



Federal Ministry of the Interior

Evaluation of the nation wide Integration Courses

Executive Summary

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Note:

The full report in German language is available for download from the website of the German Ministry of the Interior: <http://www.bmi.bund.de>

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www.bmi.bund.de/Internet/Content/Nachrichten/Pressemitteilungen/2007/01/Bericht_Evaluation_Integrationskurse.html

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On behalf of the German Ministry of the Interior, Rambøll Management evaluated the nation wide Integration Courses. The Integration Courses were introduced in combination with the new Immigration Act (Zuwanderungsge-
setz) that entered into force on January 1st, 2005. In January 2007 Rambøll Management submitted the final report of the evaluation. In the following pages the main findings of the evaluation are summarized.

The evaluation states clearly that the Integration Courses constitute a significant qualitative improvement of the German integration policy. The term *Integration Course* was coined in the new Immigration Act and refers to a specific proposition by the Federal Government to support and facilitate immigrants' integration process. Integration Courses consist of two parts: language tutoring, guiding participants to a sufficient command of German (the equivalent of B1 CEFR), and a familiarization with German culture, history, the political values of the constitution, the legal system and the political institutions of the democratic constitutional state. The courses are based on a philosophy of providing support (through education) and demanding effort (the expectation that the participants reach the language level B1 in a fore-
seen time span and that they contribute to the financing of the course). The Integration Course is a clearly defined and self-contained offer of the Federal State, which is implemented under well defined conditions.

Through the implementation of the Integration Courses, deficits and gaps in the old system of language teaching for immigrants are being removed, and different coexisting instruments are being integrated in a single comprehensive approach. Competences and responsibilities have been centralized, and well structured funding mechanisms have been established. Currently, more than 1,000 institutions provide Integration Courses throughout the country. 80% of the training institutions have extensive experience of over 10 years implementing language courses. The new system of Integration Courses is already well established and has proven its worth. For the first time in the history of German integration policy, all immigrants obtain systematic and high-quality support throughout their process of integration. Having established this system, the Federal State is on the right track.

However, the new integration programme was introduced on short notice, and implementing agencies were confronted with complex tasks. Therefore, the implementation process has resulted in procedures and regulations that show some deficits and inefficiencies. The evaluation at hand offers a quantitative data pool and qualitative insights on deficits and inefficiencies, whilst also identifying well functioning components of the adopted system.

Since its introduction on January 1st, 2005 a large number of immigrants has been accepted or committed to take part in the programme. Some of the eligible participants have recently immigrated; others have resided in Germany already for many years. Immigrants who have lived in Germany for

many years and participate voluntarily in the integration courses constitute the largest group of participants. The evaluator considers this a success, as a large group of people who have been living in Germany for many years are not fully integrated in society. Moreover, the share of women accounts for over 60% of the participants. This in particular constitutes a positive result, considering women's role in a family's integration process. The new system is characterized by well functioning access paths for voluntary participants. However, the obligatory attendance of potential participants (especially immigrants on social welfare) could still be improved.

Teachers of the Integration Courses have to hold a university degree in *German as a Foreign Language* or *German as a Second Language*. Alternatively, teachers with significant teaching experience can complete an additional qualification organized by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. In this case they have to complete the additional qualification by December 31, 2009 enabling them to continue their occupation as of 2010. By far the larger part of Integration Course teachers will have to attend the additional qualification. Aside from this formal aspect, the majority of teachers are very experienced in teaching migrants and are generally well qualified.

Most participants were enrolled in a general Integration Course. Nevertheless, course providers in large urban areas and regions with a high percentage of foreigners are able to provide programmes addressed to particular target groups, such as courses for youth, parents or women, as well as literacy classes. In rural areas and regions with a small share of foreigners, however, these special courses are only rarely implemented due to few participants.

Additionally, many course providers do not succeed in offering different courses for participants with different educational backgrounds and different learning speeds. The reason for this lack of such courses is the small number of participants in rural areas and the competition among the institutions in urban areas. Cooperation between course providers in terms of transferring participants to one another only rarely takes place. Based on the evaluation at hand, it can be assumed that the heterogeneity of participants affects the learning conditions and reduces the learning success.

For the time being it is difficult to evaluate successful participation in and achievement of the course as the final exam is voluntary and controlling data is missing. Nevertheless, the results of the exam and the estimation of the course providers indicate that approximately half of the participants reach level B1 after 600 hours of language tuition. Accordingly, the Integration Courses have provided an important contribution to the integration of many.

Successful participation in orientation courses is even more difficult to assess as exams are individually designed and conducted for each course by its

teacher. In comparison to the language component of the Integration Course, the orientation course - in its current status - is only of minor importance for the programme. Few teachers have a special qualification to teach orientation courses. Furthermore, the participants subordinate the orientation course to the standardised language assessment.

The current implementation of the *Integrationskursverordnung* (Regulation on Integration courses) entails a significant amount of administration for the institution providing the course. An Integration Course with 630 hours of instruction - at an average group size - amounts for instance to an administrative effort of approximately 64 hours. In addition, the efforts of advising the participants on the course and regional networking activities with other course providers need to be considered.

The BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) has various duties implementing the *Integrationskursverordnung*, which cover functions concerning the execution as well as the coordination of the courses. 22 regional external offices assist the central BAMF office in Nürnberg in fulfilling this purpose. Most of the course providers and other actors (municipalities, labour offices, alien departments and migration advisory desks/ services) perceive the regional coordinators as a positive entity, which is important for the successful implementation of the course.

Significant regional differences have been detected in the implementation of the Integration Courses and in the cooperation among central actors of the integration process (labour market institutions, alien agencies, training institutions etc.). Relevant authorities, such as alien departments and labour market institutions, sometimes perceive and implement their tasks differently. Depending on the region, the Integration Course is used to different extents as an instrument for faster integration of immigrants. In particular, the level of participation of unemployed immigrants obliged to take part in the courses could be improved in many regions.

The regional cooperation of all actors represents an important success factor. Local authorities play a significant role by integrating the Integration Course into comprehensive regional strategies.

The Integration course is funded with € 2.05 per hour and participant. This has led to a decrease of a teacher's salary to an average of approximately 2 Euro per hour. At the same time, the majority of course providers declare that carrying out courses has not resulted in a loss of money.

Other European countries have comparable programmes to the German Integration Course. A comparison of integration programmes in Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden has shown that approaches vary significantly and can not fully be transferred to the German system.

Based on the evaluation's results, the system of the Integration Courses can further be optimised. The evaluator provides recommendations in seven *fields of improvement* to further improve the system.

One central conclusion of the evaluation is that the system needs improved mechanisms of directing and monitoring successful implementation. Rambøll Management defines this necessity as *field of improvement 1* and suggests introducing a compulsory final exam held by examiners external to the institution providing the course. Based on these key performance indicators, a lean but effective monitoring system should be established in the BAMF. The monitoring of key indicators should be facilitated by an improved system of site-based control mechanisms at the institutions executing the Integration Course.

Moreover, the evaluation has clarified that 600 hours of language instruction – even under very favourable study conditions – are insufficient for 40% of the participants to reach the German proficiency level B1. Therefore, efforts striving for a higher percentage of successful Integration Course graduates are important for further improvement (*field 2*). Firstly, Rambøll Management recommends offering a literacy course prior the start of the regular Integration Course (for the time being, literacy tuition – if needed – is part of the 600 hours). Secondly, a flexible system of language instruction ranging from 600 to 900 hours, including literacy tuition when necessary, is advisable in order to further improve successful completion. This recommendation implies a considerable amount of additional expenses. An alternative solution would be to differentiate the targeted level of German: for slower students the target level could be decreased to level A2, which would in most cases be achievable in 600 hours. It has to be taken into consideration, however, that this group would lose the chance to reach level B2 required by the immigration act. Lowering the target level would weaken the goals set by the German integration policy.

Furthermore, less heterogeneity of participants in the language courses is likely to increase the number of successful graduates. This could be achieved by introducing feasible progression levels and enforcing their implementation. The evaluator suggests piloting this in selected regions. The quality of language instruction should be further improved by increasing competition among the course providers (publication of success quota) and by accelerating the additional qualification of teachers.

According to the Immigration Act, the Orientation Course constitutes an important component of the Integration Course; however, in the current system it is deemed of secondary importance. The development of a curriculum for the Orientation Course, standardised final exams, and trainings for the teachers of the courses, should result in a reevaluation of the orientation course (*field of improvement 3*).

By law, one of the main tasks of the BAMF is to ensure nation-wide coverage and demand driven provision of Integration Courses. The BAMF has accomplished nation-wide coverage, but could, however, further facilitate the access for and obligation of particular target groups and course participation through better framework conditions (*field 4*).

The Integration Course represents a basic support for the process of integration offered by the Federal State. However, it has to be regarded as only one component of the integration process, which needs to be complemented by other measures as well as the immigrant's own initiative. In order to improve course sustainability (*field 5*), Rambøll Management recommends interlocking the course with other components essential for the integration process (e.g. promoting integration into the labour market, embedding the course in municipal integration strategies and improving cooperation with migration advisory services). Migrants who want to continue the language course after having achieved level B1 could be supported by being offered student loans without interest (Nullkredite). In so doing, migrants who actively want to integrate into German society and the labour market are supported more intensively. Recently migrated teenagers who achieve level B1 in a maximum of 600 instruction hours could be financially supported in reaching level B2 in a maximum of 300 additional hours.

The current implementation of the Integration Courses constitutes a considerable administrative effort for the course providers and the BAMF. Rambøll Management deems some of the existing procedures unnecessary for successful implementation and steering of the Integration Courses. One of these procedures is the reimbursement of the participant's contribution to the course fee, which should be completely omitted. Moreover, the registration should be simplified by introducing online solutions. The BAMF's effort to establish online solutions by interfacing BAMF, course providers and alien departments represents a first step in the right direction (*field of improvement 6*).

The field of improvement 7 deals with the revision of the financing system. The current system of parallel course and participant based billing requires complex administrative procedures. Moreover, the current mode of financing results in an incentive to employ teachers at a low salary and to offer courses with a high number of participants. In this context, Rambøll Management recommends the introduction of a coupon system. The results of the international comparative study suggest that a coupon system significantly reduces administrative efforts. In addition, it creates positive incentives to enhance the quality of the courses through a stronger orientation on course success. Increasing the hourly rate to at least € 2.20 per hour and participant is another suggestion for improving the system.