



IO1: INTERACTIVE MAP OF LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES AND SKILLS

Outcomes of the roundtable with stakeholders on
language diversity in Germany



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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)?

1. **I.L.** (Law Degree & Master in Development & Cooperation Latin America-specialty; worked in different projects related to migrants and vulnerable groups in different countries)
2. **E.O.** (advisor for integration courses, levels schedules for migrants)
3. **A.T.** (qualified teacher for Russian and German as a foreign language, has been teaching German language courses for 4 years)
4. **J.B.** (Master Global Studies (qualitative/quantitative research projects on migrants in the local setting (Leipzig and Copenhagen) & qualified teacher of English as a foreign language (work experience with migrant teenagers and young adults, coordination of various EU-funded projects in the area of migration, integration and language learning)
5. **M.S.** (degree in intercultural communication & qualified teacher of German as a second language, has been teaching migrant teenagers and adults since 2014, work experience in various EU-funded projects in the area of migration, integration and language learning since 2013)

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, for example migrants from Syria.

All participants agreed that there are plenty of employment and work opportunities in Berlin. However, it was stressed that these depend on the language level and on the educational background.

Participants agreed that the most common language spoken by locals in Berlin was English. Some participants argued that French and Spanish were also spoken by

many locals. In general the language level in the second level was considered pre-intermediate to intermediate.

Language Learning opportunities for migrants and Low Qualified Adults

Participants identified German and English as the two most important languages at work and also an important condition for getting work. Depending on the field of work Arabic, Spanish and French may be useful too.

There are many options to learn foreign languages for adults. However, participants identified that these were limited to more 'common' languages like English, French, and Spanish while it was more difficult to find learning options for less common languages. There was some disagreement as to the cost factor. While some participants argued that language learning is not free, other participants referred to many offers for language exchanges and tandems and also pointed out the integration courses for learning German which are fully or partly financed by Jobcenters and the Ministry for Migration and Refugees.

None of the participants was aware of learning options provided by migrants for locals. Some stressed that it was the other way around in general.

Digital skills and language learning

All participants considered digital skills very important in language learning stressing that there are many digital learning options available. Especially the participants with a teaching background agreed that you can give learners extra materials for homework or to practice outside of the classroom. Digital technologies also allow learners and teachers to be more engaged and communicative with learners/classmates. It was also pointed out that the popular apps don't require great digital skills because they are mostly based on stimulus-response approaches.

Everyone agreed that digital skills for teaching become increasingly useful especially in a situation like the current. Teachers with digital skills can take advantage of the endless resources online to improve their trainings. They can develop creative ways to engage their students and provide authentic materials that are relatable and valuable. However, to develop online materials teachers need a good level of digital skills which is not always the case. It was argued that at least B2 in the sense of the European framework for digital competence is required to design the learning offers (courses, complete courses) in high quality. You don't need so much digital knowledge to design different tests, because there are a lot of intuitive apps nowadays.

Intercultural skills and language learning

All participants admitted that learning languages is a great way to get to know other cultures both for the learners and the trainers. Foreign language learning and cultural

competence are inseparable since language is part of culture and its values are conveyed through words, structures and phraseologisms. If you convey a language, you convey a culture. You also have to be sensitized to other cultures when teaching languages in order to make language teaching as sensitive as possible on the one hand and on the other hand to open up other cultures and languages for yourself.

A quote by Nelson Mandela was mentioned which sums up these views very accurately: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." If we're able to understand one another through language, language teaching is essential in gaining intercultural skills and understanding of others.