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Country report GERMANY

KEY CHALLENGES IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

IMMIGRATION STATUS

Unstable legal status limits access to work, education, and social services.

Temporary or uncertain residence leads to insecurity and delays in integration.

Asylum seekers often restricted from working or face job limitations.

Bureaucratic barriers hinder access to skilled jobs despite legal reforms.

Inconsistent rule application creates confusion and errors in processing.

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KEY CHALLENGES IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

HOUSING

High demand and low supply of affordable housing, especially in cities.

Discrimination by landlords due to legal status, ethnicity, or language.

Lack of financial resources (savings, income proof) impedes access to housing.

Language barriers complicate communication and understanding of contracts.

Prejudices and mistrust lead to exclusion from desirable neighborhoods.

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KEY CHALLENGES IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

LABOUR MARKET AND SKILLS

Higher unemployment and lower wages for third-country nationals.

Language barriers and unrecognized qualifications restrict job access.

Overrepresentation in low-skilled sectors like construction or hospitality.

Limited access to training and professional development.

Exploitation risks (e.g., wage theft, poor conditions) due to legal vulnerability.

Female migrants face additional challenges due to gender bias.

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BEST PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS: Kombi Career Counselling Project

A nationally funded initiative under Germany's **Integration through Qualification (IQ) network**, the *Kombi Career Counselling Project* **empowers migrants and third-country nationals** by recognizing their foreign qualifications, assessing competencies, and providing tailored support for **labour market integration**.

Through a **holistic approach** combining **career counselling, qualification recognition, language training, and job placement support**, the project successfully enhances participants' **employability, social inclusion, and long-term economic integration**.

Key innovation:

➡ **Bridging foreign qualifications with German workforce demands through individualized guidance and active employer engagement**, despite challenges in recognition and recruitment practices.

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BEST PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS: The Wohnprojekt Augsburg

The *Wohnprojekt Augsburg* is an **innovative housing and integration model** that combines **transitional housing** with **individualised social support** to promote the **social inclusion of third-country nationals (TCNs)** and **vulnerable groups**.

Supported by **multi-level funding and strong cross-sector partnerships**, the project goes beyond shelter provision by fostering **community-oriented living, sustainable urban development, and cultural exchange**.

Key innovation:

➡ **Integration through housing** – the project links safe, temporary accommodation with tailored support plans and **resident participation**, strengthening **autonomy, social cohesion, and long-term integration outcomes**.

BEST PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS: Migranet Plus

Migranet Plus stands out as a **comprehensive labour market integration initiative** for migrants and refugees, combining **qualification recognition, language support, personalised job placement, and social integration services**.

As part of Germany's **IQ Network**, the project leverages **federal and EU funding** to build bridges between **foreign-trained professionals** and the German workforce through **targeted, personalised support and multi-stakeholder collaboration**.

Key innovation:

 **Integrated approach to employability** – Migranet Plus strengthens migrants' access to sustainable employment by aligning **skills, language, and legal recognition**, while fostering **community participation and institutional cooperation** for long-term inclusion.


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BEST PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS: Neustart IM Team (NesT)

NesT introduces a **community-led sponsorship model** for refugee integration in Germany, combining **stable housing, personalised mentorship, and local engagement** to foster long-term inclusion.

The initiative uniquely blends **government support** with **civil society participation**—including **churches, NGOs, and private citizens**—to resettle refugees in a supportive, structured environment.

Key innovation:

 **Mentorship-driven integration** – NesT empowers small mentoring groups to take active responsibility for refugee support, providing not only housing but also holistic guidance on navigating everyday life, education, and employment.

This **community-based model** demonstrates how **shared responsibility and collaboration** can lead to **successful, sustainable refugee resettlement**.

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BEST PRACTICES HIGHLIGHTS: Initiative Für Flüchtlinge Augsburg (IFFA)

IFFA is a **grassroots, volunteer-driven initiative** that provides **comprehensive, person-centred support** to refugees and migrants—without any formal funding or legal status. Its strength lies in **community solidarity and civic engagement**, offering **housing support, integration assistance, language help, and confidence-building activities** to hundreds of families and individuals.

Key innovation:

➡ **High-impact, zero-budget model** – IFFA shows how **civil society can successfully mobilise local resources and human compassion** to deliver essential services and promote social inclusion, even in the absence of funding.

This **voluntary, informal structure** proves highly adaptable and replicable across different regions and countries, making IFFA a standout example of **community-led refugee support**.

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General Highlight from Best Practices on Migrant Integration in Germany

The showcased best practices demonstrate that **effective migrant and refugee integration** in Germany hinges on a **holistic, person-centred approach** that combines **stable housing, labour market access, qualification recognition, language support, and social inclusion efforts**.

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General Highlight from Best Practices on Migrant Integration in Germany

A recurring success factor is **strong multi-stakeholder collaboration**—between public authorities, civil society, employers, and local communities—enabling flexible, tailored, and sustainable solutions.

Moreover, several initiatives prove that **community engagement, mentorship, and grassroots volunteerism** can powerfully complement institutional efforts, even in low-resource contexts.

These practices underscore that **integration is not a one-time intervention but a continuous process**, requiring **personalised guidance, long-term support mechanisms, and inclusive systems** that adapt to the specific needs and potentials of third-country nationals.

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FOCUS GROUPS HIGHLIGHTS

Successful integration is deeply human, personal, and relational. Across the discussions, five core themes emerged as critical drivers of integration:

1. Guidance and Career Counselling as a Lifeline

Many migrants arrive with valuable qualifications but struggle to navigate foreign systems. **Career counselling and job market orientation**, such as those offered by *KomBI* and *MigraNet Plus*, were seen as essential for transforming uncertainty into stability and confidence. These services help migrants:

- Understand qualification recognition processes,
- Navigate bureaucracy,
- Access upskilling opportunities,
- Enter jobs aligned with their backgrounds.

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2. Housing as a Foundation for Dignity and Belonging

Access to **safe, inclusive housing** was repeatedly mentioned as a **prerequisite for stability and integration**. Projects like *WOHNPROJEKT Augsburg* offered more than just shelter—they created shared spaces for interaction, autonomy, and intercultural connection.

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3. Community Sponsorship and Volunteering: Integration in Action

Initiatives such as *Neustart im Team (NesT)* demonstrated the **transformative power of community engagement**. When local people actively support newcomers—through mentoring, housing assistance, and friendship—migrants are more likely to feel welcomed, understood, and empowered.

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FOCUS GROUPS HIGHLIGHTS

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4. Employment and Employer Engagement as Keys to Inclusion

Employment was not only a pathway to financial independence but a gateway to **social participation and dignity**. Initiatives helping migrants improve their language skills, prepare for the job market, and build trust with employers enabled them to unlock their potential.

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FOCUS GROUPS HIGHLIGHTS

Successful integration is deeply human, personal, and relational. Across the discussions, five core themes emerged as critical drivers of integration:

5. Civil Society Engagement Builds Trust and Belonging

Volunteer-led initiatives such as *IFFA* illustrated the strength of **grassroots involvement**, even in the absence of formal funding. **Informal networks of support**, mutual aid, and cultural exchange were seen as powerful tools to combat isolation and discrimination.

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FOCUS GROUPS HIGHLIGHTS: Overarching Insight

While institutional support is crucial, **it is the combination of structural assistance and human relationships**—trust, empathy, guidance, and solidarity—that creates truly inclusive communities. These focus group stories remind us that **integration is not only a system to build but a shared responsibility to live.**