



## Survey of Contact Partners



### Flüchtlingsrat Thüringen e.V.

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### Diakonisches Werk Schwabach

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### Berufsbildungswerk GmbH

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### Internationaler Bund-Jugendmigrationsdienst

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### Handwerkskammer Erfurt

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projectinformation





## Immigration has many facets

*The situation in Thuringia*

The situation in Thuringia we are addressing is that of refugees seeking political asylum and shelter from war and persecution. The experiences suffered during escape from a country brings with them many hardships: asylum seekers are very often traumatized and suffer from health problems. On the other hand, however, refugees can offer a multitude of professional, social, and cultural skills and abilities. Unfortunately these areas of special competence are very rarely recognized. Asylum seekers very often lead isolated lives with very limited opportunities to participate in society. This is especially true in regards to the labor market. Restrictive laws prevent access to professional development and to paid jobs. The total lack of employment opportunity is one of the most distressing problems asylum seekers face.

Jewish immigrants enjoy secure resident status yet still experience severe problems in their attempt to integrate into a society alien to them in many respects. Inadequate language skills and problems gaining recognition for professional and vocational degrees very often prevent them from finding jobs appropriate to their educational backgrounds.

After the many years of unemployment due to their exclusion from exercising their professional skills, it is the case for both asylum seekers and Jewish

immigrants alike, that they often lose the vocational perspectives they had had.

The „Thüringenmonitor“, commissioned annually by the Thuringian government, has shown that widespread racism and anti-Semitism exist even though Thuringia with only 2% has the lowest proportion of foreigners in Germany. Ostracism from participation in society occurs in many forms. Immigrants are confronted with prejudice and ignorance and an uneasiness people show in their dealings with them. They are treated unfairly in government offices, they are subjected to insults and violent attacks, infringement of their rights, legal discrimination, and altogether poorer working and living conditions. Even before the recent expansion of the European Union an increasing internationalization of private and professional lives of many people had become evident.

Thuringia needs immigration, as there will be a severe shortage of qualified employees in a very few years. A problem which medium-sized firms in particular are not prepared for. The missing multilingualism, deficient levels of intercultural competence, together with a lack of experience with immigrants complicate the task of opening up firms to immigrant employees. The project „Arbeit und Bildung International“ (Education and Employment International) aims at making improvements in all of these different areas.

## For a discrimination free labor market

*The Community initiative EQUAL*

The Community initiative EQUAL of the European Union aims to combat discrimination and disadvantage in the labor market to ensure everyone equal access to education, professional development and employment opportunities. Various projects all over Europe are attempting to establish new ways of integrating all sections of the population into an unbiased labor market. They focus on subject areas such as „equal opportunities for women and men“ or „employment capabilities“. Since 2002 the European Union has made monies from the European Social Funds (ESF) available for this purpose. The Thuringian EQUAL project „Arbeit und Bildung International“ (Education and Employment International) is focusing on „political asylum“ in order to improve access for refugees with precarious residence status to the labor market. The project has been broadened to include Jewish immigrants.



## One Idea, Seven Organizations, Two Priorities

*The project „Education and Employment International“*

### The idea:

In order to successfully combat racism we have to provide opportunities for immigrants and non-immigrants to meet each other. The tearing down of racism and xenophobia can not be ordered by law but rather takes place step by step within the everyday working world. Throughout this process all participants will be assisted and supported through suitable services.

By integrating seekers of political asylum and Jewish immigrants into structures of vocational and professional development as well as into the labor market we contribute to the retainment and development of their competencies and skills in order to open up career perspectives. This will enable them with nothing less than the opportunity to earn their own living independently.



### Seven organisations:

In order to implement this idea seven cooperation partners from Erfurt (Thuringia) and Schwabach (Bavaria) have joined forces to initiate the project „Arbeit und Bildung International“ (Education and Employment International). Using their different sets of competencies and expertise they work towards the joint goal of providing access to vocational and professional development and to the labor market for asylum seekers and Jewish immigrants. In order to achieve this goal, educational institutes, support groups for immigrants and trade union based organizations are working together. (for contact see overleaf)

### Two Priorities:

1] Juvenile and adult refugees with insecure residence status who are excluded from governmental schemes of general qualification and vocational and professional development, as well as Jewish immigrants, will be offered German language courses, vocational and professional orientation and development courses. In addition, possibilities for the official recognition of the qualifications they have already earned will be examined. Our goal is a regularized integration of these population groups into the labor market. 2] Based on the conviction, that successful integration is a mutual process, we will increase intercultural competence and convey background information concerning the complex and multi-faceted life situations of migrants. Various target groups will be addressed by means of specific educational programs: staff members of the participating institutions such as firms, governmental or municipal agencies, and educational institutes. At the same time we will provide educational support for those who are engaged with migrants, whether as volunteers or as part of their professional duties. Finally, the broader public shall be informed about the living and working conditions of asylum seekers and Jewish immigrants as well as the goals, scope and services offered through the project, in order to break down the scourge of xenophobia and prejudice.