



IO1: INTERACTIVE MAP OF LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES AND SKILLS

Outcomes of the roundtable with stakeholders on language diversity in Austria



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Introduction:

This document is a summary of a roundtable with stakeholders, held in April/May 2020, on the linguistic diversity in the partner countries of the TANDEM project. For more information about the project, please consult the project's website: www.teachyourlanguage.eu.

Who participates to the roundtable (Short description & Profession)?

2 of Verein Multikulturell staff members who have years of experience working with migrants in other capacities? The other 2 participants included other professionals in the field.

1. J.S. MA (Religious und Kulturwissenschaften) Specific background working in various migrants and refugees' settings such as refugee homes. Additional experience in diverse projects in the field.
2. M.P - Previously worked at ORS, a leading European private service provider for governments which decide to outsource the professional care of asylum seekers and refugees. Working in as researcher, conducting studies at the Medical University of Innsbruck.
3. P.O. - Igbo teacher at the University of Innsbruck and for school children with Nigerian background living in Innsbruck. Further experience facilitating women cafes and events. In addition, she has been intensely involved Austrian organizations who support migrant integration.
4. V.G. - German and basic education teacher, experienced in working with migrant and refugee groups. She is additionally involved in coordination of a EU-funded project in the area of integration and language learning.A.D. conducted the discussion, she has long experience on migration issues as researcher, trainer and mentor.

Round table topics

Main trends: National and Local (or regional) level

Participants agreed that the flow of migrants coming to Berlin continues to be high. The main migrant groups are from Syria, different European countries and Latin America. The main languages spoken by migrants are Arabic, Farsi, Spanish and Italian. There were different views in terms of the profile of migrants. In general, the educational level of migrants was considered low and over qualification not existent. However, some participants argued that part of the migrants are well educated holding even university degrees from their home countries which in many cases aren't recognized in Germany. Thus, some participants argued that over qualification is an issue for some migrants. All participants have had intense exposure to migrant and refugee groups. In some instance they have conducted research of worked in integration programs. This allowed us to have an informed discussion. The top 5 languages select to reflect migrant populations were English, Arabic, Turkish, Farsi

and Italian. All participants indicated skepticism on the abilities for migrants or refugees to teach their languages without speaking a medium language such as German or English. This they believe will be important for effective communications and motivation for learning.

Various migrant profiles were discussed, in terms of employment exposure and educational levels. It was agreed that many migrants have difficulty finding good employment due to the required German level, which in many instances will always be the case regardless of having an education or experience in another country. It was acknowledged that some migrants and refugees have had little exposure to schooling systems while others have had good education and are able to read and write in their own languages. However, there are instances where their qualifications do not fit the Austrian system and are not recognized.

Participants said there are some economic sectors where learning a second language might be useful. The example was used is the tourism industry as Innsbruck has many seasonal tourists. However, many can mainly only speak German and English or do not see a need to efficiently learn another language. An example was made that individuals are usually only interested in learning the basics of a language as a hobby or for travel.

Language Learning opportunities for migrants and Low Qualified Adults

Migrant adults can participate both in free, funded or paying German learning courses as they must write integration exams. There are a few opportunities to learn a second language for local adults, it usually requires payment. These options are provided by learning institutions such as WIFI, the University of Innsbruck and other private institutions which have English speaking nationals teaching locals. There are also social opportunities for language learning when exposed to migrant populations and expressing interest. Other opportunities include travel to other countries for cultural exchange.

Digital skills and language learning

Digital skills are very important for language learning. Participants reflected this to the case of Corona and pointing out that locals might be learning in their free time. This might limit their ability for attendance. Most of the participants saw the digital component when taught well to migrants could be useful for creative and less hands-on teaching. This included the use of tools like YouTube videos or subtitles and apps or other related material.

For the migrant groups, this might prove difficult for some participants that are not exposed to technology. However, it may prove a useful skill to learning through the project. One participant expressed indicated that we doubted that some the migrants

would be able to facilitate digital skill courses and said that she felt that they could be incorporated in a small way.

Intercultural skills and language learning

The interviewed group all agreed that this project is great mostly for providing a space for cultural integration and communication. In addition, it would allow for effective networking and exchange. When facilitated well, it would provide learning that would be taking place all around culturally, language wise and digitally. This can generally result not only in the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also a change of thinking, attitudes and ways of receiving based on insight or experience. The exposure can allow locals to see, as they must navigate a space where they do not know the language, that migrants are not inadequate or lacking in value simply because of their inability to express themselves in the local language.