and fifth example). Many of the initiatives are based on modern technological solutions. For instance, specially-designed online platforms (third and fifth example) are used to establish contacts and provide counselling.

Various social actors are involved in these actions, namely: public institutions, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions, businesses and many individuals, including individuals with migrant origins. The actions bring about visible results due to the collaboration between numerous representatives of civic society. The emergence of a new issue that is salient for civic society initiates the development of new networks of contacts and enhances existing ones.

Based on the refugees' position and role in these activities, three types of initiatives can be distinguished, namely: activities *carried out for* refugees (e.g., language courses, collecting clothing, job counselling); activities prepared for and carried out *in collaboration* with refugees

(cultural and sporting events); and *information and social campaigns* presenting possible actions in conditions that are new to the whole of society to a broad group of recipients.

### **Where does the money come from?**

Involving numerous environments and undertaking actions in the system of links between individuals, groups, institutions and organisations creates various possibilities for funding these social initiatives. Some of them are funded by large foundations (first example); some are based on *crowdfunding*, which is an innovative mode of obtaining financial resources through the use of social networking websites (third example). Some funds may be acquired through fundraisers and holding cultural and social events. While these events are already a part of actions for and with refugees, the sale of items may generate money for further actions (fourth example).

Many of the initiatives initially rely on volunteer work (second, third and fifth examples). However, as their actions extend, initiatives often manage to secure sponsorship. Companies support social initiatives directed at refugees through their corporate social responsibility mechanisms (fifth example).

#### **Fifth example: HR Integrate**

Through its website, HR Integrate enables refugees who seek employment in Germany to contact professional job counsellors. As a result, refugees can easily receive individual support for entering the German labour market. Contact is established online; however, further collaboration includes face-to-face meetings and lasts until an individual successfully integrates into a workplace.

The initiator of this programme was Thomas Batsching, a job counsellor from Munich. Like many others, he wanted to help in the summer of 2015 when the wave of people coming to Germany was increasing. He arrived at the conclusion that he would accomplish the most through making use of his competences, contacts, and thirty-five years of experience of job counselling. 'The idea is that a professional counsellor takes a refugee by the hand and guides the individual as a mentor into the German labour market.' Help involves creating a qualifications profile, identifying potential employers, writing application letters, preparing for job interviews, and providing support at the initial stages of employment. An individual may participate in the project for three or even up to five years, even though it is organised in a manner that aims to provide extensive help over a short period of time. In order to make this possible, Thomas Batsching collaborates with numerous vocational and help-giving organisations. The aim is to establish a national network in order to provide help for refugees in the sites where they stay. The programme has some sponsors. Some small companies have decided to implement the idea of corporate social responsibility by allowing their employees to spend two hours per week providing counselling help for refugees.

Source: [http://changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_13\\_hr\\_integrate](http://changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete_13_hr_integrate).

The mechanisms described here relating to German grassroot social initiatives provide evidence in support of the hypothesis that German society is transforming into a post-migrant society. The ratio of families with migrant origins and the robust influx of refugees enhance social diversity (which had already been high regardless of this phenomenon). This diversity is not restricted to ethnic characteristics or religious affiliation. When diversity, enhanced by mobility and migration, becomes a social every-day reality and a normal state of matters, social structures undergo a modification which is followed by a rapid reaction on the part of civic society. Individuals, small groups, and non-governmental organisations initiate programmes directed not only at refugees, but also at the remainder of society, which, as a result of accepting refugees, is evolving into a post-migrant society.

A post-migrant society is a dynamically changing society in which new communication structures, relationships and possibilities for life development emerge. The new conditions present people with a social challenge and promote the emergence of social innovation. The social innovation presented in this analysis reveals the broad and inclusive manner in which social integration can be grasped in a post-migrant society.

## References

- Bade Klaus-Jürgen, Oltmer Jochen, 2004, *Normalfall Migration. Deutschland im 20. und frühen 21. Jahrhundert*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bonn.
- Bota Alice, Pham Khue, Topçu Özlem, 2012, *Wir Neuen Deutschen*, Rowohlt, Berlin.
- Foroutan Naika, 2015, *Die postmigrantische Gesellschaft*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bonn.
- Georgi Viola B., 2015, *Vielfalt lernen und leben*, [in:] *Klasse Vielfalt. Chancen und Herausforderungen der interkulturellen Öffnung von Schulen*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh.
- Howaldt Jürgen, Schwarz Michael, 2010, *Soziale Innovation im Fokus. Skizze eines gesellschaftstheoretisch inspirierten Forschungskonzepts*, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld.
- Merx Andreas, 2013, *Diversity – Umsetzung oder Proklamation?* 'Migration und Soziale Arbeit', no. 35, pp. 236–242.
- Riegel Christine, 2009, *Integration – ein Schlagwort? Zum Umgang mit einem problematischen Begriff*, [in:] Karin E. Sauer, Josef Held (eds.), *Wege der Integration in heterogenen Gesellschaften. Vergleichende Studien*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, pp. 23–39.
- Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2010, *Einwanderungsgesellschaft 2010. Jahresgutachten 2010 mit Integrationsbarometer*, svr, Berlin.
- Vertovec Steven, 2007, *Super-diversity and its implications*, 'Ethnic and Racial Studies', no. 30, pp. 1024–1054.

Bacia, E. (2019). Social diversity, migration and social innovation: A new vision of society constructed by Grassroots Movements in Germany. In E. Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, H. J. Abs, & P. Müller (Eds.), *Thematic papers based on the Conference "Migration, Social Transformation, and Education for Democratic Citizenship"* (pp. 25-41). University of Duisburg-Essen: DuEPublico. doi: 10.17185/duepublico/47634

### **Legislation and documents**

*The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany*, 2008, transl. into Polish by Bogusław Banaszak, Agnieszka Malicka, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warsaw.

*Convention of 13 December 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Journal of Laws 2012, Item 1169.

European Commission, 2010, *Empowering people, driving change. Social Innovation in the European Union*. Report of The Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) of the European Commission, Luxembourg.

### **Online sources**

[http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-september-2016.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-september-2016.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) [accessed 13 November 2016].

<http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/Integrationsprojekte/Engagement/engagement-node.html> [accessed 14 November 2016].

<https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2016/05/2016-05-25-integrationsgesetz-beschlossen.html> [accessed 13 November 2016].

[http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete](http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete) [accessed 14 November 2016].

[http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_12\\_govolunteer](http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete_12_govolunteer) [accessed 14 November 2016].

[http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_13\\_hr\\_integrate](http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete_13_hr_integrate) [accessed 14 November 2016].

[http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen\\_fuer\\_gefluechtete\\_17\\_sommerakademie](http://www.changex.de/Article/ideen_fuer_gefluechtete_17_sommerakademie) [accessed 14 November 2016].

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200157004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendBevoelkerung2010200157004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile) [accessed 13 November 2016].

<https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/Wanderungen/Tabellen/WanderungenAlle.html> [accessed 13 November 2016].

<http://www.diakonie.de/fluechtlinge-9092.html> [accessed 14 November 2016].

<https://www.govolunteer.com/> [accessed 14 November 2016].

<http://www.leuphana.de/sommerakademie.html> [accessed 14 November 2016].

<http://www.neue-deutsche-organisationen.de/de/> [accessed 13 November 2016].

<http://www.tun-starthilfe.de/> [accessed 14 November 2016].

<http://www.wissenschaft-im-dialog.de/projekte/debattencheck/integration/> [accessed 13 November 2016].

<http://www.wissenschaft-im-dialog.de/projekte/debattencheck/unsere-expertinnen/foroutan/> [accessed 13 November 2016].

## **Social Diversity, Migration and Social Innovation**

Ewa Bacia

In: Thematic Papers Based on the Conference: *Migration, Social Transformation, and Education for Democratic Citizenship*

This text is provided by DuEPublico, the central repository of the University Duisburg-Essen.

This version of the e-publication may differ from a potential published print or online version.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17185/duepublico/47634>

URN: <urn:nbn:de:hbz:464-20190201-120749-0>

Link: <https://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de:443/servlets/DocumentServlet?id=47634>

License:



This work may be used under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) license.