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# THE IMMIGRANT WORKFORCE IN GERMANY: FORMAL AND INFORMAL BARRIERS TO ADDRESSING SKILLS DEFICITS

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By Stefan Speckesser

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November 2013

## Acknowledgments

This research was commissioned by the Transatlantic Council on Migration, an initiative of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), for its ninth plenary meeting, held December 2012 in Madrid. The meeting's theme was "Immigration & Skills: Maximizing Human Capital in a Changing Economic Landscape," and this paper was one of the reports that informed the Council's discussions.

The Council, undertaken in cooperation with MPI's policy partner the Bertelsmann Stiftung, is a unique deliberative body that examines vital policy issues and informs migration policymaking processes in North America and Europe.

The Council's work is generously supported by the following foundations and governments: Carnegie Corporation of New York, Open Society Foundations, Bertelsmann Stiftung, the Barrow Cadbury Trust (UK Policy Partner), the Luso-American Development Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the governments of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.

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Cover Design: Danielle Tinker, MPI  
Typesetting: Erin Perkins, LeafDev

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Suggested citation: Speckesser, Stefan. 2013. *The Immigrant Workforce in Germany: Formal and Informal Barriers to Addressing Skills Deficits*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.



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## Executive Summary

Although immigrants have come to play an increasingly important role in the German labor market, concerns persist over the integration of new arrivals and resident immigrant populations into the labor force. Recent data indicate that immigrants have lower employment outcomes and lower levels of formal education than native workers. Further education and training — undertaken after completing initial vocational postsecondary education — have significant positive impacts on employment outcomes and wages for both native and immigrant workers. They may also be effective tools for improving immigrant involvement in the labor market. However, immigrants across all ages and skill levels are less likely than nonimmigrants to participate in any kind of further education, indicating possible barriers to training for the foreign-born population in Germany.

An analysis of the structure of the workforce development system in Germany shows that the *formal* barriers to accessing training for immigrants are relatively few. Immigrants have the same legal rights within the social benefits system as nonimmigrants, and are therefore equally entitled to access publicly provided training and labor market integration programs. In addition, recent reforms to labor market policies in Germany have made it possible to provide the same employment support and training benefits to individuals receiving unemployment insurance as those receiving alternative, means-tested benefits.

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*Immigrants across all ages and skill levels are less likely than nonimmigrants to participate in any kind of further education.*

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While few formal barriers to training exist, the distinct, highly institutionalized, and regulated nature of the German workforce development system — together with the influential role played by employers and occupational associations — has an impact on how immigrants access training, and may create *informal* barriers to training. Firms, employers, and occupational associations are key facilitators and regulators of the further training system. More working-age individuals access training through their employers and workplaces than via any other route. In addition, employers enable workers to engage in professional development and ongoing training activities by providing support while the employees train, and offer career or wage incentives for employees after training is finished.

Chambers of commerce and industry are highly engaged in regulating vocational education training programs, setting the standards for occupational qualifications, and conducting qualification assessments. They also set access requirements for further training programs and often require participants to hold a recognized vocational qualification to participate in advanced vocational training.

The central role of employers and occupational associations in the German workforce development system can create particular barriers that limit the ability of immigrants to access training opportunities:

- **Credential-recognition barriers.** Many of the standard further training programs target individuals with initial qualifications obtained in the German vocational education and training (VET) system. As learners are often required to hold recognized qualifications to participate in these programs, this system may not meet the needs of people with an increasing diversity of foreign qualifications or who lack formal vocational qualifications. Immigrants from outside the European Union (EU) may find it especially challenging to access further vocational training, as their credentials are much less likely to be fully recognized.
- **Structural barriers.** Evidence indicates that immigrants are almost half as likely to participate in employer-led training as individuals without a migration background. This holds true across the skills spectrum and may indicate other, underlying obstacles that limit immigrants' ability to access training through employers. Given the importance of employers in supporting and



facilitating access to training, this suggests that immigrants are missing out on key workforce development opportunities.

In addition, immigrants may face other informal barriers to training access, including a lack of familiarity with the workforce development system or labor market, and a lack of sufficient German language skills.

Several steps could be taken to reduce these barriers. First, relevant stakeholders in the VET system, such as chambers of commerce, could make a greater effort to ensure the equal participation of immigrants and others with diverse needs in occupational training activities. Second, programs that add occupational skills training to traditional language or integration courses may offer a way to add value to immigrant-specific training programs and help immigrants overcome language barriers. Finally, credential-recognition barriers could be reduced by creating specialized vocational training programs for immigrants with foreign qualifications, or by more clearly linking training programs with credential recognition.

## I. Introduction

Workforce development and further education have long been recognized as important means of achieving innovation, economic growth, and social cohesion in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The unique structure of the workforce development system guarantees that all principle stakeholders, including professional organizations and employers, are engaged in ensuring that these goals are achieved. Thus, the private sector plays a strong role within a training and continuing education system that is otherwise entrenched in legislation and institutionalized through publicly financed consultative institutions. The influence of employers and professional associations in Germany has produced specific barriers to immigrant participation in workforce development programs, but has also created opportunities for greater immigrant participation.

This report will analyze whether publicly-financed consultative institutions, employers, and professional associations are prepared to meet the needs of existing and future immigrant populations. More specifically, it will evaluate the accessibility of training programs to immigrants, and the success of existing mainstream and targeted programs in serving the skills needs of diverse populations and preparing them to meet labor market demands.

The report begins by reviewing the structure and regulation of mainstream training programs, with a focus on further training for adults beyond the initial vocational education and training (VET) provided by the German apprenticeship system.<sup>2</sup> Second, it explains the differing educational backgrounds and training needs of the various waves of immigrants that have arrived in Germany since World War II. Then, it outlines programs that specifically target immigrant groups and assesses how well further training addresses the specific situation of immigrants, or more broadly, of people with a migration background, including the second generation.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the report analyzes the extent to which immigrants access further training programs, and sets out policy recommendations for reducing the gap in further training participation between people with and without a migration background.

1 Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, “Lernen im Lebenslauf,” [www.bmbf.bund.de/de/lebenslangeslernen.php](http://www.bmbf.bund.de/de/lebenslangeslernen.php).

2 The German apprenticeship system combines work experience in a firm with provision of vocational education in state-funded colleges; it is often referred to as the “dual system.”

3 A migration background is a standard statistical concept used to characterize first- and second-generation immigrants in Germany. It represents (1) people who immigrated to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949; (2) people born in Germany with foreign citizenship; and (3) people with German citizenship, who were born in Germany to at least one foreign parent. See Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund — Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2011*, Mikrozensus, Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2 (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012), [www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund2010220117004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund2010220117004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).



## II. Mainstream Workforce Development in Germany

### A. Institutional Context

Both German and European Union (EU) public policy emphasize the importance of further training as an element of lifelong learning and a driver of societal objectives such as innovation, economic growth, and social cohesion.<sup>4</sup> This importance is firmly entrenched in federal and state-level laws, regulations, and publicly financed institutions. The law also requires unions, employers' associations, professional organizations, trade associations and chambers of commerce, and other stakeholder groups to engage in the processes of setting standards and assessing and recognizing qualifications.

Employer-led training has the greatest share of these activities. Thus, while 34 percent of 35- to 50-year-olds participate in firm-led further training, only 13 percent participate in individually initiated further occupational training. Overall, only 10 percent of the population participates in further education without an occupational focus.<sup>5</sup> Employers and occupational associations are therefore critical actors in the German workforce development system.

#### Box 1. Defining Further Education and Skills

The importance of further training for skills development and economic prosperity in Germany was first fully acknowledged in 1970 by the work of a government commission on the long-term development of the German education system, the *Deutscher Bildungsrat* (German Education Council). According to the definition of the *Bildungsrat*, further training and skills development may be undertaken by people of all skills levels. Further training may result in both an increase in formal levels of educational attainment, as well as the acquisition of alternative knowledge and skills, which may be used to transition to employment in a different sector or occupation.

Further training consists of a variety of formal and informal learning in a wide range of contexts. Learning can take place in specific further training institutions as guided learning and assessment, but may also result from structured learning activities in the workplace, where employers increase skills through job rotation or participation in development activities. In addition, self-organized learning (activities in the community or using Internet-based learning formats) are also important elements of further education.

Although the definition of further training by the *Bildungsrat* is still valid today, the understanding of training activities in Germany, previously limited to activities formally organized by education providers, has shifted to include self-organized activities as well.

Source: Markus Bretschneider, *Kompetenzentwicklung aus der Perspektive der Weiterbildung* (Bonn, Germany: Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2006), [www.die-bonn.de/doks/bretschneider0601.pdf](http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/bretschneider0601.pdf).

4 Bundesministerium für Bildung, "Lernen im Lebenslauf;" European Commission, "Strategic Framework for Education and Training," [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/framework\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/framework_en.htm).

5 Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, *Bildung in Deutschland 2012: Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zur kulturellen Bildung im Lebenslauf* (Bielefeld, Germany: Bertelsmann Verlag, 2012): 143, [www.bildungsbericht.de/daten2012/bb\\_2012.pdf](http://www.bildungsbericht.de/daten2012/bb_2012.pdf).

## B. Activities in the Workplace

Most of the further training carried out in Germany takes place in the workplace. Employer-led initiatives are usually free from government regulation or certification requirements, but may be subject to agreements with unions at the firm or sector level.

Employer-led training is advantageous for both employers and employees. Employers benefit from a workforce that is up to date with technological and market developments. Firms with an established system of workforce training and a corresponding career or pay progression system may also establish a competitive advantage in recruitment, if high-quality applicants see such mechanisms as beneficial to their career prospects when applying for vacancies.<sup>6</sup> For employees, further training promotes career development and helps workers to achieve their full productivity potential.

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### *Most of the further training carried out in Germany takes place in the workplace.*

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There is a great variety of in-firm training (see Table 1 for an overview). Since most of it is initiated and funded by employers, the purpose of this training is primarily to improve occupation-specific knowledge and skills, which increases staff productivity and, over time, repays the employers' investment.

#### I. The Path to Initial Employment

For many professional occupations in Germany, the most common path to initial employment is through the traditional VET system.<sup>7</sup> The majority of all secondary school graduates choose to pursue a VET qualification, which is regulated and assessed by corporatist bodies such as chambers of industry and commerce and trade associations. Much VET in Germany is provided through a dual system that combines school-based training with practical work experience in firms.

For employers, hiring apprentices who completed their vocational training within the firm may reduce initial employee orientation and training costs.<sup>8</sup> However, despite the potential cost savings of hiring from within the VET system, introductory programs that enable new staff to learn firm-specific knowledge and processes are becoming a more important form of workforce development in Germany.<sup>9</sup> As firms begin to face shortages of qualified apprentices, they are increasingly forced to recruit outside the traditional apprenticeship system, requiring them to invest more in introductory training for new employees.<sup>10</sup> The

6 Christian Roßnagel and Melanie Schulz, *Beschäftigungsfähigkeit erfahrener Mitarbeiter sichern — welche Rolle spielt die betriebliche Weiterbildung? Ergebnisse einer Befragung von Unternehmen in Ostwestfalen-Lippe* (Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2007), [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bst/de/media/xcms\\_bst\\_dms\\_23079\\_2.pdf](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bst/de/media/xcms_bst_dms_23079_2.pdf).

7 Traditionally dominant in sectors such as industry and trade, crafts, the public service, and agriculture, vocational education and training is the central mechanism supplying intermediate skills for all sectors of the economy, including the service sector. Mostly undertaken in apprenticeships, about two thirds of all school leavers (at age 16) engage in two to four year-long programs in order to qualify in recognized occupations (*Ausbildungsberufe*). As of 2012, 345 occupations were covered under the VET system. See Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, "Übersetzungen Der Berufsbezeichnungen," [www2.bibb.de/tools/aab/aabberufeuebersetzungen.php?bt=2](http://www2.bibb.de/tools/aab/aabberufeuebersetzungen.php?bt=2).

8 Roßnagel and Schulz, *Beschäftigungsfähigkeit erfahrener Mitarbeiter sichern*.

9 Company case studies show that introductory training is increasingly important. See Marthe Geiben and Philipp Grollmann, "Employers' Recruitment and Induction Practices in Selected European Countries: An Indirect Measure of Quality of the VET System?" (paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research [ECER] in Berlin, September 13-16, 2011); Introductory training also includes the mandatory training of new staff and existing employees required to meet health and occupational safety guidelines. See Bundesministerium der Justiz, "Gesetz zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung von Infektionskrankheiten beim Menschen," [www.gesetze-im-internet.de/ifsg/](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/ifsg/).

10 See European Commission, *Apprenticeship Supply in the Member States of the European Union* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012), <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6633&visible=1>; Marthe Geiben and Philipp Grollmann, "Employers' recruitment and induction practices in selected European countries. An indirect measure of quality of the VET system?" (paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research [ECER] in Berlin, September 13-16, 2011), [http://vetnet.mixxt.org/networks/files/download.75091 \[Zugriff 10.4.2012\]](http://vetnet.mixxt.org/networks/files/download.75091[Zugriff 10.4.2012]).





growing prevalence of introductory training may create new opportunities for individuals who are not trained in the traditional vocational education system, such as migrants with foreign qualifications or education. Alternatively, the continued immigration of young people to Germany — who obtain their initial VET in the country — could become an important mechanism to ensure a supply of qualified staff, particularly in the light of the decreasing supply of potential nonimmigrant apprentices.

For new employees without firm-specific skills, internships and special introductory programs offer an important route to initial employment.<sup>11</sup> Internships encompass a great variety of paid and unpaid activities, such as required internships in fields such as medicine and law, internships as part of a higher education institution (HEI) curriculum, mandatory and voluntary internships during secondary or tertiary education, internships initiated by students or graduates to gain entry into specific firms or professional positions, or internships abroad to obtain international work experience.

## 2. Training for Career Development

Like initial VET, career development programs in many occupational fields are regulated by chambers of industry and commerce and trade associations.<sup>12</sup> These bodies set the standards and run the assessment process for advanced occupational qualifications, such as that of “master.”<sup>13</sup> There is a high buy-in to the system by employers because of the rigorous regulation by relevant stakeholders in the industry. Firms may release staff to attend publicly run colleges that prepare students for advanced-level assessments, or some large firms may run in-company training programs. Due to the substantial benefits for staff and companies of achieving these qualifications, many companies support further staff training by offering higher wages and enhanced occupational activities after workers complete the new qualifications.

Participating in further training programs that lead to “master”-level qualifications requires achievement in a recognized apprenticeship and several years of work experience. While qualifications obtained in the European Union are mapped to German qualifications, vocational qualifications from non-European Union countries are much less likely to be fully accepted. As full recognition of apprentice- and intermediate-level qualifications is required to start master-level programs, this may create a barrier to career development for immigrants from outside the European Union.<sup>14</sup>

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*While qualifications obtained in the European Union are mapped to German qualifications, vocational qualifications from non-European Union countries are much less likely to be fully accepted.*

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In addition to master-level training, a great variety of further training programs develop supplementary skills at intermediate levels, most of which also require intermediate-level qualifications, such as a completed apprenticeship. Further training for employees expands on basic skills learned in the apprenticeship to develop expert knowledge in specific areas (e.g., software applications) or techniques not included in the standard curriculum (such as specific technologies or full proficiency in a foreign language).

11 See European Commission, *Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union*.

12 Deutscher Industrie und Handelskammertag, “Weiterbildung,” [www.dihk-bildungs-gmbh.de/weiterbildung/](http://www.dihk-bildungs-gmbh.de/weiterbildung/).

13 The “master” qualification originates in the tradition of the guild systems and their master craftsmen, who were recognized as such by the local craft community following long careers as apprentices and journeymen. Until quite recently, some crafts required successful achievement of master-level qualifications in order to set up a business. While such restrictions were liberalized in the early 2000s, the importance of the one or two years of master training for career progression has not changed.

14 While recognition of foreign qualifications improved following the passage of the *Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz* (*the Act on Professional Qualifications Assessment*, BQFG), which includes a legal entitlement and sets out some basic principles on linking foreign qualifications to German equivalents, the procedure to assess the equivalence remained complicated due to the number of stakeholders involved and the amount of responsibility for education and qualifications given to individual states.

Outside of the VET system, large firms in both the public and private sector engage in a number of programs of continuous professional development within the workplace, particularly for highly skilled staff. Occupations with high public-sector involvement, such as education and medicine, may require participation in continuous professional development (CPD) programs for career advancement. In the private sector, CPD programs are less structured, but may be influenced by the recommendations of relevant professional associations such as the Association of German Engineers (VDI). A dynamic private-sector market exists to supply firms with relevant modules and courses for CPD activities, including some offered through professional associations.

**Table 1. An Overview of Firms' Training Activities**

Type of Training	Employer-Led	Individual-Led	
	Occupation-Specific	Occupation-Specific	Not Occupation-Specific
Introductory training; Meeting statutory requirements (e.g., health and safety)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal requirement in some industries, in particular health and safety induction.</li> <li>Delivered and paid for by employers.</li> </ul>		
Adjustment training ("up-skilling") to increase workplace productivity, including training provided by Active Labor Market Policy (ALMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of firms undertaking such activity when recruiting re-entrants/formerly unemployed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALMP may pay an "Integration subsidy" for on-the-job training.</li> <li>Payment is a discretionary grant for formerly unemployed people to achieve productivity.</li> <li>The subsidy is 50 percent of staff costs for up to 12 months.</li> </ul>	
Internships and work experience schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many firms offer graduate rotation and extended introductory training, sometimes even unpaid internships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-initiated activities for work experience</li> <li>Some degree courses (e.g., medicine/law) have a compulsory internship element.</li> </ul>	
Training to achieve goals set within the firm (e.g., for managerial roles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of firms undertaking such activity in many industries, in particular in large firms.</li> <li>Examples at public-sector level (e.g., teacher/police).</li> </ul>		
Continuous professional development/management and generic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firms must allow for statutory training or staff release if, for example, employees become elected worker representatives.</li> <li>In many firms and public-sector organizations, widely unregulated and firm-specific programs exist (e.g., sabbaticals to allow individuals to achieve their own objectives).</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public support for individual activities if relevant for work (e.g. learning languages).</li> <li>Deduction of training costs and learning materials from taxable income.</li> </ul>



**Table 1, continued. An Overview of Firms' Training Activities**

Type of Training	Employer-Led		Individual-Led	
	Occupation-Specific		Occupation-Specific	Not Occupation-Specific
Further specific skills (with accredited certificates), including career progression to higher skills levels with certified qualifications (e.g., "master" craftsman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is evidence of firms engaging in and/or facilitating such activity, e.g. by release time or by post-qualification career progression.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities to facilitate individual-led activities through release.</li> <li>Link to career progression via training plans.</li> <li>Trainee programs may be unregulated and firm specific.</li> </ul>	
Further training or retraining (with or without certificate) through ALMP system; with spans of up to 6, 6-12, and more than 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many firms offer internships or work experience programs for students.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firms as providers of ALMP programs.</li> <li>Practical experience, internships.</li> <li>Can be unpaid as part of learning activity.</li> </ul>	

Source: Author's compilation from various sources.

### C. Activities Outside the Workplace

Training outside the workplace is generally undertaken to achieve one of the following goals: individual labor market integration as an element of the Active Labor Market Policy (ALMP), further career development toward "master"-level qualifications, or intermediate-level training certification.<sup>15</sup>

#### I. Active Labor Market Policy (ALMP)

Prior to 2004 German policy, commonly known as the ALMP, aimed at reintegrating unemployed individuals into the labor market and provided higher benefits and greater support for training activities to beneficiaries of unemployment insurance. This placed individuals who did not qualify for unemployment insurance at a disadvantage. A major welfare reform in 2004 removed such barriers, enforced a rigorous job-search regime for all benefit claimants of working age, and effectively created a unified job-search assistance system for all benefit recipients that provided services at a level similar to those available under the earlier unemployment insurance system.<sup>16</sup> These services include access to optional ALMP further vocational training programs or secondary education for the purpose of labor market reintegration. Under the current regulations, eligible jobseekers obtain an "education voucher" for specific short-, medium-, or long-term programs and have the choice of various local education providers. The changes to the ALMP system have benefited immigrants who otherwise may not have qualified for the training and support services originally provided under the unemployment insurance system.

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*A major welfare reform in 2004... effectively created a unified job-search assistance system for all benefit recipients.*

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<sup>15</sup> Note that employer-led training participation outside firms is still facilitated and financed by the firms and therefore not discussed in the following section, which focuses on training initiated by individuals.

<sup>16</sup> Bundesministerium der Justiz, "Sozialgesetzbuch 2: Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch-Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende — nichtamtliches Inhaltsverzeichnis," [www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb\\_2/](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_2/). These reforms, known as the "Hartz IV" legislation, fundamentally changed the system of income support for unemployed jobseekers set out in the second book of the *Social Law Book* (SGB II).



## Box 2. The Active Labor Market Policy Prior to 2004

Further training has been the key area of the Active Labor Market Policy (ALMP) since the first comprehensive post-war welfare reform of the late 1960s. In 1969 both the *Arbeitsförderungsgesetz* (Labor Promotion Act) and the *Berufsbildungsgesetz* (Federal Vocational Education and Training Act) came into effect. Under these regulations, both unemployed jobseekers and employees had legal entitlements to vocational reintegration programs. These entitlements included access to further training or retraining, as well as career development programs leading to recognized qualifications, including those at the “master level.”

With increasing unemployment in the 1980s, legal entitlements to career progression were increasingly withdrawn, and eventually taken out of the regulation of the ALMP altogether. When the *Sozialgesetzbuch* (Social Law Book) replaced the *Arbeitsförderungsgesetz* in the late 1990s, participation in further training was changed from a legal entitlement to an optional program, offered only if employment service case workers deemed it to be essential for vocational reintegration, as often is the case for the long-term unemployed.

Because the ALMP was financed by unemployment insurance, the system traditionally privileged unemployed jobseekers with insurance entitlements by offering higher benefit levels and allowing recipients of unemployment insurance to requalify for benefits when undertaking programs. Since insurance claimants were required to have regular contact with case workers, they also tended to receive more career guidance and had better opportunities to participate in training programs.

In contrast, individuals without previous employment subject to social insurance contributions received a means-tested social assistance benefit administered by the local municipalities. Unlike people receiving unemployment benefits, social assistance claimants did not have to demonstrate that they were actively seeking new employment. In addition, benefit administrators were neither qualified to assist job-search activities nor able to support access to training programs.

This had a particularly detrimental impact on the ability of immigrants, many of whom received social assistance rather than unemployment benefits, to access labor market integration services.

*Source:* Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, “Sicherung des Existenzminimums bei Erwerbsfähigkeit: Die Leistungen der Grundsicherung (SGB II),” updated April 26, 2011, [www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/arbeitsmarktpolitik/55251/grundsicherung](http://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/arbeitsmarktpolitik/55251/grundsicherung).

While the ALMP is driven by government programs, firms also play an important part in facilitating further education and training for unemployed jobseekers. These programs aim to reintegrate individuals with significant skills gaps or a vocational education that no longer allows them to find sustainable employment. The programs are often college based, leading to recognized initial or intermediate vocational qualifications, and include paid or unpaid internships and work experience in firms. Firms can also receive wage subsidies for recruiting jobseekers who have been unemployed for more than a year because of substantial skill gaps.<sup>17</sup> Employers may reclaim up to 50 percent of total staff costs for up to 12 months if they commit to providing training and skills development opportunities that allow participants to catch up to other new recruits.

## 2. Individual-Led Career Development

Although full-time advanced training is often supported by firms, a large portion of learners self-refer to courses. Many of these courses are part of full-time programs at publicly funded training colleges and prepare learners for master-level assessments. For most occupations, these courses last one to two years. There are also many part-time courses for complementary intermediate-level qualifications, such as information technology (IT) or language skills, which are offered by both accredited and nonaccredited learning providers. Participants in master-level classes and other further training programs are required

<sup>17</sup> Bundesministerium der Justiz, “Sozialgesetzbuch 3: Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch-Arbeitsförderung- nichtamtliches Inhaltsverzeichnis,” [www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb\\_3/index.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_3/index.html), § 88.



to have the relevant prerequisite vocational qualifications, but beyond this there are no formal eligibility requirements.

Subsidized loans are offered to cover learners' living expenses while in training. Loans may also be used to pay tuition fees for master-level classes if taken through providers linked to the chambers or private-sector colleges, which charge market rates. However, many courses are available through public colleges that charge much lower tuition fees.<sup>18</sup> The level of support provided by loans is based on the needs of a college-age student, and although families receive more support, older participants may experience a considerable decline in household incomes when leaving work to pursue training.

### 3. Other Adult Education

In addition to career development regulated by the *Berufsbildungsgesetz*, there is a dynamic market for further education activities unrelated to advanced occupational qualifications. The publicly supported *Volkshochschulen* (Adult Education Institutes) are key providers of such programs; run at the local authority level, they are regarded as a crucial element of the adult education system.<sup>19</sup> Although many adult education options exist in urban areas, only the *Volkshochschulen* also cover rural communities. In addition to the *Volkshochschulen*, many charitable institutes and training providers connected to trade unions or religious institutions offer courses, as do fully independent, for-profit organizations — a large number of which specialize in language courses. Many of these providers offer structured learning for generic qualifications, such as general secondary education degrees, as well as non-occupation-specific education in IT applications, arts, or other areas of general interest.

With the exception of secondary-level education and entry qualifications to higher education, most courses charge tuition fees that must be paid for by the learners. For courses outside the publicly co-financed adult education institutes, fees can be substantial, particularly where providers operate on a commercial model and charge market rates. There are some mechanisms available to moderate the costs of further education. For example, tuition fees and materials costs for courses with a demonstrable connection to further learning or professional qualifications may be deducted from the learner's annual taxable income.<sup>20</sup> However, tuition and fees may be a substantial barrier to accessing training for learners in low-wage occupations.

**Table 2. Overview of Training Outside Firms**

Type of Training	Employer-Led	Individual-Led	
	Occupation-Specific	Occupation-Specific	Not Occupation-Specific
Secondary school certificate, further training or retraining (with or without certificate) through the Active Labor Market Policy (ALMP) system  Duration of up to 6, 6-12, and more than 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employers may facilitate participation in such programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If deemed essential for reintegration by the job-center (such as for long-term unemployment), such programs are financed through the ALMP system.</li> <li>▪ Individuals may be entitled to receive unemployment benefits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All without leaving certificate of lower-track secondary school are entitled to obtain this qualification.</li> <li>▪ Financed through the ALMP system.</li> <li>▪ Individuals may be entitled to receive unemployment benefits.</li> </ul>

18 Bundesministerium der Justiz, "AFBG: Austiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung vom 8. Oktober 2012- Gesetz zur Förderung der beruflichen," [www.gesetze-im-internet.de/afbg/BJNR062300996.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/afbg/BJNR062300996.html).

19 Deutscher Bildungsrat, *Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutscher Bildungsrat, 1970).

20 BStBl 1979, Teil II, Seite 180: SteuerThek, "SteuerThek — Aus- und Weiterbildungskosten," [www.steuerthek.de/handbuch/est/sonderausgaben\\_ausbildung.htm](http://www.steuerthek.de/handbuch/est/sonderausgaben_ausbildung.htm).

**Table 2, continued. Overview of Training Outside Firms**

Type of Training	Employer-Led	Individual-Led	
	Occupation-Specific	Occupation-Specific	Not Occupation-Specific
Career progression (master craftsman/professional technician/business administration) Other career-related learning (for instance, in languages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programs at the firm level, particularly in large firms, may be unregulated and firm-specific.</li> <li>▪ Often, staff are released to undertake such activity.</li> <li>▪ Some employers require post-training employment in the firm if the employer is paying for the courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publicly supported career progression to Master Craftsman (Act of Promotion of Career Progression).</li> <li>▪ Public learning provision (e.g. colleges).</li> <li>▪ Subsidized loans for costs of living and fees (where applicable).</li> <li>▪ In some sectors, career progression is regulated as a part of professional development (e.g., PhD programs, human medicine).</li> <li>▪ In other sectors, chambers of industry and commerce offer additional occupation-specific qualifications and certificates for individuals with initial qualifications.</li> <li>▪ Tax deductions may be available for training costs and learning materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publicly supported adult education institutes exist at the local level.</li> <li>▪ Charitable training providers (unions/churches, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Provision may be paid for by participants (at least in part).</li> <li>▪ Deduction of training costs and learning materials from taxable incomes.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's compilation from various sources.

### III. The Position of Immigrants in the Workforce Development System

#### A. Diversity of the Resident Population

Germany has experienced five major waves of immigration in the postwar period, each of which brought immigrants with different qualification backgrounds and training needs (see Box 3).

As of 2011 approximately 18 percent of the population was first- or second-generation. The largest number have come from the Member States of the European Union (approximately 3.6 million), of which the most significant sending countries are Poland, Italy, Greece, and Romania. The largest single country of origin is Turkey (approximately 2.5 million).<sup>21</sup>

Within the social insurance system, foreigners have equal status as Germans — meaning there are few formal barriers to accessing public training provisions for immigrants. They are entitled to social welfare, child benefits, use of child-care facilities and related benefits, integration allowances, and language courses, as well as other forms of integration assistance. However, immigrants may experience de facto barriers to accessing training that result from insufficient familiarity with the welfare system — for exam-

<sup>21</sup> See Table A-1 in the Appendix for a detailed representation of the migrant population in Germany by current or previous nationality.



ple, a lack of work experience or knowledge about entitlements. A lack of knowledge or familiarity with the labor market and workforce development system is more likely to affect more recent immigrants, while long-term residents are likely to have more knowledge and experience with the system.<sup>22</sup>

### Box 3. Immigration to Germany

**Post-World War II.** The first wave of immigration to postwar Germany occurred immediately following the end of World War II, as around 12 million ethnic Germans fled or were expelled from ethnically German areas in Central and Eastern Europe. With them were other refugees from the former German territory who had involuntarily relinquished German citizenship after the war and now made use of a right to return granted to them in the German constitution. With the aim of swiftly integrating expellees, the German government provided housing, education, and other forms of assistance to help ease the burden on the resident population of absorbing the newcomers, particularly in cities, which were still heavily affected by war damage.

**Aussiedler/Spätaussiedler.** A second wave of ethnic Germans or German citizens began to arrive shortly after the refugees. Referred to as the *Aussiedler*, these migrants had been expelled from former German areas in Eastern Europe or had suffered discrimination and persecution. They were granted a legal entitlement to settlement and naturalization in West Germany that continues to today. Most immigrants of this group completed vocational education and training, but many worked in simple manual or service work before immigrating to Germany. Those with high educational achievements often had difficulties finding appropriate employment because their qualifications were not recognized. A third wave of ethnic German immigration began following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and lasted throughout the 1990s, as several hundred thousand immigrants, now known as the *Spätaussiedler*, migrated to Germany each year.

**Guest workers and their families.** The fourth wave of postwar immigration consisted primarily of migrants from southern Europe and the Mediterranean, recruited as guest workers to fill substantial labor shortages in the postwar economic boom. When the recruitment of foreign workers ceased in 1973, 2.6 million foreign workers were living in West Germany. While some returned home as opportunities decreased and unemployment in unskilled jobs rose, limitations on re-entry made this option unattractive to non-European Union immigrants, and Turkish immigrants in particular chose to stay. This resulted in a related fifth wave of immigration as family dependents of the former guest workers migrated to Germany to join their family members.

**Asylum.** The generous asylum provision of the German constitution, which grants victims of political persecution an individual right of asylum, has made Germany a significant destination for asylum seekers in recent decades. Currently, substantial groups of asylum seekers come from areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan, but in the past Germany has also received significant asylum migration from Iran, Turkey, and other countries of the Middle East and the Balkans. Applicants who are granted refugee status or another form of protection receive a temporary residence permit that gives them a right to work and equal access to the social insurance system.

Source: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, “Bevölkerung | bpb,” [www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/40240/bevoelkerung?p=1](http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/40240/bevoelkerung?p=1).

## B. Labor Market Integration and Qualification Differences

Immigrants tend to perform less well on indicators of labor market integration, such as unemployment rates, suggesting a need for greater workforce development efforts among this population. Unemployment rates tend to be particularly high for immigrants from outside the European Union.<sup>23</sup> Groups with a Mediterranean migration background (that is, the first- and second-generation immigrant workers of the 1960s) — in particular those from Greece or Croatia — came closest to the average unemployment rate of 6 percent in 2011. Similarly low are unemployment rates of people with a North American migration background. However, first- and second-generation immigrants from southern and eastern European

<sup>22</sup> Table A-2 in the Appendix details the lengths of residence for major migrant groups in Germany.

<sup>23</sup> A detailed breakdown of unemployment rates by immigrant group is provided in Table A-3 of the Appendix.



countries outside the European Union tend to experience higher unemployment. This is particularly true for those with a Turkish or Ukrainian migration background. The highest level of unemployment can be found for individuals with a migration background from Africa and Latin America.

To some extent, the higher unemployment rates of African immigrants reflect their more recent arrival. Many of the people with an African migration background are likely to be asylum seekers who immigrated much more recently than migrants from Italy or Greece, who have a very strong labor market attachment after 50 years in the country. However, higher unemployment rates may also reflect the greater difficulties of labor market integration because of lower or unrecognized skills.

A breakdown of the resident population by level of education shows that, on average, immigrants have a much lower educational attainment than natives.<sup>24</sup> Only 40 percent of those with a migration background completed VET, compared to 69 percent of individuals without a migration background. Within the first generation, 45 percent of those with foreign and 62 percent of those with German citizenship have completed VET, compared with 69 percent of the population without a migration background. This difference may be attributed to differences in skill level between the guest workers from the Mediterranean, who have tended to remain foreign nationals and are generally lower skilled, and the (*Spät*)*Aussiedler*, whose educational achievements have tended to be higher and who usually naturalize soon after arriving. However, even for those with high formal levels of educational achievement, skills adjustments to increase worker productivity may still be necessary because of differences in productivity and technology in origin countries.

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*While immigrants may not face barriers to accessing training and workforce development programs based on their immigration status, they may face other, informal barriers.*

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Among the second generation, far lower shares of both German and foreign citizens have completed VET than those without a migration background. However, it is important to account for differences in individual characteristics when analyzing this breakdown, especially age. Immigrants overall, and the second generation in particular, are on average much younger than the rest of the population. The impact of age is demonstrated in an additional breakdown of people who have not completed education and training, which shows that 95 percent of those in the second generation without qualifications are still participating in general or vocational education, most likely because of their younger average age.

### **C. Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Workforce**

Taken together with the evidence of lower levels of education among many immigrant groups, the evidence on employment rates suggests a need for greater efforts to improve immigrant labor market performance. While immigrants may not face barriers to accessing training and workforce development programs based on their immigration status, they may face other, informal barriers. Difficulty receiving recognition of credentials obtained abroad can be a significant barrier to accessing training, particularly advanced-level training. Without recognized initial vocational qualifications, immigrants are not able to access courses preparing them for intermediate or master-level vocational assessments. In addition, a lack of German language skills or unfamiliarity with the training system may prevent immigrants from successfully engaging in needed training or career development opportunities.

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<sup>24</sup> A detailed breakdown of education levels is provided in Appendix Table A-4.





A number of programs have been created to meet the needs of people with an immigrant background. They can be divided into programs that are specifically aimed at immigrants, and those that have adapted mainstream services to better serve diverse populations.

### I. Immigrant-specific Programs

In 2005 the new *Aufenthaltsgesetz* (the Act on the Residence, Economic Activity, and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory) made immigrant integration a policy priority in Germany for the first time and created the legal basis for new integration courses to be offered for both newly arrived immigrants and those already residing in the country. Humanitarian migrants or immigrants and their families from non-EU Member States who arrived in Germany after 2005 and who have been granted legal residence under the *Aufenthaltsgesetz* are entitled to attend an integration course. Intra-EU immigrants, ethnic German resettlers, or students may also be able to join the course, but have no legal entitlement and may have to pay tuition fees. For immigrants who cannot demonstrate sufficient German-language skills, participation may be compulsory.<sup>25</sup>

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*They can be divided into programs that are specifically aimed at immigrants, and those that have adapted mainstream services to better serve diverse populations.*

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The program is regulated by the *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* (the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, BAMF). Participation can be full or part time, following an initial assessment of language skills. The course consists of two elements: (1) a language course of 600-900 hours, structured around areas of daily life; and (2) an orientation course of 60 hours, which introduces participants to the culture and history of Germany, its legal and economic system, and its underpinning values, such as religious tolerance.

While the integration courses are not targeted specifically at developing work skills or language abilities, first- and second-generation immigrants may access a program, cofinanced by the European Social Fund (ESF), that links language development and occupational practice. It offers workplace- and employment-focused German-language training in addition to job-specific training, internships, work experience, and firm visits.<sup>26</sup> Both immigrants with an entitlement to integration courses and others with a migration background can be referred to the program via case workers in the employment service. The program can be accessed through either the ALMP or with support of the BAMF and may be taken either full or part time.

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25 Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, “BAMF — Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge — Integrationskurse,” [www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-node.html](http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-node.html).

26 Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, “BAMF — Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge — Deutsch für den Beruf,” [www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/DeutschBeruf/deutschberuf-node.html](http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/DeutschBeruf/deutschberuf-node.html).

**Table 3. Specific Programs for Immigrants**

Type of Program	Employer-Led		Individual-Led	
	Occupation-Specific	Occupation-Specific	Occupation-Specific	Not Occupation-Specific
Integration course				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Non-European Union (EU) immigrants receive free language courses if immigrating under the residence act.</li> <li>■ A similar entitlement does not exist for EU immigrants, students, and others.</li> <li>■ Participants are eligible to receive means-tested benefits.</li> </ul>
Occupation-specific integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some firms support or facilitate occupational integration for immigrants and their dependants.</li> <li>■ However, there is no general entitlement to occupation-specific integration programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some charitable organizations, immigrant associations and the federal association of postwar expellees (<i>Bund der Vertriebenen</i>) offer programs for occupational integration.</li> </ul> <p>Depending on the local market, a great variety of programs may be offered.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An additional program, “German for occupational practice,” is offered to some immigrants on a discretionary basis and cofunded by the European Social Fund.</li> <li>■ Participants are eligible to receive means-tested benefits.</li> </ul>

Source: Author’s compilation from various sources.

## 2. Adapting Mainstream Services for Diversity

Integration and immigration policy was made an explicit priority following the formation of a new conservative-liberal government in 2009. Rather than creating new targeted programs for immigrants, the coalition aimed to increase participation in and reduce barriers to existing training programs by increasing coordination between local integration support measures, establishing more effective mechanisms for acknowledging foreign qualifications, improving options for immigrants to retake occupational assessments if needed, and developing existing training instruments in cooperation with chambers of commerce.<sup>27</sup>

Important initiatives include:

- **Netzwerk IQ–Integration durch Qualifizierung** (Network IQ–Integration through Qualification). In order to improve cooperation among the various providers of vocational training measures and employment services, the government established regional networks composed of job centers, regional and local chambers of commerce, and migrant organizations. Netzwerk IQ also hosts five expert groups on various aspects of immigrant labor-market integration, including occupational language skills, diversity management within firms, support for startup businesses, recognition of foreign credentials, and access to further training and qualifications. The expert groups disseminate information on best practices and innovations in each field to practitioners in the regional networks.

<sup>27</sup> Der Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU, und FDP (The Coalition Agreement between the CDU, CSU and FDP), „Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt.“ [www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Ministerium/koalitionsvertrag.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Ministerium/koalitionsvertrag.pdf?__blob=publicationFile), 28.



- **Credential recognition.** Because vocational qualifications obtained in Germany are both highly valued by employers and a precondition for further study (such as the master-level qualifications), migrants who received their education abroad can encounter difficulties gaining a foothold in their profession. Therefore, the government has introduced an entitlement for migrants outside the European Union to have their occupational qualifications reviewed by the relevant bodies. If a certificate of equivalence with German qualifications cannot be granted, immigrants have the option of either taking the necessary modules required to complete their training, or taking a qualification exam to recognize skills acquired through work experience. These options are also open to those without any formal credentials, but who may have gained the necessary skills and understanding to obtain a qualification.<sup>28</sup>
- **Akademikerinnern und Akademiker qualifizieren sich fuer den Arbeitsmarkt (AQUA).** While ALMP programs primarily provide upper-secondary-level training, AQUA targets workers with high skill levels. Through AQUA, unemployed individuals with at least a first university degree (including those with a migration background) have the opportunity to participate in occupational skills development seminars, internships, and language courses. The program explicitly recruits migrants, although it is also open to nonmigrants.

## IV. Participation in Further Training and Outcomes

Despite efforts to improve access to mainstream workforce development programs, participation by immigrants in training programs remains low.

### A. Data on Further Training Participation

A recent annual report on participation in education and further training activities in Germany reveals the persistent segmentation of participation in educational activities beyond compulsory schooling.<sup>29</sup> While the report indicates that a migration background tends to decrease participation — 45 percent of the population without a migration background participated in further training in 2010, compared to 32 percent of those with a migration background — higher skill levels tend to increase participation in training.

A few further trends can be identified. First, regardless of their migration background, those who successfully completed higher secondary-school education showed relatively similar levels of participation in self-initiated nonoccupational further education and training activities. For self-initiated occupational training, those with a migration background had only slightly lower rates of participation. Second, participation in employer-led training is persistently higher for the population without a migration background for all three groups, that is, people with lower, middle, or higher secondary-level schooling. Interestingly, the widest gap exists for people with completed higher secondary education, whose participation rate in employer-led training is 16 percentage points below the rate for those without a migration background. The nature of this gap is widely unexplored; further research is needed to understand the causes and consequences of the great differences between migrants and natives at the higher skill levels.

Third, the report finds a persistent gap: migrants' participation in further training does not appear to have increased in recent years. Overall, 28 percent of all people without a migration background participated in employer-led training in 2010, 5 percentage points below the 2007 level. The corresponding differences for people with a migration background remained constant: in 2007 participation in employer-

28 Bundesministerium der Justiz, "BBiG: Berufsbildungsgesetz vom 23. März 2005– nichtamtliches Inhaltsverzeichnis," § 37, [www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bbig\\_2005/index.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bbig_2005/index.html); Wolfgang Hillenbrand and Elke Knabe, *Dossier: Anpassungs- und Nachqualifizierung* (Facharbeitskreis Qualifizierung, Integra.net, 2010), [http://netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Publikationen/05\\_Qualifizierung/2010\\_Dossier\\_Anpassungs-und\\_Nachqualifizierung.pdf](http://netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Publikationen/05_Qualifizierung/2010_Dossier_Anpassungs-und_Nachqualifizierung.pdf). The assessments are regulated by the *Berufsbildungsgesetz* and are generally free of charge.

29 See Table A-5 in the Appendix; Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, *Bildung in Deutschland 2012*, 143.



led training by people with a migration background was 13 percentage points lower than for others, the same difference as in 2010. Training participation of unemployed people fell from 28 percent to 25 percent for the population with a migration background, compared to an increase from 28 to 31 percent for the rest of the population.

These recent data on immigrants' participation in further training are similar to findings for previous years in other studies and point to a persistent pattern of immigrant underrepresentation that has changed little over time.<sup>30</sup>

A further breakdown of immigrants from the first and second generations shows significant differences in participation by age.<sup>31</sup> While nonethnic German, non-naturalized, first-generation immigrants show the lowest participation rates in further training (9.5 percent on average between 2004 and 2006), participation is also low for other immigrants of the first generation, who were naturalized (12.8 percent) or immigrated as ethnic German resettlers (15.1 percent). However, the second generation of both naturalized immigrants and ethnic German resettlers show participation rates in further education and training of 25 to 27 percent, much closer to the participation rate of German citizens without a migration background.

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*These recent data on immigrants' participation in further training... point to a persistent pattern of immigrant underrepresentation that has changed little over time.*

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These findings suggest that the second generation, educated in the German education and VET system, do not face the same barriers to participation as their predecessors.<sup>32</sup>

## **B. The Outcomes and Impacts of Further Training**

Overall, considerable evidence exists on the impact of further training and skills development in Germany. Most studies consider outcomes and impacts of further training as a part of active labor-market policies and almost universally find a positive impact on employment probabilities and on earnings.<sup>33</sup> Recent findings show that there are significant benefits from participation in further training, in particular for those engaged in shorter programs that aim to explicitly update specific occupational skills by providing complementary skills at intermediate levels.<sup>34</sup> Most studies also show that outcomes and impacts materialize over the long term. For the unemployed in particular, improvement in employment rates tends to be lower than for comparable groups of nonparticipants in the short term, but labor market integration subsequently improves over time. The highest impact was found for short- to medium-term training at the same formal skill levels.

30 Frauke Bilger, *Migranten und Migrantinnen — eine weitgehend unbekanntes Zielgruppe in der Weiterbildung, Empirische Erkenntnisse und methodische Herausforderungen* (Bonn, Germany: Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2006), [www.die-bonn.de/doks/bilger0601.pdf](http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/bilger0601.pdf).

31 Halit Öztürk, "Weiterbildungsbeteiligung von Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, January 23, 2009, [www.bpb.de/apuz/32230/weiterbildungsbeteiligung-von-menschen-mit-migrationshintergrund-in-deutschland?p=all,24-30](http://www.bpb.de/apuz/32230/weiterbildungsbeteiligung-von-menschen-mit-migrationshintergrund-in-deutschland?p=all,24-30).

32 Ibid.

33 Martin Biewen, Bernd Fitzenberger, Aderonke Osikominu, Robert Völter, and Marie Waller, "Beschäftigungseffekte ausgewählter Maßnahmen der beruflichen Weiterbildung in Deutschland: Eine Bestandsaufnahme," *Zeitschrift für Arbeitsmarktforschung* 39, no. 3/4 (2006): 365–90.

34 Bernd Fitzenberger, Aderonke Osikominu, and Robert Völter, "Get Training or Wait? Long-Run Employment Effects of Training Programs for the Unemployed in West Germany," *Annales d'Economie et de Statistique* 91-92 (2008): 321–55. To some extent, the more recent evidence contradicts studies of the early 1990s, which had found negative effects for some groups of participants, although these, too, had found primarily positive impacts for groups with relatively low levels of existing skills.



The evidence base on employer-led training and individual-learning activities without an occupational focus is less consistent, as much of this activity goes unmonitored by public agencies. However, firm-level data on these activities show very positive results for both employers and employees.<sup>35</sup>

In the light of the very positive effects of training on employment and earnings reported in most of the evidence, it is surprising that immigrants — many with higher unemployment rates — are underrepresented in labor market training. However, this seems to suggest that standard or even immigrant-targeted provision of further training may not meet their requirements.

Not much is known about the differential impact of further training for immigrants under the standard provision of the ALMP. People with a migration background have not traditionally been identified as such in the labor market data, with the exception of ethnic German resettlers.<sup>36</sup> The only reliable study evaluating training outcomes for migrant background individuals found they had slightly lower employment rates (50 percent) six months after participating in ALMP further training programs than non-migrant background individuals who took part in similar programs (54 percent).<sup>37</sup> Individuals who completed the ESF-funded program German for Occupational Practice, which provides occupation-specific language training, had even lower employment rates (32 to 37 percent) six months after training.<sup>38</sup>

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*The benefits of a combination of further vocational training and language education were actually higher than further training alone.*

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However, the findings for the ESF program should not be understood as indicating that a combination of language and learning is not useful to immigrants; rather, the specific provision of the program is not meeting objectives. Another analysis compared immigrants participating in various combinations of standard language learning and vocational training programs to a matched group of unemployed immigrants with no program participation. The findings show that, while employment rates are initially lower because of the time spent on the program itself (often referred to as the program “lock-in”), participants experience significant improvements after program completion relative to counterfactual nonparticipation. In fact, the benefits of a combination of further vocational training and language education were actually higher than further training alone. This suggests that a targeted approach to service provision for immigrants under the ALMP may be superior to the ESF-program, although outcomes may be partly due to differing characteristics between immigrants participating in the ESF-program and those under the ALMP.<sup>39</sup>

## V. Conclusions

Labor market outcomes for immigrants remain poorer than for the rest of the workforce in Germany. Meanwhile, empirical data show that the participation of immigrants in workforce development programs — which could improve these outcomes — is lower than for the rest of the labor force. Since up-

35 Thomas Zwick, “Continuous Training and Firm Productivity in Germany” (ZEW Discussion Paper 02-50, Centre for European Economic Research, Mannheim, Germany, 2002), [ftp://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp0250.pdf](http://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp0250.pdf).

36 Traditionally, foreign citizenship was the only variable used to identify a migration background; as a result, naturalized immigrants and the second generation were excluded from analyses of immigrant integration.

37 Axel Deeke, “Berufsbezogene Sprachförderung und berufliche Weiterbildung von Arbeitslosen mit Migrationshintergrund — eine Verbleibs- und Wirkungsanalyse,” in *Migration als Chance. Ein Beitrag der beruflichen Bildung*, eds. Dieter Münk and Reinhold Weiß (Bielefeld, Germany: Bertelsmann Berichte zur beruflichen Bildung, 2011).

38 Ibid., 100.

39 Ibid., 107.

skilling has a positive impact on employment and wage outcomes, higher participation in further training programs is a necessary instrument to reduce unemployment rates.

There are few formal barriers to participation for immigrants. Immigrants have the same access to training programs as nationals, and recent legal reforms have changed the structure of the social-benefit and unemployment insurance systems so that recipients of both benefits are equally able to access work-related training. However, that occupational qualifications received outside the European Union go unrecognized remains a critical concern. Not only are advanced vocational qualifications highly valued by employers, they are a prerequisite for accessing many advanced training programs. Without recognized qualifications, career development opportunities for immigrants are limited.

While there are few formal barriers to immigrants' participation in workforce development, some informal barriers remain. A lack of sufficient German language skills or unfamiliarity with the labor market or training system may prevent immigrants from accessing appropriate training opportunities.

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*Without recognized qualifications, career development opportunities for immigrants are limited.*

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Four main areas merit further attention:

- First, evidence on immigrant participation in training shows that immigrants are significantly less likely than natives to undertake employer-led training programs. Given the importance of employers and firms in the German workforce development system, this merits closer attention from relevant stakeholders, such as employer associations and chambers of industry and commerce. These bodies should aim to develop learning formats that ensure equal participation of immigrants and other employees to adequately serve the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.
- Second, as there is evidence that a combination of language and occupation-specific training could increase employability more than the integration courses or the ESF-funded occupational language training programs alone, there may be benefits to integrating labor market training early in these programs by, for example, adding work experience modules to the integration course.
- Third, specialized programs for immigrants may be more effective than the standard courses, many of which target people with initial qualifications obtained in the German VET system. As individuals must often have recognized prerequisite qualifications to participate in these programs, this system may not meet the needs of people with an increasing diversity of foreign qualifications or who lack formal vocational qualifications.
- Finally, recognition of foreign qualifications is key for immigrants to fully engage in further training both within and outside of firms. Achieving recognition is a fairly complicated process and could be more clearly linked to specific programs that allow immigrants to gain knowledge specific to the German situation. These programs would better prepare immigrants to pass the exams required for full recognition of their qualifications.



## Appendices

**Table A-1. German Population with Migration Background (in Thousands), 2006 and 2011**

	2006	2011	Percent Growth
<b>Total resident population</b>	<b>82,369</b>	<b>81,754</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
Persons with migration background	15,143	15,962	5.4
By current or previous nationality			
Europe	8,880	11,260	
EU 25/27	3,579	4,987	
Greece	372	392	5.4
Italy	761	780	2.5
Poland	852	1,473	72.9
Romania (Non-EU 27 in 2006)	363	484	33.3
Non-EU 27	5,519	6,273	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	292	228	-21.9
Croatia	376	360	-4.3
Russian Federation	942	1,227	30.3
Serbia	486	286	-41.2
Turkey	2,495	2,956	18.5
Ukraine	218	273	25.2
Africa	453	555	22.5
America	327	399	22.0
North America	159	189	18.9
Asia, Australia, and Oceania	1,621	2,533	56.3
Near and Middle East	868	1,597	84.0
Kazakhstan	355	922	159.7
South and Southeast Asia	536	767	43.1
Unknown	3,644	1,216	-66.6

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, "Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund — Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus", Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2, various years. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt.

**Table A-2. Residents with Foreign Citizenship in Germany by Time since First Arrival (in Thousands), 2011**

	Total	Years in Germany Since First Arrival						Average Duration in Years
		less than 1	1-4	4-8	8-15	15-25	25+	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,931</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>1,633</b>	<b>2,066</b>	<b>19</b>
Europe	5,509	264	458	526	966	1,362	1,932	20.9
EU 27	2,599	210	334	323	382	487	863	19.5
Greece	284	10	10	9	32	80	143	27.1
Italy	520	10	19	18	57	111	304	28.4
Austria	176	5	13	13	21	25	98	28
Poland	468	59	85	124	87	85	29	9.7
Accession countries	1,913	19	48	82	285	578	900	25.1
Croatia	223	2	5	6	19	59	132	29.1
Turkey <sup>40</sup>	1,607	14	38	70	251	489	746	24.8
Other EEA/ Swiss	45	2	6	6	7	8	17	23.1
Other Europe	952	32	70	116	293	289	151	16.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	153	3	5	7	16	79	44	22.2
Russian Federation	195	11	23	43	95	23	1	9.2
Africa	276	20	47	49	74	56	30	12.1
America	224	25	42	36	44	39	38	13.3
Asia	855	82	164	134	261	160	53	10.4
Australia	13	2	3	2	2	2	2	11.2
No nationality	54	2	5	6	15	15	11	17.8

*Note:* These numbers include those born in Germany with foreign citizenship.

*Source:* The Central Register of Foreigners (Ausländerzentralregister), available from Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, "Central Register of Foreigners," updated April 28, 2011, [www.bamf.de/EN/DasBAMF/Aufgaben/FuehrungAZR/fuehrungazr-node.html](http://www.bamf.de/EN/DasBAMF/Aufgaben/FuehrungAZR/fuehrungazr-node.html).



**Table A-3. Labor Market Integration of People with a Migration Background, 2010**

	Population (thousands)	Labor Force (thousands)	Employment (thousands)	Unemployment as Percent of Labor Force
<b>Total resident population</b>	<b>81,754</b>	<b>42,372</b>	<b>39,869</b>	<b>6</b>
Without a migration background	65,792	34,576	32,813	5
With a migration background	15,962	7,797	7,056	10
Europe				
EU 25/27	11,260	5,640	5,128	9
Greece	4987	2,688	2,505	7
Italy	392	210	191	9
Poland	780	436	401	8
Romania	1,473	836	777	7
Non-EU 27	484	258	245	5
Bosnia- Herzegovina	6,273	2,952	2,623	11
Croatia	228	117	108	8
Russia	360	190	180	5
Serbia	1,227	663	597	10
Turkey	286	132	119	10
Ukraine	2,956	1,273	1,104	13
Africa	273	135	113	16
America	555	242	200	17
North America	399	181	166	8
Asia, Australia, and Oceania	189	88	84	X
Near and Middle East	2,533	1,273	1,131	11
Kazakhstan	1,597	846	743	12
South and Southeast Asia	922	539	489	9
Unknown	767	348	313	10
<b>Total resident population</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>7</b>

Note: X = below reporting threshold.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, "Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund — Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus", Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2, various years. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt.

**Table A-4. Resident Population in Germany by Level of Education, 2011**

	Resident Population						
	Total	Without a Migration Background	Migration Background				
			Total	German Citizens		Foreign Citizens	
			Migrants	Non-Migrants	Migrants	Non-Migrants	
<b>With completed vocational education and training (VET)</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Total (in thousands)	51,535	45,112	6,423	3,111	328	2,526	458
Percentages:							
Apprenticeship/dual system	64%	65%	60%	63%	70%	51%	75%
Intermediate civil service training	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
Certificate from VET college	3%	3%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%
Skilled by induction/on-the-job (OTJ) training (until 1969)	1%	1%	1%	1%	X	1%	X
Master/higher VET degree	10%	11%	8%	9%	7%	7%	6%
Vocational Training Academy degree	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Polytechnic/University of Applied Science degree	7%	7%	7%	7%	5%	7%	4%
University degree/postgrad/doctorate	11%	11%	17%	13%	10%	25%	7%
No information	0%	0%	1%	0%	X	1%	X
<b>Without completed vocational education and training</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Total (in thousands)	29,817	20,348	9,469	1,884	3,427	3,102	1,056
Percentages:							
In non-VET education	44%	45%	44%	12%	87%	10%	63%
In VET	12%	13%	9%	12%	8%	7%	14%
Internship	1%	1%	2%	3%	X	2%	1%
Foundation program for VET	0%	0%	0%	0%	X	0%	X
No qualification	42%	41%	45%	72%	5%	81%	22%
No information	1%	2%	1%	1%	X	2%	X
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,352</b>	<b>65,460</b>	<b>15,892</b>	<b>4,995</b>	<b>3,755</b>	<b>5,628</b>	<b>1,514</b>

Note: X = below reporting threshold.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Staat & Gesellschaft, "Migrationshintergrund — Bevölkerung nach Migrationshintergrund — Statist," [www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund/Tabellen/MigrationshintergrundBeruflicherAbschluss.html](http://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/Migrationshintergrund/Tabellen/MigrationshintergrundBeruflicherAbschluss.html).

**Table A-5. Percent Participation in Further Training, 2007 and 2010**

Migration Background/Highest Level of School Education Attained	Total Further Training		Employer-Led		Individual-Led (Occupational)		Individual-Led (Nonoccupational)	
	2007	2010	2007	2010	2007	2010	2007	2010
Without migration background	47	45	32	28	14	13	10	12
Lower secondary school (Year 9)	30	28	21	17	7	7	7	6
Middle secondary school (Year 10)	51	47	37	31	13	13	9	11
Higher secondary school (Year 12/13)	62	59	40	38	24	18	16	16
With migration background	33	32	19	15	9	11	9	9
Lower secondary school (Year 9)	25	23	14 <sup>&amp;</sup>	11 <sup>&amp;</sup>	/	/	/	/
Middle secondary school (Year 10)	35	33	20 <sup>&amp;</sup>	17 <sup>&amp;</sup>	/	/	/	/
Higher secondary school (Year 12/13)	49	46	30 <sup>&amp;</sup>	22 <sup>&amp;</sup>	/	15 <sup>&amp;</sup>	/	16 <sup>&amp;</sup>
Employed								
Without migration background	55	52	43	39	16	13	9	10
With migration background	36	37	25	24	10 <sup>&amp;</sup>	11 <sup>&amp;</sup>	/	7 <sup>&amp;</sup>
Unemployed/out of labor force								
Without migration background	28	31	X	X	12	13	13	16
With migration background	28	25	X	X	/	11 <sup>&amp;</sup>	13 <sup>&amp;</sup>	13 <sup>&amp;</sup>

Note: & = Unweighted base between 40 and 80; X = Not available; / = below reporting limits.

Source: Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, *Bildung in Deutschland 2012: Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zur kulturellen Bildung im Lebenslauf* (Bielefeld, Germany: Bertelsmann Verlag, 2012), Table G1-4A, [www.bildungsbericht.de/daten2012/bb\\_2012.pdf](http://www.bildungsbericht.de/daten2012/bb_2012.pdf).

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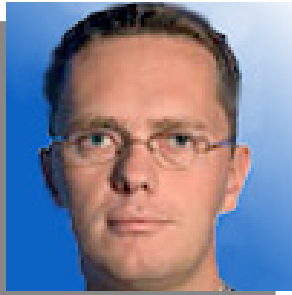
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**Dr. Stefan Speckesser** is Principal Economist at the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) in Brighton, East Sussex, United Kingdom. He is an empirical economist specializing in evaluation methodology and the impact of public policy and makes use of a wide range of experimental and nonexperimental micro-econometric methods. Increasingly, this work also involves methods for the measurement of costs and benefits of social programs and the social returns to investments.

With a background in political science, his research initially focused on statistical methods to estimate the impact of public policies on aggregate employment outcomes. Following the increasing availability of internationally comparable micro-data in the late 1990's, Dr. Speckesser's research extended to micro-econometric methods for the estimation of policy impacts, which was also the research topic of his doctoral dissertation in economics.

In more than 19 years of research in academic departments in economics (Universities of Dresden, Mannheim, and Westminster) and political science (Free University of Berlin); and in international research centers (WZB Berlin, Policy Studies Institute London, and IES), Dr. Speckesser led or contributed to numerous empirical studies on European, British, German, and regional labor market policies and further topics in education economics and labor productivity. He has recently been an advisor to the Home Office (for its Economics and Resource Analysis Group) and the European Commission (as a thematic expert for the European Employment Observatory).

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