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## Imprint

“The main task of IOM is to support migrants as well as governments in overcoming migration processes – in the best interest of all“

This study is published within the framework of the project “Stocktaking of international pre-integration measures and recommendations for action aimed at their implementation in Germany“. The project is supported by the European Integration Fund and co-financed by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AUSCO    | Australian Cultural Orientation  |
| BAMF     | Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) |
| COA      | Canadian Orientation Abroad  |
| EIF      | European Integration Fund  |
| FINCO    | Finland Cultural Orientation   |
| IOM      | Internationale Organisation für Migration (International Organisation for Migration)       |
| NORCO    | Norway Cultural Orientation  |
| UK/ELTCO | United Kingdom English Language Training Cultural Orientation                              |
| USCO     | United States Cultural Orientation   |

## List of Images

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## 1 The Project

The project on “Stocktaking of international pre-integration measures and recommendations for action aimed at their implementation in Germany“ was co-funded half-and-half by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and by the European Integration Fund (EIF)<sup>1</sup>. The aim was to improve the state of knowledge and awareness in Germany about internationally practised preparatory measures and to perform a needs assessment in the context of migration to Germany. Based on the above, recommendations for action were developed for the German government in respect of potential preparatory measures for migrants from third (non-EU) countries. The implementation of the project was taken over by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). IOM is an inter-governmental organisation which conducts aid programmes for migrants<sup>2</sup> at the national and international level. With over 400 offices in 130 countries, IOM is the largest global offerer of preparatory measures for migrants<sup>3</sup>.

According to the definition adopted by EIF, the term ”pre-integration measures“ refers to the preparation of new immigrants from third countries for their target country. Such measures are conducted in the immigrant’s country of origin itself. The significance of pre-integration measures lies in the opportunity they present of laying a foundation stone for successful integration in the host society even before the entry of the immigrants into the host country. Especially in view of the initial few months in the new homeland, the social competences of the migrants can be strengthened and problems can be anticipated in this way. This contributes towards making the migration and integration process as smooth as possible which, in turn, makes it easier for the immigrants to find their way in the society of the host country.

In Germany, subsequent immigration of family members currently constitutes the largest group of immigrants from non-EU countries. The most important countries of origin are Turkey, the Russian Federation and the nations of former Yugoslavia. One of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Fund promoted projects which aim at the integration of third country inhabitants with permanent residence permit status in the European society.

<sup>2</sup> In this text, the male form is used for better legibility. The female form is, of course, always included implicitly.

<sup>3</sup> You will find more information under: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

requirements of the project was, thus, the development of preparatory measures which would especially take into account the needs of the immigrants from these regions.

On the German side, the language courses offered by the Goethe institute for a fee are the only activity until now which can be described as a pre-integration measure. Since the introduction of a compulsory proof of basic knowledge of the German language in the year 2005 within the framework of subsequent immigration of family members, these courses are offered in the concerned countries of origin as a preparation for the respective test. This measure is not only criticised primarily by the Turkish government, but also by German charitable and migrant organisations, since this measure is perceived to be discriminating (see 3.5). Therefore, it was not completely possible to separate the continuing debate about compulsory language test from the discussion of potential preparatory measures for third-country nationals which was the focus of this project.

### **1.1 The Preliminary Study**

From January to June 2009, a preliminary study offering an initial overview of the subject area of preparatory measures was prepared. The point of departure for the study was a twofold problem. On the one hand, a stocktaking of pre-integration measures in the international context was performed. Since IOM conducts a multitude of preparatory measures worldwide for diverse immigrant groups, six host countries in all were initially selected for in-depth research of their pre-integration practices: Australia, Finland, United Kingdom, Canada, Norway and the USA. The decision in favour of these countries was taken on the basis of the following criteria:

- Size of the pre-integration programmes and fairly long-term experiences in this area
- Comparability of the host countries with Germany in respect of the economic, political and social conditions

In order to evaluate the experiential knowledge of IOM in detail, a four-page questionnaire was drafted and sent to the missions in the six host countries as well as the department for *Migrant Training* at the IOM administrative centre in Manila. On the basis of the questionnaires, the evaluation of the internal project database and further

documents, the pre-integration measures of the six aforementioned nations were then examined. The results are given in Chapter 2.

On the other hand, suggestions, requests and ideas of German players in the field of integration work were compiled for potential pre-integration measures and documented in Chapter 3. For this purpose, expert discussions were held with 29 representatives of immigrant self-help organisations and charitable organisations in Germany (see Enclosure I). A two-page list of questions was developed as a guideline for these interviews. The expert discussions were meant to ensure that the perspectives and the experiential know-how of practitioners from the German context flow into the deliberations on potential pre-integration measures.

## **1.2 The Workshop**

The results of international stocktaking and the expert interviews were summarised in a preliminary study which served as the basis of discussion for a workshop on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July in Nürnberg. At this event, representatives of immigrant self-help organisations and charitable organisations, together with colleagues of IOM, developed recommendations for action aimed at a pre-integration strategy for the Federal Republic of Germany (see Enclosure II). In doing so, a distinction was made between recommendations at the general political level and programme-based proposals for pilot projects. The results of the workshop are presented in Chapter 4.

## **2 Stocktaking of international Pre-integration Measures**

As per the understanding of EIF, different aspects can be subsumed under "pre-integration“:

- Simplification of immigration
- Concrete preparation of migrants for their future integration through advisory and information services
- Language courses and courses in civics in the country of origin itself

In the following, the activities of IOM in these three areas have been represented for the six selected host countries.

## 2.1 Language Courses and Courses in Civics

The area of *Migrant Training*, i.e. the preparation of the immigrants for their temporary or unlimited stay in a specific host country, is by far the broadest sphere of activity of IOM in the sphere of pre-integration. *Migrant Training* can be sub-divided into six different thematic sub-areas which encompass both brief orientation events as well as language courses of several weeks:

- *Cultural Orientation*: Courses lasting several days and meant to prepare the immigrant for the initial months in the host country
- *Pre-Departure/Pre-Employment Orientation*: One-day preparatory seminars for migrant labourers and highly-qualified immigrants
- *Language Training*: Language courses
- *Literacy Training*: Training, aimed at illiterates, for imparting basic writing, reading and numeracy skills
- *Pre-Embarkation Sessions*: Preparation for air travel
- *Pre-Departure Briefings*: Orientation meetings of several hours, primarily for highly-qualified persons and subsequent immigrant family members, with briefings on entry requirements and bureaucratic formalities directly after arrival in the host country

### 2.1.1 Cultural Orientation

By far the largest share of these offers is claimed by *Cultural Orientation Trainings*. In these courses, the most important basic information about the host country is communicated to the new immigrants within a few days. In the year 2008, IOM conducted *Cultural Orientation* for nearly 50,000 persons in 44 countries. The most important clients are the USA, Canada, Australia, Finland, Norway and United Kingdom. *Language Training*, *Literacy Training* and *Pre-Embarkation Sessions* are likewise integrated in the courses where required. The target group of these events are

predominantly refugees participating in *resettlement* programmes<sup>4</sup>. The target is the preparation for resettlement in a safe third country.

#### 2.1.1.1 Overview of national Programmes

The scope of national programmes is very diverse. Whereas thousands of persons worldwide are prepared annually for *resettlement* in the USA, the participating European nations absorb relatively small contingents of refugees. The integration structures of the USA, Australia and Canada are very similar. Upon their arrival, the refugees are primarily provided support services by NGOs which receive state funds for their services. These organisations offer intensive support services in the initial months, in the course of which they provide living space, offer language and integration courses and help in the search for jobs. The aim is the early independence of the person from state support and his successful application for citizenship, which is mostly attainable a few years after resettlement. In Finland and Norway, on the other hand, governmental organisations play a central role in the process of integration of refugees, primarily at the local government level. The United Kingdom implements a mixture of both these systems.

**United States Cultural Orientation (USCO):** This oldest and most comprehensive *cultural orientation* programme has been in existence since 1990. The target group are refugees selected for resettlement in the USA. Financing is provided by the *Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration* which is attached to the US Department of State. In the course of education of trainers and the formulation of curricula for USCO courses, IOM works in close cooperation with the *Cultural Orientation Resource Centre* of the research institution *Centre for Applied Linguistics* in Washington DC. The courses last between half a day and six days. All the 14-69 year old refugees are expected to participate in the USCO courses prior to their resettlement, though absence from the courses does not have any negative repercussions. USCO is coordinated by a *Senior Migrant Training Officer*. This person is in contact with the *Regional Cultural Orientation Coordinators* who are responsible for the conduct of the courses in a region. They adapt the curricula devised in the USA to the requirements of the refugee groups to

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<sup>4</sup> Resettlement refers to the selection and transfer of persecuted persons from a nation, where the concerned persons have initially sought protection (country of first refuge), to another nation which has consented to their adoption as refugees and where they can resettle permanently.

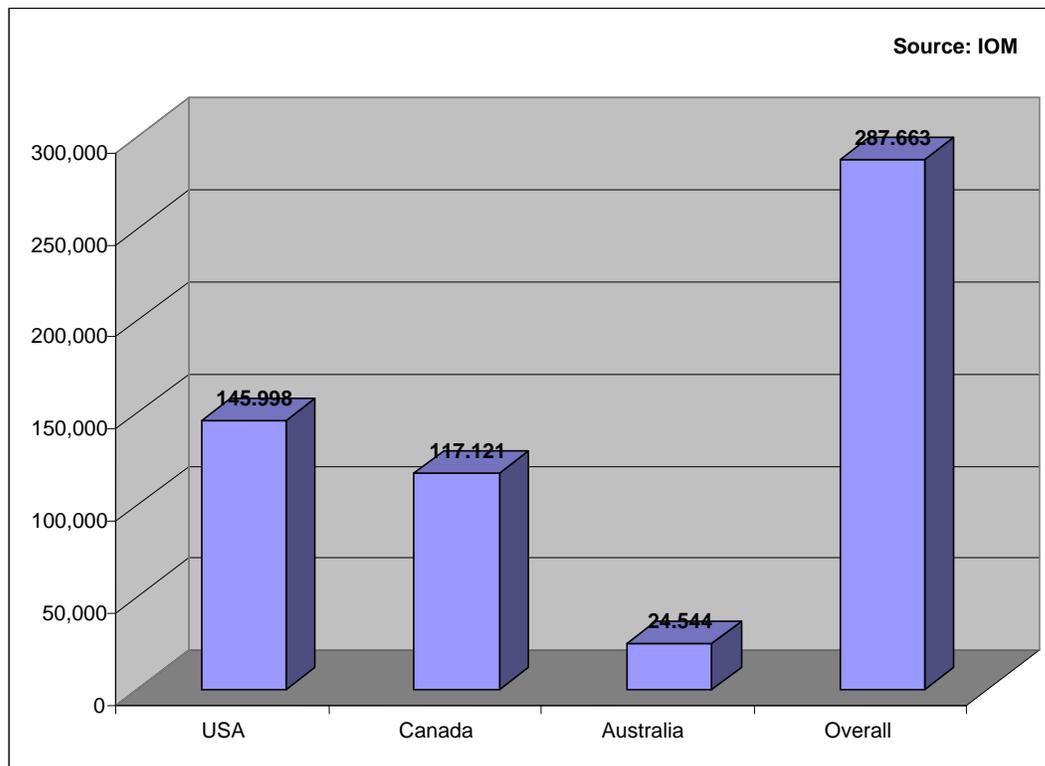
whom they provide support services. The *Cultural Orientators*, who conduct the courses locally, usually come from the same country of origin as the course participants. Upon their arrival in the USA, the refugees continue to receive support services for the next 8 months from *resettlement agencies*. These locally operating NGOs are coordinated by several national organisations, the *voluntary agencies*. They also disburse to their local partners the state funds which are available for the integration of refugees in the US American society. The staff of the *resettlement agencies* and the *voluntary agencies* is connected to the IOM staff responsible for USCO via an e-mail list so that continuous dialogue is guaranteed. Furthermore, there is an annual exchange of two weeks, in the course of which *Cultural Orientators* travel to the USA and the staff of the NGOs is allowed to observe USCO courses in the countries of origin.

**Australian Cultural Orientation Abroad (AUSCO):** The target groups are refugees and other immigrants who have been granted a permit for stay in Australia on humanitarian grounds. The programme is offered by IOM in over 18 countries. As and when required, the courses last three to five days. AUSCO is financed by the *Department of Immigration and Citizenship*. AUSCO has a *Global Coordinator* who is currently stationed in Bangkok. Overall, the structure is analogous to that of USCO. Four *Regional Coordinators* assume the organisation of AUSCO courses in their regions and supervise the *Cultural Orientators* who are recruited from among natives.

**Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA):** This programme exists since 1998 and is addressed to immigrants of all categories and countries of origin. Canada not only runs a large *resettlement* programme, but also continuously courts migrant labourers in the qualified and highly-qualified sectors. A third large group is formed by subsequent immigrant family members. Within the scope of COA, however, refugees are given priority vis-à-vis all other immigrant groups, since they are in need of pre-integration in large measure. COA is financed by *Citizenship and Immigration Canada*. The courses last one, three or five days, depending upon how the orientation requirement of the concerned migrants is estimated. Furthermore, IOM works in close cooperation with the Canadian embassies in the countries of origin of the immigrants in order that the migration process is devised as smoothly as possible. Beside 15 permanent COA centres in South East and Central Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East, IOM

maintains mobile COA teams which can be deployed as and when required. The administrative headquarters of COA is in Amman (Jordan). COA trainers recruited in their countries of origin are sent on exchange visits which provide them with an impression of Canada and the work done by NGOs which provide support services not only to refugees but also to other immigrants in Canada in their familiarisation phase.

**Image 1: Participants of IOM Cultural Orientation 1990-2008 USA, Canada, Australia**

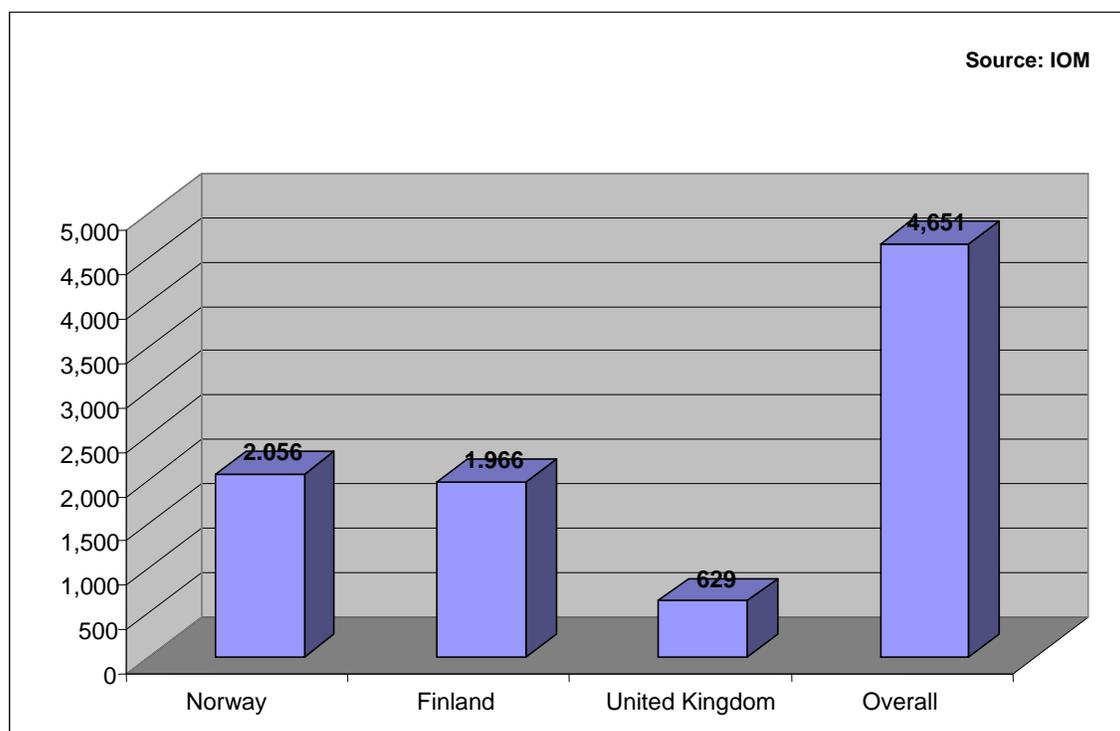


**Finland Cultural Orientation (FINCO) and Norway Cultural Orientation (NORCO):** Both these programmes are structured very similarly. FINCO exists since 2002, NORCO since 2003. The target groups are quota refugees who were selected for resettlement in these countries. FINCO courses are addressed to all the persons above 15 years of age and last three days, as a rule. NORCO courses are designed for four days. Two-day courses are additionally offered for children who are between 8 and 15 years old. Both nations have absorbed approx. 2,500 persons respectively until now. These refugees came mainly from crisis regions in South East Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In the course of the Finnish and Norwegian *resettlement* programmes, local authorities

court refugee contingents for absorption. These local authorities are then also responsible for further support and accompaniment of the persons and their integration. Therefore, FINCO and NORCO also address the local authorities that absorb these refugees. IOM conducts orientation courses there on the ethnic, religious and cultural background of the refugee contingents. FINCO is financed by the *Finnish Immigration Service* and is coordinated by IOM Helsinki. NORCO is managed by IOM Oslo and funded by the *Directorate of Integration and Diversity*. Both programmes employ a *Cultural Orientation Coordinator* in Oslo and/or Helsinki respectively, who is responsible for the curricula of the seminars and the supervision of the trainers.

**United Kingdom (UK ELT/CO):** On behalf of the British government, IOM offers since 2005 *Cultural Orientation* and language courses for refugees who come to the United Kingdom within the framework of the *UK Gateway Protection Programme*. This programme, supported by the *Home Office*, absorbs up to 500 especially vulnerable refugees annually. So far, 900 persons have benefited from this programme. The orientation courses last three days, the language courses last between 10 and 15 days. All the refugees above 12 years of age can participate in it. The accompaniment and integration of the refugees is assumed by the local authorities in the United Kingdom. The distribution of the refugees is coordinated by the *Border and Immigration Agency*. Moreover, the *Resettlement Interagency Partnership*, a federation of six large NGOs active in refugee work, is also involved in the programme. The local authorities apply for the programme and enter into a commitment to financially support the refugees for the first twelve months and to make an adviser available to each family for this time span. They are supported in this initiative by NGOs. One who doesn't participate in language and integration courses after his arrival in the United Kingdom, loses a part of his claim to state aid. IOM employs its own *UK Gateway Coordinator* who is responsible for cooperation with the relevant authorities and NGOs. In the course of an evaluation study about the UK CO/ELT programme from January 2009, the refugees stated that they perceived the orientation courses in the country of origin as helpful, but that they wished they were provided with more information about the labour market and opportunities for further education.

**Image 2: Participants in IOM Cultural Orientation of European Nations 2001-2008**



### 2.1.1.2 Organisation and Content

After this brief overview of the most important *Cultural Orientation* programmes, the content and organisation of the courses is explained in the following.

*Cultural Orientation* pursues four objectives:

- Communicating basic information about the target country.
- Counteracting misleading expectations about opportunities in the host country, created by false information.
- Preparing for the initial months in the host country.
- Giving the migrants an opportunity to voice their questions and express their cares.

Though the curricula of the different cultural orientation programmes differ from each other in their detail, yet it is possible to identify six broad subject areas which are contained in every programme:

**The procedure of entry:** The different bureaucratic hurdles, which are lined up within the framework of *resettlement* and/or immigration, are explained, e.g. administrative aspects and formalities which must be dealt with in the initial days after arrival. If needed, IOM also offers *pre-embarkation training* for refugees who have never flown before. In the process, basic information is communicated, like e.g. the sequence of events during air travel, orientation at the airport, behaviour inside the aircraft and the use of modern, sanitary facilities.

**Basic knowledge about the host country:** Information about climate, geography, history, social, ethnic and religious composition of the host society and the political system of the target country is communicated.

**Rights and duties of immigrants:** The significance of the respective residence status under Aliens' Act in respect of the claims and duties of immigrants are explained and the relevant authorities within the framework of the migration process and their competences are presented. The most important legal regulations entailing heavy penalties in the event of infringement (e.g. no vigilante justice, no acceptance of domestic violence, ban on forced marriages) are made clear. The refugees are made aware of offers of state aid and aid by civil society groups and continuative integration measures in the host country, like e.g. language courses.

**Information about the labour market:** Organising a job search and identifying the contemplable activities for the new immigrants, who are often still very inhibited in terms of their language skills, are the focus of attention here. The possibilities and hurdles in the way of recognition of certificates are addressed, beside the conventions in the professional world marked by Western influences (lesser distinct hierarchies, women in positions of leadership, importance of punctuality, expectations of a job application etc.). The rights and duties of employees and employers are explained.

**Information about daily life:** The social security, health care and education systems of the host country are described in detail. Furthermore, institutions of the modern world are explained depending upon the requirements of the respective group, e.g. how to use the public, short-distance transport system, how to open a bank account or how to make a cashless payment transaction.

**Intercultural aspects:** The culturally induced values underlying the society of the host country (equality of all human beings, personal responsibility, secular state system etc.) are explained. In this context, problematic topics and taboos like the relationship between the sexes, rigid caste system and violence towards children and women can also be addressed. In the process, an attempt is made to stimulate a process of reflection on one's own cultural values and behaviour and to deliberate together as to how problematic situations in the host country can be circumvented. Tips for making integration easier are also passed on, like how to deal with symptoms of culture shock, hints on social networking and advice on how to rear children without violence.

The curricula of the courses are handed over to the participants at the end of the seminars as guides. Thus, the guidebook "*Welcome to the US*" forms the thematic basis of the USCO courses. Across 110 pages, this guidebook contains central information about the subject areas presented above. Since the orientation requirement of the immigrants is very diverse, the respective curricula must be understood merely as guidelines for the content of the courses, which can be varied depending upon the requirement of the immigrant groups. The *Cultural Orientation Trainers* decide on their own on the basis of criteria like level of education, the cultural and religious background and the previous living conditions of the course participants, as to which topics they will deal with in detail and which aspects they will leave out or only touch upon. Often, all the refugees from early adult age onwards are taught together. A few programmes offer special orientation courses for children and adolescents. Sometimes, a distinction is made between single and married persons. For families, information about the schooling system, child health and parenting methods are especially relevant.

All the programmes make special reference to continuative integration offers in the host country. In many nations, e.g. in United Kingdom, sanctions are imposed if these offers are ignored. With regard to content, NORCO coordinates the courses in the countries of origin with the integration courses which are obligatory for new immigrants in Norway. In this way, duplication is avoided and a smooth continuation of what has already been learnt is guaranteed.

The trainers conducting the seminars are selected on the basis of different aspects depending upon the programme. NORCO and FINCO work with “Bicultural Trainers“, i.e. persons who have themselves arrived in these countries as refugees and have the same ethnic background as the refugee contingents who they are teaching. This not only ensures the trainer’s ability to empathise, but also draws upon the unique wealth of experience of persons who have themselves undergone the *resettlement* process. Bicultural trainers find it easier to establish an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Moreover, they are like role models for the refugees, since the story of their life exemplifies that successful integration in the host country is possible.

Owing to the larger number of cases, USCO, AUSCO and COA also have a higher demand for trainers. They work with native workers as *Cultural Orientators*. These must fulfil four criteria:

- Very good English language skills.
- The same ethnic background as that of *resettlement* refugees or a good knowledge of the ethnic and religious background of the refugees.
- Possession of an academic degree or a lot of experience in the areas of adult education /pedagogy.
- Ideally, the trainers ought to have lived in the host country for a while.

Irrespective of their previous knowledge, all the *Cultural Orientators* are prepared for their activity in courses lasting several weeks. In the process, the communication of participative teaching methods, above all, is given importance, aside from the necessary factual knowledge.

A special challenge for the successful organisation of orientation courses is posed by the situations frequently marked by war and political persecution in the countries of origin and the chaotic and miserable conditions in the refugee camps. These circumstances can entail considerable logistical problems for the conduct of the courses. In order to guarantee the participation of as large a number of refugees as possible in the *Cultural Orientation* programmes, all the refugees selected for resettlement must be informed about the courses. If the persons live in refugee camps, participation rates of 100 per cent

can be achieved. If this is not the case, the participants are personally informed about the *Cultural Orientation* offer by the local IOM mission on the telephone, by mail or by post. If the communication structures function only rudimentarily, this information is displayed at central places, like religious facilities or NGO offices.

A few programmes entail possible costs for the participants who must travel to the venue of the event from elsewhere. Most of these events offer child care services so that even mothers can participate. As and where required, FINCO also assumes the cost of overnight stay. In the case of courses lasting several days, the daily course duration does not exceed five hours, as a rule, so that the participants do not lose one whole working day. The number of participants in the courses are between 20-25 persons. The place at which the *Cultural Orientation* is conducted depends upon the local conditions. Mostly, the choice is in favour of the premises of the IOM mission, classrooms of local schools or conference rooms of hotels. The central criteria is good accessibility. Certain minimum standards must be fulfilled, like sufficiently large classrooms with desks and chairs, an intact power supply and sufficient sanitary facilities in order that a constructive learning atmosphere is ensured.

The low level of education of many refugees from developing countries is an additional difficulty. The *Cultural Orientation* courses are designed as interactive and participative courses. Therefore, methods like role play, question and answer games, group work and discussion rounds are preferentially applied. The attempt is to visualise and experience haptically as much as possible, by showing photos and videos and passing around illustrative materials, e.g. Dollar notes, credit cards or social security cards. If a significant illiteracy rate is expected among the participants, this is taken into account during the selection of teaching materials and teaching methods.

Sensitive topics like sexuality, domestic violence or animosity towards strangers require that an atmosphere of trust and confidence has been built between the trainer and the refugees by that time. That is why these problems are, as a rule, discussed only in the later stages of the courses. Often, videos and case examples are used, which are then discussed in the group. Thereby, a discussion about one's own culture and about the culture in the host country is stimulated so that even taboos can be addressed. In this way,

it is attempted to rid the refugees of their fears but, at the same time, clarify to them the formal and informal rules of the host country. NORCO separates groups according to especially problematic topics, like e.g. the genital mutilation of women. In doing so, it is ensured that the groups are taught by same-sex trainers. Examples of proven and tested teaching methods within the framework of *Cultural Orientation* are:

**The KWAL method:** (*What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned*). At the beginning of the course, three columns are drawn on the blackboard with these headings, columns one and two are initially worked off and filled out with the group as *Ice Breaker* activities. In the course of the lesson, the newly gained knowledge is then summarised in the third column. Thus, the knowledge requirement of the group can be covered optimally.

**Promotion of active teamwork:** Group work and *Peer Tutoring* are important methods here. The latter means that the course participants teach each other course content which they have worked through separately at an earlier stage. In this way, even differences in levels of education within the group can be applied profitably. During the preparation of Somalian Bantus for their resettlement in the USA, for instance, persons with English language skills were identified out of this group and employed as teachers.

**From the known to the unknown:** First, it is discussed in the group as to how, for instance, the education system in the country of origin functions, then the differences as compared to the host country are clarified.

**Loosening up during serious topics:** Taboo topics are frequently touched upon via "low risk games", e.g. inflating of condoms in order to then talk about reproductive health. Thus, a light atmosphere is created first in order to rid the participants of their inhibitions.

As mentioned earlier, *Literacy Training* can also be a part of *Cultural Orientation*. Modern Western societies are not attuned to the problem of illiteracy. Therefore, the preparation of refugees who can neither read nor write is a special challenge. As and where required, USCO conducts special literacy courses and training for numeracy skills. In the process, elementary abilities like writing your own name, reading the time by the clock, using the calendar or filling an official form are practised.

All the aforementioned *Cultural Orientation* programmes obtain feedback from the participants by means of questionnaires. Together with continuous exchange between relevant players in the host country and the *Cultural Orientators* in the countries of origin, the currency of the curricula and its consistency with the orientation requirement of the refugees is guaranteed in this way.

As *Best Practices* for *Cultural Orientation*, the following points were mentioned in the questionnaires of the IOM missions

- The courses ought to be held in everyday language.
- Visualisation by means of videos, maps, pictures etc. loosens up the course and makes it possible to experience the course content
- The course ought to be designed in participative format as far as possible, ex-cathedra teaching ought to be sooner avoided.
- Feedback ought to be obtained from the course participants, best after some time (several months) in the host country so that the benefit of pre-integration can be evaluated.
- Permanent exchange with the host local authorities, players and organisations involved in integration work and with the competent authorities of the host country, in order that the curricula can be updated and coordinated in line with the requirements of the refugees.
- The experience of former *resettlement* refugees ought to be used by involving them as guest speakers and bicultural trainers.
- An atmosphere of trust and confidence ought to be built in order that the course participants feel secure enough to express all their problems.
- Flexible trainers who manipulate the curricula according to their adequacy for the course participants.
- Mobile *Cultural Orientation Teams* can serve even larger regions and work in a decentralised manner.
- Regular further education and evaluation of the *Cultural Orientators* in order to maintain and improve quality.

- Keeping different curricula ready to cater to diverse groups (above all, the age, the level of education and marital status are decisive here).

### 2.1.2 Pre-Departure Orientation/Pre-Employment Orientation

Beside the large *Cultural Orientation* programmes, which claim the lion's share of international pre-integration measures, there are also different preparatory courses for immigrant labourers. As opposed to *Cultural Orientation* for *Resettlement* refugees, these events are shorter and more intensive. These courses last maximum one day and impart concentrated and important basic information. Since 2007, for instance, IOM offers *Pre-Departure Orientation* for workers on behalf of Canadian companies. These workers are courted by these companies for time-bound employment relationships. The target group here are primarily less qualified workers from developing countries. The one-day preparatory seminars communicate information about the living conditions in Canada, about the rights and duties of workers, about the health care system and the banking system. The future employers in Canada are presented to the participants through video conferencing. The contents are then handed over to the participants in the form of a brochure. As and when required, language courses, IT courses and financial management courses can be offered additionally so that the immigrants are prepared for their future activity. Moreover, the participants receive plastic cards, similar to phone cards, with the most important telephone numbers of public authorities and advisory offices in the country of origin and in Canada.

Another large group of migrant labourers, who are prepared for their stay in Canada, are nursing staff for domestic care. Highly-qualified migrants, who are selected by the Canadian government based on a needs assessment, receive, above all, information about efficient search for a job within the framework of pre-integration.

#### *Best Practices for Pre-Departure Training:*

- Keep the seminar short (maximal one day).
- Prepare concrete replies to specific questions, since generally accessible knowledge about the host country can be assumed.

- Interactive PowerPoint presentations in order to communicate central information for the first 6-12 months in the host country.
- Openly address the problems faced by migrants in the labour market of the host country so that false expectations can be corrected.
- Assistance and advice for job search and for behaviour at the workplace.

## **2.2 Orientation and Advisory Offers**

In some of the countries of origin, IOM runs so-called *Migration Service Centres* on behalf of EU and a few European nations. These advise prospective immigrants in respect of their possibilities and opportunities in the host country. The offer extends from information brochures about the host countries to individualised advice. Thus, the possibilities of legal immigration are attempted to be clarified and illegal immigration is attempted to be prevented in this way. In Georgia, 14,000 immigrants in four such centres could be advised personally or on the telephone in the last seven years. Meanwhile 22 advisory centres were established in the Western Balkans. Approx. 3,000 migrants have been advised there since June 2008. A *Migrant Service Centre* is currently being set up in Moldavia.

The orientation offers principally address all groups of migrants, i.e. subsequent immigrant family members, migrant labourers and students. However, it is the migrant labourers who predominantly use these advisory service offers. In order to increase the chances of migrants in the labour market of the host country, the centres, therefore, also offer further education courses in the area of EDP skills, internet use and training on how to apply for a job. Additionally, job fairs are organised, where foreign companies introduce themselves to potential migrant labourers.

## **2.3 Pre-Consular Services**

The offer of *Pre-Consular Services* serves the purpose of relieving embassy personnel and immigrants by providing assistance for overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. These offers are valid only in specific countries of origin and vary greatly.

In Hong Kong, Vietnam, Cambodia, Russia, the Ukraine, El Salvador and Honduras, for instance, IOM offers assistance during visa application for the USA, Canada and

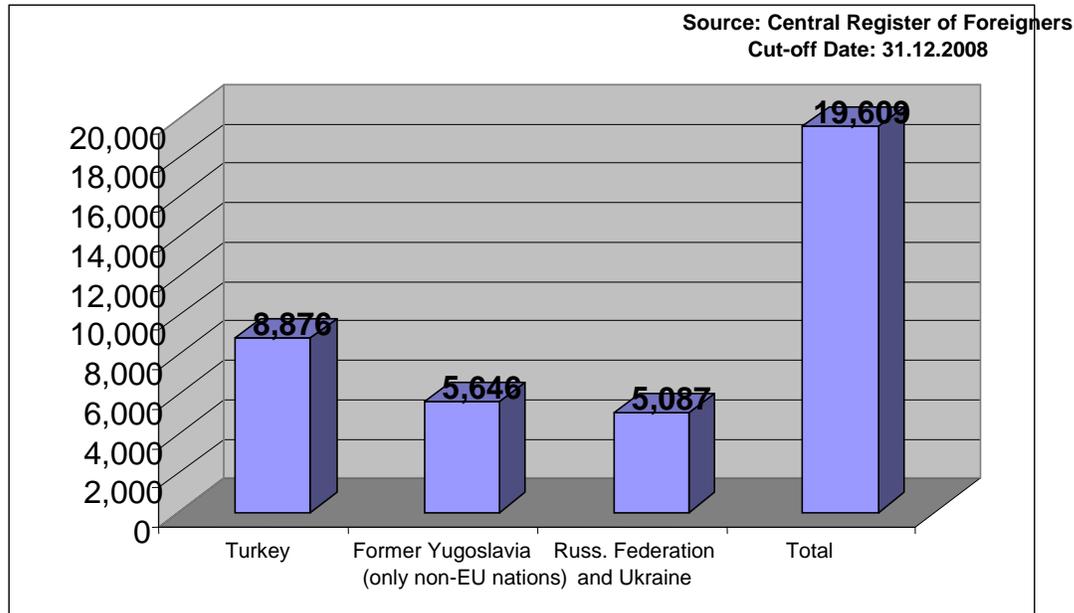
Australia. Thus, unnecessary errors on the part of the applicants are attempted to be avoided, since such errors could result in avoidable delays during the processing of the application or even to its rejection. Moreover, this puts paid to the activities of criminal "immigration agents" who demand exorbitant fees for their services. Within the framework of a *Pre-Screening*, prospective immigrants in Russia and the Ukraine can learn about their chances of a visa according to the Canadian points system for a small fee. The number of applications without any prospects for success worth mentioning can thus be reduced. This lightens the burden and accelerates the entire process of application processing in the embassies.

Further offers within the framework of *Pre-Consular Services* are the conduct of medical examinations, the booking of cheap flights, reception at the airport of the host country and accompaniment and support of migrants throughout the bureaucratic procedures directly following their arrival. Furthermore, IOM offers the verification of official documents and certificates. *Pre-Consular Services* can be interpreted as pre-integration measures, since they serve to simplify the immigration process.

### **3 Pre-integration Measures in the Context of Migration to Germany**

The proposals for preparatory measures for immigrants with Germany as the host country, described in the following chapters, are based on interviews with representatives of 29 experts from the field of integration work. These interviews have been systematically represented here. A large share of the expert discussions was claimed by the debate on advisory offers and pre-integration courses. The topic of assistance for immigration seekers in the course of visa processing was also addressed several times. Additionally, the optimal combination of pre-integration measures with integration offers in Germany and the organisational challenges in the countries of origin were discussed. The fundamental critique, expressed by the interview partners in respect of the concept of integration, is summarised at the end of this section.

**Image 3: Persons with entry visas in 2008 and with residence title issued for family reasons**



### 3.1 Integration Obstacles

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were requested to present their experiential knowledge about problems and obstacles in the way of integration of subsequent immigrant family members. In the course of the discussions, three problem areas, to which potential pre-integration measures could be applied, crystallised :

**Lack of knowledge of political, judicial and social structures:** Fundamental knowledge about the German state and its social security systems is essential for new immigrants. Though several specialised and problem-oriented advisory offers are available to immigrants in Germany, the persons frequently lack in an overview of the whole situation. Here, two large thematic blocks can be identified. First, the communication of everyday knowledge about the German social security, educational and health care system. Secondly, an introduction to the political system of Germany and the values on which it is based.

**Professional integration:** This thematic block was considered to be central by a majority of the experts. The difficulty in accessing the labour market and the slender prospect of adequate continuation of academic and professional careers are irksome for many immigrants. From the point of view of the German host country, this also implies that the professional potentials of migrants remain unexploited more often than not. Especially in the case of highly-qualified technical and management personnel required by the German

economy, the lack of opportunities result in a professional perspective suited to emigration from the Federal Republic of Germany. Therefore, not only should ways of entering the German labour market be pointed out in the course of potential pre-integration measures, but also exaggerated expectations should be discussed and dealt with.

The following problem areas were mentioned as central hurdles in the way of successful establishment of immigrants in the German labour market:

- Difficult right up to impossible recognition of leaving certificates and qualifications issued by foreign schools/universities/institutions. Here, generous regulations analogous to the recognition of certificates of returned resettlers would be welcome.
- Disadvantages vis-à-vis native job seekers owing to lack of language skills and lack of networking.
- Reservations of German employers against qualifications and certificates acquired abroad.
- Excessive demands on employment exchanges in the process of advising immigrants. One reason for this is the low level of awareness of further education and other offers for professional integration.

In the expert discussions, it was pointed out repeatedly that the actual improvement of professional integration of immigrants irrespective of their qualification cannot be achieved exclusively through pre-integration measures. Rather, this calls for easier recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, namely, both at the judicial level as well as at the level of acceptance by the society. The offer of upskilling ought to be expanded. Precisely in academic professions, additional training ought to be emphasised so that reentry into the professional world can be facilitated. Moreover, there was often a lack of understanding among the Germans for the fact that qualifications might exist even if they could not be supported by certificates. Here, there is a need to create more openness for the recognition of these abilities by employers. An expansion of the modular imputation of professional and academic qualifications could be helpful here. There was also a need

to actively look for ways to recognise job descriptions which are not present in Germany. These demands, frequently expressed by interview partners are, naturally, implementable only to a limited extent within the scope of pre-integration measures in the country of origin. However, they form the background for the recommendations of the interview partners and ought not to remain unmentioned for a better understanding of the proposals in this area.

**Inter-cultural Conflicts:** The questioned experts were by and large unanimous in their opinion that no comprehensive intercultural training can be conducted in the course of pre-integration measures. Rather, there was a need to lay the foundation stones for successful overcoming of the migration and integration process through reflection on one's own situation and through the promotion of a positive basic attitude. It ought to be made clear that intercultural coexistence always harbours conflicts, that these can, however, be dealt with constructively and that successful overcoming of these conflicts ultimately strengthens all the involved persons.

## **3.2 Potential Pre-integration Measures**

### **3.2.1 Pre-integration Courses**

In the interviews, the discussants expressed themselves primarily about the possible contents of pre-integration courses. In doing so, these deliberations were oriented to the three aforementioned problem areas described above.

#### *3.2.1.1 Social Science and Political Education*

The majority of the interview partners pleaded for the communication of basic everyday knowledge about the State and administration in Germany. Basic knowledge about the social security system was considered especially urgent, primarily knowledge about pension and health insurance. Right of residence in its main features was also to be made familiar to the immigrants. In particular, information about the rights and duties of new immigrants and about the possibility of obtaining permanent residence title or citizenship were mentioned in this context. Practical tips on dealing with agencies and authorities and clarification in respect of the possibility of demanding rights were likewise considered relevant.

A few interview partners emphasised the character of Germany as a “Jungle of Regulations“, meaning that ignoring of official orders or warnings could have grave consequences. This, according to the interview partners, was not always known to the immigrants who hailed from informal cultures and could lead to legal problems with grave implications. Another point, primarily mentioned in respect of immigrants from the Russian Federation, is the warning against criminal immigration agents who demand exorbitant sums for their ”services“. Therefore, it would be welcomed if the process of immigration to Germany were explained in detail with its legal and bureaucratic procedures and were, thus, made more transparent within the framework of pre-integration courses.

For parents, information about the education system is especially important. Owing to its threefold structure and the early separation of pupils among different school types, the German schooling system often represents a hurdle for children with immigrant background. This problem ought to be discussed and, in this context, there was also a need for canvassing for quick acquisition of German language skills, which is a necessary though not sufficient condition for success at school. The importance of the involvement of parents in their children’s career at school ought to be highlighted. The function of parent-teacher meetings, parent’s associations, the possibility of silent time for supervised homework, educational pilot services and similar helpful facilities are not always known to the migrants. The fact that violent parenting methods are not permissible in Germany must equally be made clear to the immigrants.

Many experts suggested that the theme of forced marriage and rights of women be addressed in the course of pre-integration and the fact be made clear that equality of genders counts as a central value in Germany. At this juncture, not just emergency call numbers and addresses of women’s shelters ought to be mentioned. Rather, low-threshold offers of advice and assistance ought to be pointed out here in order that possibilities of intervention can be used before a crisis occurs.

A few interview partners pleaded in favour of a broader interpretation of civics, which ought also to contain an outline of recent German history and an introduction to the political system of Germany. In the process, not only must the method of functioning be

explained, but also the values underlying the Federal Republic of Germany, above all, ought to be discussed. Without this fundamental knowledge, thus argued the interview partners, the entire political and social system in Germany was difficult to understand. Discussants, who work with immigrants from former Soviet Union, emphasised that their clients had no knowledge of a functioning democracy from their time in their country of origin, since even the successor states of the Soviet Union represented merely defective democracies. Moreover, a large measure of belief in the powers of the state was often a hindrance in the way of self-initiative of these immigrant groups. This often led to a lack of involvement in the school careers of their children, since schooling was perceived purely as a state responsibility not open to any influences.

Another point addressed by a few interview partners was how to encourage immigrants to greater political and social involvement. Information about the institution of honorary posts and involvement in sports clubs, in charities, fire brigades etc. could be of use here. The idea of holding an “honorary post“ is not very prevalent in societies of the country of origin for different reasons. In Turkey and in the Balkans, social involvement has its place within the extended family or the circle of neighbours. Holding honorary posts, however, would offer the immigrants several fold possibilities of additional qualification, of getting acquainted with the German society and actively contributing to its shaping. Immigrants are often still looked upon by the majority society as receivers of assistance and aid money, holding an honorary office allows them to break out of this mould and the role that is ascribed to them and promotes active participation of persons with immigrant background in the German host society.

### *3.2.1.2 Professional Integration*

The potential of preparatory courses for professional integration was sooner estimated as low by the discussants, since the level of previous education in the academic and professional sphere varies greatly in the case of subsequent immigrant family members. Generally applicable course contents are, therefore, hardly imaginable. Nonetheless, a few fundamental problems which could be addressed with the course content, could be identified.

Many discussants urged that myths about career opportunities in Germany be addressed. Often, false expectations prevailed about the opportunities in the German labour market, which could result in great disappointment and demotivation once the immigrants are confronted with the reality. In many countries of origin, the rumour still circulates that it is easy in Germany to secure a well-paid job even without higher qualifications. The frustrations which ensue when the immigrants are confronted with their real chances in the German labour market, can have a negative influence on the immigrant's readiness and willingness to integrate in the long term. Prospective immigrants ought also to be made aware of the fact that mastery of the German language is an important criterion for making gaining a foothold in the German labour market. An "intercultural training for the working environment" was suggested by some experts, since prospective immigrants could profit from an introduction to German work culture. In this context, even trainings for job applicants was conceivable. Local representatives of German companies could appear as guest speakers in such courses.

Several discussants suggested that practical training programmes for continuative and further qualification of immigrants be conducted in the country of origin itself. In this way, prospective immigrants could be brought close to the German labour market and, at the same time, be further qualified. Short advanced training courses and supplementary courses, beside profession-based language courses would be thinkable within this framework. Serving of apprenticeships with local branches of German companies would be another possibility of implementing such practice-oriented programmes. In the IT sector, local structures are not at all required, since it is possible to operate here via the internet while remaining localised. Such entry programmes must, naturally, be organised in close cooperation with the German economy. A few interview partners spoke in favour of a system which would allow the German companies to notify the respective countries of origin of the requirement of skilled and qualified personnel. Accordingly, the respective countries of origin would prospect for such workers among prospective immigrants and offer advanced training courses for the professional guild in demand. Practice-oriented programmes can represent an effective way of bringing prospective immigrants close to the German labour market. They are, however, also very expensive and would be realizable only for a small number of participants. The involved companies

would primarily be interested in highly qualified immigrants and would launch such programmes primarily to cater to this sector.

A few interview partners pointed out that professional integration cannot be separated from social integration and that intercultural problem situations can present difficulties even to highly qualified and professionally successful immigrants. If there has been no preparation for the stay in Germany, these persons can find it very difficult to integrate despite their high level of education. This is primarily valid for scientists who speak only English. It was considered especially advantageous to offer concentrated preparatory courses for highly-qualified persons and students, held by academicians who had returned to their country of origin after having lived in Germany.

### *3.2.1.3 Intercultural Training*

A comprehensive intercultural training, like that received e.g. by development workers prior to their foreign posting, would extend the scope of pre-integration measures. It could, however, make sense to address the psychic processes associated with migration to another country. One possibility would be to initiate deliberations on concepts like e.g. "Turkish and German Identity". Trivialising images of Germany ought to be avoided, since this would not do justice to the multifaceted German society. One could, however, approach the occurrence of identity problems in the migration and integration process via the discussion of images of Germany in the minds of the course participants. With the help of questions like "What do I take with me?", "What do I assume?" and "What do I retain?", the problem of "fluctuating identity" could be discussed. In this way, one ought to communicate that psychic reactions like "culture shock" or feelings of alienation are normal and are not a threat to one's own identity, but ultimately represent a possibility of evolving personally.

A few interview partners emphasised that the needs of children and adolescents, for whom the relocation to another country with a foreign culture poses a special challenge, ought not to be overlooked. Therefore, sensitising parents to the problems of their children in their new homeland ought to be a constituent of pre-integration. Special events for children and adolescents would also be conceivable. In doing so, hopes and cares in respect of the relocation to Germany ought to be addressed especially.

Prejudices against their society of origin, with which immigrants in Germany could possibly be confronted, can be equally addressed. In the case of pre-integration of Muslim immigrants, the topic of religion needs to be taken into consideration. For instance, women who wear head scarves are often exposed to discrimination in Germany, primarily when they apply for qualified jobs. For religious immigrants from societies with Muslim majorities, a relocation to Germany also signifies a life as a religious minority in a society with different values and traditions. A few discussants suggested that the field of conflict between Islamic values and everyday life in a majority secular society ought to be taken up as an issue in pre-integration courses. Several experts expressed the opinion that topics like women's rights and gender roles ought to be best discussed with Muslim immigrants within groups separated by gender. In the process, Islam in itself ought to be drawn upon as the basis of argument against domestic violence and forced marriages. However, any impression that being a follower of the Muslim religion is perceived as a "taint" by officials and authorities must be absolutely avoided. Instead, possible intercultural problems of religious Muslims in their everyday life in Germany ought to be depicted and adequate strategies for solutions to these problems ought to be clarified.

A point that was repeatedly highlighted in the discussions was that integration had a strong emotional component and, therefore, cannot be merely moored to legal aspects. Therefore, it was important to evoke a positive feeling towards Germany during pre-integration. German society ought to be described as an open and free society which, however, is also dependent on the observance of a few central rules. Films about immigrants who have successfully established themselves in German society (sportspeople, academicians, politicians, entrepreneurs) could underline this message. The adoption of German citizenship ought also to be solicited and it ought to be clarified that immigrants are welcome in Germany irrespective of their religious and cultural background.

### 3.2.2 Proposals for the Organisation of Pre-integration Courses

In addition to the previous statements, it ought to be noted at this point that the three central subject areas mentioned here need not be compulsorily dealt with in different courses. Based on the weightage given by experts in the interviews, the legal, social and

political structures in Germany would occupy a central position in a pre-integration course. Hints about the labour market and further education possibilities could be integrated here. Occupation with intercultural aspects, which aims lesser at the dissemination of knowledge and is sooner conducted interactively and playfully, could be included at the end of such a programme.

Neutral places, like offices of NGOs and international organisations come into consideration as venues for pre-integration courses. Participation would then entail a journey to the venue and possible overnight stay, since these institutions exist only in a few cities. Owing to long distances in many countries of origin, primarily in the Russian Federation, preparing pre-integration courses as *E-Learning* offers is also a possibility. Another possibility is presented by mobile teams which are not tied to one venue. Such teams could offer pre-integration courses in schools, sports halls and community centres in remote regions. Thus, even persons without internet connectivity could participate in such offers, without having to undertake costly journeys.

Among those who are considered as lecturers for potential pre-integration courses are primarily persons who have the same cultural background as the course participants and have got acquainted with Germany as immigrants. Based on their biographical background, such speakers have greater credibility and direct access to the course participants. Neutral course contents, like e.g. introduction to the German work culture or profession-based advanced learning courses, could also be conducted by Germans with the appropriate language skills. While communicating culturally sensitive topics like the rights of women, however, it is essential that the speaker should have the same cultural background as the course participants.

### **3.3 Advice and Orientation of Persons seeking Migration**

For the area of information and advice, the discussants envisaged many possibilities of enlightening prospective immigrants comprehensively about Germany in the country of origin itself with the help of new media. It was also repeatedly emphasised in the interviews that it was important to offer alternative advisory and support services to immigrants at an early stage outside their ethnic *community*. The existing ethnic, religious and kinship networks can have an inhibiting influence on integration in many cases and

sometimes perpetuate false notions about Germany. In particular vulnerable groups, like e.g. women in violent relationships and homosexuals, could apparently find very little help or support within some *communities*.

### 3.3.1 Information Campaigns

Campaigns with a broad scattering are well-suited to communicating generally applicable factual knowledge about migration to Germany and counteracting false notions. In many countries of origin, (state-run) television represents a potential communication channel. Films about everyday life in Germany and information for prospective new immigrants, e.g. about visa regulations, about obligatory language courses and possible pre-integration measures, could thus reach a wide public. Media campaigns, which communicate legal ways of immigration in the style of consumer information and warn against criminal "agents" and human traffickers would be likewise conceivable here. Another possibility would be represented by the distribution of "guides" for immigrants, which would contain information about the social and educational system, the labour market, Aliens' Act, among other things. Such brochures with practice-oriented basic information about Germany could be displayed in German embassies and distributed among participants of obligatory language courses. They ought to be composed in the native language so that they can be used as reference material.

The idea of a "starter package" for immigrants, borrowed from the "ADAC Tour Sets" (information packets for holidaymakers with city maps, important local addresses and travel tips etc.), thinks along the same lines. The difference as compared to guides lies in the fact that such packets would contain information about the future place of residence which, as a rule, is known in the case of subsequent immigrant family members. A city map and a list of the most important places offering advice and support, integration offers, addresses of local agencies and authorities as well as addresses of local German and immigrant associations could be possible contents. It was repeatedly emphasised by the discussants that local integration and support offers were often not known to the immigrants. Virtual information portals, where local authorities provide such information for new immigrants, were another frequently named idea. Such an offer would be relatively cheap to organise, but presupposes the possibility and the ability to use the internet on the part of the target group.

Further proposals dealt with “emigration fairs“ at universities, at which German companies could present themselves to prospective immigrants. Orientation events for German Abitur certificate holders and students, who wish to study at German colleges or are interested in possibilities of apprenticeship/internship and jobs in Germany, would likewise be a possibility. Students or university lecturers, who have already got acquainted with Germany through exchange programmes like Erasmus, could be included in these programmes.

### 3.3.2 Advisory Offers

Beside information campaigns and the provision of essential basic information, the discussants also pleaded for the provision of personalised advisory offers for prospective immigrants, in the course of which concrete questions could be answered. Several ideas were developed for this area by the discussants.

An online information portal for immigrants in their native language which provides information about everyday topics, e.g. housing situation, social security and health insurance related questions, the labour market, among other things, and additionally offers support services via e-mail was the favourite model. Therewith, a contact point is established, which not only allows the immigrants to receive basic information about their new homeland, but also to ask concrete questions about their future in Germany. In order not to exclude persons with low computer skills and without internet access, telephonic advice ought also to be considered. Another possibility would be the use of such an online offer by local advisers working in IOM missions, the *Migrant Service Centres* or other local advisory facilities and able to address their enquiries on behalf of their clients via e-mail.

Another service in this context would be the online checking of the status of visa applications. Many discussants emphasised the fact that the intransparent character and the often long waiting periods prior to the issue of visa for family reunification collectively contributed to the fact that the migration process begins with negative experiences.

An interesting proposal was made by a discussant from the Turkish *community*. He reported about plans of his organisation to start a mentoring programme for spouse

reunification. In the course of arranged marriages, young brides and grooms are sometimes lured to Germany with unrealistic promises about their future prospects. His suggestion for confronting these problems was to bring prospective spouses into contact with Turkish immigrants who have already been living in Germany for a while and can, therefore, convey a realistic picture. It would be possible to establish confidential and unofficial contact between prospective spouses and these honorary mentors via e-mail or telephone.

A step forward towards the improvement of opportunities for immigrants in the German labour market would be the better consultation of prospective immigrants in respect of their professional future. Easily accessible solution possibilities, like opportunities for further education available in the country of origin itself, the correct translation and attestation of certificates, can thus be pointed out on time. Moreover, advice in the country of origin offers the first opportunity to be informed about alternatives within the framework of professional orientation and further education in Germany.

The minimal variant of profession-based advice in the country of origin would be a brief, general introduction to the German (further) education system and the labour market, the maximal version would be individualised consultation with assistance like the translation of certificates and direct reassigning to relevant advisory and further education services in Germany. In this subject area as well, the usefulness of an online offer in the native language was often pointed out. In this way, the interlocking of pre-integration and continuative integration offers in Germany, which is especially important in the area of professional integration, could be ensured. Relevant players and institutions would be both the employment exchanges and, depending upon level of training and profession of the prospective immigrant, the carriers of further training offers, universities or the chambers of commerce and industry. Special offers as well, like for e.g. the academics programme of the Otto-Benecke-Stiftung or the job exchange responsible for the specific target group of Russian-speaking migrants in Cologne, ought to be made known on such a portal. Many discussants complained that such offers had were not very known among the immigrants and even among advisers at labour exchanges. In the course of an online offer followed by consultation via e-mail and on the telephone, prospective immigrants could be brought directly into contact with the organisations of interest to them and

carriers of further training offers at their future place of residence. Advanced training courses and the like could be booked from the country of origin itself so that there are no delays.

### **3.4 Pre-Consular Services**

The idea of making it easier for prospective immigrants to find their way to Germany by offering assistance during visa application, was welcomed by the majority of discussants. At the same time, almost all complained about the intransparent work method of the German embassies and the often unfriendly treatment of applicants. This often implied that the initial contact with the German embassy became a negative experience for prospective immigrants. Offers of support, primarily to older migrants and persons with low level of education, would be useful here. Thus, errors could be avoided and delays or rejection of the application could be prevented thereby. In this way, one could also put paid to the fraudulent attempts of criminal “migration agents“. The verification of certificates and other documents was equally considered to be helpful and ought to be offered in the course of profession-based advice.

### **3.5 Criticism of obligatory Language Test and Pre-integration**

Although the majority of interview partners spoke in favour of the concept of pre-integration, they also expressed criticism of the idea individually. This often happened in connection with the discussion of the controversial obligatory German language test for subsequent immigrant family members. Proof of participation in language courses as a condition for family reunification was criticised by many discussants. Several reasons were named for the attitude of rejection towards this regulation. For instance, the necessary participation in language courses in the country of origin that this regulation presupposed, was perceived to be too expensive. Furthermore, Goethe institutes, the main offerers of such courses, existed only in a few cities. Additionally, the contents of such courses were felt to be too demanding for immigrants with low level of education. The language courses, hence, had the disadvantage that they were conceived for members of the middle class and highly-qualified persons, and not for persons who needed help the most in the acquisition of the German language. Illiterates were especially discriminated against through the requirement for a language test. Those who had successfully attended and passed self-organised and often cheaper courses were felt to be at a disadvantage vis-

à-vis the participants of Goethe courses within the scope of the tests. The consequence was a virtual monopolisation. One of the interview partners observed that the courses in the context of arranged marriages were often pre-financed by the prospective husband as a “pre-investment“, so that the prospective bride came to Germany with ”debts“ which made a rejection of the marriage proposal very difficult for her. It was repeatedly demanded that the language courses ought to be free of cost and journey and overnight stay costs ought to be reimbursed.

In the course of the expert interviews, doubt was also expressed individually about the rationale of pre-integration measures. A few interview partners expressed the assumption that the usefulness of pre-integration measures was limited, since integration in the narrower sense could only take place during exchange with the host society, not in advance. Since integration is a two-sided process, which cannot succeed without a sufficient measure of openness on the part of the host society, the focusing on immigrants, which is inherent to the concept of pre-integration, was felt to be problematic by some discussants. Another argument of the critics was that immigrants were too occupied with the administrative and emotional separation from their original homeland and their old existence to be able to get involved with pre-integration measures. Practical knowledge, the kind that is communicated in orientation events and courses, did not help during the immigration act, since this was emotional and it concerned psychological processes like dreams, aspirations and fears etc. The attempt to anticipate the professional careers of immigrants in the country of origin itself was also doomed to failure owing to the complexity of this topic. Moreover, pre-integration service was already rendered by transnational networks of the immigrants themselves; state measures were, therefore, felt to be not needed and also not desired by the immigrants. A few interview partners feared that pre-integration measures might be misused as a vehicle of communicating a mainstream culture and might represent another hurdle in the way of relocation to Germany. In the course of the workshop, the points of criticism from the interviews were taken up as issues and considered as far as possible while developing potential pre-integration measures.

## **4 Recommendations for Pre-integration Measures**

From 9th to 10th July 2009, a workshop on pre-integration measures was held in Nürnberg, in which representatives of charitable organisations and immigrant self-help organisations as well as employees of IOM participated (see Appendix II). The results of the preliminary study, presented in the preceding chapters, which was sent to all the participants in advance, formed the basis of discussion in the course of which concrete recommendations for the implementation of pre-integration measures were developed in three working groups. This chapter systematically presents the proposals developed at the workshop.

### **4.1 Aims of Pre-integration**

Before proposals for a pre-integration strategy can be drafted, the aims of such measures must be identified in writing. In the course of the workshop, four superordinate aims were defined:

- Preparation and simplification/easing of the integration process
- Set up of a welcome culture
- Image cultivation in foreign countries through the communication of a positive picture of Germany
- Steering of migration through better management of family reunification and animation of desired migration

### **4.2 Relevant Target Groups in the German Context**

In principle, all the entitled immigrants are potential target groups. In the following, a distinction has been made according to immigrant status and country of origin.

According to status:

- Family reunification
- Highly-qualified persons and students
- Migrant labourers
- Resettlement refugees

Significant regions of origin:

- Turkey
- The Russian Federation and the CIS nations
- The nations of the Western Balkans

#### **4.3 Concrete Recommendations at the political Level**

The discussion of potential pre-integration measures can hardly be separated from the already existent **duty to acquire language skills** in the country of origin. Therefore, recommendations on this subject area also emerged from the workshop. The obligatory language test for family reunification immigrants ought to be dispensed with. In spite of that, the participation in language training courses in the country of origin ought to be promoted and made easier, e.g. by providing cheap courses and a wide range of offers even outside metropolitan cities. What was demanded was a **duty to participate instead of a duty to pass a language test**, so that the language courses are not perceived as a hurdle but as a helpful offer. Learning the German language ought to be obligatory for immigrants in any case, but only after their arrival in Germany could such an obligation be demanded. Moreover, owing to long-term delays between the language course in the country of origin and continuative courses in Germany, **individual tutoring instead of course tutoring** was recommended, in order to avoid the long waiting periods for the start of German language courses in thinly populated regions.

For many immigrants, emigration to Germany implies the loss of their qualifications. Together with the language barrier, this problem represents the biggest hurdle in the way of successful professional integration. The quick and unbureaucratic **recognition of professional and academic leaving certificates** acquired abroad is, therefore, a basic prerequisite for easier access to the German labour market and successful integration in German society.

A **separate right of residence for spouses**, irrespective of the duration of cohabitation in Germany, would allow subsequent immigrant spouses to make central decisions on their life independent of their spouse.

**Greater service orientation of German agencies abroad** is urgently needed. This must find expression, above all, in greater transparency of the bureaucratic process during the processing of visa applications and greater customer friendliness. A positive conclusion of the initial contact with German authorities is also in the interest of a welcome culture. Friendly treatment by embassy personnel and an efficiently functioning bureaucracy likewise play an important role in the successful courting of highly-qualified personnel.

#### **4.4 Points for Discussion**

The term “pre-integration“ was raised as the topic of discussion several times in the course of the workshop. Today, there is consensus on the issue that the term “integration“ describes a two-sided process, the success of which depends on the efforts of both the immigrants as well as the host society. Based on this argument, the **term “pre-integration measures“ appears to be unsuitable**. Alternatively, the following terminologies were suggested: “pre-information“, “pre-migration measures, ”preparatory courses“.

As to the issue of whether **potential preparatory measures** ought to be **voluntary or obligatory**, no consensus could be reached among the workshop participants. Three different positions crystallised out of the debate:

- Participation in preparatory measures could be named as a condition for the approval of visa application. Attendance of consultation hours and/or preparatory courses, therefore, ought to be documented in writing. This document would also need to be handed over to the immigrants so that it is visible during possible further consultation in Germany as to which measures have already been successfully concluded.
- There ought to be a duty to participate in preparatory measures for prospective immigrants, but no duty to pass a language test.
- The preparatory measures must be offered exclusively on a voluntary basis, since compulsion always implies an unacceptable intervention in the personal freedom of the immigrant.

## 4.5 Proposals for Projects in Countries of Origin

### 4.5.1 Cultural Orientation with Language Course Component

Borrowing from *Cultural Orientation* programmes, **civics training for prospective immigrants** could be conceived. In the process, pure factual knowledge ought to occupy lesser time than the communication of and debate on the normative scope of social life in Germany. The following topics were named as potential contents of *Cultural Orientation*:

Firstly, the communication of **basic knowledge about the host country** in terms of factual geography as well as information about everyday life in Germany:

- Politics, history, religion, civics, social security, health care and education system
- Information about contact points in Germany
- Identification of opportunities and difficulties in Germany
- Rights and duties of the individual (in particular, also, women's rights)

Secondly, the forwarding of information about the **debate on the normative scope of cohabitation in Germany** and the values of German society

- Intercultural sensitisation
- Equal treatment and equal rights of all persons
- Tolerance, democracy, human rights, rule of law
- Problematisation of sensitive and taboo topics like homosexuality, forced marriages and non-violent parenting

Language trainings and *Cultural Orientation* ought to be closely interconnected. Since intensive and effective language training is possible only after arrival in the host country, *Cultural Orientation* could be given greater weightage than the acquisition of German language skills within the scope of preparation for immigration. However, language trainings can be a part of *Cultural Orientation*. German language courses already being held in the countries of origin ought to additionally incorporate subject areas from *Cultural Orientation* in their curriculum. There is also the possibility of developing a playful variant of *Cultural Orientation* for children and adolescents.

#### 4.5.2 Information and Advice

An **in-depth consultation in personal meetings** could take place in the German agencies abroad in the course of visa application. In this context, increased support ought also to be offered in the course of visa application. Moreover, informative material, both in the native language as well as in the language of the host country, could be forwarded as early as at this moment in time.

Owing to the work method of the embassies and their role in steering the migration process, e.g. the safety check of applicants, intensive pre-migration consultation ought to be outsourced. The establishment of **external service centres or overseas agencies** for the support of prospective immigrants represents a possible model. As opposed to embassies, these centres could offer independent advice and communicate objective information about the immigration process and the host country. The overseas agencies ought to be represented in several locations in the country of origin and ought to advise both on the telephone as well as personally. At this juncture, it is conceivable to award the advisory services to independent carriers (for instance charitable organisations or private companies) in the form of sub-contracts signed with the overseas agencies. The following points were mentioned as possible contents of pre-migration advisory services:

- The way of functioning of social security system and of the education system
- Profession based consultation (cf. 4.5.3.)
- Legal advice (rights and duties of immigrants in Germany)
- Information about everyday life in Germany (rental prices, cost of living, values and norms etc.)
- Concrete information about the host local authorities (known in the case of subsequent immigration of family members, as a rule)
- Mediation of possible preparatory courses in the country of origin
- Marketing of continuative integration offers in Germany and/or with the host local authorities

**Psychosocial advice offers** would also be conceivable as another component, which would focus on counteracting the fear of immigration and the associated problems. These services ought to be rendered by independent carriers, which could be pointed out in the course of general pre-migration advice, if need be. Special advisory measures for women could be offered, for instance, in cooperation with local women's organisations.

A useful extension of the advisory offer would be the **information packets** about German health care, schooling and education system, the rights of immigrants, with addresses of information centres, charitable organisations and migrant self-help organisations in the host region. In this context, "starter packets" would be conceivable in the form of brochures or media-based information packets in terms of DVDs. In order to reach all prospective immigrants, these packets could be displayed at places of application for visa, i.e. in embassies and consulates. All the offers of information ought to be composed in the native language. The establishment of a central **information and/or advisory hotline**, on which prospective immigrants could ask their questions and would receive information about the host country, would be a possibility of creating a cheap contact point. Thus, it could be ensured that a contact person is always available for questions and problems throughout the emigration process. Beside a telephone hotline, an **internet platform** could also be set up. The starter packets could be available there as downloads.

#### 4.5.3 Optional professional Orientation

Orientation and course offers about professional opportunities could be offered separately as an optional module, which could be sought as and when required. Professional orientation ought to deal with the **expectations of German employers** on a priority basis and ought also to discuss German **job application modalities**. An important topic in this connection is the recognition of qualifications. On the one hand, a realistic picture of the obstacles in the way of entry into the German labour market ought to be communicated to prospective immigrants even before they embark on their journey. On the other hand, contact points and addresses for obtaining recognition of qualifications, further education offers and profession-based advice in Germany ought to be mentioned so that quick professional integration can be supported.

**Professional screening**, in the course of which the potential of the immigrant is analysed in detail, is recommended only for certain, specially sought professional groups and highly-qualified persons owing to the high amount of work and expense this entails.

#### **4.6 Methodological Remarks**

Content and methodology of potential preparatory measures ought to be **attuned to the host groups**. On the one hand, country-specific requirements ought to be taken into consideration; on the other hand, immigrants need different information each time depending upon their immigrant status. The following formula was suggested as orientation: 70% general content, 30% host group oriented content. The requirements of host group orientation give rise to the prerequisites for the selection of appropriate advisers and lecturers. They ought to be natives, who have ideally become acquainted with Germany from the migrant perspective. Thus, intercultural sensitivity and ability to empathise required by such an activity could be ensured in the best possible way.

The course offers ought to be designed **interactively and participatively** as far as possible and ought to contain less of ex-cathedra teaching. The aim must be the creation of a relaxed atmosphere in order that the participants are able to speak about their fears or, possibly, taboo topics. Moreover, they ought to be **cheap and easy to reach**. That is why preparatory courses must be held in larger cities without long gaps between courses. In countries which are vast in terms of area, **mobile teams** could be additionally deployed, in order that even prospective immigrants from rural regions are able to attend the courses without a lot of financial expenditure. Child care service ought to be offered to parents. This could be simultaneously used for also preparing children and adolescents for the outbound journey in a playful manner.

**Advertising and marketing for preparatory measures** in the form of flyers, readers or brochures in embassies and consulates was considered to be especially important. Thus, it could be ensured that prospective immigrants are made aware of potential preparatory offers at the time of visa application itself and can plan the attendance of such courses in the long term. Television broadcasts could also make the core statements and basic information of preparatory measures accessible to a wider public in the country of origin.

Moreover, a close **interlinking of all the preparatory measures** conducted in a country of origin of the immigrants ought to be ensured, in order to generate a synergy effect. Language courses, advisory offers and *Cultural Orientation* ought to be interrelated and the participants of one course ought to be motivated to participate in the other measures.

#### **4.7 Transition Management**

A central objective of every kind of preparatory measure must be the approaching of the integration structures in Germany, since the actual integration process starts only after arrival in Germany according to its definition. Time loss was mentioned as a fundamental problem during the transition between pre-integration measures and integration measures. This effect is known from the long waiting periods between the successful completion of the German language course in the country of origin and the outbound voyage to Germany, which is caused by the often sluggish processing of visa applications. Therefore, the creation of **structures against time loss** must be the primary aim of successful transition management.

For one, the aforementioned orientation, advisory and course offers would suggest themselves for the implementation of this requirement, so that **information about continuative integration measures, contact persons and contact points in Germany can be passed on** for use directly upon arrival. This purpose could be additionally served by native language “info-flyers“ and/or “info-readers“ about the integration offers in Germany, which can be displayed in the offices of overseas agencies and distributed in the course of pre-integration measures. In the case of subsequent immigration of spouse, the spouses already living in Germany could be involved in the measure. Furthermore, it would make sense to send them an info-flyer explaining all the remaining administrative aspects and integration offers in the direct surroundings.

Through the **coordination of curricula of integration courses in Germany and preparatory courses** in the countries of origin of the immigrants, a fluent transition for the participants could be achieved. Thus, it ought to be ensured that contents are not repeated and that it is possible to build on the knowledge gained from the pre-integration course. The example of Norway presented in the preliminary study was named as one of the successful models for transition management. For a long time now, content-related

coordination of the curricula of pre-integration measures and subsequent integration measures is practised there (see 2.1.1.2).

Another connecting point between pre-integration and integration is represented by **migrant self-help organisations**. Since they already make a significant contribution to integration activity in Germany, content-related topics of integration ought to be coordinated with them as well. Furthermore, they ought to be named as contact persons in the info-flyers handed out in the countries of origin.

An **obligatory host-country consultation**, which ought to be conducted shortly after arrival in Germany and which could continue directly where the consultations in the country of origin left off, was suggested by some of the participants. If the consultations and courses already attended successfully in the country of origin are documented, new immigrants could be advised more selectively and could be quickly reassigned to suitable integration offers.

The pilot services operating in Germany could provide a direct connection between pre-integration and integration. Hereunto, prospective immigrants ought to be referred to “Lotse” (pilot service) institutions as contact persons for support in Germany while they are still in their country of origin. In order that the multitude of Lotses operating in Germany remains manageable for the adviser in the country of origin, central contact points must be established and communicated. The development of a **geographical map of Lotses**, on which the respective locations of the Lotse institutions are marked, could be an important aid here. Thus, the advisers in the countries of origin could mediate direct contacts in Germany for those willing to emigrate. Essentially Lotses ought to have the following qualifications: knowledge of the city, networking with all the relevant places as well as knowledge of the language and culture of the respective country. Personal migration background is not perceived to be absolutely necessary. Since knowledge of regional structures is indispensable, the training of the Lotses ought to be decentralised.

In order to connect pre-integration and integration measures even more closely, **exchange programmes** ought to be installed, so that integration Lotses occasionally travel to the country of origin as trainer for pre-integration measures. Thus, prospective

immigrants could get to meet their contact persons in Germany in the country of origin itself. At this juncture, the Lotses themselves could form a current impression of pre-integration measures which they could build on in their work in Germany.

## 5 Summary of the Results

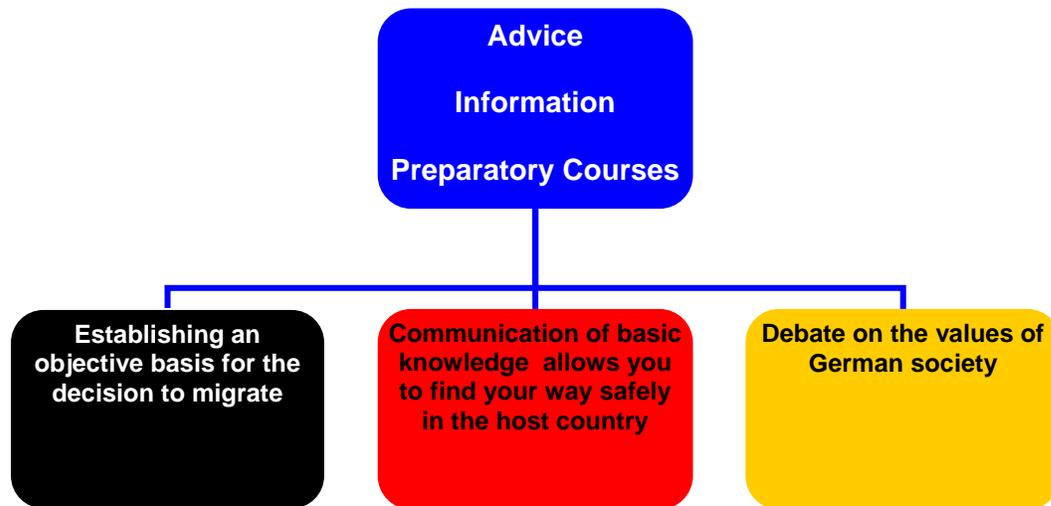
In the major countries of origin of migration to Germany, there are no offers of pre-integration measures other than the language courses offered by the Goethe institute for a fee. These language courses enable the prospective immigrants to prepare for the obligatory German language test. The needs assessment in the context of the project has, however, revealed that practitioners in the field of integration work definitely see a potential for such activities. In the course of the interviews, many proposals were made for pre-integration measures. In the course of the workshop, these proposals were developed further into concrete recommendations for action so that a future German pre-integration strategy could be defined. Two broad subject areas crystallised out of this process.

Firstly, the provision of **structures which permit general information and individual advice**. At this juncture, “overseas agencies“ were favoured rather than the expansion of the offer of German embassies, since the former could operate more neutrally. Independent information and advice even before embarking on the outbound journey could make an important contribution towards forming an objective decision-making basis for prospective immigrants. Beside the provision of basic knowledge about Germany, the communication of information about the integration structure in the specific municipalities would make the phase of familiarisation of the immigrants with the new homeland easier and ensure that offers of support and contact points are known.

Secondly, the topic of development of **preparatory courses for immigrants in terms of “Cultural Orientation“** was initiated. Extending beyond the scope of communication of basic knowledge, such events could allow the immigrants to actively discuss the values of German society and the political structures of the German state. There was a plea to combine language training and *Cultural Orientation*. In the process, the share of the language course was proposed to be lesser, since learning of the German language could be pursued more efficiently after arrival in Germany, whereas the communication of

basic knowledge about the state and the society ought to take place before departure for Germany. Nevertheless, the fundamentals of German language ought to be imparted and continuative language courses ought to be solicited in the country of origin itself. New immigrants ought to be ware of the fact that finding one's way in German society is difficult without German language skills.

**Image 4: Results of a successful pre-integration strategy**



Central for the success of a pre-integration strategy, irrespective of how it is devised, is **effective transition management** which ensures that the immigrants are reassigned to the integration structure in Germany directly after their arrival. At this juncture, networking with players in the field of integration work from all areas and, primarily, with migrant self-help organisations must be optimised. In the process, it must be ensured that as much local information as possible is made available in the country of origin itself, so that immigrants can prepare themselves optimally not only for Germany but also for life in the host municipality.

However, it was repeatedly emphasised during the interviews and the workshops that even the best of preparation of the immigrants must remain limited in its effect without a **long-term adjustment of basic political and legal parameters in terms of a welcome culture**. Increased service and customer-orientation of visa sections, easier recognition

of foreign qualifications and an independent right of residence for subsequent immigrant spouses were mentioned as especially urgent points in this context.

In spite of the critique of the obligatory German language test, which is seen primarily as an obstacle in the way of immigration, the majority of the participants considered **obligatory participation in pre-integration measures** as called for. However, an obligatory test was rejected. In order to guarantee the efficiency and acceptance of pre-integration measures, the same ought to be furthermore **oriented to host groups and ought to be accessible** without being expensive and time-consuming.

Both in the interviews as well as in the workshop, it was emphasised that much can be done at an early stage for the new immigrant's readiness to integrate, if a "welcome culture" in future determines the interaction with immigrants in the country of origin itself. Germany ought to be marketed as the "land of opportunities" in information material, in courses and consultations. Subsequently, it ought to be explained as to how one can best avail of these opportunities, namely by learning the German language, participating in integration courses, making use of further education possibilities and active participation in social and political life. Successful preparation imparts decision-making ability to the prospective immigrants which makes it easier for them to realize their future plans in Germany and awakens in them the feeling of being welcome in their new homeland. Germany is a country of immigration and ought to help its new immigrants more than previously to exhaust their potentials. Not least the German society as a whole stands to profit from it. Successful pre-integration can contribute towards this goal by laying the foundation stone for successful integration processes in the country of origin itself.