

IQ counselling in Integration Points

Interlinked advice for refugees in a central contact point



IQ | GOOD PRACTICE in a nutshell

Addressees for Transfer:

Employment agencies and job centres, counselling centres for refugees, project coordinators.

Strategic approach of counselling on the recognition of foreign credentials in the Integration Points:

IQ offers counselling on the recognition of foreign credentials for refugees in central contact points ("Integration Points") in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. In these Integration Points, immigration authorities, employment agencies and job centres, youth welfare officers, employer and employee services as well as civil society organisations offer all necessary support services for the integration into the labour market under one roof. The IQ counselling in the Integration Points is characterised by short distances, synergy effects and networking and cooperation structures of the various players.

Project:

Counselling on the recognition of foreign credentials in the Integration Points of the Federal Employment Agency (BA)

Implementing organisation:

Subprojects of the Network IQ North Rhine-Westphalia

Project contact:

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Offer:

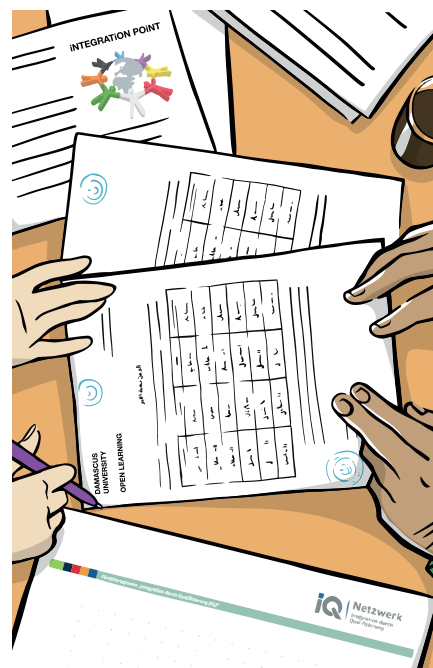
An overview of IQ counselling for the Integration Points can be found at iq-netzwerk-nrw.de/angebote/anerkennungs-und-qualifizierungsberatung. All previously published IQ Good Practice examples can be found at www.netzwerk-iq.de.

Starting point/challenge

People who have sought asylum are often unfamiliar with the bureaucracy, counselling and social security systems in Germany. The path to labour market integration often poses numerous hurdles due to a challenging bureaucracy and an unclear support landscape. In order to meet these challenges, all support services for refugees required for integration into training and work have been offered under one roof in all agency districts of the Federal Employment Agency (Job Centres and Employment Agency) in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) in accordance with the logic of the "One-Stop Government" since 2016. In the "Integration Points" of the Federal Employment Agency (BA), people seeking advice are supported by IQ recognition and qualification counselling alongside the employment agency, the job centres and the social and youth welfare offices. In this way, recognition procedures and qualification processes can be accelerated and accompanied more efficiently. The state-wide introduction of the Integration Points in NRW ensures that the advisory services are available to the target group throughout the state.

Implementation of the strategic approach

After many years of good cooperation, in 2015 the Regional Directorate NRW (RD) of the Federal Employment Agency and the regional Network IQ NRW developed the idea of a sustainable cooperation within the framework of the Integration Points. The two institutions agreed on the common goal of accelerating the labour market integration of refugees through local and substantive cooperation. In addition, there were important synergy effects between the IQ projects and the other players in the Integration Points. Five permanent IQ counselling centres are located in the Integration Points in Duisburg, Bielefeld, Minden/Herford, Detmold and Bonn. Further Integration Points in



all agency districts are supported by two mobile IQ counselling teams upon request. The central and integrated counselling and support of refugees under one roof by the participating players, creates a transparent interlocking and bundling of all offers and measures. Thereby, existing qualifications and competences can be identified and supported from an early stage.

Conclusion

The location of IQ counselling centres in the Integration Points creates short distances for refugees. The close cooperation of the relevant players accelerates procedures and facilitates networking in the interest of the refugees. In addition, process chains are initiated that successfully lead to professional recognition and further training. In 2016 and 2017, a total of 4,100 initial counselling sessions were held for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications and over 1,300 initial counselling sessions for adaptation or bridge trainings. The mobile team provides counselling to about 250 to 300 people each year at the Integration Points.

“Setting the course for success”

Increased efficiency by combining existing offers

The Integration Points are “contact points with short distances that guarantee the best possible support for refugees”, emphasises Sefer Öncel, Commissioner for Migration at the Regional Directorate of the BA in NRW. Öncel is convinced that close cooperation between the employment agencies and the IQ counselling centres creates added value in terms of early support for refugees, as well as in increasing the efficiency of labour market integration: “The specialists from the employment agencies, job centres and IQ support the integration of refugees into the labour and apprenticeship

market through mutual coordination. Offers can be made at an early stage through the Integration Points. These common contact



points provide important orientation and support to the refugees.” The success of the Integration Points and IQ counselling depends on the personal experience and skills of the staff at the counselling centres. Öncel states: “The counselling and placement specialists have special skills, such as foreign language proficiency, specific legal knowledge and the necessary intercultural sensitivity.” Öncel concludes that early contact with refugees and the efficient offers by IQ and other labour market stakeholders can “set the course for a successful start in training and work”.

Three questions to Gülsah Tunali, project manager at IQ consult of the Network IQ North-Rhine-Westphalia

“Making the skilled labour potential of those seeking advice visible”



Which aspect of the IQ counselling centres at the Integration Points can be described as innovative?

The innovative aspect is the location of IQ services in the structure of the Federal Employment Agency (BA). The target group can thus be reached in a straightforward and uncomplicated manner. Those seeking advice do not have to search for suitable offers but are referred directly to IQ counselling.

In addition, the concept of the Integration Points enables the individual offers of the respective players to be closely interlinked and bundled in order to make short routes and accelerated procedures possible for refugees. The state-wide introduction in NRW in all agency districts of the BA ensures that the offer is available to the target group throughout the state.

Is it possible to use the approach nationwide?

The concept of IQ counselling at the Integration Points is fundamen-

tally transferable, since the idea can be implemented with the BA in other federal states. Various implementation concepts are conceivable in this context: IQ counselling especially for refugees and/or IQ counselling for all migrants who are BA customers. The other regional IQ Networks could also benefit from the concept and implement it in their own structures, in order to reach those seeking advice who might otherwise not have been aware of IQ at all. The cooperation with the IPs has proven to be a successful model in this context.

Which lasting effects can the Integration Points bring about?

The interlinking of counselling and integration processes is intended to ensure sustainable labour market integration. Long-term to the extent that labour market integration is adequate in terms of skills and guarantees a livelihood. IQ counselling is an important part of all issues regarding professional recognition and related training. Only through the counselling on recognition will existing qualifications and competences become visible, such as vocational training already completed in the country of origin, which is academic as well as non-academic, regulated and unregulated. In this way, the skilled labour potential of those seeking advice becomes visible.

Imprint

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Network IQ

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