



Potential for recognition on Facebook

La Red reaches out to communities on online forums to offer advice on the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications



IQ | GOOD PRACTICE in a nutshell

Addressees for transfer:
Advice centres

Outreach advice on social media platforms

Migrants often use social media or other community networks to look for information on the recognition of professional qualifications. LaRA – La Red uses this communication potential and offers outreach advice on Facebook. By offering ongoing, credible, and beneficial support on social media channels, the advisers have acquired a lasting and far-reaching online reputation. The La Red – Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (LaRA) team is now active in some 90 groups with all almost 500,000 members.

Project:

La Red – Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (LaRA)

Provider:

La Red – Vernetzung und Integration e.V.

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Provision:

Further information on the services of the “La Red – Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (LaRA)” project are available at www.la-red.eu/portfolio/lara/ and www.facebook.com/LaraAnerkennung

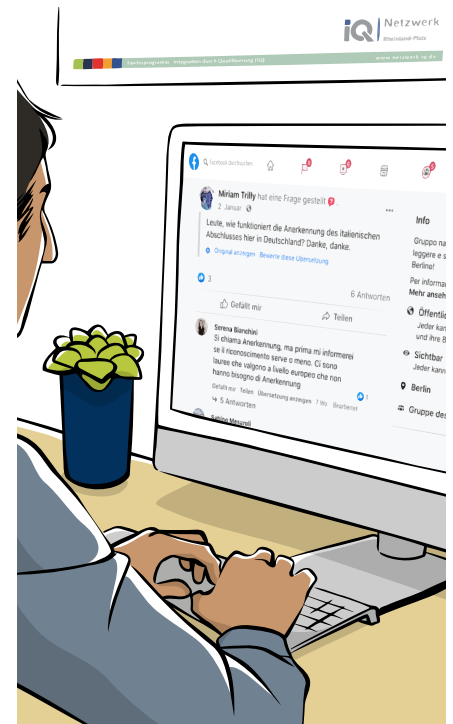
All previously published IQ Good Practice examples can be found at www.netzwerk-iq.de.

Starting point/challenge

Before using existing institutional advisory services, migrants look for important information in social media networks which are part of their communities. Information is quickly and easily available in such networks. Information and experiences can be exchanged in the users’ native language. Questions about gaining recognition for foreign qualifications frequently arise on online forums. As it is a complex topic, questions are often incorrectly answered or not at all.

Implementing outreach advice on social media

The migrant organisation La Red – Vernetzung und Integration e.V. has developed a strong reputation in the Network IQ Berlin in recent years. The organisation has over 9,000 followers on its Facebook page – a solid foundation for outreach advisory work. The idea behind the outreach approach is to visit those social media channels where potential clients seek advice and swap experiences, make active contact with them (“digital streetwork”) and invite them to make use of the available services. For this approach to be a success, it is key that the outreach advisory team has knowledge of the target group’s respective native languages. Their work will only be effective if carried out in these languages. It is also necessary to identify the main channels which the target groups use. The La Red – Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (LaRA) team is now active in some 90 Facebook groups with all almost 500,000 members. The groups share either a common cultural or occupational background. Community-specific key words are used to identify questions relating to recognition. The advisers answer questions, identify incorrect answers, and provide impor-



tant information. The organisation’s own Facebook page supports the advisers in four languages and contains important information and links relating to recognition. The aim of these online activities is ultimately to establish contact between those seeking and providing guidance on recognition.

Conclusion

La Red has steadily built up its positive online reputation thanks to the advice it offers on social media. Analysis of the data shows that the online activities lead to an increase in advisory sessions. For example, the number of Italians – one of LRA’s first two target groups – obtaining advice on recognition rose considerably within one year. Outreach advice on social media platforms represents a worthwhile and innovative addition to traditional advisory services.

Identify channels used by the target groups

Advisers respond to general questions about recognition and draw attention to recognition guidance services

Recognition of foreign qualifications is an important factor in the integration or re-entry of people into working life after the coronavirus pandemic ends. That is why the La Red team expanded its outreach advisory work on social media during the pandemic to target groups made up of Spanish, Arabic, and English speakers. Other groups will be addressed as required in the future. The lively exchange of questions and experiences on social media represents an important opportunity to practice guidance work, provide information, and identify specific wishes and needs for advice. “We first of all identified relevant online forums and then looked at occupational profiles,” says Lau-

ra Sajeва, who gives advice on the assessment and recognition of qualifications at La Red. “Using community-specific key



words we can specifically seek out persons who are interested in the recognition procedure.” The advisers identify and answer questions about the responsible authorities or costs for the procedure. They participate in discussions in order to, for example, correct false answers or provide additional information. For data protection reasons, the extent of the outreach work in Facebook groups is limited. “The advisers’ online work is limited to identifying existing questions and answering them with general information. The work concludes with an invitation to an initial consultation in the IQ advice centres on recognition, where all data protection standards can be met,” says Laura Sajeва.

Three questions for Laura Sajeва, adviser at La Red – Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications in the Network IQ Berlin

“Develop a lasting online reputation”



What is innovative about the concept?

Social media platforms have grown rapidly in the last ten years. It is estimated that roughly a third of the world’s population now use them. The lively exchange of questions and experiences on social media represents an important opportunity to practice guidance work, provide information, and identify specific wishes and

needs for advice. Social media platforms can thus be used as an innovative tool for supplementing and expanding traditional advisory services.

Is the concept easily transferable?

Outreach advice on social media can be carried out in any envi-

ronment and can be easily adapted to the teams’ knowledge of languages and the characteristics of the target group. Once the social media channels and platforms used by the target group have been identified, any team, even those without extensive online marketing knowledge or experience, can offer outreach advice, as the groups on these platforms offer a lot of scope concerning the number of members and amount of questions relating to guidance on recognition.

How long do the benefits of this approach last?

The answers the advisers give on the social media platforms remain there permanently for all users to see. Users can thus find answers to their questions or tips on suitable advice centres at a later date. The longer the advisory team offers ongoing, credible, and beneficial guidance on social media and within its target group communities, answers questions and corrects false information, the more its positive online reputation will grow and spread.

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