UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

A manual for successful transnational work with disadvantaged target groups

"IdA – Integration durch Austausch"
(Integration through exchange)
Priority area of the Federal ESF Integration Directive

European Union

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Contents

Foreword

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) continues its success story with the 'Integration Through Exchange (IdA)' ('Integration durch Austausch (IdA)') programme, a priority area of the 'Federal ESF Integration Directive' ('ESF-Integrationsrichtlinie Bund'). Young people who are without a school-leaving certificate, poorly educated, unemployed, without prospects, who cannot take going abroad for granted, can complete an internship in another European country.

This approach had already been developed under the predecessor programme 'IdA - Integration Through Exchange' of the 2007 - 2013 funding period of the European Social Fund (ESF). For the first time, it supplements existing exchange programmes for students and apprentices with an exchange programme for disadvantaged, unemployed young people. IdA addresses in particular young people who job centres and employment agencies are not successful in reaching due to initial vocational difficulties and often also social problems.

Anyone who finds themselves in such a situation, for whatever reason, needs support. Whether we can unlock the potential of all young people in Germany and whether we can give everyone a chance of a fulfilling working life is decided at the threshold between school, vocational training and work.

The aim of the IdA-Programme is to improve the chances of disadvantaged people on the labour market by arranging working visits to other EU countries - a great challenge for the 32 project networks. They operate nationwide in the period 2015 to 2021 and have so far mastered this difficult task with remarkable success. After all, the results are impressive for the 3,000 or so participants who have been abroad to date: Participants overcome inhibitions, they acquire language skills, they build up confidence and self-esteem, their perspective on Europe is expanded: approximately 55 per cent of the participants have taken up work or vocational training or returned to school to complete their school-leaving qualification.

The aim of providing young unemployed people with a vocational training place or a job with the help of an internship abroad has since found many imitators in the EU - in a positive sense. In the current ESF funding period, nine member states and regions of the European Union (EU) are successfully implementing mobility programmes for disadvantaged youth (NEETs). These programmes are coordinated by the European Learning Network 'TLN Mobility' where Germany has the lead: 'With IdA we are living the European idea!'

A key prerequisite contributing to IdA's success is high-quality project work. The creation of the right framework conditions and the clarification of key questions already before the start of the project is critical for the design of the internship abroad and successful follow-up process as a bridge to the labour market:
How is the cooperation network set up with the involvement of all relevant partners, including the job centres and companies as well as the transnational partnership? How is the project management carried out? How will the prospective participants be reached and selected? How will they be prepared for and assisted during the stay abroad? How will the experience gained and the personal changes in participants be harnessed as development opportunities?

More than 20 important stakeholders of IdA projects have dealt with these questions. They represent the so-called stakeholder groups in IdA projects: participants, executing agencies of the project networks, job centres/employment agencies, transnational partners, educational experts, enterprises and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The present manual for transnational work with disadvantaged youth is the outcome of this joint effort. It seeks to provide a guiding quality framework with recommendations and pointers based on practical experience gained in IdA projects. The manual compiles the findings and know-how gleaned to date by all stakeholders and makes sense of them for use in project work.

'IdA is an attitude: we look at potential.'

I wish the IdA project networks continued success and hope that our manual will also be of help to all those looking for new ways to promote the mobility of disadvantaged target groups in future as well.

Rolf Schmachtenberg
State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Further information on the "Federal ESF Integration Directive" is available here www.integrationsrichtlinie.de.

Introduction

HOW IT STARTED

It is the aim of the 'Federal ESF Integration Directive' to integrate persons with particular difficulties with access to work or vocational training gradually into the labour market for the long term.

To support this, one of the three priority areas in the 'Federal ESF Integration Directive' is 'Integration Through Exchange - Integration durch Austausch (IdA)' which facilitates transnational exchange measures.

The core of the IdA approach is an assisted internship abroad of several months duration in another EU member state, integrated into a project cycle with intensive preparation and follow-up phases for the participants and close involvement of job centres, employment agencies and companies.

IdA supports transnational mobility measures. Aimed at the 18 to under-35s, this priority area helps individuals complete in-company internships abroad in a European country. The central element is a two to six months assisted stay abroad (focus on in-company internship), including a preparation and follow-up phase in Germany. The integration of the target group into employment or training is ensured in the follow-up phase by coordinated cooperation between regional public employment services and cooperating companies.

Under the predecessor programme 'IdA - Integration Through Exchange' in the ESF funding period 2007 to 2013, the substantive support framework was based - among other things - on the thematic networking of all projects and a stakeholder process. The latter was responsible for preparing the present manual to document the quality of the educational work in IdA in particular and make it available for similar projects in future. The manual was drawn up jointly by about 20 stakeholders in three two-day workshops with external moderation and process backstopping. The procedure was characterised by interactive and participatory elements as well as methodological variety in order to be able to consider as many aspects, approaches and discourses as possible. In this way, different perspectives and interests were processed and integrated into the manual.

The following interest groups were invited as stakeholders to the workshops: representatives of job centres and employment agencies as well as business and industry (chambers and enterprises), transnational partners, participants, educationalists and project managers/coordinators as well as a representative of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS).

The current implementation of the projects in the IdA priority area is also accompanied by a networking process. The manual of the predecessor programme on 'successful transnational work with disadvantaged target groups' provided helpful directions and information, in particular with regard to working together in the cooperation network and with the transnational partners. In the meantime, many new findings have been made and valuable experience has been gained.

Ideas and aspects developed as a result of the exchange at the regular networking meetings, which resulted from the ongoing development of the programme and are inspired by the perspective of the transnational partners and job centres involved, among others, have now been incorporated into the present revision of the manual. This revision was also carried out in the framework of a stakeholder workshop with the involvement of representatives from the job centres, project management, pedagogical support, companies, transnational partners as well as the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, who all presented their views regarding the implementation of the project and contributed to the individual chapters.

AIMING FOR QUALITY

Based on the experience of the IdA projects, important areas were identified of relevance to their quality. Criteria were defined to pinpoint where special attention must be paid to what quality entails. The manual offers guidance and support here. It raises awareness of the phases and points in an IdA project that call for reconsideration and decision-making. These reflections and decisions can be put into practice in quite different ways in a specific project. On the one hand, the manual therefore makes recommendations and on the other it points out options and explains areas of tension that a project should explicitly deal with by stopping for a moment to reflect. Altogether then, this manual seeks to provide a framework and guidance for quality but does not see itself as a set of directions or recipe. Instead it wants to do justice to the individual scope of action and processes of each IdA project network in all its complexity.

"Development does not start with deficits, but with strengths and resources."

Although disadvantaged persons are the target groups, IdA activities should be guided by the strengths and resources that these target groups have in terms of diversity and should develop them. They are the hitherto often undiscovered potential of a social Europe that feels equally committed to all people.
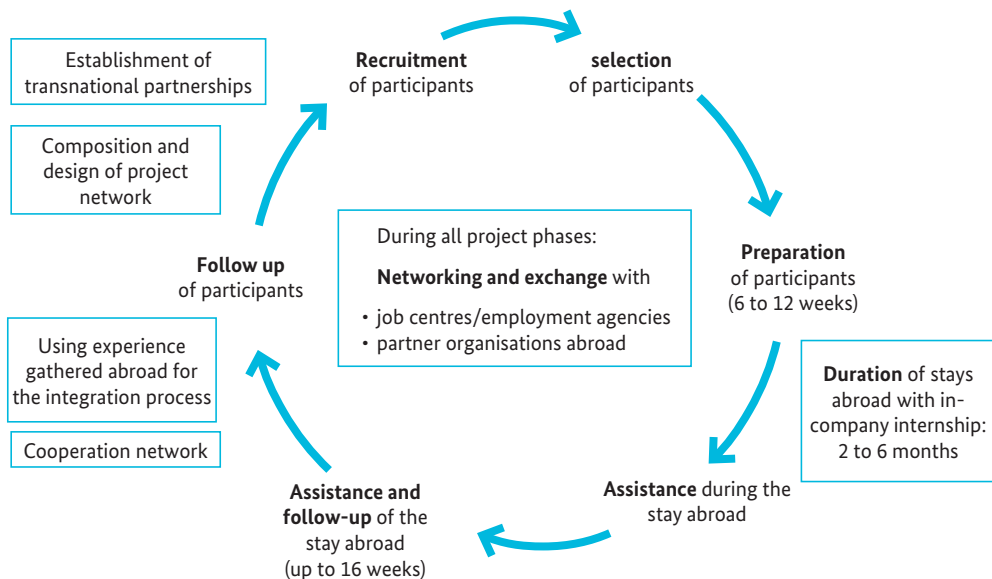
"IdA is an attitude: we look at potential."

All participants in the project networks will only develop quality together if the potential-oriented view is also their personal concern and if they interact with others based on an attitude of mutual esteem. In so doing, IdA also contributes to the elimination of stereotypes which are often the origin of the marginalisation of certain groups.

MAIN PROJECT PHASES

In the following we will present the main project phases reflecting the recurring themes of the manual with its individual chapters. These phases are at the same time the recurring themes guaranteeing a thorough understanding of quality within IdA.

Phase A	Phase B	Phase C	Phase D	Phase E
Where do we start?	Who is involved?	How do we cooperate?	What is set in motion?	What is the outcome?
Composition and design of project network	Selection and preparation of the participants	Preparation with the transnational partner	The stay abroad	The integration phase

Establishment of transnational partnerships

Composition and design of project network

Recruitment of participants

selection of participants

Preparation of participants (6 to 12 weeks)

Duration of stays abroad with in-company internship: 2 to 6 months

Follow up of participants

During all project phases: **Networking and exchange** with
• job centres/employment agencies
• partner organisations abroad

Using experience gathered abroad for the integration process

Cooperation network

Assistance and follow-up of the stay abroad (up to 16 weeks)

Assistance during the stay abroad

Quality criteria
• Defining common objectives in the project network
• Keeping in mind information, communication, feedback and transparency

Specifying processes
• Developing common objectives
• Determining common crisis intervention/ crisis management processes
• Determining development objectives
• Describing effectiveness potentials
• Observing, reflecting and assessing participants' development steps, discussing skills and failures from a perspective of the participants' potential
• Non-formal aspects: Esteem and self-esteem, activation of one's own resources, responsibility for one's own actions, shaping one's own stage of life

Examples for tools
• Developing a support plan
• Reflective discussions with participants (four-eyes principle) without (involvement of the) job centre
• Regular feedback from executive agencies to job centre (including immediate handover of participants when they join the project, return interview after the stay abroad, talk on continuation of integration chain after leaving the project – 'six-eyes', i.e. with participation of the job centre)
• Where possible, common description of skills, shared scale for the assessment of key skills (e.g. using the school grading system)
• Making developments visible by visualisations and their presentation on the ground

The following overview illustrates that in addition to the natural focus on participants, IdA's quality is decisively determined precisely because of the intensive design of the project network, the continuing cooperation with the job centre, the employment agency and the partner organisation abroad as well as by establishing an 'integration chain'.

Quality through cross-phase networking with job centres and employment agencies and partner organisations abroad

- **Cooperation quality**
  - Agreeing on project objectives and target group

  - Working together as equals, based on similar attitudes and experience

  - Information, communication, feedback

  - Clear responsibilities

  - Appreciative attitude towards the participants

- **Jointly agreed objectives, methods and tools**
  - Orientation towards the individual resources and potential of participants

  - Agreeing on effectiveness potentials

  - Specifying development targets for participants and making them measurable (target catalogue)

  - Better vocational orientation and employability by strengthening self-confidence and individual empowerment

  - Knowing effects and effectiveness and being able to present them

- **Ongoing planning of support**

- **Observing, reflecting and assessing participants' development steps, discussing skills and failures from a perspective of the participants' potential**

- **Agreeing on crisis management (crisis interventions and responsibilities)**

EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE BY TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

Europe has a long-standing tradition of exchange programmes for young people (students, apprentices and even managers), but there are no exchange programmes to support the labour market integration of disadvantaged youth. If we want to create a 'social Europe' we have to remove access barriers to fight discrimination and our focus has to be more on this particular target group.

IdA uses this transnational exchange to create a genuine link with the real labour market. In addition to pupils, students and apprentices, persons not in employment, education or training (NEET's) can now for the first time also benefit from a stay abroad. IdA has demonstrated that the members of this target group can increase their chances of integration into employment or training quite considerably through an in-company internship abroad provided they are supported accordingly (the integration rate is currently between 55 and 58 per cent). Participants gain work experience, practical experience and self-confidence. They learn respectful interaction and appreciation with and through their work abroad. This will allow them to significantly increase their chances on the labour market, while at the same time, group bias towards them will also be reduced.

This exchange, the experience of diversity and multilingualism, is important for their professional and private future. These are 'cross-border' experiences. And this is what Europe is taking forward. A study by the EU Commission[1] has shown that participants in the Erasmus exchange programme find employment more quickly and are also less likely to be unemployed in the long term than those without experience abroad.

It is important that these in-company internships abroad are integrated into a project cycle with intensive preparation and follow-up phases and close support from the public employment services.

Corresponding transnational mobility programmes for disadvantaged youth in nine EU member states/regions

In 2013, several EU member states therefore joined forces in ESF-funded learning network on 'Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults (TLN Mobility)' in order to carry out transnational mobility programmes for this target group in the ESF funding period 2014-2020 in the framework of a Coordinated Call. This Coordinated Call with agreed minimum standards on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults works as a reference framework for the specific calls for proposals to be implemented at the national and regional level, respectively.

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1 The ERASMUS Impact Study 2014, European Commission, see below http://europa.eu,
   Special Report 2018 No. 22 European Court of Auditors. see below http:// eca.europa.eu

So far, nine EU member states and regions have published or plan to publish their own calls for proposals at national or regional level: Germany, Spain (Andalusia, Galicia, Catalonia), the Czech Republic, Poland, Italy (Trento), Sweden and Slovenia.

Activities of the TLN partners: Sending and receiving youth within Europe

STRENGTHENING CONFIDENCE IN SOCIAL EUROPE

The European Union is experiencing a crisis of confidence among parts of the population, but especially among disadvantaged people. A 'social Europe', such as set out in the first draft of the European Commission's European Pillar of Social Rights, can restore trust. Europe must therefore do more to highlight its advantages and make them visible and tangible, especially for disadvantaged people. We must also make a special effort to win back trust in the EU among young people and to make them assume responsibility, too. Young people are the future of Europe. They need to experience Europe as a place of exchange and opportunities.

IdA offers participant-related assistance: in other words positive change that reaches young people directly combining this experience with the European transnational idea. In this way, the European idea will also be positively experienced by NEETs. The EU is not perceived as a place where people compete for jobs, but as an opportunity to comprehensively secure one's subsistence through a combination of personal and labour market-related integration.

From left to right: Dr. Rolf Schmachtenberg, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with IdA participants from Halle, Grosuplje (Slovenia), Cottbus, Chemnitz and Barcelona.

A. Where do we start? –
Composition and design of project network

Transnational work with disadvantaged target groups poses challenges that need to be taken into particular account at the beginning. Before the work with young people and their stay abroad can begin in concrete terms, an important quality criterion is to know exactly how to generally set up a project network. Cooperation, networking and communication among very different partners are thus a decisive factor for the quality of this kind of project. This is the starting point for all subsequent considerations. The following points are key here:

• Participatory project management

• Status quo and needs analysis

• Involvement of partners

• Cooperation based on partnership

1. PARTICIPATORY PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Besides the classic elements, the mode of project management in a project network with a transnational component [2] calls above all for special sensitivity and an attitude that is conducive to transparency and continuity in joint work. Due to the convergence of different types of organisation with in part disparate cultures, histories and their own set of values, there is a particular need for an explicit discussion of how to deal with changes, crises and mistakes. It is essential for all stakeholders to take part in project procedures in order to establish a way of interacting with one another which is based on mutual respect for diversity. It is not possible to make basic proposals or set out requirements here; rather is it advisable to initiate a joint process in which these aspects are addressed and decided together. A good way of dealing with this issue is illustrated below with the help of a so-called 'square of values' [3] on coping with mistakes:

2 A technical definition of project management can be found in the German standard DIN 69901-5:2009-01: Totality of management tasks, organisation, techniques and means to initiate, define, plan, control and complete projects.
3 As for to the work with 'squares of value', see Schulz von Thun, Friedemann (1997). Miteinander reden 2: Stile, Werte und Persönlichkeitsentwicklung. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, p. 38 ff.
See also http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werte-_und_Entwicklungsquadrat
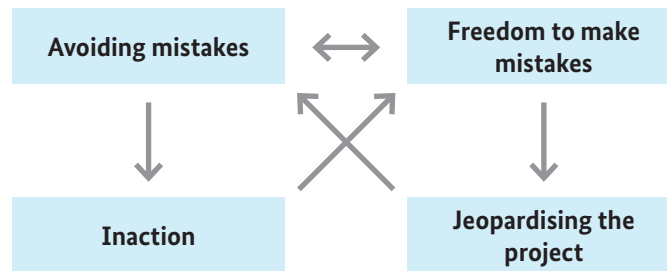
The square shown is made up of the positive basic values (above) and the problems of exaggerating them (below). For balanced project management in a network with very diverse partners it is essential to be able to take action on the one hand and succeed on the other: Avoiding mistakes should form part of any good project management, but if this is exaggerated it may result in inaction and the whole project falls into inertia because too much time is spent on correcting mistakes so that the actual process comes to a standstill. This is where - symbolised by the diagonal development path – a culture needs to be developed for dealing with mistakes that allows specific scope for error in this kind of non-standardised project. If this is too broad and it gets out of hand, it could jeopardise the project overall, because it can no longer distinguish which specific contents, processes and results are valid and belong to its core. Then it is time to take the development path that attaches more importance to avoiding mistakes.

Familiarity with this square of values is a good starting point for the stakeholders to establish a balanced project management, which can then successfully cater for all other points. The same applies to careful preparation. The project management analyses all influencing factors, discusses, coordinates and considers the results for the joint regulation of responsibilities, design of communication processes and the related reporting system.

Culture for dealing with mistakes and risk management

The explicit and detailed discussion of mistakes and risks and how to deal with them is an important starting point for participatory project management. In a broader sense, it also includes paying attention to the unforeseen changes, crises and basic risks of your project and how you intend to cope with these. Make sure your project management is designed from the outset to be adaptable enough for you to remain capable of taking action when changes occur in the project network and all partners can respond effectively. It can be helpful to run through relevant scenarios and possible reactions at the beginning.

Quality of communication processes

To maintain dense joint interfaces in the project network and to review where the overall project stands, you should set milestones in a time and work schedule and discuss these together. These milestones have proved to be an effective way of slowing down in everyday project operations and communicating together at a meta level about what has happened so far. Communication acquires a high quality, if you use these times for reflection and renewed motivation and for defining aims and visions for the future course of the project.

As for communication, the different ways of handling hierarchies may need to be considered. A project-related communication structure that is known to all and takes into account the respective responsibilities, has proven very helpful in the implementation process. This communication can only be defined and developed jointly, optimally with the inclusion of case studies.

Responsibilities

To prevent inefficiencies and misunderstandings in project implementation, it is useful to draw up a joint list of competencies and responsibilities. Decide who is to coordinate the overall project as a person and as an organisation. This coordinating function should be seen as independent and quite comprehensive and will bind some resources. Set up the smallest possible steering group of key partners to meet regularly and support overall coordination. Specify who is responsible for personnel selection, who is in charge of financial controlling and who operates the network and maintains contacts with all partners and also employers.

Reporting

Plan with your partners a reporting system that enables everyone to keep abreast and obtain continuous and transparent information. Consider what available instruments you can use and what practicable additional effort you want to make.

Specify what kind and scope of reporting you expect reciprocally of your partners and how and where reports are filed.

A jointly developed or jointly defined instrument for planning and documenting the integration processes has proven its worth in order to ensure a common level of information for the partners.

This not only helps to communicate development goals, but also to coordinate support processes and to reliably identify development steps of the participants.

2. STATUS QUO AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

Not only at the time of application, but also during the implementation phase, is it important to check which target group is meant comprehensively, e.g. with NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) status or with the attribute 'disadvantaged', and what influence the addressing of the defined target group has on the design of the project. The review of the labour-market status quo and the demand for the mobility project target group must ascertain whether enough potential participants are available and whether the project still fits in with the regional capacities. The integration of the project in the regional/local labour market concept and the definition of the target group are particularly important for the status quo and needs analysis. As experience shows, the following issues are of special relevance:

- **Look at the regional labour market concept.** Do other measures and services already have priority and/or are there priorities for other measures? The perspective and assessment of job centres and employment agencies are decisive here. Specify these points in more practical detail. Use the labour market report in your region. What is specific to your region? Why would it make particular sense here to start this kind of project for the target group?

- **Find out what the participants think of the host country.** This is an important indicator for the acceptance of the overall project by the target group and can do much to motivate or demotivate the participants. What useful links are there between your region with the partner country (e.g. school or town twinnings).

- **Also look at the labour market in the partner country and the selected region.** Are there connections with the situation in the region in Germany that could be of use and facilitate mutual learning? A comparison of the educational systems and labour market policy can be helpful: Does the partner country afford opportunities that are not available here? What problems could you expect there with the target group?

- **What participants with what needs are eligible for your project?**
  After analysing the preceding points in consultation with the local job centre/employment agency, make a more discriminate assessment of whether in their opinion a sufficient selection and/or number of potential participants are available. To ascertain the potential target group you can refer to the following criteria for constraints on labour market integration:
  - Long-term unemployment
  - Migrant background
  - No career plans
  - Single or multiple interrupted education
  - Special family situation, also taking gender discrimination into account
  - Poor learning resources
  - No or unrecognised qualifications
  - Lack of occupational experience
  - Personal obstacles such as fears, insecurities, lack of independence, other mental disorders

Together with the job centre/employment agency, also consider how you can jointly identify and specifically address and reach the relevant target group. At the same time, when looking at disadvantages, pay attention to the project as an offer to strengthen the potential and opportunities of the target group as a continuous attitude.

> "*The Bavarian Forest borders on the Czech Republic. Since the fall of the Wall, economic relations have intensified. There are many commuters. Bavarian companies produce in the neighbouring country. People come to us from there to shop, so that German companies have a growing demand for workers with knowledge of Czech. The firms would like to talk to their customers in their mother tongue but also respond to calls to tender in the neighbouring country. Many Germans are, however, reluctant to learn this difficult language. This is why we send our IdA participants only to the Czech Republic. On their return they usually find work fast.*"
>
> Marianne Loibl, Deggendorf employment agency

3. INVOLVEMENT OF PARTNERS

For project success - particularly in the follow-up phase as part of labour-market integration – it is important to involve strategic partners with interests from the region. These include, for example, chambers, economic development agencies, associations, trade unions and municipalities. Ongoing contacts with partners at EU level are advantageous.

Labour market actors

Actively involve the labour market actors in your region and the relevant partners in your existing networks. Are there enough partners that are keenly motivated to actively co-support and co-plan this kind of project and/or network? Which are the key organisations and persons?

Transnational competency of project network

All cooperation partners should have experience in the implementation of transnational projects. This includes on the one hand an awareness of the specifics of a project with a cross-border component (legal framework, organisational specifics, language, communication) and a diversity awareness on the other, that is, awareness of possible differences in relevant norms and values (e.g. punctuality or the validity of oral agreements). Learning effects, but also potential risks have to be taken into account in this area of tension.

Transnational partner(ship)

Look at possible transnational cooperation: Are cooperation projects already under-
way between the region or a possible partner and a foreign country? What would be a
good starting point? What would bring value added to the region as a whole?

This applies to all those who operate both as receiving and sending organisations. In
this context it is important to take account of differences in cooperation approaches
regarding the expected support structures of the country, the need for support of the
target groups, the labour market in the (host) country and thus also the involvement
of companies hosting interns.

The partner organisations should be familiar with the target group and the cooperati-
on with internship companies: they should have transnational and intercultural
experience. This is particularly important to achieve or prepare for equal partnership
and value added through mutual learning. Experience with exchange at European
level and knowledge of labour market structures and of the educational system play a
decisive role.

> *"The town of Göttingen cooperates in Tenerife with a municipal corporation for
> economic development and employment promotion, that is, the set up is similar,
> as municipal employment promotion is also integrated into the network in
> Göttingen. In Rouen, France, the Mission Locale, that is, local public youth career
> assistance, is integrated as a partner. All partners have gained experience in
> transnational projects."*
>
> Peter Rossel, Göttingen Municipality

Involvement of multipliers

Apart from the partnership in the project network, it is important to address multipli-
ers at a very early stage. These include, for example, team leaders in the job centre,
specialists in charge of supporting labour-market projects in the competent regional
directorate of the Federal Employment Agency, in the employment agency/job centre,
the officers for equal opportunities on the labour market, social actors, such as youth
and sports clubs, parents' and employers' associations. Make sure there is personal and
direct mutual exchange between major multipliers and the transnational partner.

4. COOPERATION BASED ON PARTNERSHIP

Good project management is not the sole guarantor of effective work in the project
network. As in many cases the partners are new, different attitudes, visions of man and
ideas about cooperation come into contact with each other. For cooperative partner-
ship, it is essential to find a way to strike a balance between obligations and flexibility
so that the project network can function effectively on the one hand and the regulatory
arrangements of the respective partners involved are not overstretched on the other.

If too many obligations are required or agreed on, there is a danger that the mode of cooperation in the project network becomes rigid and can no longer respond to the various changing requirements. There is a need here to take the development path towards more flexibility to allow the participating partners to take independent decisions and action. If this scope for flexibility becomes too large, however, it puts the whole fabric of the project network at risk of disintegrating, because cooperation can become negligent. This is where it is important to demand and agree on greater compliance with obligations again.

A good way of dealing with this issue is illustrated in another square of values below on work in the project network.

Compliance	⟷	Flexibility
Inflexibility/Pedantry		Negligence
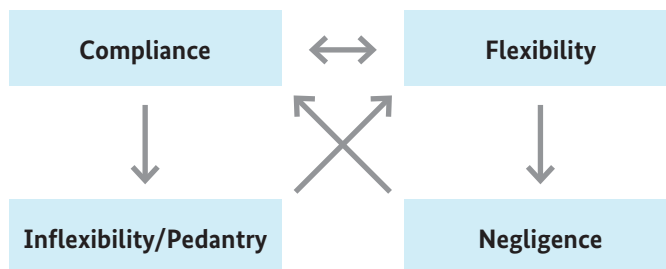
The project network should pay explicit attention to this force field and prepare examples for the four sides to specify more clearly the points of cooperation where they could be relevant.

This is a way of developing a basic joint approach beyond practical project management, which builds confidence.

Partnership

Partnership in the project network is maintained through a jointly prepared collaborative culture that ensures permanent cooperation while preserving the autonomy of the executing agency (see the square of values on compliance – flexibility above). Depending on the requisite degree of legal obligation, it is important to formalise this with contracts, agreements and declarations. The cooperation contract for the cooperation network is, for example, a requirement for funding for IdA projects.

> *Our tips when working with a transnational partner:*
> · *Common agreements, but leaving sufficient room for flexibility in the process*
> · *Common understanding of the target group*
> · *Reflect together on the use of methodologies and, where possible, define uniform tools*
>
> Stakeholder Group, Munich

Communication

Open and transparent communication in all project phases is crucial in order to be responsive and above all to support the established partnership in those aspects that cannot be formalised (attitude, vision of man, organisational culture). As much capacity as necessary must be set up for communication and different channels used for the frequently diverse needs of project stakeholders.

Infrastructure

It must be clear which institutions belong to a project network and who is responsible for which tasks. With regard to the target group, it may be helpful to include in the active network, for example, the youth welfare office, youth legal service, probation officers or street workers. Helpful here can be a so-called mind map [4] - as detailed as necessary but as simple as possible – that shows which organisations and also persons are entrusted with which tasks. It should also depict where and how different persons and organisations in the project network interrelate to facilitate networked activities and avoid duplications. In this respect, the infrastructure of a project network clearly differs from a formally delineated organisation chart with a traditional hierarchy and operating channels. The project network is thus just that, a network, managed from a central point. Different approaches (mentalities) serve the same purpose and are managed for results in cooperative partnership. Typical networking structures are in particular:

- Regular working meetings

- Short, transparent lines of communication

- Documentation by protocol

- Clear role definition and allocation

Project framework

Precisely because persons, relationships and networking are decisive quality criteria in the project network, the overall project framework must be clearly set out. The project term, the respective available budget, the number of participants, the cooperation and also the strategic partners, the contents and mode of exchange (e.g. in-company internships), the accommodation (e.g. host family, shared accommodation arrangements) and the scope and intensity of mentoring (e.g. ratio of mentors to participants) are set out in a framework agreement.

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4 Information on mind mapping techniques can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map

Staff resources and framework conditions

A successful project lives not least from the staff employed. For the pedagogical work, they need skills, experience and also the necessary framework conditions to achieve development progress and actual integration, to support participants in crisis situations and to launch and moderate the appropriate interventions in cooperation with all partners. Target groups with varying degrees of problems need professional mentors. Mobility projects offer special learning spaces, but they also involve risks. Balancing this is a skill that staff working on the project must be able to cope with.

Staff should therefore be carefully selected and trained and supported by the appropriate framework conditions and offers (e.g. gender expertise, diversity awareness, accompanying supervision and coaching) for this complex, complicated, pedagogically demanding and dynamically challenging task. Reliable monitoring by project management and a culture of handling mistakes that is actually used, flanked by professional external supervision, strengthen pedagogical actors not only in transnational and intercultural requirements, but also in development work with participants.

Cooperation between executing agency and job centre/employment agency

Projects under the 'Federal ESF Integration Directive' aim at integrating disadvantaged people into the labour and vocational training market in a long-term way. Support is provided within the framework of a single mandatory implementation structure, the cooperation network. Close cooperation based on regional needs is, therefore, of fundamental importance.

Companies or public administration institutions and job centres have to be actively involved in the cooperation networks from the beginning. The aim is to make it easier for participants - as individuals, but also in structural terms - to access a specific job or vocational training place. Involving the local public employment service (job centres or employment agencies) in the project work should make it possible to optimise participants' integration processes.

It must also be ensured that funded projects meet the needs of regional labour markets and are embedded in regional labour market policies, in particular, to ensure that successful project work lasts long after funding ends. This improves the coordinated cooperation and facilitates a successful integration of the participants into employment or training. This approach can only be successful if the agency and the job centre/employment agency exchange information regularly throughout the project cycle and already align their activities with the interests of the participants in the early project phases. Mutual exchange informs about participants' development progress and equally about the requirements of the labour and training market accessible to them. Jointly defined goals and a good and continuous exchange throughout all project phases optimise the chance of integration success.
Occupational guidance and placement officers in the competent job centres/employment agencies must be well informed about the project and its participants and are personally involved in project implementation. Important is the continuity of cooperation, which already begins with the coordinated recruitment of participants.

Selection criteria for this are jointly specified. Information and acquisition phase are designed together.

When the project network is being organised, for example, it should be agreed what the participants should learn through the mobility project. In the beginning, the jointly agreed target-setting supports a coherent integration process.

Good cooperation is also useful and meaningful during the stay abroad. For example, if benefits are unexpectedly no longer paid during the stay abroad, speedy support from the job centre can prevent a crisis. In principle, in the event of an imminent cancellation of the stay abroad, feedback is as important as information on progress in the development and skills of participants.

The principle of coordinated cooperation also applies to the placement process following the stay abroad and in the framework of the integration chain. When the participants move from the pedagogical support phase of the project to the placement service/case management, development steps and skills gains can be helpful for the integration process.

A project can have a constructive effect, if it maintains the overarching link between the needs of participants and the requirements and aims of the placement agencies.

"Good examples:
· For the flow of information and jointly agreed action it is helpful to have mentors assigned to the individual measures.
· Dates for exchange have to be fixed and the desired channel for timely transmission of information has to be agreed upon in order to make communication work.
· The desired effect for the participants is to be defined in the integration agreement."

Stakeholder Group, Munich

"The staff at the job centre have to believe in IdA."

Stakeholder Group, Munich

"In the course of implementing the IdA project in our network, regular consultations take place in the job centre, where the representatives of the participant partners in attendance can raise and settle substantive, organisational and scheduling issues. Consultations and completed tasks are documented in writing."

Uwe Hoppe, Bildungswerk der Sächsischen Wirtschaft gGmbH, Dresden

Cooperation with companies

The support processes of participants aim at future employment or training. Involving companies from the outset ensures a realistic view of requirements, provides authentic information about the regional market and optimises career guidance and empowerment processes. A vital business network and this systematic involvement ensure labour market orientation, appropriate development progress and successful placements. At the same time, the systematic involvement of companies makes it possible to convince contacts that support processes can be a success and to sensitise them for the potential of participants.

> *"Our IdA participants with learning disabilities between 16 and 20 have attended special schools. Most have no self-confidence. Our institution has been taking care of this group for many years. We provide them with prevocational training followed by assisted vocational training. They then find work on the primary labour market. The placement rate is higher, the more mobile the young people are. Many, however, are apprehensive about travelling to work a couple of towns away. Internships abroad help to allay these fears. We also send our IdA participants to Austria. Some in gastronomy learn to prepare real Viennese cutlets. These are in great demand in restaurants in Schleswig-Holstein."*
>
> Christian Lange, Jugendaufbauwerk Koppelsberg, Plön

B. Who is involved? –
Selection and preparation of participants

1. ACQUISITION

After finding out which group of participants are actually eligible for the project through the analysis of the regional demand (Chapter A), it is a question of selecting prospective participants. People who can spread the word could potentially then be identified and approached in order to reach the target group of job-seeking/unemployed youths and young adults.

Aspects of transnational cooperation with regard to a common understanding of the target groups must already be taken into account during the acquisition process: It is important for both sending and receiving organisations to clarify together with the transnational partner how „labour market disadvantage" is defined given the respective current situation in the labour market and training market. The target groups of exchange projects can thus be very different depending on the participating countries.

In Germany, although youth unemployment is now low, there is a special need for support for young unemployed people with special problems, such as psychological problems, sometimes difficult biographies (age structure, single parents, housing situation, etc.) and multiple barriers to placement. Due to an improving labour market situation, these young people can benefit from the increased demand for training if they are supported accordingly. Therefore, the job centres see a stay abroad as an opportunity to significantly improve and realise the integration opportunities of these target groups.

In some EU partner countries, such as Italy and Spain, needs are defined differently due to high youth unemployment and the selection of young people is clearly different from the young people from Germany. The partners should therefore make the differences in their target groups clear and develop a uniform understanding of the concept of disadvantage. Respective documents and evidence from partner organisations (and with regard to the target group) will ensure legal certainty here.

This requires an adequate acquisition strategy. The appropriate approach and information must be selected and prepared (media, experience reports, etc.). Who do I inform and how (informational event, individual interviews, choice of media), with whom (inclusion of relevant interface partners, e.g. former participants) on which topic? The relevant selection criteria are set parallel to the information and target-group acquisition of prospective participants.

Matching objectives

The project objectives and individual aims of potential participants are considered separately and matched with each other to arrive at the largest possible cross-section, so the prospective target group of the project must be included early on. It is important to clarify the expectations. The largest possible overlap favours a positive participation outcome. In this context, both occupational integration and the acquisition of skills and personal experience are important in terms of individual goals.

Selection criteria

Based on the project goals, the project team develops a list of selection criteria that has been agreed upon with the job centre/employment agency beforehand. This ensures a transparent selection procedure. Transparency should be a fundamental feature. Each project team should determine which criteria it regards as necessary or possible criteria, depending on the given labour market situation and target group. The basic principle is to look at the resources of the participants and to adopt an attitude of respect towards them:

- The personal motivation of participants as a priority criterion paves the way for many other positive effects.

- Willingness to learn and open-mindedness help people be open to new, unfamiliar and difficult situations and afford them new prospects.

- Taking the individual resilience of the participants into account is key.

The key points of the selection list consist of the following questions in order of priority and phase of criterion:

- Is this participant disadvantaged and do they belong to the target group?

- When is a development prognosis for the selected person good enough for the goal of "long-term integration in training/work" to appear achievable?

- Is it possible to tell whether difficulties abroad can be dealt with? (Risk analysis)

- Does the selected person fit into the overall group structure?

Generally, it should be determined to what extent the various problems of the potential participants can be alleviated through the possibilities of the stay abroad and their own resources can be strengthened; at the same time, it is important to consider where limits are, taking into account the resilience limit for the project team as well as the group.

Selection

Individual interviews, as well as assessments, are used to select participants. At the same time, and more importantly, following selection, affirmative feedback talks geared to resources are conducted with those selected and also those rejected, focusing on their strengths.

The corresponding feedback can help those rejected as well as their respective contact persons in the job centres or employment agencies to better plan goals and integration strategies.

In some projects, it has proven successful for potential participants to have to apply to the project before the selection interviews. The project team should review the advantages and disadvantages of this procedure with regard to the respective potential target group. This procedure offers the chance to identify motivated participants, but can also be too high a barrier to entry.

The following approach serves as an orientation for conducting selection interviews.

After the dates for the information events have been agreed in the preliminary meeting with the person responsible for the project, the potential participants are selected by the contact persons of the job centres/ employment agencies according to the predefined criteria and then invited to interviews. The interviews take place on the premises of the executing agency or at the job centres. A first meeting on „neutral ground", such as in a café, can also facilitate access for interested persons.

It should be considered which methodological framework makes sense and presents a low threshold for the target group.

It is even more effective if former participants are directly involved, highlighting the labour-market and training opportunities. This increases credibility and can give new potential participants a concrete picture through testimonials and word-of-mouth campaigns. Formats such as talks with former participants on-site or „speed dating" with them have proven successful. In consultation with the job centre, initial contact by the executing agency can be useful in this context.

Overall, the following findings are used as a basis for the work of the project agencies and partners in order to understand acquisition as an individual process that always needs to be fine-tuned anew:

- Acquiring participants is more efficient if it is well prepared and agreed on with placement and advisory personnel.

- The chances of successfully attracting participants in the target group are higher if they are given objective, frank advice on organisation, implementation and active participation.

- When counselling participants, both a realistic description of participation and individual treatment of opportunities and risks is recommended. In in-depth individual interviews, possible fears must be discussed, overly high expectations and enthusiasm put into perspective, and the binding rules in the project explained.

- Personal problems should be addressed at an early stage, sometimes even before participation starts.

- A realistic project description during the consultation interview is crucial. Individual wishes and realisable goals should be reconciled.

- Positively motivated participants can act as a positive force in their group.

2. PREPARATION

Preparation usually takes between six weeks and three months. Contents and tasks are coordinated with the transnational partner. For example, a visit from the transnational partner during preparation can help promote familiarity in the group and support the selection of the internship places. In addition, during the preparation phase, goals for the period abroad are specified and concretised with the group; the results produced, such as detailed profiles and applications, are shared with the transnational partners.

The pedagogical staff carries out the preparation. At the same time, other relevant persons should be involved in the individual support of the participants, such as support staff, family members, therapists, etc.. Regular communication is maintained with the contact persons at the job centre and the employment agency.

In addition to language preparation, the preparation includes job-related content, communication training and conflict training, team building and, depending on the target group, practical preparation for a stay abroad. Self-reflection and the development of intercultural skills should also be seen as important components. Individual support of participants, for example in coaching sessions, is one of the jobs of the pedagogical team across phases.

A holistic approach provides different points of departure in the support for and relationship with the participants. Based on context analysis and individual case studies, it is possible to develop a targeted approach to the biography of the participants. Everyday issues are also relevant when preparing for the stay abroad. Take an affirmative approach geared to resources that builds trust and opens up prospects on both sides.

The following elements should be included in the preparation:

- Labour market and job-related knowledge of the country

- Intercultural skills

- Basic knowledge of the respective language; if necessary, additional language courses depending on the requirements in the planned area of activity

- Preparation for the specific internship and regional specifics, such as public transport, flat-sharing, etc.

- Reflection on one's situation and one's further development process through the experience of foreignness

- Practical life orientation (e.g. nutrition, managing a household)

- Dealing with culture shock to prepare and reflect on one's reactions abroad and on return so-called „culture shock model" [5] (see appendix)

It is recommended that further information and seminars be offered abroad to build on this. This should be done either by the sending agency's staff, by peer trainers or mentors from the same target group, or, if necessary, by the transnational partner.

The following elements are possible:

- Internship-related language skills

- Leisure activities in the region

- Important regional specifics

- Communicating the specifics of the labour market in the respective region

Self-reflection

Of prime importance is self-reflection on occupational aims (attitude, skills, directions), one's own identity and "culture" in the broader sense. Self-awareness can also be improved through situations that convey a sense of 'foreignness' in preparation for dealing with difficulties. Approaches from theatre pedagogy and experiential education can be applied here. The aim is to enable the participants to see possible problems abroad as positive challenges that can help them grow. This should be gone into in greater depth after the selection interviews. Personal and professional goals as well as individual personal problems are examined in depth.

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5 Ethnologie in Schule und Erwachsenenbildung – ESE e.V.; Ursula Bertels, Ethnologie in der Schule, eine Studie zur Vermittlung Interkultureller Kompetenz, Münster 2004, Wolfgang Wagner, Kulturschock Deutschland, Hamburg 1996

The following self-reflection suggestions and questions have proved helpful here:
- Occupational guidance and clarification
  - Where am I going?
  - What will I gain from the stay abroad?
  - What would help me make progress? (wishes and compromises)
  - Before/After assessment (actual and desired profile)

- Expectations and possibilities (bursting bubbles, bringing participants down to earth, bringing visions into line with reality)

- Individual clarification of special aspects of the psychological and familial situation and assistance needs

- Specification of suitable reflection and documentation tools

Intercultural skills

Intercultural preparation for the stay abroad is not essentially about learning the history and geography of the country; it involves reflecting on one's own culture in the broad sense and the images and preconceptions about other cultures. This promotes general awareness of diversity and reduces group-related stereotypes. How each person deals with being foreign is „tried out" in an exemplary way. Similar situations abroad are anticipated and reflected upon in a protected setting. Intercultural skills and conflict training are of major help in coping with the challenges and learning opportunities associated with a stay abroad but always also in acquiring key skills that can be used professionally. Intercultural training is part of the individual support plans. Training in intercultural skills thus also serves to promote employability.
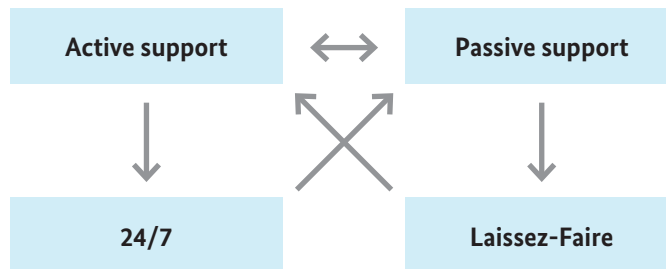
Aspects of intercultural skills[6]:

- Acquiring and obtaining information and developing interest

- Practising changing perspectives

- Recognising and overcoming ethnocentrism

- Reflecting on situations where there are intercultural interactions

- Promoting attitudes and values

6 Bertels, Ursula et al.: Ethnologie in der Schule. Eine Studie zur Vermittlung Interkulturelle Kompetenz. Münster et al., 2004, p. 38ff.
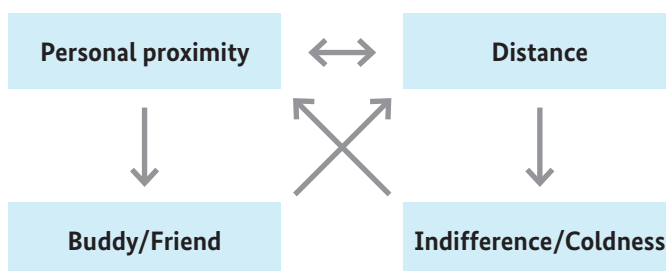
Support for the pedagogical staff

Another component of the preparation is the support of the pedagogical staff themselves, who are faced with challenges that cannot not always be calculated. They also have to make decisions on their own responsibility in some areas where there is tension. The following value squares are a proven instrument to illustrate some of these areas of tension:
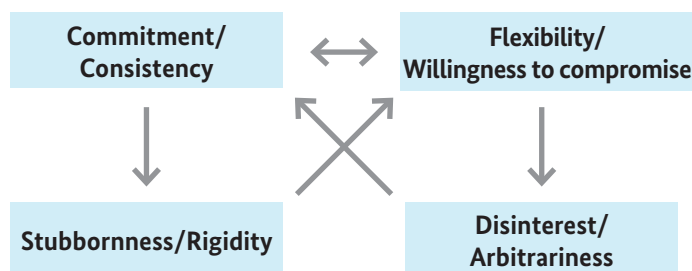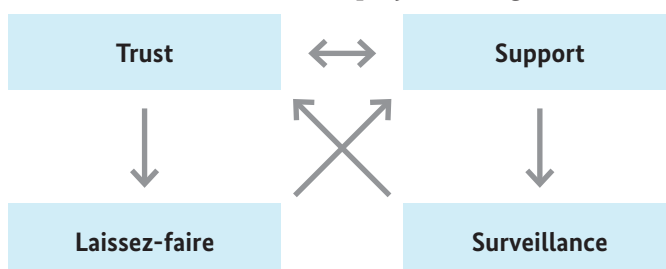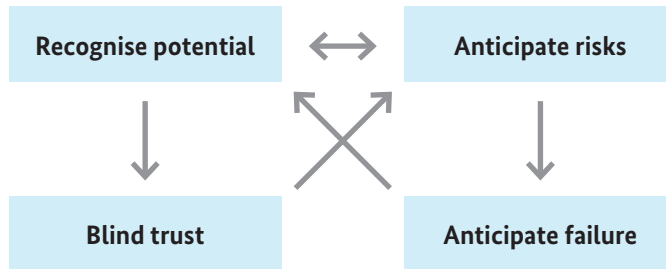
1. Area of tension "availability, support"

Active support	⟷	Passive support
↓	✕	↓
24/7		Laissez-Faire

2. Area of tension "role"

Personal proximity	⟷	Distance
↓	✕	↓
Buddy/Friend		Indifference/Coldness

3. Area of tension "compliance with rules"

Commitment/ Consistency	⟷	Flexibility/ Willingness to compromise
↓	✕	↓
Stubbornness/Rigidity		Disinterest/ Arbitrariness

4. Area of tension "Role of the project management"

Trust	⟷	Support
↓	✕	↓
Laissez-faire		Surveillance

5. Area of tension "Challenge: providing development"

Recognise potential	⟷	Anticipate risks
Blind trust		Anticipate failure

Supervision and coaching have proven effective in supporting pedagogical staff, providing opportunity for technical and professional reflection. In particular, dealing with psychological stress and one's own limit experiences with regard to reasonable expectations and professionalism are relevant issues for this kind of support.

Likewise, offering telephone coaching to the project agencies via the hotline of a health management institute helps support the pedagogical staff in difficult situations, in giving a sound assessment in dealing with mentally impaired people and in supporting the development of strategies for solutions. This coaching serves to overcome crisis situations abroad and to deal with difficulties that arise in advance. The hotline represents a support tool for all phases of the project and can be integrated in the casework at an early stage.

For more information, see the flyer "Arbeit mit psychisch beeinträchtigten Menschen" (Working with mentally impaired people), available at the website https://www.esf.de/portal/SharedDocs/Publikationen/37930_irl_ida_flyer_hotline.html

C. How do we cooperate? –

Preparation with the transnational partner

A good cooperative relationship between all project partners is essential for a project to be successful. Such a relationship is based not only on open and transparent communication in an atmosphere of trust, but also on agreeing on guidelines for action for the project. Another foundation of constructive cooperation is that all project partners are involved in all project phases, i.e. from the very beginning including in all planning processes, in public relations work and in events of the project network. You should also plan regular project meetings where new questions and issues can be raised.

The quality of the transnational partnership proves its worth especially in the preparation and during the stay abroad. Already at the beginning of this phase, this partnership has been institutionally secured. A personal trust-building process has also already taken place. In this phase, the partners focus on providing security and guidance to protect the participants during the stay abroad. Regulated communication processes support the joint work and help to effectively cope with the various challenges, in plannable processes but also in the case of acute difficulties. This applies not only to the participants, but also to the cooperation between the project partners. You should strengthen transnational cooperation through a personal exchange of ideas: This can take the form of a working meeting within the cooperation network or in the context of an exchange of ideas with other actors that work closely with the project at home or abroad.

Agreements/Contract

It is important to establish certainty and reliability regarding the various responsibilities and competences of the transnational partners. The main rules and the agreed project goals are part of an agreement or contract. Ways of dealing with and bearing responsibility for possible risks are also specified. Different values can come into conflict here: The transnational partner could interpret these contracts as overregulation and an imposition because an oral assurance is considered quite adequate in many places. As a general rule, cooperation agreements with transnational partners are obligatory for the IdA projects so as to provide a clear framework for cooperation and ensure that obligations are met when carrying out the stay abroad.

Important aspects whose regulation and definition have proven their worth include:

- Description and division of tasks for both executing agencies

- Regulation of the respective responsibilities

- Description of the target group

- Length of the stay

- Financial arrangements (when are payments to be made, what is their amount, what are the financial regulations in case a participant drops out of the project)?

- Deadlines (participant profiles)

- Support (responsibilities of the sending and receiving organisations)

- Accommodation and board

- Language course (who and when, contents, duration)

- Transportation (monthly tickets etc.)

- Insurance

- Leisure time

- Risk management (rules and dropout)

Involvement of the foreign companies

Involving a foreign company, together with the associated opportunities to gain experience, is very important for the participants. Here too, the more tailored the selection, the greater the learning effect. Practical work experience abroad is gained through individual in-company training. In addition to practical language and communication experience, this form of internship lets participants have the experience of adjusting to initially unfamiliar situations and to become more confident in doing practical tasks while mastering everyday life.

The following goals with a positive impact on employability are emphasised:

- Developing personal skills (self-confidence, creativity, ability to communicate, expanding one's knowledge)

- Developing (foreign) language and social skills

- Improving self-organisation

- Learning to be flexible and mobile in a protected environment (by forming groups and through support)

- Cooperation among people from different cultures

- Experiencing "Europe" in a tangible way

- Overcoming socio-cultural barriers

- Reducing existing fears of contact

- Learning how to organise work processes

The participants benefit all the more from their everyday work experience in terms of their individual development, the more in-depth the organisation of the individual preparation of participants is and the more precisely the objectives and the progress are formulated.

Acquisition of in-company internships in cooperation with the transnational partner

The transnational partner usually organises the local internships. The partner should thus have good contacts with regional businesses and have gained experience in organising, supporting and evaluating company internships. If the sending institution has the relevant experience and contacts, it can also organise internships together with the transnational partner.

You should provide comprehensive support to the local companies. The resources and skills of the participants will be strengthened to a considerable extent there. An exchange of ideas to balance the differing needs should take place at as many levels as possible:

- Basic information about the programme, its concept and main objectives; communication of information to all staff, pointing out the importance of the intercultural learning process on both sides

- Information on participants' profiles and on the matching process: necessary details on participants' goals and development potential; information on health problems, limitations and necessary medical care (medication, examinations etc.)

- Determination of time off for further training and language courses

- Taking up the issue of how to deal with crises as part of the communication/project

- Determination of formalities such as contracts and insurance

- Determination of contact persons on both sides

- Determination of offers and possibilities for support

D. What is put in motion? –

The stay abroad

Framework conditions and preparation

Preparation of the framework conditions abroad, the implementation of the in-company experience and joint support is necessary for a stay abroad to be as successful as possible. You should clarify the following guiding questions together:

• Given the target group/participant structure what special requirements are there?

• What basic risks should be taken into account? What preventative measures can be taken? What is the adequate response when changes occur?

• What accommodations are suitable for the target group and can be implemented in the host country? What is the best way to organise meals?

• How exactly can the selection of the internship companies work? How exactly is joint support provided?

Target-group related implementation

The type of accommodation, the internship's support programme, the local activities and the selection of enterprises are closely tailored to or geared toward the participants. Thus, different types of accommodation and/or meal plans are appropriate for different target groups; the level of support depends on the individual. The same applies to the kind of internship and the internship search. Both should be tailored to the individual participant. For the various participants, a decision needs to be taken as to what level of challenge is right and what guiding parameters they need as a basis for independent development.

> *"During our stay abroad, we stayed in a shared flat where we felt very comfortable. That enhanced our sense of community and we were able to practice tolerance and conflict management due to individual conflicts among 'foreign' personalities. Other alternatives were available, however, such as accommodation in guesthouses or with host parents. We had the impression that those in charge had made an effort to choose the right accommodation for individuals or groups and taken into account our individual needs."*
>
> Leander Paul, IdA participant, VHS Regen

Risk factor analysis

Risk analysis is a preventive measure to be able to respond appropriately in the event of crisis. All those playing a role in the stay abroad should be involved in advance and address the following questions:

- What are the wishes, expectations and fears of the enterprises, transnational partners, host parents, and pedagogical support staff?

- What is your most important goal?

- What specific circumstances should be taken into account from the respective perspectives?

You should compile the findings of reflecting on this in a document to be shared with all stakeholders. It represents a good basis for commonalities and potential differences and lines of conflict.

Transfer of the participants to the cooperation partner

The transnational partners should get to know the participants before the start of the project, if that is possible. A visit to Germany by the transnational partner during the preparatory phase has proven to be worthwhile. During such a visit, all practical questions regarding prerequisites, wishes and goals can be clarified individually. Discussions can be held with the individual participants and possible risks thought through. At the least, the standard should be getting to know the composition of the group and the profiles of the individuals. It is recommended that meetings be held concerning the handovers with the transnational partner before and after the stay abroad.

> *"The transnational partner visited to help to prepare the participants when they had settled as a group. The partner held individual interviews that the participants had prepared for with a curriculum vitae, description of their own motivation, language proficiency, career goals and their preferred form of accommodation. A two-day group information meeting was held at the agency with formal and informal parts at the same time. The whole thing was carried out in multiple languages with an English introduction and a mix of languages in the individual discussions. The participants thought it was great and were already able to recognize faces and connect experiences with their upcoming stay abroad."*
>
> Claudia Böing, Gesellschaft für Berufsförderung und Ausbildung mbH, Münster

Competence of the support staff

You should put special emphasis on choosing the pedagogical staff with regard to their experience with the target group, implementation of stays abroad and cooperation with foreign partners. Important success factors in this regard are implementation of the support processes agreed with the partners, the role model function vis-a-vis the participants and, for example, the methodological repertoire for crisis interventions or stress management of the staff.

Training should be provided on dealing with diversity, sensitivity for gender-specific differences and dealing with group-related stereotyping. In the course of the project this should be repeatedly examined through supervision and coaching. The right attitude is an integral part of the overall plan for working with foreign partners and also in terms of being a role model for the participants.

Ideally, the pedagogical staff should do their work in a situation-specific, coordinated, individual and holistic manner, while keeping an eye on the desired integration process at all times. Given these overall very demanding requirements, the project management should keep an eye on the workload limits, provide suitable support and plan staffing levels and work times responsibly (see chapters A and B).

The competence of the transnational partner's support staff is also a key factor in the success of the stay abroad. You should address and clarify the requirements for the transnational partner's staff during the joint preparation considering the points mentioned above (see also chapter C).

> *„The low average age and serious problems of the young people were the basis for the decision to increase the staffing ratio."*
>
> Hendrik Abel, Göttingen Municipality

Continuous goal orientation

The requirements of the stay abroad, e.g. language, adjusting to and dealing with everything that is foreign, dealing with homesickness, etc., sometimes cause the actual goal of promoting employability to be forgotten. During the stay abroad it is therefore important to remember the goals and reflect on the related progress in development. An individualised and action-oriented methodology with systematic support planning and feedback discussions is also valuable here to inculcate skills and to facilitate consciously taking positive development steps.

You should agree in advance on a suitable and appropriate communication structure (in writing and in person or via other media) between the pedagogical support staff and the participants. The form, frequency, media and other aspects chosen may vary. Experience clearly shows that regulated, good communication in the project network has a substantial positive influence on quality. Above all, you should ensure that this is regular, individual and personal contact with participants.

Continuity of support is particularly important during the stay abroad. An appropriate number of support staff per participant and continuity in terms of the responsible persons both assist the development process of the participants.

- Regular and documented meetings to reflect ensure the support process is continuous. Regular intervals, e.g. weekly, are recommended. Proven instruments include:

- Regular individual or group discussions

- A learning diary

- E-mail, Internet conference, telephone

- Blog or video contributions on the internet

> *"English companies appreciate the German work ethic of our young people. That sounds surprising when you reflect on their problems. In fact, however, many of them see the stay abroad as an opportunity. They want to learn and they really get roll up their sleeves. A hotel professional, who, as a single mother, could not find work in Germany, overhauled the bookkeeping of the small company where she did her internship. After a short time, she was standing in for her boss. Now she is planning to move to England."*
>
> Katja Feldmer, Akademie Überlingen

> *I am happy that I was able to complete such an internship. It was not just about the work experience. I also learned how to overcome stress better. And my life experience tells me: „Only what you accomplish on your own is really yours". I have known that for a long time, but this time I really learned that I can actually put it into practice. If I can also indulge in a little self-praise, let me say that I have very high standards for myself. I have now learned that not only do you have to work hard, but you also need to put in a certain amount of time to get everything done. And then the German. From nothing to a good little basis. For someone else that is nothing, but for me it is a great success.*
>
> Matej, Czech ESF OPZ participant, organisation / project agency / Dobrovolnické centrum,
>
> z.s. project name FIT FOR LIFE

Crisis prevention

Establishing effective methods and arrangements for the protection and security of all stakeholders is not only a contractual duty, it also forms part of the quality management. Crisis prevention is therefore important in order to identify possible risks in advance, to develop solutions for them and provide assistance. You should make sure that emergency strategies are already developed during preparation in the project network.

Below you will find pre-departure planning suggestions and potential activities:

- Choosing a suitable health and accident insurance package for abroad and review of an existing liability insurance of the participants. It is important to determine whether the participants also need to be covered locally during the internship with corporate liability or similar insurance.

- Determination and documentation of any health restrictions or food intolerances and the availability of necessary medical aids and medication abroad

- Storage of copies of the most important documents with the support staff and the project team in the home country

- Emergency kit with first-aid supplies (the pharmacy can help put this together)

- Preparation and practice of emergency measures through exercises, role play and a first-aid course

- Provision of phone numbers of important institutions and contacts, such as contact information of support staff, transnational partners, the German Embassy, emergency number with helpful phrases in the national language (who-what-why-where questions).

Emergency structures abroad

- Setting up a support system for participants and support staff

- Ensured accessibility of support staff, contact persons of the transnational partner and the project network in Germany

- Feedback for the project network or the parents of participants concerning important decisions

The telephone hotline with professional psychological counselling has proven its worth, especially in crisis situations abroad and as support for the pedagogical staff (see also Chapter B, p. 31).

Dealing with conflicts

Conflicts can arise abroad during the project when (cultural) ideas are different from those of the transnational partner or the companies involved. The information in Chapter A on the set-up of a project network and the overarching criteria in the diagram at the beginning of the brochure are relevant in this regard. In the following, the focus will therefore be on conflicts with participants while abroad.

There is also potential for conflict between participants. This must be dealt with ad-hoc. Because of the very different biographies and problem situations, personalized support is essential for the quality of the overall project. As is true for the project network, in addition to formal criteria, basic attitudes and an understanding of human nature are crucial. Building trust is also necessary when dealing with the participants. This puts the focus on opportunities and resources, particularly in problematic and conflict-laden situations, and helps prevent dropout or exclusion from the project. The problems and conflicts of participants are generally seen as a learning opportunities that can bring about fundamental changes and develop skills.

This must be done in positive opposition to the project's boundary setting to ensure that the project is successful.

A good way of dealing with conflicts is illustrated by another "square of values" below.

Problems/Conflicts as learning opportunities	←→	Setting boundaries
↓	⤬	↓
Lack of boundaries/ Arbitrarine		Obstacle to development
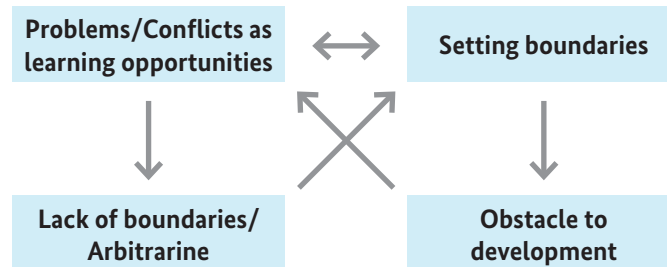
This "square of values" demonstrates that a one-size-fits all recipe is hardly helpful. Even if it is possible to learn from conflicts or crises and gain experience from them, this does not necessarily hold true for all situations and persons.

- Conflicts should be seen as an opportunity for development. However, not every behaviour that triggers conflict is a good learning opportunity. A clear position on the part of the pedagogical staff and the setting of limits also provide orientation and a boost for the development of the participants.

- If handling conflicts is seen dogmatically, uncertainties can arise for participants who need more orientation. The "square of values" makes it clear how important it is to always develop scenarios for solutions and interventions that are individualised and subject-oriented.

Building trust is an indispensable prerequisite when dealing with the participants, so that the positive tension between learning opportunity and limits can be explored repeatedly. Only then can decisions that are beneficial to development be made and reflected upon with those involved.

Here are some examples of options for action in local conflict situations:

- Immediate action by the support staff (individual/group discussions)

- More support staff as needed

- Backing up of the support staff by the project management

- Premature termination of a stay abroad, especially in the case of serious violations of the rules (e.g. theft, drug abuse)

- Discussion of rules and early termination scenarios already during preparation in Germany

- Coordination with contact persons at the job centre, programme managers and transnational partners (if applicable also parents, partners, therapists, legal guardians)

Benefits to companies

Provision of internships by and cooperation of foreign companies is a prerequisite for the success of the projects. The challenges of hosting foreign interns are not seldom outweighed by the benefits this can bring. The benefits for companies can be very diverse from opening up to other cultures within the workforce (e.g. in terms of employing people with a migration background), to developing intercultural skills of the staff, to providing support in international business dealings. Participants may be offered a job abroad, although this is not usually the objective. Taking up employment may also be a desired side effect, depending on the labour market of the sending country and the demand for skilled workers in the receiving country.

> *"It was always something very special when young people from other European countries came to us. The house residents felt somewhat honoured when people went out of their way to do work for them in our residence. Everyday routines changed. Because not all residents are mobile and can travel around the world, this way a bit of Europe came to them. People talked about the countries the young people came from. Some residents had even travelled to these and were proud to discuss their experiences. Because there were language barriers, our residents had to make an effort to overcome them. You could feel a certain politeness and respect. Everyone made an effort to approach this special employee accordingly. Years later, we still recall the interns from Spain, Sweden, Slovakia and Italy. People from abroad were seen in a clearer light. This ultimately also produced sympathy and led to conversations during the refugee movement. The cooperation with the Akademie Überlingen also made contacts to alleviate the expected shortage of skilled workers."*
>
> Matthias Liesegang, GSW Wernigerode, Residence Manager

Evaluating the stay abroad

Frank evaluation and documentation of the results of all stays abroad should be done together with partners, companies and participants. This can produce more than just ideas for discussion for development of the participants for further reflection and integration in the home country. The evaluations also provide an important basis for developing the cooperation and the expansion of the project. Examples of such an evaluation include pre-arranged evaluation forms, final assessments in the participants' learning diaries, standardised interviews with companies during final visits and/or the minutes of final meetings between the partners.

E. What is the outcome? –

The integration phase

1. Integration of the participants

An in-depth approach to the personal and professional integration of the participants after their stay abroad is decisive for the quality of mobility projects. Still, this follow-up effort should already be initiated in the preparation phase as a continuous „integration chain" between the partners involved.

The duration of the follow-up phase or integration phase is organised differently by region in the project networks. Experience shows that successful integration is possible within the first few months after a stay abroad and can lead to training or employment subject to social insurance contributions. Other possible outcomes of this phase include nudging participants towards qualified school-leaving certificates and occupation-specific further training to ensure integration into the labour market.

Determining the increase in skills of the participants

Demonstrating the increase in skills can be handled in various ways. In any case, this should be documented, which can also help the project network integrate the participants.

For the following skills, for example, increases can be measured and presented:

- Degree of mobility

- Social skills

- Intercultural skills (diversity awareness)

- Language skills

- Practical job-related knowledge, skills and abilities

Central evaluation instruments (questionnaires) related to the participants can be included in the project work.

Pedagogical and psychosocial support for the participants

For many participants, the follow-up phase is the first step into a new phase of life. It represents a real integration into society and active participation.

You should address the associated challenges in the person's environment in personal coaching talks.

You should be sure to find a balance between activities to enliven the group dynamics of your target group and individual guidance.

Considerable psychosocial support for participants may be necessary in all project phases, including after their return from abroad.

Culture shock can easily occur when returning to the home country after experiencing appreciation and having a successful internship stay, when participants find a problematic initial situation unchanged ("reverse culture shock"). This can be alleviated by adequate crisis management. Involvement of other network partners such as the psychosocial service and debt counselling plays an important role here.

Self-assessment and assessment by others

The results should be assessed in individual and/or group discussions and joint assessments made at least at the transitions between the project phases (preparation, mobility, follow-up).

You should therefore encourage participants to engage in self-reflection on both their social skills and their professional skills and abilities. This is an essential tool in professional development. The resulting self-awareness is usually strongly motivating and provides orientation for the further course of the personal development of young people.

Involving participants in information events to acquire new groups of participants strengthens their self-confidence, gives them recognition and makes them valuable in spreading the word.

This is supplemented by the assessment of the transnational partner or the internship company (cf. evaluation after the stay abroad, p. 41).

A ceremony recognising what has been achieved (successful completion of the stay abroad) increases motivation and self-esteem.

Application management

After an initial evaluation of the stay abroad has been produced together with the partners, companies and participants locally, the evaluation is taken up in the follow-up phase.

You should therefore plan to have application management that strengthens the participants' own initiative and provides comprehensive support. Over the course of the project, the participants get to know different application options and use them in application processes (internships, integration).

References and work certificates from abroad also form an important basis for applications. You can use the Europass (www.europass-info.de/dokumente), for example.

2. Project network and networking

There is coordinated cooperation between the agency, the job centre/employment agency and other network partners to ensure that the project results are long lasting.

Cooperation with job centres/employment agencies

A decisive planning factor in the success of the integration process is timely, direct coordination between the project agency and the job centres/employment agencies involved. Possible methods may include:

- Presentations by returning participants about their experiences abroad to the integration staff

- "Warm" handover (personal discussion between participant, project management and job centre/employment agency staff)

- Development reports of the participants

The goal is to develop realistic prospects for the participants within the framework of the integration chain. This includes the standard instruments (SGB II/ SGB III) in line with individual needs.

The consortium partners should also be available to project alumni as contact persons after the follow-up phase in a suitably reduced capacity.

"*IdA opens new perspectives. The young people gain self-confidence, personality development, social and professional skills. They experience recognition, respect and success.*"

Doreen Albrecht, Jobcenter Salzlandkreis, in charge of integration

"*Thanks to the stay abroad, I learned that I can achieve more in my life! I didn't expect to be able to handle the whole stay without my family. I overcame that and succeeded. I don't regret going. I have become self-sufficient. I manage my own budget. I can take care of myself on my own. After returning from abroad, I felt I needed more support. I suddenly saw what another life could look like. Now I have a real job for a year, as an assistant. After that, I will possibly go to a technical school.*"

Leona, Czech ESF OPZ project participant, organisation/executing agency/Dobrovolnické   centrum, z.s., project name FIT FOR LIFE

Implementation of the horizontal objectives –
Information from the Agency for Horizontal Objectives[7]

Like projects in all other ESF programmes, IdA project networks are obliged to implement the following three horizontal objectives:

• Gender equality

• Anti-discrimination

• Ecological sustainability

This means that all project activities must be assessed in terms of how they contribute to these horizontal objectives. Since the „Federal ESF Integration Directive" focuses mainly on gender equality and non-discrimination, no special requirements are placed on project agencies with regard to environmental sustainability.

For all three horizontal objectives, it is important to ask what gender inequality or discrimination (may) happen. It is important to avoid them when analysing the problem, formulating the goals, planning and implementing actual activities and reviewing the goals. This is necessary in all project phases of IdA projects, i.e. in setting up the project network, the cooperation of the different partners, the acquisition of participants, the preparation phase, during the internship abroad and the follow-up phase.

In terms of gender equality, this means, for example,

• that staff have or acquire expertise in gender issues,

• ensuring that all genders are adequately represented among the participants,

• analysing the different challenges the genders face and taking these into account when supporting the participants,

• reflecting on and working against gender stereotypes,

• not steering participants towards gender-stereotyped training or employment;

• and when arranging integration into work or training, taking care to ensure that these are prospects that lead to employment that pays a living wage.

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7 In order to improve the implementation of the horizontal objectives, the ESF managing authority also commissioned structural support in the 2014-2020 funding period

There are similar aspects to which attention should be paid with regard to non-discrimination, for example

- having or developing sufficient skills for a diversity-conscious approach in the team and with the participants,

- having no barriers to entry based on specific characteristics,

- successful participation being possible regardless of impairments,

- reflecting on group-related prejudices and

- giving support in overcoming prejudice-based barriers in the selection of internships or placement in training or work.

Even if no special requirements are set by the programme with regard to environmental sustainability, it is desirable for the project implementation to observe the principles of environmental sustainability.

Taking the horizontal objectives into account does not mean establishing something on top of the implementation of the IdA activities, but rather taking the horizontal objectives into consideration in all phases of implementation. This improves the quality of the implementation, by being more aware of gender and diversity and geared towards the needs of the participants and the actors involved. The cooperation in the overall project is also oriented towards this.

Further information on the horizontal objectives can be found at
https://www.esf-querschnittsziele.de/english/.

Annex

Culture shock model[8]

The culture shock model draws distinctions between the following phases:
Euphoria - alienation - escalation - misunderstandings - understanding.

The stay abroad

Culture shock – 1st Phase: Euphoria

- High level of cultural competence in own culture; own culture is not questioned
- Sensory overload
- Fascination with the exotic
- Foreignness is perceived selectively
- „Honeymoon"-Phase

Culture shock – 2nd Phase: Alienation

- Awareness of the foreignness of the new culture grows
- Internalised behaviour patterns do not apply
- Rules, morals and values must be relearned
- Stress, insecurity, disillusionment and disorientation
- First contact difficulties occur
- Self-doubt, self-recrimination
- One longs for the familiar
- "Food-from-home phase"
- controlled withdrawal, plenty of sleep, time outs

8 ESE Ethnologie in Schule und Erwachsenenbildung e.V. Interkulturelle Kompetenz – Vielfalt gestalten,
   Teilprojekt IdA-Projekt „Move and work", GEBA mbH, 2009-2014

Culture shock – 3rd Phase: Escalation

- Blaming the foreign culture
- Formerly positive things are now seen as negative
- Glorification of own culture
- Arrogance, ethnocentrism, anger
- Homesickness, illness
- May lead to early termination of the stay abroad
- Sharing ideas helpful
  („fellow sufferers", "cultural mediators")

Culture shock – 4th Phase: Misunderstandings

- Recognition that difficulties in understanding
  may be based on cultural differences
- No assigning blame
- Information

Culture shock – 5th Phase: Understanding

- Learning the behavioural patterns, norms and values of the
  foreign culture, misunderstandings become less frequent
- Acquiring competence in both cultures
- Rapprochement

Here are some participants' state

Culture shock – 1st Phase

"Everything is so different. It is so much nicer here!"

"I've never seen anything like it!"

"Everyone is so nice here!"

Euphoria

"Scotland is paradise!"

"I can imagine living here!"

"I have already got to know a lot of people! We even had a conversation in front of the supermarket. People are really interested."

"I'm doing much better with the language than I thought I would."

Culture shock – 2nd Phase

"What's wrong with me? I'm not like that."

"I can't be who I am!"

Alienation

"I'm so dependent on others."

"I don't understand anything anymore!"

"This is all overwhelming!"

"Yes ≠ Yes"

Culture shock – 3rd Phase

"Why don't they just say what's bothering them? I prefer our direct German way."

"Nothing works here!"

Escalation

"They're lying to me and having fun tricking me!"

"Friendliness?! Just superficial hypocrisy! They don't know what friendship is!"

"We wouldn't do anything like that!"

"I have to get out of here! I don't trust anyone here!"

Culture shock – 4th Phase

"We had even talked about that in advance."

"Now I understand!"

Misunderstandings

"There is actually a system behind this madness."

"I see that the „lie" was necessary, anything else would have been impolite in their culture."

Culture shock – 5th Phase

"Looking back, it was a funny misunderstanding."

"I'm glad no one really resented my behaviour."

"I also learned a lot about myself and my own culture."

Understanding

"I can also imagine staying longer again."

"Things often don't go according to plan here, but I'm used to it. People in Germany could also be a bit more relaxed."

Returning Culture shock at home/reverse culture shock

1st phase: Euphoria

- Joy over the familiar: Community, family, friends, food, freedoms, hobbies, etc.
- Phase significantly shorter than abroad

2nd Phase: Alienation

- Insecurity because one is not aware of having changed
- Self-recrimination
- Important: taking time to fit back in

3rd Phase: Escalation

- Blaming one's own culture
- Glorification of the foreign culture
- Arrogance, anger, longing to go abroad
- Withdrawal

4th Phase: Misunderstandings

- Recognition that reintegration difficulties are based on mutual changes
- No assigning blame
- Different perspective

5th Phase: Understanding

- Recovering competence in both cultures
- Communication and explanations
- "Reconciliation with oneself"

Here are some participants' statements:

Culture shock at home – 2nd Phase

"Nobody is interested in me or my experiences!"

"Everyone says I've changed so much!"

Alienation

"I can't really connect with my friends anymore."

"I don't know where I belong anymore."

"I was really looking forward to coming home again, but now everything is different from what I had imagined."

Culture shock at home – 3rd phase

"Don't the Germans have any manners?"

"My friends are just hanging out – and they're happy just doing that, too."

"Nothing like that would happen in XY!"

Escalation

"You have no idea what I'm talking about!"

"That's really stereotypical!"

"Let them get off first! They push each other like a bunch of stupid sheep here!"

"I have to get out of here as soon as possible!"

Culture shock at home – 4th phase

"I just never expected to have such a hard time settling in."

Misunderstandings

"We have all changed."

"I can't expect everyone to be interested in my experiences when I haven't even asked what's been happening here."

Culture shock at home – 5th phase

"When I returned, I saw myself, my environment and my culture differently."

Understanding

"It took us a while to get used to each other again."

"It's also nice when you feel so at home in Germany that you don't want to go abroad."

Preparing for culture shock abroad:

• Address culture shock (and culture shock at home) before leaving the country

• Do a self-assessment, keep notes and take them abroad with you

• Self-reflection, observation by support staff and participants, learning diary

• Informal talks, individual and weekly group talks

• Conflict training

• Develop strategies to overcome „down" phases

• Taking „home" with you

• Stress management methods

• What else do I do about stress?

• Go easy and play for time when you want to go home

Preparing for culture shock on returning:

• Take up the issue again shortly before returning home:
  – What am I looking forward to?
  – What will have changed?
  – Will I have changed?
  – What can I do if I miss country XY etc.?

• Working through this in the group is important

• The project trajectory should be as geared to this if possible

• Plan follow-up phases

• Joint teaching phases

• Formal and informal follow-up meetings

• Communication structures (mail, blog etc.)

• Maintain contacts abroad

Glossary

1. **IdA** stands for Integration through Exchange. IdA is one of three priorities of the federal programme entitled „Federal ESF Integration Directive". The goal is to reach to youth and young adults with special difficulties above all. After the IdA project, participants are to be integrated into the labour market for the long-term by taking up employment or training. They may also decide to go back to school to acquire a school-leaving certificate. The projects are implemented in so-called cooperation networks with the active participation of companies and the public employment service. In Germany, 32 projects are co-funded in the IdA priority area. These cooperate with transnational partners from 16 EU member states/regions. For two to six months, the participants stay abroad for in-company training in another European country. In-depth preparation and follow-up bracket the stay. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the European Social Fund. Further information can be found at: www.integrationsrichtlinie.de.

2. **Integration** means including people who have been excluded from groups or processes for a variety of reasons. In the context of a labour market policy programme, integration always means integration into the employment system. With regard to the IdA priority area, emphasis is placed both on improving all relevant skills to integrate youth and young adults with poor initial prospects due to their individual or social situation and on directly integrating them into the training and/or labour market.

3. In this manual, **follow-up** refers to the objective of sustainability and denotes all procedures to secure and upgrade development progress and outcomes for the future with a view to training and gainful employment. This includes both reflection by the participants and applications and placements but also the acquisition of information to be able to subsequently assess development progress and actual integration measured against programme goals. Follow-up, however, also includes the regional and transnational cooperation relationship so as to maintain good working relations for the future as well.

4. In this manual, the term **emergency case** denotes a set of preventive tools. The aim is to anticipate possible risks in a stay abroad and plan related strategies to ensure that problems do not arise or can be dealt with quickly. An emergency kit thus forms part of professional project management or crisis management. Besides the emergency plan, it contains, for example, local emergency service contacts, an emergency fund and emergency medical supplies.

5. **Participatory project management** means managing, planning, steering and controlling projects in line with objectives and the involvement of stakeholders and those affected. It is important to clearly and transparently define and monitor aims (stages/milestones), procedures and responsibilities. Professional project management has as its goals the following:

- reactions are prompt and solutions are found quickly to prevent or rapidly remedy mistakes;

- besides good planning, quality assurance also pays attention to risk assessment and flexibility so as to cope in a sufficiently tolerant and competent way with disruptions/conflicts (see square of values) and exerts a positive influence on communication; process support procedures and instruments (monitoring, checks and evaluation) help to maintain continuous improvement;

- a frank culture of dealing with mistakes in an affirmative way is as crucially important as the intercultural determinants of national and international partners and the competent intercultural behaviour of those in charge;

- there is a continuous flow of information and participatory coordination involving the various actors and partners, particularly regarding the integration chain and follow-up.

6. **Stakeholders:** those involved in or affected by a project, an issue or a decision. The stake at issue in IdA is 'quality'. Various stakeholders have been involved in and/or affected by this issue: participants, project networks, job centres, employment agencies educational mentors, transnational partners, enterprises and the Federal Labour Ministry.

7. **Transnationality** means working towards a jointly defined goal with transnational partners in a mutual process. The IdA priority area serves the horizontal objective of **transnational cooperation** in the Operational ESF Programme (ESF OP) of the federal government that must be implemented in the ESF OP (Art 10 Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013). The **principle of reciprocity holds: both sides must receive participants**. Coordinated programmes similar to IdA are currently running or planned in nine EU Member States and regions: Andalusia, Germany, Galicia, Catalonia, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Trento and the Czech Republic. Some of these youth also participate in IdA projects in Germany. Around 500 young people from Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Trento and the Czech Republic have been sent to the German IdA projects so far. Coordination between German co-operation networks and their European partner organizations is supported by the Transnational Learning Network "Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults" where the Member States and regions, represented by ministries and public employment services collaborate. This cooperation is a decisive factor in getting other EU Member States and regions to implement transnational mobility programmes, too. A database is used to search for partner projects willing to receive participants. The draft exchange programme is available and can be adapted by each Member State individually to its needs.

8. **Squares of values:** The square of values originally goes back to Aristotle. Aristotle speaks of "the right measure between too much and too little". This idea was taken up by Paul Helwig (1951), who called it the square of values. It was popularised and developed by Friedemann Schulz von Thun in his book, "Miteinander reden 2: Stile, Werte, Persönlichkeitsentwicklung" (Talking to each other 2: style, values, personality development). Development squares help to clarify and balance positive basic values and the problems of exaggerating them.
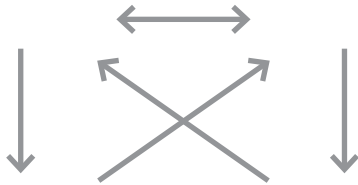
In the context of this manual, the squares of values aim to illustrate that a system as complex as an individual IdA project and the diverse intersections and influencing factors cannot offer a recipe but only procedural guidelines and support for raising awareness of general conditions and risks.

9. **Target group** means the group of persons with defined homogenous characteristics to be addressed by a programme/activities. The measures in IdA are aimed at youth and young adults whose access to employment and training is difficult for multiple individual or structural reasons and who are no longer being reached by the measures of the job centres/employment agencies. They are for instance long-term unemployed, they have not completed their school or vocational education or they have a migration background. IdA's target group are youth and young adults between 18 and 35 years. The focus is on young people up to the age of 27.

Legal notice

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Participants in the stakeholder process „quality" as part of the thematic networking of the project networks of the transnational programme „IdA - Integration through Exchange" (2008-2014) as well as the „Federal ESF Integration Directive" in the priority area „Integration through Exchange (IdA)" (2015-2021):

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