

Curriculum interculturALE – a new perspective on educational work with refugees



A German course for refugees at a German adult education centre

Since the increased arrival of asylum-seekers and refugees in Germany, adult education centres have reported about a shortage of teaching staff who are specially qualified to meet this demand. In addition to linguistic, didactical and intercultural skills, there is a particular need for instructors who can empathise with refugees as a specific learning group. In order to close this gap, DWV International has been developing the intercultural-didactical qualification entitled “Curriculum interculturALE”¹ since 2017.

The further training is aimed at instructors and volunteer learning guides who teach courses for refugees at German adult education centres. They are to be sensitised to the challenges and opportunities arising from working with culturally-diverse groups.

In developing Curriculum interculturALE, DWV International was able to build on its international experience in working with refugees, particularly in the Middle East, and to use the knowledge and methods gained there for integration work in Germany. With support from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Institute has designed and tested the further training course as a pilot project together with an international team of experts from Jordan, Palestine, Iraq and Germany.

Focusing on the educational situation of people who have experienced displacement

The Curriculum interculturALE, which was developed as part of the project, provides an insight into the further education concept and the three underlying approaches of multicollectivity, active citizenship and participatory education. It comprises three modules on the following main topics:



Who am I? – My role as an adult educator in a culturally-diverse setting



Who are my students? – Understanding learners' backgrounds, experiences and contexts



How can we learn together? – Diversified methods for learning from one another

¹ ALE stands for “Adult Learning and Education”



“The strength of Curriculum interculturALE lies in the fact that it motivates self-reflection and self-questioning. It shakes up apparently sound knowledge relating to cultural backgrounds, traditions, mentality, attitudes, etc. This paves the way for a completely different approach toward learning from one another as the course progresses.”

Daniela Haslecker, Germany, multiplier working in the “Curriculum interculturALE” project



“Curriculum interculturALE provides instructors with an understanding of the reality of refugees’ lives and of the challenges that they face. In addition to the content, the question of how to impart knowledge is also of central importance to me. And the participatory education approach has proved its worth here, especially when it comes to multicultural learning environments.”

Jawad Al Gousous, Jordan, expert working in the “Curriculum interculturALE” project

Curriculum interculturALE focuses on the educational backgrounds and needs of people who have experienced displacement, and promotes an attitude of appreciative inquiry. Rather than providing ready-made solutions for working with particular groups of learners from specific countries of origin, it supports the ability to select learning and teaching strategies that respond to learners’ individual situations. Integration work with refugees requires instructors to be willing to change perspectives and to be highly receptive to differences, but without losing sight of commonalities. The training based on the three abovementioned modules is intended to help teaching staff to adjust their perspective with regard to the course that they offer and their professional role in this context. After successful participation, instructors are to be able to:

- create a safe, appreciative atmosphere in culturally-diverse learning groups;
- explain the basic principles of education in contexts of forced displacement;
- apply learner-centred methods; and
- strengthen their self-reflection and open up perspectives for pluralistic values.

A two-stage further training concept

The further training was implemented and piloted in two phases in 2018: The first stage consisted of international meta-trainers training a total of 25 multipliers from seven associations of German adult education centres at *Länder* level in various workshops. In the second stage, the multipliers who had been qualified in this way offered weekend workshops for roughly twelve instructors and volunteer learning guides each. This meant that a total of

125 teaching staff throughout Germany received further training in 2018.

In addition, a five-day study trip to Jordan gave the multipliers insights into the work of DVV International. They became familiar with partner organisations from the education sector, and visited Zaatari, the largest refugee camp in Jordan. They experienced the challenges and successful instruments that exist in the implementation of educational programmes for refugees, and were able to draw parallels to their work in Germany.

The project led to the production of extensive teaching and learning materials, in addition to the publication entitled “Curriculum interculturALE”. The materials include exercises, didactical implementation via film, and dossiers on topics such as culture and identity, migration, educational biographies and backgrounds of refugees, learner orientation as well as dealing with trauma.

DVV International will work together with the German Adult Education Association to promote the further dissemination and use of the intercultural-didactical training in Germany. In addition, DVV International will make the training concept and the developed methods available for the practical use in its international work in the future. ●

All materials relating to the “Curriculum interculturALE” project can be downloaded free of charge from the following website:
www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/curriculum-interculturale/

