



WP2 – Op2.2: individual case studies

Germany – Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich

I – Preparation

The interviewee is Kosovarian citizen, and together with other family members has come to Germany over the Balkan route. At the time of the interview he is 24 years old. Since two years he has the legal status of a registered asylum seeker and, since November 2016 has a temporary residence permit.

The interviewee holds a school certificate, which in Germany is equal to a high school degree (Abitur), and would allow him to enter a university study of his choice. However, applicants from foreign countries in addition are required to prove excellent performance of German language (C-1 level or higher). The interviewee actually does not fulfil this criterion, and thus is attending language courses and preparatory classes.

The interviewee participated in entrance exams for the university, but his language skills were too poor to successfully pass the test. Although he was offered a one year preparatory course in the study field of his choice, including language and cultural subjects, he finally decided to enter into vocational training.

II - Awareness

During the interview it became obvious that the interviewee is aware of skills and competences he has acquired outside the education system, but shows difficulties to align those assets with the new circumstances. While in his home country he used to attend school and in parallel had a paid job in the gastronomy (where most of his prior learning took place), he in Germany would have to visit full time preparatory courses, leaving no time for a job.

It is noteworthy to mention that the primary aim of the interviewee is to get a job, while an educational pathway for him rather is a second choice. However, the interviewee is aware that a well-paid job in Germany will not be available without training certificate.

Given this contradictory motivation it is not surprising that the respondent in parallel to IHK also is in contact with the local labour office and other job agencies. Thus, the respondent expects validation to deliver results applicable on both sides.

III - Starting up

The respondent by counsellors of the local chambers of commerce (IHK) was advised to focus on an occupational domain and in order to find out about his fitness in this field to do a theoretical and practical test. He was told that, depending from the results, the regular training period could have been reduced from two to one third of the regular training time.

IV – Documentation and support

Portfolios or self-assessments in Germany are not very common. This does not mean that they don't exist, but they form a part of validation schemes, which are very rarely used by migrants or refugees. Examples are Profilpass or Kompetenzbilanz. When asked, the respondent did not know about any of these instruments.

In order to prepare for the validation the assessors asked for certificates mainly. No other documents were required at this stage.

V - Assessment

This assessment, which has been conducted by regional learning centres, included validation of prior learning in the domains the interviewee has gathered work experience, such as cooking, business, hygiene, health, billing and maths. After completion of the assessment he received a certificate and a personal report.

The assessment however was delivered in a rather standardized format, and thus in the eye of the respondent only to a certain extent met his personal needs. As a matter of fact, the respondent had the impression that validation is about something institutions want to know about him, instead of helping him to find out more about himself. As a consequence of this, the participant developed little motivation to reflect on them or from the results draw conclusions for his future career.

Besides the above mentioned difficulties, the interviewee by and large was satisfied with the validation process. It can even be mentioned a good practice, because the process was transparent and even non-native speakers like him could easily understand the purpose and elements of the validation process. Moreover, the assessors were supportive in any way possible.

Moreover, the respondent emphasized the validation process as a fair procedure, which is of real value for him. He pointed out that it was a very new and positive experience, because in his home country one would rarely find neutral evaluations, because of the widespread corruption in all sectors, including education and job markets.

VI – Impact

The impact on his life was overall positive. Although the validation in his opinion did not reveal all skills and competences, in particular hidden talents, it helped him to find his way into vocational education. He at the moment attends a one year preparatory course, with a chance to either work in the gastronomy sector or start business studies in the same domain

at a later stage. His final choice will however depend on the development of his financial situation.

A further positive aspect emerging from validation is the support network he now is linked to. He has been invited to consult the guides and support staff at the university, IHK and regional learning centres in case he will need further guidance or support.