

LoGoSO

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

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Employment

Bridge. Berlin Network for the Right of Residence

Danielle Gluns, Universität Hildesheim

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Contact

Freie Universität Berlin
Fabeckstr. 23-25, R. 1.1124
14195 Berlin
katja.levy@fu-berlin.de

www.logoso-project.com

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

Bridge is the name of a network of various organizations that support the labor market integration of refugees¹ and migrants in Berlin. This report explains the network structures, their internal collaboration, as well as the collaboration with external actors. It focuses on the relationships between public and non-profit organizations at the local level. The report is based on an analysis of documents such as the federal program, prior evaluations and media reports, the websites of the network partners and in-depth expert interviews with representatives of some of the participating organizations.

In the following chapter, the network partners and their general activities will be depicted. The account will focus on those organizations that have been interviewed (chapters 2.1-2.3), while the others are only briefly described. The second chapter then outlines the federal program that funds the network, its structures and activities, as well as the co-operation with the local government in more detail. The network is a special case of a collaboration between the city and other organizations, because the coordinator of the network is employed at the Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, SenIAS). Therefore, she has a dual role as being part of the network and of the local public administration. In this report, the SenIAS will be treated as one of the “organizations” that participate in the network – which seems to conform to both her self-conception and her close relationships to the other network partners – even if her position provides a strong link to the local government at the same time.

2 Information on the participating organizations

2.1 *Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales* (SenIAS) / Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs

2.1.1 General information

The Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs is part of the Senate, i.e. belongs to the government of the land Berlin. The government, which consists of the Governing Mayor, and a maximum of ten additional Senators, assigns the responsibilities of the respective Senate Administrations (tasks and names of the branches vary between electoral terms). Senate Administrations may be comprised of subordinate agencies that are state authorities with responsibilities encompassing the entire city (Musil and Kirchner 2017: 44f). In the field of SenIAS, these subordinate agencies include the State Office for Health and Social Assistance (*Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales, LAGeSo*), which had initially been responsible for the accommodation of and social assistance to asylum seekers, as well as the State Office for Refugee Affairs (*Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten, LAF*), which took over this task in August 2016.

2.1.2 Internal governance structures

The Senate Administration has been under the auspices of Senator Elke Breitenbach who belongs to the political party *Die Linke* (The Left, socialist party) since the inauguration of the new regional government in December 2016. The Administration is currently divided into three departments. The first one is the department for Integration and Migration under the State Secretary for Integration. It encompasses tasks such as general policy matters on migration and integration, counselling for migrants, and the Welcome Center (see 2.1.3 below). The department of Labor and Vocational

¹ The term “refugee” is used in a broad sense here to denote all persons who live in Germany with the legal status of a recognized refugee, asylum seeker, or exceptional leave to remain (“toleration”) (cf. Gluns 2018a: 7f).

Education takes care of employment law, active labor market policy and vocational training. Lastly, the department of Social Affairs is responsible for unemployment benefits, as well as accommodation and social assistance under the responsibility of the LAF (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales 2018). Thus, tasks regarding the integration of refugees are the responsibility of all these departments. The Senate Representative for Integration and Migration (*Beauftragter für Integration und Migration des Senats von Berlin*), Andreas Germershausen, is therefore responsible for the “strategic coordination” (*strategische Steuerung*) of integration policy as a crosscutting task. He also manages the department for Integration within SenIAS. Moreover, he is in charge of the collaboration with, and support of, non-profit organizations (NPOs)², especially for organizations run by migrants.³ In particular, he supports projects that foster integration and human rights (Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Integration und Frauen 2015: 16). The Senate Administration is funded out of the public budget and will spend app. 1.3 billion Euros in 2018 (Senatsverwaltung für Finanzen 2018: 25).

While volunteers are not directly involved in the Senate Administration, it supports them with funds according to the Master Plan – e.g. for qualification or certain projects – and is seeking to involve them by regular meetings with voluntary initiatives (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2017: 14; Senat Berlin 2016: 72–78; Garrelts 2017).

2.1.3 Activities

SenIAS is directly involved in policymaking and implementation. For example, it is currently revising the Master Plan for Integration through a participatory process where organizations can provide inputs for the new Overall Concept for Integration (*Gesamtkonzept Integration*). As part of the government of the land Berlin, the Senate can shape integration policy in fields such as education, reception and accommodation and health care. Moreover, the department for Labor and Vocational Training of SenIAS is developing and partially implementing the labor market and employment policy of the land Berlin. However, two other crucial bodies in these fields are the job centers that are organized at the level of the districts and the employment agencies that are directly governed by the Federal Employment Agency (for their respective responsibilities see Gluns 2018a). Policy implementation is partly assumed by public bodies themselves. For example, the State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF) is disbursing social assistance according to the Asylum Seekers’ Benefit Act. Other tasks are implemented by private and nonprofit organizations with funds made available by SenIAS, e.g. for the implementation of the Participation and Integration Law or for the accommodation and counselling of migrants.

2.1.4 Networks

Integration as a crosscutting topic requires collaboration across departmental and administrative boundaries. Therefore, the collaboration of the Senate Administration with other public and non-

² Non-profit organizations can be defined as entities that are organized, non-governmental, limited profit-distributing, self-governing, and voluntary (Salamon and Anheier 1997; Salamon and Sokolowski 2014). In Germany, they comprise a broad variety of organizations such as the free welfare associations (Wohlfahrtsverbände, confederations of organizations active in various fields of social assistance, organized along ideological and religious lines), voluntary associations (*Vereine*), private law foundations (*Stiftungen des Privatrechts*), cooperatives (*Genossenschaften*), and non-profit private limited corporations (*gGmbH*) (cf. Zimmer *et al.* 2016). Besides these non-profit organizations, the non-profit sector also encompasses less organized voluntary initiatives or movements.

³ See <https://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/service/ueber-uns/>, last accessed 03/09/2018.

public entities is explicitly called for in the description of its tasks.⁴ A number of new agencies have recently been created to improve refugee integration and collaboration between public and private service providers. Firstly, co-operation within the Senate Administration, as well as with external providers, is promoted by the Welcome Center that was established in 2016 (BR_SenIAS⁵). It serves as a one-stop shop where migrants can receive various counselling and other services from five regular employees of SenIAS, as well as by representatives of external partner organizations (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2017: 15f). Moreover, a Co-ordination of Refugee Management (*Koordination Flüchtlingsmanagement*) was created in 2017 to improve communication and networking at both at the level of the city and the districts. It focuses on improving the accommodation of refugees in Berlin and on their participation in policy-making and society (Integrationsbeauftragter Berlin 2018: 17). The Co-ordination is part of the department of Labor in the Senate Administration for Integration. Further networks and relationships that directly relate to the field of refugee integration will be explained in the second chapter of this report.

2.2 Berufsfachschule (BFS) Paulo Freire / Vocational School Paulo Freire

2.2.1 General information

A second important organization within the network is the Vocational School (*Berufsfachschule*, BFS) Paulo Freire. The activities of today's school started in 2005 with the development of preparatory courses for training and employment in the care sector in collaboration with a large private company in the health and care sector in Berlin (*Vivantes*). Starting in 2009, the concept of these courses was further developed in the framework of the precursor of the federal program that now funds the Bridge network (BMAS 2012). They were institutionalized in 2012 by the foundation of the school. The school also provides vocational training courses for becoming a social assistant in the care sector. The school was initially under the auspices of Vivantes (Noetzel 2014), until a non-profit limited liability company took over the management in 2016 (Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN 2017b: 25).

2.2.2 Internal governance structures

The Center Survival (*Zentrum Überleben*) that has managed the school since 2016, is itself in majority ownership of a foundation (*Stiftung Überleben*) and in minority ownership of the registered association Treatment Center for Victims of Torture (*Behandlungszentrum für Folteropfer, bzfo e.V.*). The center has eight specialist departments, most of which are concerned with the psychosocial support and treatment of traumatized persons. Over time, these activities have been supplemented by activities supporting the integration of migrants, e.g. through counselling and training (cf. Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN 2017b). The vocational school is a central component of this expansion (Poelchau 2016). The educational work of the school is publicly certified and its activities are in large parts funded by regular public funds (BMAS 2012). Moreover, the school raises participation fees for its vocational training courses, amounting to 75 Euros per person per month (BR_BFS).

Volunteers are not directly involved in the work of the school, even if the employees work overtime without payment if need arises and have even installed an "emergency phone" for a client when she was threatened with expulsion. In addition, public payments for the salary of the lecturers of the Basic

⁴ See <https://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/regierender-buergermeister/senat/geschaeftsverteilung/#arbeit>, last accessed 03/09/2018.

⁵ The interviews have been coded to indicate the organizational affiliation of the interview partners. The abbreviations are explained in the references section of this report.

Care Courses (see chapter 3.2.1) is so low that a certain degree of intrinsic or humanitarian motivation for accepting the job is usually required (BR_BFS).

2.2.3 Activities

The school pursues several goals. Firstly, it strives to enhance access of refugees and migrants to training and employment in the care sector. Secondly, this contributes to relieving the lack of specialists in this sector. Thirdly, increasing the employment of migrants in care professions enhances intercultural competences and openness of the health and care sectors in Berlin (Kötter 2015). All of these goals shall be achieved by providing education and training with an intercultural curriculum, individual support as well as by collaborating with Vivantes, one of the main employers in this sector in Berlin. Training for becoming a social assistant (*Sozialassistent*) takes two years and allows for simultaneously obtaining a general school-leaving certificate (*Mittlere Reife*). The BFS and Vivantes have developed a cooperative recruitment procedure that helps to place graduates of these courses either in employment as assistants or in three-year trainings as qualified nurses or health care workers (Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN and Vivantes n.y.).

2.2.4 Networks

The Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN coordinates the Berlin Network for Vulnerable Refugees (BNS). In 2008, it was established, in coordination with the Senate Administration for Health, to develop a procedure for screening asylum seekers and refugees regarding potential vulnerabilities and to care for these persons according to their needs. In the network, seven non-profit organizations collaborate to achieve early and tailored interventions to prevent chronification e.g. of psychological diseases.

Apart from these networks, and the formal collaboration with Vivantes, the school collaborates with other providers in the field of health and care in Berlin. It has initiated a network consisting of organizations from the health sector and universities in Berlin and is engaged in the network of the Marburger Bund “Not alone”, in which various organizations collaborate to provide services to unaccompanied minor refugees (Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN 2017b: 23–25).

2.3 *Beratungs- und Betreuungszentrum für junge Flüchtlinge und Migranten (BBZ) /* Counselling and Support Centre for Young Refugees and Migrants

2.3.1 General information

The project was founded in 1994 to provide encompassing counselling to young refugees and migrants in Berlin. Today, it is managed by the registered association *KommMit e.V.* (“Come with Me”). The association was founded in 2013 and has grown rapidly since 2015, when many new projects were developed, and new funding streams were made available to deal with the increase in refugee migration. In addition, the project has reacted to changing needs. For example, family reunification is a topic that has gained importance due to changes in federal law that made it virtually impossible for family members of persons with “subsidiary protection” status to legally join their relatives in Germany (BR_BBZ).

2.3.2 Internal governance structures

Funding for the activities of the BBZ and *KommMit e.V.* is exclusively project-based and comes from various sources. Among them are public funds, including federal and regional funds, as well as donations by a number of foundations, but also membership fees (BR_BBZ; *KommMit e.V.* 2016). The association now has more than 40 employees (BR_BBZ). Many of them are social workers with a long

experience in the fields of youth welfare, the Social Code and aliens' and asylum laws. Moreover, they have various national or ethnic backgrounds and speak different languages.⁶ Volunteering does not play a large role in the work of the center or the association, even if the board of directors is a voluntary body. There are some lawyers who provide counselling work on a pro bono basis (BR_BFS).

2.3.3 Activities

The goal of the BBZ is to achieve equal societal participation in spheres such as education and employment and foster the integration of refugees and migrants.⁷ The focus of the counselling center has always been on young refugees, and in particular on issues of education. However, in the wake of the change in management, the diversification of needs and the increase in projects since 2015, this focus has broadened and now also comprises support in family reunification, psychosocial support and legal counselling regarding the asylum procedure (BBZ o.J.; BR_BBZ). In addition, the BBZ is striving to sensitize the public on issues of asylum migration and young refugees and is participating in political activities such as demonstrations.

2.3.4 Networks

The BBZ is strongly engaged in the Bridge network, whose relations will be described in chapter 3 of this report. Moreover, it has close links with various providers of youth welfare in Berlin that can supplement the counselling of the center with projects funded by the Youth Offices of the districts. For example, it coordinates the working group "Young Refugees", a network of service providers, initiatives and employees of public agencies in the field of youth welfare. It is also the specialist department for minors within the network for vulnerable refugees (BNS) which is coordinated by the *Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN*. In addition, it has relationships with intermediary organizations and small- to medium-sized enterprises to support the placement in work and internships (BR_BBZ). Moreover, the counselling center benefits from the networks of the managing association *KommMit* (KommMit e.V. 2016) that have opened up possibilities for new projects and activities (BR_BBZ).

2.4 Arbeit und Bildung e.V. / Labor and Education⁸

The registered association was founded in 1986 in response to increasing youth unemployment in Berlin. Its goal was to create a novel approach and improve services for unemployed youth by increasing the collaboration between public and quasi-public agencies. Both the organization itself and its activities have grown since its foundation. In the 1990s, the association began its engagement for young refugees and migrants with a helpdesk to provide counselling and by motivating businesses led by migrants to provide places for training and internships. *Arbeit und Bildung e.V.* now has 25 employees, many of whom have worked for the organization for more than ten years.

The organization is mainly providing counselling and work integration services, based on a lifelong-learning concept and on the perception that integration into employment can ensure stable private and professional lives. It is directed at youth and young adults who are disadvantaged in the labor market due to their educational background, age, religion, gender or ethnicity. In particular, its services now focus on refugees and migrants. Funding for its activities comes from various sources, including federal ministries, Senate administrations, local youth offices and job centers.

⁶ See <http://www.bbzberlin.de/ueber-uns/team.html>, last accessed 10/09/2018.

⁷ See <http://www.bbzberlin.de/ueber-uns/organisatorisches/84-leitbild.html>, last accessed 15/08/2018.

⁸ All information retrieved from www.aub-berlin.de (last accessed 04/09/2018), unless otherwise indicated.

Together with the BBZ, *Arbeit und Bildung* has founded a non-profit competence center (“Check-Up”) that is located in the Youth Occupational Agency (*Jugendberufsagentur*) in Tempelhof-Schöneberg. It provides counselling and coordinates the providers of youth welfare services in close collaboration with the youth offices, job centers, public employment agency and the Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Science. Moreover, it has a counselling project for refugees in Welcome Classes and for their parents, as well as being a partner in the project „Berlin needs you“ („*Berlin braucht dich*“) that strives to enhance internships of refugees in (public) companies.⁹ Moreover, the organization is collaborating with partners from the economy, in particular the Chambers and small- to medium-sized enterprises.

2.5 *Kurdistan Kultur- und Hilfsverein (KKH e.V.) / Kurdistan Culture and Help Center*¹⁰

The Cultural Center was initially founded in 1974 to preserve the cultural heritage of Kurds living in Berlin. This focus was extended to becoming a meeting place and to conducting public relations work for the interests of Kurds. Later on, the exclusive focus on the Kurdish population was equally broadened to other groups of migrants, including refugees, and the association started to assume additional tasks. Its main underlying rationale is to foster self-help of these groups through empowerment by providing courses and particular projects. For example, the organization has developed a sports project in collaboration with sports associations, where multipliers are educated to reduce discrimination and to promote diversity and the participation of migrants in sports. In addition, the organization seeks to reduce boundaries between German and migrant populations by fostering encounters and mutual understanding. The organization is also a publicly certified provider of migration counselling.

2.6 *Über den Tellerrand e.V. / Beyond the edge of one’s plate*¹¹

The registered association *Über den Tellerrand* was founded in Berlin in 2013. The name translates into “beyond the edge of one’s plate”, which is the German colloquial expression for “beyond one’s own nose”. It demonstrates the initial main field of activity of the organization that was to foster exchange and combat prejudices through joint cooking and eating. These activities were chosen because they allow for encounters on a level playing field and without too many language barriers (Collet 2016). The association has obtained a lot of public attention, as well as various awards and scholarships. The mobile kitchen “Kitchen on the run” is touring Germany, spreading the idea and cooking with refugees and locals in different municipalities.

By now, the association is also conducting other creative and sports projects, publishing and selling cookbooks and offering cooking classes. The association also organizes a mentoring program (“Building Bridges”) where newcomers and natives or former migrants are matched two to one to support integration and mutual learning. These activities are funded by the income generated from the sale of cookbooks and cooking classes, as well as by project-based public funding and donations. The association now employs 13 persons and works together with 35 volunteers (*Über den Tellerrand e.V.* 2017).

⁹ See <https://www.berlin-braucht-dich.de/ueber-bbd/>, last accessed 15/08/2018.

¹⁰ All information retrieved from <https://www.kkh-ev.de/> (last accessed 04/09/2018).

¹¹ All information retrieved from <https://ueberdentellerrand.org/about> (last accessed 04/09/2018), unless otherwise indicated.

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

3.1 General information on the selected program and its development

The Bridge network is mainly funded through a joint program of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*, BMAS) called *ESF-Integrationsrichtlinie Bund* (ESF Integration Guideline). Its aim is to assist persons with difficulties in accessing training and employment and to foster their sustainable integration into the labor market. The term of the current program is from 2014 to 2020. However, its activities are a combination of successful components of former programs, the EQUAL Community Initiative (2002-2007) and “XENOS” in the ESF grant period of 2007-2013. The main idea behind these programs was to strengthen relationships between various actors from the public, private and non-profit spheres, in order to reduce barriers for labor market access (Bundesregierung 2015).¹² Thus, building local or regional networks was and is a mandatory component of the federal programs. In the current funding phase, these collaborative networks must include the local employment agencies or job centers as well as non-profit organizations and employers as either operative or strategic partners.¹³ The partners complete formal collaboration contracts regarding their contributions to the network, which should guarantee coherent chains of support and structured hand-over of the participants between the special measures of the networks and regular support offers. The networks shall thus support the regular activities of the employment agencies and job centers by providing better access to the target groups and supporting them irrespective of their legal status (*“rechtskreisunabhängig”*, i.e. disregarding their entitlement to services according to the different books of the German Social Code or the Asylum Seekers’ Benefit Act) (BMAS 2017: 6f).

The networks apply to the Federal Ministry for funding in a competitive process. The Ministry decides on the applications and disburses the funds – a combination of funding from the ESF and its own ministerial funds – based on quotas for each federal state. Each organization in a network receives 50 percent of the funding for its network-related projects from the ESF and 40 percent from the Federal Ministry. The remaining 10 percent must be provided by the respective organizations themselves. In the case of the Bridge network, the Land Berlin, i.e. the Senate, has provided these 10 percent with funds from the Master Plan Integration since 2016.¹⁴ Previously, the organizations used their own or philanthropic funds. Funding by the ESF and BMAS is currently guaranteed until June 2019, and a prospective extension until the end of 2020 has recently been announced. In this case, the participating organizations must acquire the 10 percent funds for the additional months, as well (BR_SeniAS). All networks that are part of the federal program are organized in regional and federal umbrella

¹² In particular, the first German program was developed to support the implementation of a policy change regarding persons with the status of an exceptional leave to remain (“toleration”). Many of these persons had lived in Germany with this temporary status for several years, because their deportation was not possible due to administrative or practical reasons. In 2007, federal law was changed; introducing the possibility to obtain a residence permit under certain conditions, among them the requirement to autonomously earn a living. As most “tolerated” persons had been barred from labor market access for many years, this requirement was hard to fulfil. The networks for a right to remain (*“Bleiberechtsnetzwerke”*) were thus aiming at supporting the migrants in obtaining paid work and thereby consolidating their legal residence status.

¹³ See also <https://www.esf.de/portal/DE/Foerderperiode-2014-2020/ESF-Programme/bmas/2014-10-21-ESF-Integrationsrichtlinie-Bund.html>, last accessed 04/09/2018.

¹⁴ Source: Internal reporting, provided by the network coordinator.

networks¹⁵ to exchange information on good practices, funding options and needs, and thereby contribute to quality assurance (BMAS 2017: 8).

The overall program is directed at various groups with difficulties in accessing the labor market, including young adults, unemployed persons and migrants. The Bridge network is part of the program line “IvAF” (*Integration von Asylsuchenden und Flüchtlingen / Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees*), which funds 41 networks with app. 300 projects. The target group of the Bridge network consists mainly of recognized refugees, asylum seekers during their asylum procedure and persons with an exceptional leave to remain (“toleration”) (bridge 2017). In practice, the network focuses on those who do not yet have a permanent residence permit, i.e. “tolerated” persons and asylum seekers, in order to support those persons who do not have access to regular support measures of “active labor market policies” in Germany (cf. Gluns 2018a). However, the federal program prohibits persons from so-called “safe countries of origin” from participating in the network’s activities, because they do not have access to the labor market (BR_SeniAS; Gluns 2018a: 8f).¹⁶ In addition, the network can only include participants who formally reside in Berlin, whereas refugees from surrounding Brandenburg cannot participate in the measures (BR_BFS).

The federal program has three common components: counselling, qualification and placement (Bundesregierung 2015). Nonetheless, the structures and activities of the networks are diverse in order to respond to the respective local or regional needs and conditions.¹⁷ The Bridge network partners understand integration in terms of an equal participation in all societal spheres, even if the focus of the activities is on participation in the labor market. In order to achieve this, existing disadvantages need to be overcome both on an individual and on a structural level (BR_SeniAS). For reducing individual barriers, the network partners are

- providing preparation and activation measures in close collaboration with businesses,
- offering individual counselling regarding career opportunities and access to the labor market,
- ensuring access to general or vocational education,
- providing support in access to services of the regular and special support systems, and
- placing participants in employment or language tuition.

Structural barriers shall be reduced by providing trainings for public and private actors – e.g. for employees in the local employment agencies and job centers, or for potential employers – and by informing politicians and public administrations about the project results (Senat Berlin 2016: 51, 58f; BMAS 2017: 9–11).¹⁸

¹⁵ The federal network is called “National Thematic Network” (“*Nationales Thematisches Netzwerk*”).

¹⁶ The German education system distinguishes on-the-job vocational training, which requires a work permit in the case of foreign nationals, and education or training in schools, which is open for all students (Grabbe 2018). However, the federal program is directed at those refugees “with at least a subordinate access to the labor market” (<https://www.esf.de/portal/DE/Foerderperiode-2014-2020/ESF-Programme/bmas/2014-10-21-ESF-Integrationsrichtlinie-Bund.html>, last accessed 05/09/2018), i.e. it excludes refugees from “safe” countries of origin even if they are allowed to pursue training in schools.

¹⁷ Moreover, the activities of the networks can be adapted to changing needs. For example, during the peak of new arrivals in 2015, immediate relief actions and placement in language courses became a main task of Bridge, whereas the network has now resumed the more long-term support and chaperonage of the clients (BR_SeniAS).

¹⁸ Source: <https://www.esf.de/portal/DE/Foerderperiode-2014-2020/ESF-Programme/bmas/IRL-Bund-Projekte/ivaf/bridge.html> (last accessed 16/08/2018).

Participation in the activities is free of charge for both refugees and institutions receiving training or counselling (bridge 2017).

3.2 Distribution of responsibilities in the program

3.2.1 Collaboration between the network partners

The close collaboration between the network partners is the central pillar of the program (Bundesregierung 2015): “In this field, work cannot be done effectively without networks. Alone you can hardly bring anything about. You depend on each other.”¹⁹ In practice, this means that the organizations support each other, e.g. by providing their respective expertise for particular cases (BR_BBZ) or even by assisting with the co-funding requirements (BR_SeniAS). Many of the partners have collaborated in networks that were part of the precursory programs started in 2005, which has helped to establish close contacts between them. The structures and communication between the organizations have not changed significantly between different funding rounds, because “[t]he partners have more or less smoothly continued what we have been doing before.” (BR_SeniAS)²⁰ However, the former network surpassed the maximum funding levels that applied for the current funding round. This has led to a separation into two networks, one coordinated by the Senate Administration and one by the *Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN*. After six months, during which the second network did not receive any funding, the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS) acknowledged the high need for assistance in labor market integration and provided additional funding for the second network and it immediately resumed its work. In practice, both networks now collaborate so closely that the division between the two is hardly discernible from the outside (BR_SeniAS). Therefore, the partners and activities of the second network will be briefly outlined in chapter 3.2.2.

In general, the organizations exchange information by e-mail or by phone on an ad hoc basis, for example regarding support for individual clients, regarding vacant posts or future funding opportunities. This way, they can draw on one another’s particular expertise and knowledge (BR_BFS). Clients that contact an organization for the first time are registered with a particular form and the information is entered into a database. This way, information on the situation of the respective client needs only to be recorded once and the proceedings of the client can be monitored between the organizations (BR_SeniAS).²¹ In addition, the partners have network meetings every two months together with the associated second network to discuss more general questions of collaboration. In addition, working groups with representatives of both networks exist for particular topics (BR_SeniAS). While regular contacts between all organizations thus exist, some organizations interact more frequently due to the similarity of their tasks (e.g. in terms of being active in preparing clients for jobs in the care sector) or due to the spatial proximity of their offices (BR_BBZ).

In the following, the respective tasks of each organization in the network will be outlined. The coordinator, who is employed at the Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs (SeniAS), is responsible for the overall network coordination, communication with the partners and external stakeholders and organization of trainings e.g. for public employees and for providing

¹⁹ “In dem Bereich kann ohne Vernetzung keine richtige Arbeit stattfinden. Alleine kann man selten etwas bewirken. Man ist voneinander abhängig.”

²⁰ “Die Partner haben ja quasi reibungslos weitergeführt, was wir davor schon gemacht haben.”

²¹ Participation in this sharing of information is voluntary for the clients who have to sign a data protection form and agree to the information exchange between partners.

information on legal matters regarding social and residence rights (bridge 2018). These two sets of rights are highly important not only for the refugees themselves but also for (potential) employers, because the residence title can directly influence the right to take up work and the duration of the stay in Germany. Apart from the coordinator herself, a lawyer provides information on the complex and intertwined system of rights to both refugees and businesses, and also to volunteers of other initiatives who assist refugees. The lawyer focuses on matters of employment and education, whereas counselling on other topics can be obtained by the legal services of the Welcome Center (BR_SeniAS). The coordinator is partly perceived also as a manager that has a steering and oversight role: “Everything is channeled through them. They are at the top [...]” (BR_BFS)²²

The Vocational School Paulo Freire (BFS) is closely connected to the Bridge network because its establishment arose out of a former funding round of the federal program. The collaboration with Vivantes had already existed and its goal was to place participants in training or employment in the care sector. However, it became clear that the participants needed more encompassing preparation for the admission procedure and the jobs themselves, e.g. in terms of language skills but also other subjects such as mathematics. Therefore, preparatory “Basic Care Courses” (*Pflegebasiskurse*) were developed. In six months, the 25 participants receive instruction in three modules in preparation for regular vocational training: theory (e.g. basic knowledge regarding illnesses), practice (two months internships with accompanying theoretical reflection in the school) and application management (one week, assistance in compiling application documents and preparation for the interview) (Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN and Vivantes n.y.). The name of the project, Culture Care, demonstrates that the courses of the BFS are oriented at an intercultural approach that takes into account the specific situation of refugees and migrants (Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN 2017a).²³

The BBZ has been involved in counselling and chaperonage for young refugees for a long time. With the funding from the Bridge network, they have intensified their counselling activities in the field of training and employment. In addition, the Federal Government added integration into education to the portfolio of the program for the current funding round. Within the Bridge network, the BBZ is the natural provider for services to assist young refugees in obtaining a school-leaving certificate, due to its long experience in this field (BR_SeniAS). In their work, they place special emphasis on long-term assistance and encompassing support, rather than short-term placement in educational measures or one-off assistance. Therefore, support can range from language tuition via school graduation to training or employment and shall accompany the young refugees in their personal development during the entire process towards full participation in the German society (BR_BBZ).

Arbeit und Bildung e.V. focuses on career planning for refugees, i.e. it has extended its regular job orientation activities to the target group of refugees due to the Bridge network. The association is collaborating with the Welcome Center and offering its services there. This way, the expertise of lawyers and other organizations on site can be involved, if necessary (BR_SeniAS). The association conducts a skills assessment for new participants, prepares them for training or employment and supports refugees during the training or on the job in order to overcome newly arising barriers and thereby minimize dropout rates.

²² „Das läuft ja alles über die. Die sind ganz oben von uns [...]“

²³ See also https://www.esf.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen_NL/Newsletter/2016/esf-bga.html, last accessed 05/09/2018.

The Kurdish Culture and Help Association (KKH) provides encompassing services to stabilize the residence of refugees and foster their employability in terms of “helping them to help themselves”. One of its tasks is to assist refugees with the application procedure by helping with the preparation of application documents and providing information about German labor market requirements and what businesses expect in job interviews and employment. In doing so, the association collaborates closely with the businesses to tailor their support to the needs of the employers and refugees alike.²⁴

The association *Über den Tellerrand* has been a latecomer to the network. When the Federal Government came to know the association and its activities, it approached the coordinator with the request to include them in the network. Additional funding was made available, which is rather unusual during an ongoing funding round. This funding is used to continue a one-to-one mentoring project called Job Buddies that assists refugees with accessing the labor market and planning their careers. With funding from the Bridge network, continuous supervision of the tandems after the initial matching can be ensured (BR_SenIAS).

Assisting refugees with access to higher education is not part of the program. Even so, many refugees aim to study at a university, which is why the project also provides counselling in this respect. However, they do not have the time to do this as intensively as in the other fields, which is why they also refer refugees to external actors to receive advice (BR_SenIAS).

3.2.2 Tasks of and collaboration with the second Bridge network

Due to the close relationships between the two networks, the organizations and activities of the second associated network are briefly outlined here to create a better understanding of the program and its implementation in Berlin.

3.2.2.1 Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN / Center Survival

The *Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN*, which also manages the BFS Paulo Freire, is the coordinator of the second network. It is a large provider of psychosocial treatment serving more than 500 patients each year. In addition, it provides counselling in fields such as psychological, legal and social affairs, as well as career planning and qualification to more than 600 clients. Its annual budget in 2016 was 6.5 million Euros, half of which was provided by public agencies, including the EU, the German Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth and the Berlin Senate (*Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN* 2016). Within Bridge, it is responsible for assessing the competences and support needs of participants, conducting preparatory training in commercial, technical and gastronomic professions, providing psychosocial counselling and supporting refugees with higher education certificates (*Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN* 2017a).

3.2.2.2 S27 Kunst und Bildung / Art and Education²⁵

The initiative understands itself as an “art laboratory for young people who want to change the world”, but also seeks to develop innovative education concepts, in particular by manual and creative activities. It has been active in Berlin since the late 1970s. Since the 2000s, it has also taken over the task of providing counselling, education, training and placement of refugees in employment or internships. This includes services to the refugees as well as outreach efforts towards and preparation of potential employers. In connection with the latter task, the organization takes over the function of contact office

²⁴ See <https://www.kkh-ev.de/seite/221151/projekt-bleiberecht.html>, last accessed 16/08/2018.

²⁵ All information retrieved from <http://www.schlesische27.de/> last accessed 04/09/2018.

for another labor market integration network, ARRIVO. Consequently, S27 also serves as an interface between the networks and assists participants with the transition between them, if necessary. With its various activities, the initiative now has 45 employees. Basic funding is provided by the land Berlin, whereas a booster club of businesses in Berlin assists with fundraising for the projects. The initiative belongs to the registered Association for the Promotion of Intercultural Youth Work (*Verein zur Förderung der interkulturellen Jugendarbeit e.V.*).

3.2.2.3 GFBM (*Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft für berufsbildende Maßnahmen* / Non-profit Organization for Vocational Education)²⁶

The nonprofit company was founded in 1992 to assist unemployed and employed persons with adapting to the demands of a changing economy. In order to foster or preserve labor market participation, the company provides vocational training, in particular in the technical, commercial and construction fields, general education and language tuition. The latter task is also its main function in the Bridge network, where it assesses the language capacities of refugees, provides language courses or places refugees in courses run by other providers. In addition, the company employs and supervises “integration pilots” (*Integrationslotsen*) that are funded by the Senate, and collaborates with various businesses, e.g. in the network “Businesses Integrate Refugees” (*Unternehmen integrieren Flüchtlinge*).

3.2.2.4 *Migrationsrat Berlin e.V.* / Migration Council Berlin²⁷

The Migration Council is an umbrella organization of more than 70 so-called migrants’ organizations, which are usually understood as organizations mainly run by migrants. The Council was founded in 2004 with the main goal of achieving full legal, social and political equality of migrants, their offspring and other People of Color. To achieve this objective, it is working as an advocate for various groups independent of religious beliefs, nationality, gender or sexual orientation, and combating any kind of discrimination. Within the network, it focuses on multilingual counselling regarding career orientation, support with application procedures and placement, and also helps with psychosocial matters, if needed.

3.2.3 Interim conclusion: Collaboration between network partners

In sum, the collaboration of partners with different expertise, and their prior experience with one another, allow for creating synergies in the network. The relationships that have been established over the years have created institutionalized trust between the organizations. Each partner knows about the projects, services and expertise of the others and can refer clients to the organization that can best meet his or her needs. This is important in a city such as Berlin, where the abundance of support offers creates a complex landscape of organizations that is difficult to navigate for both refugees and voluntary initiatives (BR_SenIAS).

However, the responsibilities of the various project partners overlap to a significant extent, which can be seen by the various offers of counselling and placement services. This is due to the fact that each partner seeks to provide encompassing services tailored to the needs of each participant, which is usually not strictly limited to a certain task or topic. The network allows the organizations to provide their services but draw on additional expertise, if necessary. This becomes particularly important in the field of qualification, where the longstanding experience and relationships of the BFS in the care sector, and the equally strong experience of the S27 in handicrafts, are invaluable for strengthening

²⁶ All information retrieved from <https://gfbm.de/>, last accessed 04/09/2018.

²⁷ All information retrieved from <http://www.migrationsrat.de/>, last accessed 04/09/2018.

the employability of refugees. Moreover, the expertise of the *Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN* in the field of psychosocial treatment is crucial for assisting traumatized participants, while the BBZ is a specialist for young refugees and migrants.

3.3 Co-operation with the local government

As mentioned before, the co-operation between the network and the local government – which is also a regional government in the case of Berlin – is a particular case due to the direct involvement of the Senate Administration for Integration as employer of the network’s coordinator. This can facilitate the access of the network partners to the local government in terms of resources such as funding or information and foster their involvement in policymaking. For example, continuous lobbying and advocacy on behalf of the network led to the pledge to meet the ten percent co-funding requirements of the network with funds from the regular budget of the land Berlin. However, achieving this commitment took approximately ten years, i.e. access to regional or local funding is no self-evident consequence of being part of the administration. Rather, it is attributed to the “continuous groundwork”²⁸ (BR_SeniAS) by the former coordinator, who was an active advocate for refugees.

Within the Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs, the coordinator is linked to a number of related actors and is thus closely involved in the relevant networks. This results from being part of the Welcome Center, which is in itself a network hub that links various public and private bodies (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2017: 15). Biweekly intra-departmental meetings ensure co-ordination between the employees of the Welcome Center and the other fields within the department for Integration. Moreover, the network coordinator is subordinate to the Director of the Working Group on Refugees (*Leiterin der Arbeitsgruppe Flüchtlinge*), who is responsible for nearly all refugee-related issues under the Senate Representative for Integration. The Director had been the coordinator of the Bridge network from 2005 to 2015, before changing “completely” to the public administration (BR_SeniAS). Therefore, she has good insights into both the network and the proceedings of the public administration and can assist the network partners in the collaboration. Both the coordinator and her superior can therefore act as “mediators” between the public and non-profit spheres (BR_SeniAS). These close links also allow for continuous lobbying on behalf of the network, for example in the process of reforming the Master Plan Integration. The direct contact between the network and the responsible public entities is an advantage that facilitates inputs from the network partners. In addition, belonging to the Senate Representative for Integration also facilitates access to other projects funded by this department, e.g. for legal counselling. Participants of the network are also referred to these similar projects, for example if they are in closer spatial proximity to the clients than the offers of the Bridge network (BR_SeniAS).

Apart from actors within the Senate Administration for Integration, the network partners collaborate with other public and publicly funded bodies, particularly in the field of labor market integration. They have regular meetings with the representatives for migration of the employment agencies and job centers. In particular, collaboration with the employment agency in an “Early Intervention” project for refugees in the past has established trust between the organizations, which facilitates collaboration today. The project has also led to the development of a “Team Asylum” and the “Employers’ Service Asylum” in the employment agency, whose employees were trained by the Bridge network. Both entities have contributed greatly to networking between relevant actors in Berlin. Responsibilities are shared, with the bodies of the employment agency focusing on larger businesses, whereas the Bridge

²⁸ “kontinuierliche Vorarbeit”.

network provides counselling to small and medium-sized enterprises. However, structural changes have recently disrupted the collaboration by increasing the number of persons in charge and reassigning responsibilities (BR_SeniIAS; internal reporting).

The network partners also collaborate with the private or non-profit providers that manage the regular offers of the local employment agency for unemployed persons, which are also available for asylum seekers and “tolerated” persons. They can supplement the offers of the network, for example, by offering private lessons or additional language tuition to support the successful completion of vocational training (BR_SeniIAS; BR_BBZ). Apart from these regular offers, the Senate funds Mobile Education Counselling and Job Coaches as services particularly for refugees (Senat Berlin 2016: 53f; Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2017: 49–53). Their providers are also in contact with the Bridge network partners. However, these services are similar to those offered by the network itself, which is why referrals of clients between the actors rarely occur. The same holds true for the Migration Counsellors and Youth Migration Services, that are only complementary in terms of providing support also for those refugees who wish to pursue higher education or taking up self-employed work, whereas other services are similar to those of the Bridge network (BR_SeniIAS).

Another important partner for the Bridge network regarding young refugees is the secondary vocational schools (*Oberstufenzentren*), where persons who have not yet completed compulsory schooling (i.e. ten school years according to Berlin legislation) receive basic and vocational education. Newly arriving refugees are usually taught in separate “Welcome Classes”, where they mainly receive language tuition. After one year of schooling, they should reach a level of language proficiency sufficient to pursue further vocational training (BR_SeniIAS). In these secondary vocational schools, other providers offer counselling and career orientation services. For example, in 2015, the Senate founded Youth Occupation Agencies (*Jugendberufsagenturen*) to reduce unemployment among young persons, including refugees and migrants (Senat Berlin 2016: 56f). They draw on funds and services by the Youth Office, which makes them a valuable complementary actor to the offers of the Bridge network (BR_SeniIAS). Clients of the Bridge network can also apply for funding that is not directly targeted to refugees such as financial aid for persons in education (“BAFÖG”). Employees of the network partners help refugees in filing the applications, but legal barriers such as status of the residence title or age of the applicant, can inhibit support (BR_BFS).

While access to external public and private partners can be facilitated by being part of the local administration, this position also has negative side effects. In particular, the rather formal structures and hierarchical relationships within the public administration need to be observed, which partly runs counter to the more practical approach of many non-profit organizations and can prolong endeavors:

Public administration always also means internal co-signing, writing votes and opinions, writing annotations and keeping at it again and again, and hoping that someday things might budge a little. (BR_SeniIAS)²⁹

In this sense, the clearly structured public administration does not allow for direct contact or communication with other departments, because official channels and chains of command need to be observed. Nonetheless, once a communication has been opened e.g. between frontline staff of two different departments, it can be used freely. This underlines the importance of continuous networking

²⁹ “Verwaltung bedeutet halt auch oft immer wieder interne Mitzeichnungen, Voten schreiben, Stellungnahmen schreiben, Vermerke schreiben und immer wieder, immer wieder da dranbleiben und hoffen, dass sich irgendwann ein bisschen was bewegt.”

activities that can create relationships, open channels of communication and help build trust that can later be drawn on for further collaborations (BR_SenIAS).

Another disadvantage is that the public administration itself is divided into different departments, with different logics and institutional interests, which can hinder collaboration. For example, interests in the field of labor market policy may be in conflict with those of the home affairs field. A particular difficulty that has been mentioned by various interview partners, and which have been stated in a position paper by the network (Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN 2017c), is the practice of issuing work permits and so-called “tolerations for vocational training”. The latter have been created by the federal government to allow persons without a permanent stay, who obtain a place in vocational training, to remain in Germany for the duration of the training and potential subsequent employment (cf. Röder 2017). However, these “tolerations” have rarely been issued by the Aliens Department in Berlin. One of the problems is that the department requires a passport for issuing the permit, which may be difficult to fulfil if the authorities of the country of origin do not collaborate. Network partners try to clarify these problems and come to terms with the employees of the Aliens Department by writing letters and explaining the particular situations of the respective clients (BR_BBZ). Moreover, the Representative for Integration addresses these issues in Jour Fixe with other departments, as well as in Round Tables where the Aliens Department is also present. However, this has not led to a significant policy change or to formal collaboration with the Bridge network so far. The Bridge network recommends reform of the procedural instructions for the Aliens Department and the assignment of a responsible person for labor market integration who can be addressed by the network and other organizations.

As explained in Gluns (2018b), the public administration is divided between the citywide and district administrations, which can create co-operation problems in practice. However, these difficulties are not as relevant for the Bridge network, because funding is obtained directly from the Federal Government and the Senate. Moreover, the division of responsibilities does not affect the field of labor market integration as much as e.g. the field of housing, even if the job centers belong to the level of the districts (BR_SenIAS). Federal funding, together with the explicit mission of reaching those that fall through the cracks of other support systems, provide a certain freedom to the network partners. They are free to act within their respective fields of action and are not – as is the case for the job centers and employment agencies – restricted to serving persons with a particular residence title (BR_BBZ).

Even so, public funding is tied to particular obligations regarding the staff to be hired, the eligibility of potential participants, the activities to be pursued or reporting requirements (BR_BFS). For example, persons from “safe third countries” are excluded from the program. Evaluations of the projects’ success rest on the number of persons placed in employment or education. This does not reflect the additional work required from the network partners, e.g. in terms of stabilizing residence, providing counselling regarding family reunification, developing career perspectives etc. (BR_BBZ). Receiving funding from various public bodies can raise additional difficulties if the funding agencies have different reporting requirements that do not necessarily match the specific conditions of the network. However, due to the coordinator being part of the Land Berlin, it is clear that the regional regulations take precedence over federal or EU ones in the case of conflicts (BR_SenIAS).

A barrier for the collaboration between the network partners and public actors is their differing view on the situation at hand. While the nonprofit organizations view the refugee as a person to be individually supported in reaching his or her full potential and gaining access to the German society,

public actors more often follow a rules-based approach (cf. Mayntz 1968). This heritage of the traditional model of the public administration implies that actions are always based on formal regulations. Even if this model has been reformed in a number of ways over time, remnants of the approach are still visible and become relevant for refugees e.g. when they try to access a particular education program or profession. Many of these are highly institutionalized in Germany, which means that a particular school-leaving certificate, evidence of having completed an apprenticeship or other formation are required to gain access. Other ways of proving existing competences or prior experience are usually not sufficient. Refugees, who often leave their countries with not much more than the clothes they wear, can hardly fulfil these formal requirements. Therefore, the network partners support them in producing the necessary documents or arranging for alternative ways to prove their competences (BR_BFS). In this regard, programs such as the so-called IQ networks³⁰ have contributed to raising awareness for the problem and developing alternatives. They are valuable partners for the Bridge network.

The partners of the Bridge network also advocate actively for their participants. At times, they enter into contact with the responsible senators, e.g. for integration, labor or home affairs, or with national and international politicians to communicate their experience and opinions. Those meetings can be arranged either on the initiative of the network or of the respective senators. When entering into contact with policymakers, or other external actors, the network partners discuss who of them would be best suited to voice the request. Sometimes, a letter with the heading of the Senate has more impact than a letter from a non-profit organization, i.e. the coordinator assumes responsibility for the interaction. At other times, prior relationships between another network partner and external actors can be helpful to build on for further requests or inputs. In this sense, the network structure allows for flexibly assuming responsibility for the communication with external partners, depending on the respective topic and counterpart (BR_SenIAS).

Front-level employers of the network are not always involved in such policymaking activities, those activities are usually taken over either by the directors of the respective organizations or by the network coordinator (BR_BFS; BR_BBZ). Even so, collaboration between the partners is so dense that the staff who are directly working with the clients can voice their opinions within the network before official representatives engage in communication with external decision-makers. Moreover, the legal proceedings that may arise for individual cases – e.g. in terms of legal redress against decisions by public agencies – are also assumed to convey the information that legal or political changes are needed if they occur at a large scale (BR_BFS).

However, an individual policymaker or entity cannot usually decide upon issues alone, and not all decisions can be taken at the level of the state. Rather, some decisions necessitate support by political parties or require legal changes at the federal level (BR_BFS). In some cases, visits to the projects by high-level representatives, such as the Federal President or the Federal Minister for Labor, can be used to voice concerns and requests (Bundesregierung 2015; Zentrum ÜBERLEBEN 2017b). For some issues, though, the Bridge network alone might be too small to have real impact. In this regard, relationships with established institutions such as the Refugee Council (*Flüchtlingsrat*), that are involved in many committees and bodies, are important. Also important are institutions such as the working group

³⁰ These are networks of non-profit organizations funded by the BMAS that pursue the goal of enhancing labor market participation and qualified employment of migrants, among other things by facilitating the certification of foreign qualifications and sensitizing employers for the situation of migrants. For more information see <https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/foerderprogramm-iq/programmuebersicht.html> (last accessed 10/09/2018).

“Young Refugees”, which comprise a number of providers (BR_BBZ). To gain access to higher-level decision-makers, support by the economy can also be very helpful. They share the interest of facilitating the refugees’ access to the labor market and enhancing their skills and employability, which serves as a basis for collaboration between the network and employers. In Berlin, an “Interest Group Refugees”, which is led by a large company and comprises a number of larger and smaller businesses, communicates these interests to policymakers (BR_SeniAS). In addition, the networks that receive funding from the federal program also jointly lobby for their cause through their federation (“National Thematic Network”). For example, in 2012 the Federal Government decided to terminate funding for the program despite the positive evaluations. This decision was reversed after the networks, as well as external stakeholders with whom they collaborate such as the large and influential Free Welfare Associations, job centers and political parties, had voiced strong opposition (BR_SeniAS; cf. Borosch and Klein 2017: 15f).

In general, the political climate and societal discourses around immigration are a crucial aspect that influences the work of the organizations and the collaboration with public actors. Political changes at the federal level can influence the activities of the partners through the guidelines for subsequent funding rounds. For example, many federal policies currently distinguish between migrants with a “positive” and those with a “negative” perspective of remaining in Germany, based on the countries of origin. If this distinction was used to restrict the target groups of the program, this could exclude a large part of the current participants for the next funding period (BR_BFS; BR_BBZ).

At the level of the federal state Berlin, the current red-red-green coalition (i.e. a rather leftist government) is open to more favorable provisions for refugees than the Federal Government under the grand coalition. This can facilitate collaboration between the organizations that are trying to support refugees and migrants on the one and the local government on the other hand (BR_BBZ). For example, the current coalition agreement contains a provision that the instructions for the Aliens Department in Berlin shall be revised to become more “integration-friendly” (BR_SeniAS). This could also help to reduce disagreements between immigration control and integration within the local public administration.

3.4 Assessment of the effect of the program

When discussing the effects or impact of the program, this needs to be measured in relation to the program objectives, but should also consider the general situation of the participants and surrounding conditions, such as the situation on the regional labor market. The current federal program formulates the goal of a “gradual and sustainable”³¹ integration into the labor market. However, evaluations usually focus on the number of participants placed in employment, training or education measures, which is a rather short-term view that does not consider the long-term career perspectives nor the many additional processes to be completed by participants (BR_BFS). In the application for funding, the network formulated the goal of placing 30 percent of participants in education, vocational training or work, “[...] which is a relatively ambitious goal that is not easy to achieve. But it can be done.” (BR_SeniAS)³² The evaluation of the former funding rounds have shown that these quotas have been met, or even surpassed, depending on the respective socio-economic background of the participants

³¹ <https://www.esf.de/portal/DE/Foerderperiode-2014-2020/ESF-Programme/bmas/2014-10-21-ESF-Integrationsrichtlinie-Bund.html>, last accessed 07/09/2018.

³² „[...] was ein relativ ehrgeiziges Ziel ist, also das ist nicht so leicht zu erreichen. Das ist aber machbar.“

and the conditions of the regional labor markets (Mirbach *et al.* 2014: 45–47). In 2016, the rate has been slightly lower (23%), while it was fulfilled in 2017 (31%).³³

The in-depth evaluation of one network also showed that the investments into services supporting refugees and migrants in accessing education and employment are highly cost-efficient (cf. Borosch and Klein 2017). Moreover, ensuring labor market access and employment can help to address the shortage of skilled labor and thereby contribute to economic development and growth (cf. Dopheide 2016). The approach of the BFS is particularly mentioned as helpful in achieving a qualification of the refugees that matches the needs of employers and training institutions (Das Nationale Thematische Netzwerk 2010: 25).

While the Bridge network can thus be considered generally successful, participants still strive for higher goals. The overall goal would be to place all refugees in training or employment and ensure that they receive support tailored to their respective resources and personal ambitions. Until now, this objective cannot be fully reached due to a number of obstacles that partly lie with the public administration as well as with the funding structures of the program. The societal systems to which refugees must gain access – e.g. education or the labor market – are partly structured in ways that do not fit the respective conditions of the lives of refugees. One example is the regular requirement that vocational training is to be completed full-time. This implies that refugees and migrants need to have obtained a level of German proficiency to follow courses taught in German prior to accessing vocational training, simply because it is impossible to do both at the same time. Structural changes, such as part-time training or the combination with language courses, could thus help to facilitate the participation of refugees (BR_SenIAS). Moreover, organizations providing education or jobs may not be familiar with the particular situation of refugees such as potential traumatization or preoccupation due to family members being threatened in the country of origin. The network partners with their long experience in assisting refugees, are well equipped to involve refugees despite such difficulties. They engage with other providers to spread their experience and contribute to the sensitization of other actors (BR_BFS). Long-term support by such experienced and well-embedded organizations will also be needed to finally achieve access to the regular labor market. Initially, the participants are mainly placed in trainings and education, because a number of individual and structural barriers need to be overcome. Women in particular are underrepresented, partly because they often have to take care of minor children.³⁴

A second goal of the federal program is to gain experience and provide information to policy-makers and other public actors at the regional and federal levels (BMAS 2017: 9–11). While the impact on policymakers can hardly be measured, the provision of trainings for public employees and issuance of statements or press releases as foreseen by the program are implemented by the coordinator and the network partners in their respective responsibilities (cf. Poelchau 2016; Kötter 2015; Nikolow 2013; Treichel 2014; Flüchtlingsrat Berlin 2017; KommMit e.V. and BBZ 2017). Moreover, the trainings for employees of the job centers and employment agencies have already reached more persons than had originally been envisaged in the project proposal. Changes in legislation regarding labor market access, in particular the liberalizations since 2007, can at least partly be attributed to the advocacy and lobbying work of the federation of the networks, even if the low number of new asylum applications

³³ Source: internal reporting, provided by the network coordinator.

³⁴ Source: internal reporting.

and the good situation of the labor market were also crucial preconditions for these changes (BR_SenIAS).

4 Conclusion

The Bridge network is a good example of the strengths of the collaborative and integrated network approach in providing services to refugees. It allows the conditions of each client to be considered in an encompassing way and addressing support needs by drawing on the respective expertise of public and non-profit partners. The heterogeneity of the network partners, in terms of resources, capacities and contacts, ensures encompassing support. The collaboration between the network partners, including the Senate Administration for Integration, Labor and Social Affairs (SenIAS), is based on a formal collaboration agreement. However, the fact that most of the organizations have collaborated for more than ten years now, and that they pursue the joint endeavor to assist the labor market integration of refugees, may be even more important in practice. Network partners have established trustful relationships and are aware of one another's competences (BR_BBZ; BR_BFS). This prior experience and common goals also help to create networks to other public and private organizations in Berlin. In particular, existing relationships with other departments and public agencies can bridge departmental boundaries and formal hierarchical structures (BR_SenIAS).

Many of the network partners have been active in Berlin for many years and are therefore well embedded at the local and regional levels. They have acquired a reputation in the fields of labor market integration and/or services to refugees and migrants both among potential external partners and among migrant communities. These communities thus become the main entry point for new participants (BR_SenIAS; BR_BFS). This shows that former participants have been satisfied with the services they received and therefore recommend the network to newly arriving refugees and migrants.

However, there are also barriers to the (long-term) success of the network. One aspect, that was repeatedly mentioned by interview partners, is the time-limited funding. It requires time-consuming fundraising activities that hinder the regular work to be conducted with the clients. Moreover, project-based funding gives rise to time-limited working contracts and can lead to unemployment or personnel turnover when gaps between funding rounds arise (BR_SenIAS). This hampers the continuity of the networks that are important for the program's success. In addition, the content and activities of the networks have remained largely unchanged between funding rounds due to their successful implementation and persistent need for their services. However, each new program cycle requires a new application for funding and implies slight changes in the formulation of programmatic goals. Thus, a new justification for the work of the network – which is widely recognized as successful by policymakers and the public – needs to be devised every four to five years.

Moreover, public funding is tied to eligibility criteria and reporting requirements that limit the work of the network partners and imposes certain bureaucratic obligations. So far, the Bridge network does not perceive these regulations as too constricting or as a barrier to their work. Nonetheless, they fear that the current political climate is shifting in a way that might imply new rules regarding the potential eligibility of participants for the next funding round – if the program continues. On the one hand, the group of recognized refugees is expected to grow in the future in comparison to newly arriving asylum seekers, which might result in a reshuffling of responsibilities. On the other, the rights of refugees from particular countries of origin have increasingly been restricted in recent years. If this trend continues, it would greatly affect the work of the Bridge network, because it comprises some of the main target

groups of their activities. In terms of placement in employment or vocational training in companies, this is already obstructing their work (BR_BBZ; BR_SenIAS).

In sum, the Bridge network is providing very helpful services to refugees and public actors. Collaboration with the local government is an important component of this success. It does not only imply that the ten percent co-funding are now met by the Senate of Berlin, but also opens doors to other important stakeholders. The model of collaboration is a hybrid between a hierarchical-bureaucratic and a new governance model. Hierarchies remain important in terms of the internal organization of the administration, where direct contacts between different departments need to be organized top-down. However, once these contacts are established, a more informal collaboration becomes possible. This underlines the importance of continued interaction and collaboration and thus, the need for continuous funding rather than time-limited and project-based funding. At the same time, the interaction between the coordinator as part of SenIAS and the non-profit partners is based on a network approach where the partners co-operate on equal terms and take decisions jointly. Finally, some elements of the New Public Management model can also be observed in terms of the call for bids, the awarding of the contract as well as the subsequent evaluation and monitoring requirements of the program. The main aspect to be assessed is the quota of persons placed in employment or training. This outcome measure ignores other aspects of integration such as social participation or psychosocial stabilization that may however be needed for the aspired "sustainable" integration into the labor market.

Therefore, the success of the model could be further enhanced by providing funding from the regular budget without time limits, by agreeing on softer evaluation criteria and by further reducing hierarchies and strict departmental boundaries in the administration of the land Berlin.

Interviews:

BR_BBZ Employee of the Beratungs- und Betreuungszentrum für junge Flüchtlinge und Migranten; July 2018

BR_BFS Two employees of the Berufsfachschule Paulo Freire; July 2018

BR_SenIAS Coordinator of the Bridge network, employed at the Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales; July 2018

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