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Models of Co-operation
between Local
Governments and Social
Organizations –
Migration: Challenges
and Solutions

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RheinFlanke: HOPE

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The Research Project

Models of Co-operation between Local Governments and Social Organizations in Germany and China– Migration: Challenges and Solutions (LoGoSO Germany China) is a comparative research project of the Freie Universität Berlin, the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster and the Chinese Academy of Governance, funded by Stiftung Mercator.

This comparative research project looks at the co-operation between state and social organizations (SOs) in China and Germany. It focusses on social service delivery in the area of integration of migrating populations with special attention to the fields of education, employment, vulnerable groups and social assistance (incl. legal aid) as a crosscutting issue to all of the fields. Within this subject area, the project wants to identify different models of state-SO co-operation and analyze which models are successful and why and where this co-operation is problematic. It aims to capture the different models of co-operation in Germany and China, to analyze and compare the underlying structures and to show potentialities for development.

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1 Introduction

HOPE is an integration program of the social enterprise RheinFlanke. Started in 2015, the program developed out of RheinFlanke's offers of mobile youth work. Under the slogan "Developing Perspectives" ("Perspektiven entwickeln"), the program strives to sustainably integrate refugee youth into the educational system and labor market. To achieve this objective, the program employs a similar approach as RheinFlanke's other programs. HOPE reaches adolescents and young adults via free-of-charge sports programs in youth centers and refugee accommodations. After employees have gained their trust, youth are provided with individual counselling services. They take the form of case management, during which refugees receive information on job and schooling perspectives, as well as placement in schools and vocational training. In addition to counselling, youth can take part in several workshops to improve their soft skills and knowledge of the German labor market. Currently, RheinFlanke operates the program HOPE in Cologne and Berlin.

The report will be structured as follows. The next chapter briefly describes the development of the managing organization, RheinFlanke, its internal structures, general activities and relationships to other actors. The second chapter focuses on HOPE in particular. It outlines the activities conducted within the program and its relationship with the local government. Finally, the model of co-operation is analyzed and some conclusions regarding collaboration in the policy field of education and youth are drawn.

2 Information on the organization

2.1 General information

RheinFlanke started as a local street football league in the city of Cologne in 2006 (Brüntrup 2017: 17). Inspired by projects that used football to enhance social skills and development in young people during of the Football World Cup hosted in Germany in that year, two social workers came up with the idea to combine street football and pedagogical initiatives.

In the beginning, the football league was supported by a start-up grant from the city of Cologne (10,000 Euro). Due to massive positive feedback, and several inquiries by other municipalities, RheinFlanke was established as a private limited liability company with public benefit status in 2007 (Bräuer et al. 2017: 8). Since 2008, RheinFlanke has continuously expanded its offers to additional cities along the Rhine and, in 2015, set up a branch in Berlin. Many of these cities made RheinFlanke a permanent component of their youth work services (Brüntrup 2017: 18).

Nowadays, the organization is active in nine cities where it mostly operates in districts with socioeconomic difficulties and high percentages of migrants. Accordingly, its main target group are poor and migrant youth who have limited access to education and vocational training (Grabbe et al. 2018: 152). They are in practice, predominantly male, and between the ages of 14 and 18 (Bräuer et al. 3).

2.2 Activities

While the organization focused on football as a way to reach disadvantaged youth in the beginning, it has now extended its offers far beyond that by now. However, the core idea behind RheinFlanke's activities remains unchanged. It is to reach deprived adolescents via open sports programs and to help them to develop and enhance their social skills:

We support young people in discovering their needs and fostering capacities. We strengthen their strengths and show ways. We accompany them and enable them to find their place in the game of life and to feel like a valuable part of society.” (RFMD)¹

In this way, sports activities serve as a starting point to reach adolescents in socially weak neighborhoods. It also provides a setting to develop and enhance their social skills – such as fairness, responsibility, and tolerance.

The first pillar of RheinFlanke’s activities is mobile youth work that is currently offered in all nine cities. Next to football training, it includes dancing courses, individual counseling or job application trainings. Employees approach adolescents on football grounds, playfields or schoolyards, get in contact and then try to build mutual trust through ‘open’ (without previous registration and free of charge) sports activities (Bräuer et al. 2016: 4). Next to this mobile youth work, the organization provides daily free-time activities in youth centers and sports clubs in two districts of Cologne. There, it also organizes holiday camps and celebrations in co-operation with local associations (RheinFlanke 2018a; Rösger 2018).²

The second pillar of RheinFlanke’s activities is social work and open youth work in several all-day schools in Cologne. Similar to its offers of mobile youth work, these activities are mostly sports-based, but also extend to musical education, theater workshops and foreign language tutoring. In cooperation with external partners, RheinFlanke provides programs to prevent Islamist radicalization and bullying, as well as business education in schools (RheinFlanke 2018c: 43ff.).

In addition, RheinFlanke provides several particular projects offered in one or more of its sites. For instance, it offers the program ‘Work for you’, which addresses adolescents in the transition from school to working life and gives them the chance to improve their skills by engaging in voluntary work (RheinFlanke 2018c: 62). The organization estimates that it reaches around 2,000 adolescents per week (RheinFlanke 2018a).

All in all, RheinFlanke’s starting point to engage its target population are sports activities, but many youths later join the social enterprise’s other offers. These go far beyond sports and include social and individual and group work, job counselling and training placement and aim at helping them in their transition from school to working life (Bräuer et al. 2016: 4).

2.3 Internal governance structures

Presently, RheinFlanke employs 71 salaried workers, 13 of whom have a background as migrants or refugees (RheinFlanke 2018c: 82). RheinFlanke is led by two managing directors, its founders Christoph Bex and Sebastian Koerber, both friends and former colleagues (Bräuer et al. 2016: 5; RheinFlanke 2018c: 81). They are supported by an administrative team of six employees (ibid.). The organization is divided into five operative units. These are 1) Cologne, 2) Berlin, 3) all other sites in the Rhine area, 4) the cooperation with schools, and 5) the development of competencies in sports. The organization has a board of supervisors and a board of trustees. The board of supervisors consists of two lawyers and a TV celebrity, while the board of trustees includes 28 members from the local administration and

¹ “Wir unterstützen junge Menschen dabei, ihre Bedürfnisse und Möglichkeiten zu erkunden. Wir stärken ihre Stärken und zeigen Wege auf. Wir begleiten sie und versetzen sie in die Lage, ihren Platz im Spiel des Lebens zu finden und sich als ein wertvoller Teil der Gesellschaft zu fühlen.”

² For further information see <http://www.rheinflanke.de/gremberghoven/> and <http://www.rheinflanke.de/stadt-koeln-2/>, last accessed 05/01/2019.

prominent public figures of the Rhine area (RheinFlanke 2018c: 81; RheinFlanke 2018a). The board of supervisors advises the organization in financial and legal matters, while the board of trustees assists in networking. Figure 1.1. depicts the organizational structure of the organization.

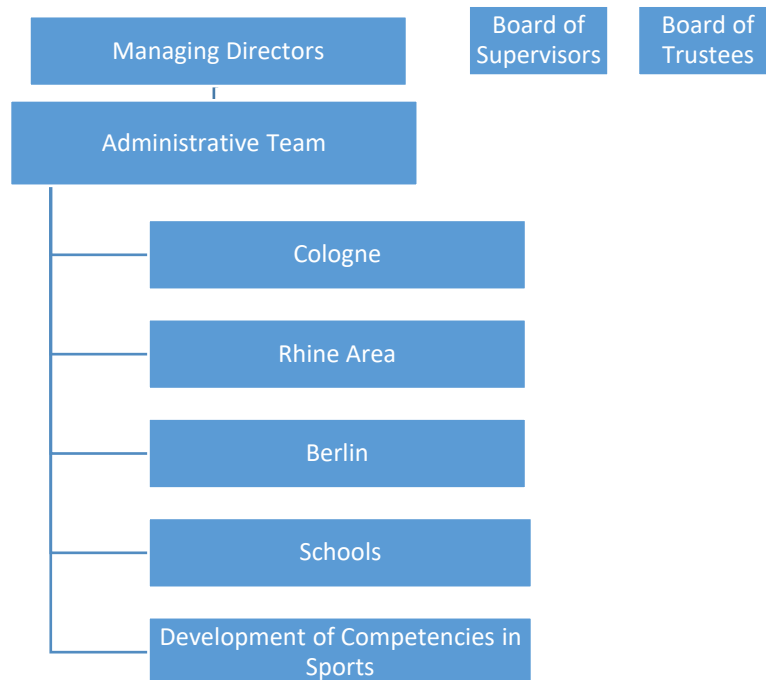


Figure 1.1: Organizational structure of RheinFlanke

Own representation based on RheinFlanke 2018c: 81.

RheinFlanke's annual budget is about 3 Million Euro (RheinFlanke 2018c: 101). It mainly consists of project-oriented grants (95 percent) and donations (3 percent). The grants for projects are received from (business) foundations (53 percent), the local government (35.5 percent), the European Union (9.7 percent) and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (1.7 percent) (ibid.: 102). There is no earned income because the program does not charge user fees.

The majority of HOPE is financed via grants by foundations. The largest share is given by the SKala initiative (*SKala Initiative*) founded by Susane Klatten, shareholder of the automotive group BMW (RFH). This foundation will contribute funds until 2020 but reduces them annually. Therefore, RheinFlanke must acquire further grants from other foundations or public authorities to pursue HOPE in the future years (ibid.). Only HOPE mobil, a side project of HOPE dealing with mobile youth work in refugee accommodations, receives around 30 percent of its funds from some of Cologne's district administrations (ibid.).

Nonetheless, the funds provided by foundations and the district administrations does not cover all the activities that are conducted and all the services that are needed for running HOPE and HOPE mobil. Therefore, RheinFlanke draws on volunteers, in particular for the sports offers. For instance, two football teams consisting of participants of HOPE have joined the local football league in Cologne (Hinrichsen 2018). They are coached by volunteers (RFH). To acquire these volunteers, RheinFlanke cooperates with the local volunteer agency (RheinFlanke 2018a). Moreover, many former participants of HOPE stay connected to the program (Wiedemann 2018). Outside of the sports activities, RheinFlanke refrains from involving volunteers, in particular in counselling or job coaching services. These activities

are conducted by professional integration pilots because they demand a high reliability, specific knowledge and temporal flexibility:

“The volunteer works somewhere else full-time. He isn’t free all the time, but appointments come in spontaneously. The youngster says that he has received a letter from the immigration authority. Can somebody accompany him? The integration pilot has the time and quality for this service. [...] When volunteers come, we are eager to involve them into our fixed dates.” (RFH)³

2.4 Networks

We think in socio-spatial dimensions, we intensively work in different districts and we initiate network processes [...]. We can only initiate and drive change if all social institutions work together. (RFMD)⁴

This statement by one of RheinFlanke’s founders, Sebastian Koerber, emphasizes that RheinFlanke attaches great importance to its regional integration. It has established a dense local network of 70 partners from the public administration and recognized sponsors from sports, politics and TV that guarantee nationwide publicity and funding (RheinFlanke 2018a). Amongst the most prominent individual sponsors are the Lukas Podolski Foundation (by football world champion Lukas Podolski), the GOFUs e.V. (a network of professional (ex-) football players), and the Dirk Nowitzki Foundation (professional basketball player) in the sports sector (ibid.). Moreover, other prominent sponsors are the RheinEnergy Foundation, which belongs to a regional energy company or the Ford Motor Company Fund (ibid.).

Furthermore, the fact that RheinFlanke’s board of trustees is manned with celebrities from film and television and locally engaged politicians and businessmen and women helps to steadily expand existing networks. They guarantee the publicity necessary to raise funds and help out with donations. Nonetheless, RheinFlanke’s directors see the organization’s support by celebrities and big donors as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is considered absolutely necessary as RheinFlanke’s work is difficult and time-consuming to sell to broader audiences. On the other hand, it involves the risk of making the organization’s financial situation appear more stable to the public and authorities than it actually is. (Bräuer et al. 2016: 6).

Finally, although employees of RheinFlanke stress that the organization is not affiliated with any party (RHF), the organization is involved in several local and supra-regional networks with the aim to shape policies. Since 2009, RheinFlanke has been a member of the umbrella welfare associations *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband*, one of the six big umbrella organizations of voluntary welfare work in Germany (Bräuer et al. 2016: 9). Furthermore, it participates in the Federal Association of German Associations (*Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen*) (RheinFlanke 2018a) and the state working group of North Rhine-Westphalia Streetwork/mobile youth work (*Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Nordrhein-Westfalen Streetwork/Mobile Jugendarbeit*). On the local level, it attends regular network meetings organized by the office of youth welfare (YWO2). These meetings assemble all providers of youth welfare active in Cologne (ibid.). Finally, RheinFlanke highly values resisting all forms of racism and

³ “Der Ehrenamtler ist auch irgendwo anders hauptberuflich. Der hat nicht immer die Zeit und es kommen hier spontane Termine rein. Der Jugendliche sagt, ich habe gerade einen Brief von der Ausländerbehörde, kann jemand mit? Der Lotse hat die Chance und die Qualität das zu machen und deswegen sind wir schon darauf bedacht, dass wenn Freiwillige kommen, wir sie in unsere festen Termine einbeziehen.“

⁴ “Wir denken in sozialräumlichen Dimensionen, wir arbeiten intensiv in unterschiedlichen Stadtteilen und initiieren Netzwerkprozesse. [...] wir können nur Wandel initiieren und vorantreiben, sofern alle sozialen Einrichtungen zusammenarbeiten.“

right-wing violence. For instance, it supported the Cologne Tidings (*Kölner Botschaft*) in which local celebrities spoke out against xenophobia that arose in reaction to the incidents of New Year's Eve in Cologne in 2015 (RheinFlanke 2018a; Rossmann 2016).⁵

3 Information on the program and its co-operation with the local government

3.1 General information on the selected program and its development

After the previous chapter has outlined the managing organization RheinFlanke, the following chapter will introduce its integration program HOPE. This section will start with some general information on the program and its development.

HOPE developed out of RheinFlanke's offers of mobile youth work. As many refugees arrived in Cologne around the year 2015, they quickly became participants in the organization's regular offers in youth centers and its mobile youth work all around the city (Hinrichsen 2018). At the same time, motivated to provide refugees with an opportunity to integrate themselves into society and to escape the boredom of refugee accommodations, Benjamin Meßner, a sports scientist and social worker, founded a football team consisting of refugees living in a shared accommodation (Schätzle 2015). He gave the team the name H.O.P.E. and those four letters stand for hope, opportunity, peace and empathy (ibid.). Soon the football team attracted the attention of RheinFlanke and the organization incorporated it into its service portfolio by hiring Meßner as full-time project leader (ibid.). In 2016, several local foundations and district administrations started to fund the project and RheinFlanke was able to extent it from a one-man-show to a small program active in several accommodations and youth centers around the city (RheinFlanke 2018a). At the beginning of 2017, the approval of significant funding from the SKala initiative gave HOPE the opportunity to scale-up (RheinFlanke 2017: 79). Since the start in 2016, the range of services, their professionalism and number of employees has continuously grown. Currently, HOPE is implemented in RheinFlanke's sites in Cologne and Berlin and employs a total number of 17 staff (RheinFlanke 2018a).

At first, the most urgent demand of refugees was to elude the tedious monotony of the day and to learn the German language (RFH). For this reason, HOPE's social workers focused its activities on sports offers and provided help in dealings with the authorities. They accompanied refugees to doctor appointments and the local Integration Point, where they received information on integration and language courses (ibid.). However, as the decision-makers of RheinFlanke realized that providing refugees with schooling and employment is the only way to integrate them thoroughly into society, this became the pivotal issue of HOPE's activities.

To achieve this objective, HOPE relies on RheinFlanke's proven method of youth work. It reaches adolescents and young adults via free-of charge sports offers in youth centers and refugee accommodations (RheinFlanke 2018c: 56). After employees have gained their trust, youth are provided with individual counselling offers (ibid.). Its target groups are refugees between the age of 16 and 27 with a good perspective to stay in Germany (ibid.). Nonetheless, the program welcomes older refugees and those with other residency statuses, too. Participation in the program is voluntary (ibid.).

⁵ For further information on the Cologne Tidings see <http://www.rheinflanke.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/koelner-botschaft-auf-deutsch-data.pdf>, last accessed 06/01/2019.

3.2 Distribution of responsibilities in the program

In the program HOPE, RheinFlanke has established targeted counselling, supervision and workshops for young refugees and combines these with the regular offers of RheinFlanke and its partner organizations. The responsibilities and activities of the various actors in the program will be illuminated in the following section.

Social workers of HOPE, so called integration pilots (“Integrationslotsen”), approach young refugees via sports activities in youth centers, schoolyards or playgrounds (RheinFlanke 2018b). In the framework of the project HOPE mobil, the sports offers are also conducted in refugee accommodations (ibid.). After the integration pilots have established a trusting relationship with the adolescents, they are invited to take part into counselling (ibid.). This is conducted a by RheinFlanke facilities by professional coaches with a background in psychology or social pedagogy. The coaches provide the adolescents with information on job and schooling perspectives and assist them in their search for a place in a school or an opportunity for vocational training. The coaching is wide-ranging, as participants also receive information and referrals for language courses and childcare facilities for their children. Next to the individual case management, it is the task of the professional coaches to make contact with schools, public institutions and businesses and to make appointments for participants with these. Integration pilots accompany the participants to these appointments (RFH). After an adolescent has been successfully placed in schooling, vocational training or employment, both, professional coaches and integration pilots maintain their function as contact persons for refugees and employers (RheinFlanke 2018b; RFH).

These main components of HOPE are flanked by the HOPE Academy, the project HOPE Life and the HOPE Café. The HOPE Academy is a joint project of RheinFlanke and the foundation of the local Chamber of Industry and Commerce named IHK foundation for training maturity (*IHK Stiftung Ausbildungsreife*). It is financed by the asylum, migration and integration fund (*Asyl-, Migrations- und Integrationsfund*) of the European Union (2014-2020) and supplements the individual counselling offers of HOPE by providing thematic group workshops dealing with working culture, working life, computer skills and self-confidence (RheinFlanke 2018b). Furthermore, in the framework of the HOPE Academy, visits to companies are regularly organized (ibid.). All in all, the project provides the refugees with an opportunity to exchange their experiences, train their skills and gain insights into other work environments.

In contrast to the HOPE academy, which deals with work-related hard and soft skills, HOPE Life aims at strengthening the mental state and health of refugees to support their continued engagement in vocational training and schooling (RheinFlanke 2018b). For this reason, the project motivates refugees to follow a healthy lifestyle by conducting workshops on conflict management, stress reduction, healthy diet and addiction prevention (ibid.). The program is funded by the initiative new quality of work (*Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit*) of the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs (ibid.). Finally, RheinFlanke runs the HOPE Café on Wednesday evenings. There, participants are given the chance to get to know each other and to share their experiences and ideas in an informal way (RFH).

Furthermore, the participants of HOPE can make use of several offers of RheinFlanke’s partner organizations. For example, a close co-operation partner is the Heimspiel gGmbH, a provider of youth welfare services that offers facilities of assisted living to the participants of HOPE (RheinFlanke 2017: 79). The program HOPE has also built close relationships to other initiatives and organizations involved in the labor market integration of refugees such as the network Chance+ Refugees and Employment

(*Chance+ Netzwerk Flüchtlinge und Arbeit*) and the service point KAUSA (*Servicestelle KAUSA*). Similar to RheinFlanke, these initiatives provide professional coaching and placement in vocational training and jobs. Occasionally, a refugee takes part in both, the program HOPE and the offers of these organizations. Nonetheless, representatives of RheinFlanke do not see the other programs and organizations as competitors but perceive the exchange with these organizations as a good opportunity to increase the expertise of HOPE (RFH).

3.3 Co-operation with the local government

The co-operation between the program HOPE and the local public administration takes two major forms. Employees of HOPE deal with administrative agencies and schools during the case management of participants. Further, they apply for funding for the project HOPE mobil at the district administrations.

First of all, professional coaches and integration pilots of HOPE make contact with public agencies when supporting participants in their administrative proceedings. The most relevant public agencies are the immigration authority, the local integration center (*Kommunales Integrationszentrum*), the job center and the Integration Point (RFH). The program does not have specific persons of contact or fixed procedures in the public administrations but instead contacts institutions according to the needs of participants. While some are quite independent and usually communicate with public departments autonomously, others benefit from assistance (ibid.).

We don't have a contact point to whom I always send the participants. Instead, it is always very individual as every participant comes with different prerequisites. Some get along quickly and have already registered at the Integration Point, have enrolled their children in the kindergarten, have joined the German class autonomously and you don't have to do a lot in that case. Others have to be accompanied somewhere. (RFH)⁶

Regarding the administrative procedures of their clients, it is a major obstacle that the public administration does not make information easily accessible for the respective target groups and intermediary organizations. Therefore, employees of HOPE recommend tailored information for the respective target groups that is communicated more broadly (RFH). Furthermore, when contacting public agencies on behalf of their clients, the employees of HOPE find it problematic that they have to make various phone calls to public actors. Due to the pronounced hierarchies in the administration, and the limited availability of certain employees on phone, it is difficult to reach the right contact person. Further, it is criticized that information provided by public employees has to be double-checked because it is not always correct (RFH). Representatives of HOPE perceive that this is mainly due to the constant personnel turnover in the administration. So, new employees have to get acquainted with their work and the coaches of HOPE have to establish good contacts to new public employees again and again. However, it is stressed that once the right contact person is reached, the communication is very friendly and congenial. Public employees are described as very cooperative in terms of sharing information and scheduling appointments for participants (RFH).

⁶ "Wir haben jetzt aber nicht irgendwie so einen Punkt, wo wir sagen würden, ich schicke die immer dahin, sondern das ist immer sehr individuell, weil jeder Teilnehmer von uns andere Voraussetzungen mitbringt. Die anderen sind schon flott unterwegs und haben sich schon beim Integrationspoint angemeldet, haben ihr Kindergartenkind da angemeldet, gehen selber in den und den Deutschkurs und eigentlich muss man da gar nicht mehr viel machen. Andere muss man irgendwo hinbegleiten."

Regarding the specific co-operation with the immigration authority, representatives of HOPE say that receiving the necessary work permit to start a job or vocational training is a major challenge for participants. Employees of HOPE stress that they would like for the immigration authority explain its decisions and provide greater transparency:

Concerning certain decisions of the immigration authority i.e. regarding work permits, there sometimes seems to be arbitrariness. There is somebody for whom you have found a job. In his passport is stated 'with permission from the immigration authority'. Then you go to the immigration authority, but he does not receive the permit. Reasons are not given. I would wish for more. (RFH).⁷

Furthermore, refugees not only have difficulties with administrative documents and procedures, but in many cases also need some general education in order to participate in vocational training. For this reason, RheinFlanke frequently sends participants to two evening schools in Cologne (RFH). One of these is the Evening Secondary School of the city Cologne (*Abendrealschule der Stadt Köln*) (ibid.). This school enables adolescents from the age of 17 to complete the basic school qualification (*Hauptschulabschluss*) within one year or to obtain a vocational extension certificate after two years.⁸ This vocational extension certificate qualifies participants to start vocational training. To be accepted in the school, the state laws demand students certify that they possess work experience or are currently employed on a mini-job basis.⁹ There are some exemptions from this rule, but according to the headmistress of this school, it is a major obstacle for refugees willing to learn, that state laws have become more restrictive recently and the exceptions have decreased (ARS). As a result, it is very difficult for refugees to prove that they have gained work experience in their home country (ibid.).

At the Evening Secondary School of Cologne refugees usually attend a preparatory course for one year. These courses are detached from the regular classes, as they teach the regular curriculum with a focus on German as a foreign language (ARS). After having completed the preparatory course, they can transfer to the school's regular classes. According to the headmistress, the language capacities of a large amount of refugees attending the school are by now sufficient so that they can follow the regular classes right from the start (ARS). To improve their language capacities further, the students in the regular system can take part in extra-curricular German classes or practice the language with a language buddy. This language buddy is usually an international student that has been sent by the local volunteer agency.

The ARS holds co-operation contracts with several non-profit organizations, for instance the KAUSA network offers job counseling in Arabic that is available to all students in the school (ARS). RheinFlanke's co-operation with the school is not based on any written agreement, but similar to the dealings with other administrative departments, solely in relations to the individual refugee attending the school (ibid.). However, to support the educational success of participants, a regular exchange between the teachers and coaches of HOPE takes place and a trusting relationship has been established (ibid.). Both, employees of RheinFlanke and the school indicate that the co-operation is functioning well. As both sides are highly interested in the educational success of the students, the

⁷ "Gewisse Entscheidungen der Ausländerbehörde, was z.B. Arbeitserlaubnis betrifft, es kommt so rüber, als würde manchmal Willkür herrschen. Da hat man jemanden, für den findet man eine Arbeitsstelle. Im Pass steht ‚mit Erlaubnis der Ausländerbehörde‘. Dann geht man zu der Ausländerbehörde hin und er bekommt es trotzdem nicht. Die Begründungen warum fehlen. Da würde ich mir mehr wünschen.

⁸ See <https://ars-koeln.de/index.php/studieninfos/studiendauer>, last accessed 27/12/2018.

⁹ See <https://ars-koeln.de/index.php/studieninfos/voraussetzungen>, last accessed 27/12/2018.

potential for conflicts is limited (ARS). To achieve this objective, consultations and agreements are taken non-bureaucratically (ARS; RFH).

Finally, RheinFlanke co-operates with some district administrations and district youth offices in the project HOPE mobil. In 2015, the council of the city of Cologne decided to promote the integration of refugee children and youth into the services of child and youth work (Stadt 2017: 39). The council particularly encouraged the development of offers that support the connection between newly arrived youth and the local population (ibid.). For this reason, it started to provide each district of the city with a yearly sum of 80,000 to 90,000 Euro to fund low-threshold projects by free providers (YWO2). Usually, free providers apply for the funding at the district youth offices by handing in concepts for proposed projects (RFH). As there are fixed rates for these services, free providers are not chosen according to price criteria but on the basis of their previous experience, quality and geographic location in the respective district (YWO2). Against this background, RheinFlanke has entered into several contracts with the city administration and receives funding for HOPE mobil (RFH; YWO1). In many districts, there was such a high demand for services of mobile youth work that the local youth office urged RheinFlanke to submit HOPE mobil as a project (YWO2).

Both sides, RheinFlanke and the representatives of the city, describe the co-operation as a success story. The local administration considers RheinFlanke as a “joker that can be drawn if [there is] a spontaneous need” (YWO2)¹⁰ for its services. Another member of the administration names the ability to “come up with creative solutions” and “quality” of its services as the program’s unique selling points (YWO1).¹¹ Furthermore, it is perceived as beneficial that the organization’s work is usually long-term oriented and very reliable (YWO2). Moreover, it is seen as an asset of HOPE and RheinFlanke that in contrast to the large welfare associations, the organization work is not bureaucratic and appointments are arranged very quickly (YWO2). In turn, employees of HOPE consider it to be beneficial to the co-operation that the administration is very clear and precise about which services it expects. Furthermore, the employees of the district youth offices are characterized as being very open and supportive if changes have to be made to the original plans determined in the contract (RFH). However, two aspects impede the co-operation and its long-term perspective. First, while the funding for 2019 is secured, representatives of the city voice doubts that the municipal funding will continue in the upcoming years. This is due to the fact that the number of refugees coming to Cologne is decreasing steadily (YWO1). Second, representatives from the administration would like for representatives of RheinFlanke, and HOPE in particular, to join more network meetings on the district level to facilitate the exchange between the administration and with other organizations. A regular exchange with the local administration could help RheinFlanke and HOPE to involve the organization into further projects and activities financed by the local government or federal level (YWO2). So far, the employees of HOPE regularly join only a select few working groups and network meetings that they consider as relevant for their operative work. These are particularly organized against the background of the federal government’s program Local Coordination of Educational Services for Newly immigrated Individuals (*Kommunale Koordinierung der Bildungsangebote für Neuzugewanderte*). In Cologne, this program has led to the employment of two members of staff of the local integration center as educational coordinators in 2017 (Stadt Köln 2017: 53; Grabbe 2018: 11). Their main task is to connect the relevant public institutions and nonprofit actors (Grabbe 2018: 13). Employees of HOPE, as well as the headmistress of the ARS, underline that since their introduction, the local integration center functions

¹⁰ “Für uns sind sie der Joker, der, wenn wir Bedarf haben, diesen spontan abdecken kann.“

¹¹ “Die Qualität [...], kreative Lösungen zu finden, das ist schon etwas, was RheinFlanke ausmacht.“

as a one stop agency for the educational matters for refugees. Furthermore, the relevant public actors and non-profit providers are far better connected (RFH, ARS). However, for HOPE it is difficult to attend more than these meetings because the program lacks sufficient human resources (RFH).

In contrast to its managing organization RheinFlanke, HOPE holds limited ambitions to influence policies and instead focuses on the operational work. Its employees perceive the project as too small and failing sufficient human resources to make any impact on policies (RHF). Nonetheless, employees of HOPE are open to transmit their practical experiences to policy makers and other important stakeholders if they meet these in any networking rounds.

In sum, collaboration with the local administration focuses on the operative work and is mainly established on a case-by-case-basis. Coaches and integration pilots get into contact with departments of the local government or schools according to the needs of the individual participant. Usually there are no specific persons of contact or fixed procedures, but contacts change continuously due to a high personnel fluctuation in the administration and the diverse needs of participants. An exemption from this co-operation model resting on the case management of the individual participant, can be found in the project HOPE mobil. A share of the funding for this project is provided by the district administrations on a contract-based basis.

3.4 Assessment of the effect of the program

The ultimate goal of the program HOPE is to integrate young refugees sustainably into the labor market and society by providing education, internships and jobs. RheinFlanke reports in its current leaflet of the program HOPE that since the end of 2016, 53 adolescents were provided with a job or vocational training and 233 have started internships, schooling, language courses and other qualification programs (RheinFlanke 2018a). In-depth evaluations on the effect of HOPE, and to what extent it promotes sustainable educational and labor market integration, have not been undertaken thus far.

Nevertheless, according to its participants, businesspeople and policy makers, the program can be considered very successful. In particular, a 23-year-old participant values the comprehensive support of the program:

“The vocational training will soon enable me to be self-sufficient and lead an independent life. [...] My coach has always supported me. I could ask her for everything, even when looking for a flat or for administrative procedures. It is nice to always have a contact person.” (RheinFlanke 2018a)¹²

Furthermore, entrepreneurs are supportive of HOPE because it provides them with an opportunity to find apprentices for those jobs that are not popular among German youth such as shop assistants, craftspeople or caregivers (RheinFlanke 2018c: 61). HOPE provides information on these jobs and advertises them among refugees. Despite some language difficulties, entrepreneurs consider the refugees as highly qualified and motivated (ibid.). Second, in the hiring process, RheinFlanke helps businesses and youth to circumvent bureaucratic hurdles such as the application for work permits (ibid.). Thirdly, with their individual coaching and the workshops of the HOPE academy, RheinFlanke provides long-term support for enterprises and refugees to ensure that they keep up with their schooling and jobs in the long run (ibid.).

¹² “Mit meiner Ausbildung kann ich bald selbst für mich sorgen und mein Leben gestalten. Meine Betreuerin hat mich immer unterstützt! Ich konnte sie wegen allem fragen, auch wenn es um die Wohnungssuche oder Behördengänge ging. Es ist schön immer einen Ansprechpartner zu haben.”

Finally, representatives of the public administration stress that HOPE, and in general RheinFlanke, offer advantages when compared to other providers of youth welfare in the city: In contrast to the established large welfare associations and public institutions, they praise the organization's high flexibility and non-bureaucratic style of work, which makes it possible to implement the services of the organization quickly (YWO2). At the same time the organization has proven itself as a reliable partner in the long run. This is very remarkable because it is chiefly financed via time-limited project grants:

They have long experience in local contexts. What we don't need are things like projects, that start and end, [...] like you have some counselling here and there. We need reliable things, that are long-term oriented. (YWO2)¹³

4 Conclusion

The lion's share of the co-operation between RheinFlanke and the public administration takes place during the case-management of individual participants. Only in the side project HOPE mobil, does RheinFlanke provide youth welfare services based on a contract with the district-administrations. The co-operation usually arises on a case-by-case basis depending on the previously acquired qualifications and living situation of the refugee who participates in the program HOPE. As information on labor market access and schooling opportunities is not easily accessible for young refugees, coaches provide them with information and frequently contact the respective public agencies on their behalf, be it the providers of working permits, childcare facilities, schooling or social benefits. In general, public institutions are friendly and cooperative so that in many cases a trustful relationship with the employees of HOPE has been established. Nonetheless, due to the pronounced hierarchies in the administration, it is sometimes cumbersome to reach the persons in charge. Furthermore, the high personnel turnover in the public administration makes it necessary to double-check information.

Apart from these contacts based on the needs of the individual participant, a share of the funding for project HOPE is provided by an annual grant of the city council aimed at strengthening open youth work for refugees in the city. The money is distributed by the district youth offices via competitive tendering. However, as personal costs and overhead for the services of youth providers are fixed according to a tariff, free providers are not chosen on the basis of a new public management approach that values the lowest prices but on the basis of their previous experience or location in a district. District youth offices like to co-operate with RheinFlanke in project HOPE mobil because the organization combines the flexible, creative non-bureaucratic working style of a young organization with the profound local integration and long-term orientation of an established provider. At the same time, the working style of the district youth offices seems to not be very bureaucratic as they communicate their expectations openly and give RheinFlanke the freedom to change plans. Apart from this positive aspect of the co-operation, it should be noted that the funds provided by the city council are not a permanent institutionalization of Hope mobil. Instead, it is uncertain whether the provision of funds for youth work with refugees will continue as the number of newly arriving refugees in Cologne is constantly declining. In the program HOPE, the employees have devoted all their resources to the operational work with young refugees but not to policy making. Nonetheless, to secure further funding for project HOPE via local and federal grants, representatives of the district youth office

¹³ "Sie sind langjährig in örtlichen Bezügen. Was wir nicht brauchen können, sind so Dinge wie Projekte, die anfangen und aufhören im Sinne von [...] man macht hier mal 'ne Beratung und mal dort. Wir brauchen verlässliche Dinge, die dauerhaft angelegt sind."

encourage RheinFlanke, and specifically the employees of HOPE, to engage themselves more in working groups and network meetings on the district level.

All in all, the case of HOPE demonstrates how the social enterprise RheinFlanke has transferred its proven approach of mobile youth work to the new target group of refugees. The program can be considered as successful because it serves the needs of participants and businesses and has gained the support of the local administration via funds for project HOPE mobil. While participants value it for its encompassing support and opportunity to empower themselves, entrepreneurs can fill the so called 'lack of specialized workers' by hiring motivated employees. Policy makers and administrative representatives have found a way to integrate youth into the education system and labor market and to get them in touch with the local population. HOPE is the ideal co-operation partner for them because of its flexibility and good local integration that was established via its managing organization RheinFlanke. Despite this positive picture, it should be noted that RheinFlanke as a whole, as well as program HOPE, is chiefly dependent on project grants and therefore needs to continuously cultivate contacts to networking partners and donors. This demonstrates that although the integration of refugees into the labor market and education system has been recognized as important and organizations like RheinFlanke have begun to tackle this issue, thus far no permanent government funding channel has been established in this policy field. Therefore, despite the arrival of refugees as a new target group, the style of co-operation between social organization and local administration remains largely unchanged.

Interviews:

RFH RheinFlanke Hope employees, RheinFlanke, MitarbeiterInnen Abteilung Hope

RFMD RheinFlanke managing director

ARS Evening secondary school Cologne, principal (Abendrealschule der Stadt Köln, Schulleiterin)

YWO1 Youth Welfare Office Cologne, employee, district Rodenkirchen (Mitarbeiter Jugendamt Stadt Köln, Bezirk Rodenkirchen)

YWO2 Youth Welfare Office Cologne, employee, district Mülheim (Mitarbeiter Jugendamt Stadt Köln, Bezirk Mülheim)

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