



INTEGRATION INITIATIVES FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

MAIN RESULTS FROM THE STUDY VISIT
SOLINGEN & COLOGNE, GERMANY
18-25 MAY 2025

K.a.210 Capacity Building for Refugee Youth
Integration in Erasmus+ projects



ABOUT THE STUDY VISIT IN GERMANY K.A.210 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR REFUGEE YOUTH INTEGRATION IN ERASMUS+ PROJECTS



Aim of the study visit:

- The study visit in Germany aimed to immerse participants in a diverse range of integration initiatives addressing the educational, social, cultural, and emotional needs of young refugees and migrants. Through direct interaction with project leaders, beneficiaries and community stakeholders, participants gain a practical understanding of effective, community-driven integration approaches.

Objectives of the study visit:

- O1: The study visit introduced participants to 10 successful German integration initiatives, showcasing practical methods and tools that improve the inclusion and well-being of young refugees and migrants in educational, cultural and social contexts.
- O2: By engaging with facilitators, beneficiaries, and community partners, participants documented best practices and transferable strategies that can be adapted to their own local contexts.
- O3: The visit enhanced the participants' capacity to design and implement more effective, culturally sensitive, and community-centered integration projects, contributing to stronger refugee support systems in their home countries.





1. EXTRA ZEIT – AFTER-SCHOOL INTEGRATION SUPPORT

Organization: Easy Bildungs- und Familienzentrum e.V. (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Address the learning gaps caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for young migrant children, ensuring they don't fall behind academically while also fostering social inclusion.

Objectives:

1. Provide structured after-school learning to reinforce core subjects, particularly German language and mathematics.
2. Create a safe environment for children to form friendships and practice social skills across cultures.
3. Boost confidence and motivation for continued education.

Facilitator Implementation:

Small-group sessions are held after school, led by trained educators and volunteers. Activities blend academic tutoring with creative play, role-play exercises, and group games, encouraging both learning and peer interaction.

Target Group: Children aged 6–10 from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Duration: Ongoing since 2021, with regular school-year sessions.

Structure: Afternoon classes 3–4 times/week, mixing learning blocks with group play.

Tools: Workbooks, interactive games, storytelling, and craft materials.

Guest Support: Snacks provided; staff offer emotional support and positive reinforcement.

Safe Space: Warm, non-judgmental atmosphere where mistakes are accepted as part of learning.

Outcome: Children show measurable improvements in language proficiency and school performance, alongside better social interaction skills.

Impact:

For the target group – academic catch-up reduces the risk of early school drop-out, while friendships with peers from other backgrounds foster intercultural trust.

For the local community – stronger integration at the school level reduces tensions and builds a sense of unity among children and families.





2. ANTI-RACISM & EMPOWERMENT WORKSHOPS

Organization: Easy Bildungs- und Familienzentrum e.V. (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Confront prejudice and discrimination through experiential learning that empowers young people to respond constructively to racism and bullying.

Objectives:

1. Raise awareness of racism, hate speech, and discrimination.
2. Provide tools for conflict resolution and standing up against injustice.
3. Encourage empathy, respect, and intercultural dialogue.

Facilitator Implementation:

Interactive workshops use role-play scenarios, debates, and group discussions. Participants explore real-life situations and develop strategies to address them.

Target Group: Youth from both migrant and local backgrounds, including school drop-outs.

Duration: Short-term workshops run several times/year.

Structure: 2-4 hour sessions facilitated by trained moderators.

Tools: Role-play scripts, case studies, interactive games, and visual materials.

Guest Support: Participants receive one-on-one guidance when discussing sensitive personal experiences.

Safe Space: Group rules protect against judgment, allowing open sharing.

Outcome: Increased knowledge about discrimination, improved confidence in addressing conflict, and stronger bonds between youth from different backgrounds.

Impact:

For the target group – improved resilience against bullying and hate speech.

For the local community – a new generation equipped with anti-racist values helps reduce incidents of discrimination in schools and neighborhoods.





3. FAMILY BREAKFAST & LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR HOUSEWIVES

Organization: Easy Bildungs- und Familienzentrum e.V. (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Reduce isolation for migrant women with childcare responsibilities by providing combined language learning and social networking opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Improve German language skills through practical conversation.
2. Build friendships and mutual support networks among women.
3. Increase confidence in navigating local institutions and daily life.

Facilitator Implementation:

Weekly breakfast meetings where women share a meal, then join structured language sessions while trained childcare volunteers look after their children.

Target Group: Migrant housewives with children under school age.

Duration: Ongoing weekly sessions.

Structure: 1-hour breakfast, followed by 2-hour language class.

Tools: Conversation cards, role-play, and community information packs.

Guest Support: Childcare provided; facilitators available for individual advice.

Safe Space: Women-only setting ensures comfort and cultural sensitivity.

Outcome: Increased language proficiency, stronger social bonds, and greater community participation.

Impact:

For the target group – reduced social isolation, improved language skills, and expanded personal networks.

For the local community – better integration of women leads to stronger engagement in schools, markets, and civic life, enriching neighborhood diversity.





4. RESPECT COACHES & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

Organization: Internationaler Bund – JMD, (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Support young migrants' integration in school by promoting tolerance and addressing emotional well-being.

Objectives:

1. Educate on diversity, anti-racism, and anti-radicalisation.
2. Offer mental health tools for dealing with stress and trauma.
3. Foster collaboration between students, teachers, and communities.

Facilitator Implementation:

School visits by trained coaches delivering interactive workshops on respect, tolerance, and mental health strategies.

Target Group: Students aged 12–27 with migration backgrounds.

Duration: Annual cycles within participating schools.

Structure: Workshops embedded into school schedules; optional one-on-one support.

Tools: Multimedia presentations, scenario exercises, emotional literacy tools.

Guest Support: Confidential mental health consultations available.

Safe Space: Emphasis on non-judgment and peer support.

Outcome: Greater empathy, reduced incidents of discrimination, and improved student well-being.

Impact:

For the target group – better coping strategies and sense of belonging in school.

For the local community – schools become safer, more inclusive spaces, benefiting all students and reducing intergroup tensions.





5. MELISSA PROJECT – WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Organization: Caritas Wuppertal/Solingen (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Empower migrant women by improving mental health, building skills, and creating community connections.

Objectives:

1. Provide accessible counseling and peer support.
2. Develop vocational and personal skills for independence.
3. Encourage active participation in civic and cultural life.

Facilitator Implementation:

Workshops, group counseling, and community events designed for migrant women, with a focus on mental well-being and skill development.

Target Group: 100 migrant women over 3 years.

Duration: Fixed 3-year project period.

Structure: Weekly workshops and monthly larger gatherings.

Tools: Mindfulness techniques, vocational training materials, networking events.

Guest Support: Professional counselors and interpreters available.

Safe Space: Women-only groups ensure trust and openness.

Outcome: Increased self-confidence, employability, and participation in local initiatives.

Impact:

For the target group – improved quality of life and greater independence.

For the local community – increased economic participation and cultural diversity from empowered women contributing actively to society.





6. BÄRENLOCH WEEK – SUMMER YOUTH INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Organization: Haus der Jugend (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Create a vibrant, week-long summer program where local and refugee youth can interact, build friendships, and learn from each other through shared sports and cultural activities.

Objectives:

1. Encourage intercultural friendships in a relaxed, informal setting.
2. Promote teamwork, trust, and communication through games and outdoor challenges.
3. Reduce prejudice by mixing participants from different backgrounds in equal roles.

Facilitator Implementation:

The program takes place in a local sports and recreation area, with a mix of team sports, art projects, cooking sessions, and cultural sharing activities. Trained youth workers encourage cooperation rather than competition.

Target Group: Young people aged 12–20, both local and with migration/refugee backgrounds.

Duration: One-week intensive camp held each summer.

Structure: Daily 6–8 hour activity schedule, including team-building exercises and shared meals.

Tools: Sports equipment, art supplies, cooking materials, and cultural storytelling.

Guest Support: Youth workers provide guidance, mediation, and translation where needed.

Safe Space: Activities are designed to ensure everyone participates regardless of language or skill level.

Outcome: Strong bonds formed between participants, improved language use in informal contexts, and increased willingness to collaborate across cultural lines.

Impact:

For the target group – development of social skills, self-confidence, and intercultural understanding.

For the local community – long-term friendships between local and newcomer youth reduce social divisions, creating a more cohesive and welcoming neighborhood environment.





7. FLINTA SAFE SPACE PROGRAM

Organization: Sofra – Queer Migrants e.V. (Cologne)

Concept:

Purpose: Provide an affirming, safe environment for FLINTA (women, lesbian, intersex, nonbinary, trans, agender) migrants to meet, share experiences, and access essential support without fear of discrimination.

Objectives:

1. Offer culturally sensitive support for queer migrants navigating identity, migration, and safety concerns.
2. Build solidarity networks for mutual aid and empowerment.
3. Encourage visibility and self-expression in a safe, supportive setting.

Facilitator Implementation:

Regular meetups include peer discussion circles, creative workshops, and information sessions on health, rights, and community resources. Guest experts are invited for legal and psychological support.

Target Group: FLINTA migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Duration: Ongoing biweekly sessions.

Structure: Mix of social, educational, and advocacy-focused activities.

Tools: Art materials, educational handouts, safe space guidelines, contact lists for legal and health services.

Guest Support: Trained interpreters, counselors, and advocates available on-site.

Safe Space: Strict confidentiality and non-discrimination policies enforced.

Outcome: Increased self-confidence, expanded access to resources, and greater participation in queer and migrant advocacy networks.

Impact:

For the target group – reduced isolation, stronger identity affirmation, and better access to essential services.

For the local community – greater awareness of queer migrant issues, fostering acceptance, reducing hate incidents, and enriching the diversity of the social fabric.





8. START WITH A FRIEND – FRIENDSHIP-BASED INTEGRATION

Organization: Allerweltshaus Köln / National Network (Cologne)

Concept:

Purpose: Build deep, sustainable integration through personal one-on-one relationships between locals and newcomers, reducing isolation and prejudice.

Objectives:

1. Establish genuine, trust-based friendships between migrants and locals.
2. Help newcomers navigate daily life, local systems, and cultural norms.
3. Promote mutual cultural exchange and dismantle stereotypes.

Facilitator Implementation:

Participants are matched based on shared interests. Friendship pairs meet regularly for activities such as cooking, attending events, or practicing language, with occasional group meetups for all pairs.

Target Group: Adult newcomers, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, plus local residents.

Duration: Matches last for at least 6 months, often continuing longer.

Structure: Flexible, participant-driven schedule supported by periodic facilitator check-ins.

Tools: Interest-matching questionnaires, activity guides, cultural orientation resources.

Guest Support: Staff mediate if cultural misunderstandings arise.

Safe Space: Pairs choose neutral and comfortable meeting spaces; privacy respected.

Outcome: Long-term friendships formed, improved language proficiency, and greater community engagement by newcomers.

Impact:

For the target group – increased confidence, social capital, and sense of belonging.

For the local community – stronger intercultural ties, reduced stereotypes, and expanded social networks that include diverse cultural perspectives.





9. EBRU ART WORKSHOP – CREATIVE CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Organization: NEO at Solifest (Cologne)

Concept:

Purpose: Use the traditional Turkish art of Ebru (paper marbling) to bring people together in a creative, language-independent environment where cultural sharing happens naturally.

Objectives:

1. Provide an inclusive artistic activity accessible to all skill levels.
2. Encourage intercultural dialogue through shared creative expression.
3. Promote relaxation, mindfulness and self-expression.

Facilitator Implementation:

A skilled Ebru artist leads small workshops where participants learn the technique and create their own art pieces, sharing stories and traditions during the process.

Target Group: Mixed group of locals, migrants, and refugees of all ages.

Duration: Single-day workshops, repeated at community festivals or cultural events.

Structure: 2–3 hour sessions with step-by-step guidance.

Tools: Ebru paints, brushes, water baths, paper, and protective aprons.

Guest Support: Assistants help participants with limited dexterity or mobility.

Safe Space: No language or skill prerequisites; all contributions valued equally.

Outcome: Finished artworks taken home, cultural stories exchanged, and new social connections formed.

Impact:

For the target group – boosts confidence and creative expression while providing a stress-free social space.

For the local community – increased appreciation for diverse cultural traditions and more interaction between different social groups at local events.





10. WALDMEISTER CULTURAL SPACE – MEMBERSHIP-BASED INTEGRATION

Organization: Waldmeister e.V. (Solingen)

Concept:

Purpose: Provide a non-commercial, community-run venue where migrants and locals co-create cultural activities, fostering a sense of ownership and belonging.

Objectives:

1. Enable community-led cultural expression in music, art and performance.
2. Build cohesion through shared responsibility for the space.
3. Offer affordable, inclusive cultural participation for all.

Facilitator Implementation:

The space is run collectively by members, who propose and organize concerts, art exhibitions, language exchanges, and workshops. Migrants are encouraged to join the planning teams.

Target Group: Local residents, migrants, and refugees interested in arts and community organizing.

Duration: Ongoing, with events throughout the year.

Structure: Open membership, volunteer-led event committees, monthly member meetings.

Tools: Stage equipment, workshop materials, communal kitchen and shared scheduling system.

Guest Support: Mentors assist new members with project proposals and event planning.

Safe Space: Anti-discrimination policies and transparent decision-making processes in place.

Outcome: Regular cultural events that reflect the diversity of the membership, increased civic participation from newcomers.

Impact:

For the target group – opportunities to share their culture, develop organizational skills and feel ownership of community life.

For the local community – a vibrant, inclusive cultural calendar that reflects the neighborhood's diversity and strengthens cross-cultural understanding.





These are the 10 Integration Initiatives for Migrants & Refugees that were researched by the participants from Grow and LIFE Association during the study visit from Solingen & Cologne in Germany between 18-25 May 2025.

The study visit was part of K.A.210 project Capacity Building for Refugee Youth Integration in Erasmus+ projects.

The project was applied by grow e.V.

The project is implemented by grow e.V from Germany in partnership with LIFE Association from Romania.

The project is co-funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ Programme.

Disclaimer: This publication reflects only the views of the participants in the project and the EU Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

