



WP2 – Op2.2: individual case studies

Germany – Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich

I – Preparation

The respondent is a male, Kosovarian citizen. At the time of the interview he is 21 old. He came to Germany 2014 and over the past two years lived in various places in Germany. His official status is that of an asylum seeker, with residence permit.

The interviewee holds a school certificate that ranks between a technical college (Fachschule) and high school (Gymnasium). In order to enter into higher education the interviewee either would be required to visit additional classes leading to a high school degree (Abitur), or alternatively undergo a three years vocational training followed by further education classes (Fortbildung). The German legislation only recently has been revised, in order to increase the permeability of the education system. In particular new pathways have been created, that shall allow for more flexibility and transitions from vocational training to higher education.

II - Awareness

The interviewee is pretty aware of the skills and competencies acquired in his home country. He however has his doubts that his prior learning would help him that much in Germany, because the skills and competences associated with his former job (conductor) do not compare with the German situation. Thus, his expectations about validation are relatively low.

Clearly the respondent's prior aim is to enter into training and education. He however is also aware that without improving his language skills the chance to find a training place will be very limited. He therefore on a regular basis is attending language classes.

III - Starting up

The interview showed that the respondent has a very low self-esteem, and little trust in his own capacities. As a consequence of this, and the fact that his language skills even after two years still are poor, he himself did not actively search for validation opportunities. All communication with respective institutions and employers is managed by his German wife. She talked to the local job centre, the chambers and potential companies as well. After a longer time of waiting the chambers finally invited the interviewee to get his skills and competences validated.

IV – Documentation and support

The chamber in the first instance asked for a full CV, and later on for employer references and a full documentation of diploma. On behalf of the interviewee his wife also submitted a copy of the documentation to the local job office, which however was not able to read his school certificates, and falsely classified him as school dropout.

V - Assessment

The interviewee participated in a skills assessment at the regional learning centre. The assessment mainly focused on formal learning outcomes and work-experience, while personal interests played a minor role. Because of his poor language skills, the major focus of the assessment was on validation of his CV, employer certificates and diploma. So, most of the process was dedicated to the submission of documents and their analysis by assessors.

For this purpose he had to hire a professional translator, who translated all certificates in German language. The assessors in particular were interested in school certificates of the last three classes. So, his father had to ask his former teachers for copies of annual certificates and send them to Germany for validation, together with supporting documents from teachers. The result of validation was a written report that in the interviewee's opinion sounded very close to a job application.

VI – Impact

The respondent reported that the validation as such only had a limited impact on his life and future career. He however learned from the lesson, and instead of trying to resolve the mismatch of his prior learning in his home country and skills demands in Germany, he now reflects upon skills and competences gained from activities he currently undertakes in Germany, such as working as a trainer in the local football club. He reports that employers would be far more interested in this kind of soft skills, rather than hard skills that don't match with their needs.

The interviewee actually on a voluntary basis works as football trainer, but in the mid-term expects to do his license and get a regular part-time job in the football club. Moreover, it's crucial for him to improve his German, since it's a vital condition for entering into vocational training.