

# Refugee and Migrant Labor Market Integration in Germany

Status Update and Insights  
June 1 to August 21, 2017



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## Highlights to Date

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- Completed 60 meetings with service providers in 35 days. Each meeting lasted 1.5 to 3 hours and served as an exchange of best practices and consulting on policy, service delivery and systems-building.
- 20 skilled refugee/migrant professionals participated in focus groups to share their experience, successes and frustrations in Germany with labor market integration.
- Built strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of refugee service provision in Stuttgart area and in Germany. Formulated plan on how European version of Upwardly Global's direct service and online platform for the labor market system can fill gaps and advance job placement for refugees and migrants.
- Designed/co-facilitated half-day Stuttgart Ausbildungscampus partners working group session, the largest one to date. Advanced collaborative relationships among partners across private, public and NGO sectors.
- Recruited first cohort of jobseekers. Delivered three workshops over two days. 36 skilled refugee/migrant professionals attended.
  - Workshop materials and presentation delivered in three languages: Arabic, English, and German
- Began customization of Upwardly Global tools and curriculum for German/European market.
  - 100 volunteer hours expended over 14 days by supporters in U.S. and Germany to develop and customize curriculum and to deliver workshops.

## Pilot Project Overview

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Migration brings opportunity. We believe that at the intersection of migration and the Future of Work lies economic opportunity for countries, companies, communities and families.

We also believe the “refugee crisis” presents the opportunity to forge transnational solutions, particularly with regard to accelerating the integration of hundreds of thousands of newcomers into new labor markets in the next two to five years.

While innovation is needed, starting from scratch to form new entities with new solutions is unlikely to meet the needs of the refugee integration challenge, in the timeline needed. We are focusing on scaling and innovating ventures, like Upwardly Global and others, that have already achieved results and scale and have the expertise to move quickly and nimbly to support new markets.

Jane Leu, Founder/Ashoka Fellow and Camille Ramani, founding COO, of Upwardly Global started a global spin-off called Migration Ventures to bring this proven, results-driven model, guided by their deep expertise and decades of experience, to international markets.

Upwardly Global places 2,000 migrant jobseekers into full-time paid employment annually in the US and has served more than 10,000 skilled migrant jobseekers over the past 15+ years. Migration Ventures, with the technical assistance support of Upwardly Global, is offering to customize and localize for Germany and other nations this proven approach to labor market integration.

Migration Ventures believes that to be successful the model needs to be embedded within regional agencies and institutions that are part of the existing ecosystem.

This report shares findings from a pilot project, designed to run June through December 2017, with seed funding from the Peery Foundation. The goal of the project is to embed a spin-off of Upwardly Global within the Stuttgart Ausbildungscampus in Stuttgart, Germany, an innovative private-public partnership that brings together key vocational training and labor market focused service providers to forward the labor market entry of refugee newcomers.

## The Context, Opportunity, and Challenges

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### 1. Potential for Global impact from Germany’s success

It has been under 24 months since Germany, in an unprecedented move, opened its borders and received over one million refugees, primarily those fleeing Syria, who arrived within a span of few months in late 2015. As one of the few nations (along with Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon) who took on this challenge, Germany now has a key leadership role to play on a global stage particularly with regard to labor market integration for refugees. If Germany can successfully put in place policies and programs that marry the future of work with migration, it can set the precedence for other nations.

Germany has been open to and will benefit from seeking acceleration and scale by collaborating globally to leverage solutions, ideas, learning and knowledge from other nations with longer experience in refugee settlement. The solutions Germany is developing, while rooted within a German framework, have vast potential to be a solution for Germany, other European nations and for nations around the world that need to help newcomers achieve labor market integration.

## **2. Germany is the “Silicon Valley” of Immigration – and it’s exciting!**

Necessity is the mother of invention and everywhere we looked in Stuttgart and in Germany we saw creative and exciting experimentation and new ways of thinking, interacting and promoting migrant inclusion. From new laws like the one in 2012 that guaranteed [the right of migrants to have their foreign-gained credentials evaluated](#), to volunteer programs that match newcomers and Germans for a plethora of activities to shortened apprenticeship programs that get newcomers started working more quickly, to national networks of projects that are creating programs that work in their localities, we are excited to see, partner with and follow the progress of these new ways to forge a pathway to integration.

With the German government acting much like Silicon Valley venture capitalists, the Euros being invested in bets on new approaches are huge – in the many tens of million Euros. The willingness to invest in experimentation is likely to produce one or two inventions that propel the field of migration and work forward, as well as many that don’t fully get off the ground. Kudos to Germany for embracing the so-called “refugee crisis” as an opportunity for invention and innovation in both immigration and workforce policies and practices.

## **3. National Challenges, played out at the regional and local Level**

Colleagues shared that integration efforts are guided by the Federal and state governments and tend to be siloed, somewhat uncoordinated, and politically guided. We saw these challenges to coordination reflected at the state and city level. Given that public agencies responsible for leading labor market integration are spread across different ministries and have rarely worked together in the past towards a common goal, there are few structures in place to foster results-oriented collaboration. There are even fewer structures in place that incorporate other sectors (corporate, academic, NGO/nonprofit) alongside public agency actors. It would be more surprising if a nation was not facing these challenges, as they build new systems that must operate at an unprecedented scale.

## **4. The Stuttgart Ausbildungscampus is a promising local model**

Some pilot efforts in Germany that are cross sectoral collaborations are underway. At the city level, one of these that is very promising is the Ausbildungscampus in Stuttgart under the coordination of Buergerstiftung Stuttgart (Community Foundation of Stuttgart) which has brought together the Federal Employment Agency (Agentur fuer Arbeit), the Job Center, the Chamber of Commerce (IHK), the Chamber of Handwork Trades (HWK), and charitable nonprofit organizations under one common roof to help refugees understand pathways for employment, job training, and education. With community foundations present in many parts of Germany, with multi-sector networks already in place, this model has the potential to be replicated with a similar set of partners in each place.

## **5. Targets, metrics, and incentives not sufficiently focused on job placement**

From our long experience in migrant labor market integration we spotted structural barriers that are hindering results. The most significant are:

- Lack of funding incentives to drive toward placements: There is widespread agreement that the desired outcome is refugee and migrant labor market entry, measured currently by participation in an internship, apprenticeship (vocational training) or part-time or full-time job. The efforts to date that are government funded by have been primarily focused on advising and job readiness, including German language acquisition. From our survey of local refugee serving organizations, third-party vendors for integration programs, and private-sector programs that have funding from the government and other sources, their funding is NOT tied directly to job placement goals and the achievement of them. While there is great value in the willingness of funders to allow for experimentation, without penalizing service providers financially, we feel that in the short to medium term there needs to be stronger financial incentives to drive toward part-time or full-time employment outcomes.
- Targets are inputs, not outcomes: We observed that service providers have structured their program targets around delivering inputs (job readiness advising and workshops, job fairs, counseling and advising) vs. producing an outcome (permanent job). For example, an internship is an input to a permanent job placement. Refugees are doing several internships (unpaid), but most service providers have not structured their programs to help refugees and employers to convert internship experiences into a full-time job offer at that employer or another employer. Results statistics show that the number of permanent job placements is quite low. From our experience, following a refugee all the way to a placement is intensive work, and if organizations have structured their programs to focus on inputs only, because of their mission or funding, they are unlikely to achieve placement outcomes.
- Insufficient time allotted for individual case/placement management:  
To the point above, supporting a job search to placement is intensive work. The typical immigrant job search can take at least six months and up to 18 months to complete. We met highly motivated, skilled and committed service providers who are working at public and private agencies with refugee jobseekers. All of them shared that they do not have sufficient time allotted to case manage jobseekers individually. One agency is able to meet with each jobseeker 30 minutes every two months. This is insufficient to get to a placement. For comparison, an Upwardly Global staff member spends at least 5 hours/month per jobseeker until full-time employment is gained, working with that jobseeker individually on interviewing, application customization, event invites/registration and emails/calls. This is after a 3-5 hour per jobseeker time investment by a staff member in foundational learning and tools: helping a jobseeker design a career map, getting them started on the Upwardly Global training program, and developing a resume for the local market and industry.
- One size does NOT fit all: There is a lack of market segmentation that is slowing job placements. The tendency by employers, agencies and service providers is to group refugees in two categories: unskilled, low-educated, laborers or “educated enough” young people ready to enroll into three-to-five year vocational training programs (ausbildung). Those who do not fit into these categories, especially those with skilled experienced and/or professional degrees find themselves outside the sphere of relevant job search services and largely have to fend for themselves and yet, they remain dependent on government assistance to survive.

- Short-term legal ruling leads to short-term results: Through our extensive meetings with service providers in Stuttgart we observed that programs are designed towards exposure to jobs for a period of 2 weeks to three months but not towards longer term, full-time, paid job placement. In part, this is a result of the overarching issue that the maximum stay allowed by the German government for a refugee who has been approved for asylum is currently one to three years, depending on country of origin and other factors. Thus, there is a feeling of impermanence and hesitancy to fully commit and/or invest for a longer outlook on the part of both Germany and the refugees, since neither group knows if refugees will be in Germany long enough for the investment in German language acquisition, longer-term training programs and formal education will bear fruit for refugees, employers or the country. While all actors are making rational decisions to “see how it goes”, the short-term approach is hindering labor market integration.

**6. All of the programs are “succeeding”, but labor market integration is not yet succeeding**

We asked service providers to share their targets, metrics and results with us. The majority had met and exceeded their targets. These targets are measured in numbers of workshops, numbers of refugees served, etc. Their report back to their funders and supervising ministries and agencies will accurately and rightly report that their programs are succeeding. Yet from our perspective, and from the perspective of the refugees who measure integration in part-time or full-time paid employment without needing financial assistance from the government, labor market integration is not yet succeeding because permanent job placements are not happening.

## Summary of Deliverables Status

The following is the status on the deliverables we set out to achieve during our pilot project, June through December 2017.

<b>1. Serve Refugees</b>	<b>Output/Outcome</b>	<b>Status as of August 21</b>
a. Get hands-on in job readiness and career coaching of refugees	At least 100 refugees served by our team	76, of which 36 skilled professionals
b. Facilitate job placement of refugees	At least 20	No placements yet (see notes below)
c. Evaluate appropriateness of UpGlo curriculum/program approach to refugees in Germany	Assessment document by program element	In progress - Basic curriculum was Germanized, translated into three languages, and used in three workshops.

- A primary goal was to get hands-on with refugee jobseekers to understand how closely their experiences match those of refugees we have worked with in the United States. Aside from some differences with regard to legal status and the breadth of regulated professions, their experiences closely match those of the 10,000+ jobseekers Upwardly Global has served.

- We held three workshops and did focus groups and one-on-one advising with refugee professionals to assess their strengths, goals, needs, and challenges. The majority of jobseekers were Syrian; their professions were diverse and included medicine and health care, engineering, education, accounting and finance, business, marketing, consulting, IT, social work, journalism and others. They were mostly, but not exclusively men, in their 20s and 30s. The majority have been in Germany for about 20 to 22 months, and have made good progress with German language acquisition (up to B1 or B2, levels at which employers consider for hiring). Many spoke/understand English at the same or better level. The majority had their credentials evaluated or were in the process of doing so. The majority were still living in refugee housing or in very basic housing arrangements with other refugees or sponsor families and are eager to start working and to become independent.
- We worked with German volunteers to “Germanize” our curriculum, for German language, legal, workplace context, customs and expectations. While we expected there to be many changes, our German volunteers needed to change only about 10% of Upwardly Global’s curriculum to fit the German context.

Next step: We plan to leverage the work we have completed with the campus and its partners to focus on our placement goal over the next six months. We are posting two roles (Program Manager and Program Coordinator) in early September and will be conducting interviews in late September/early October in Stuttgart. We are seeking funding support for these staff roles.

<b>2. Assess Potential Jobseeker Service Partners</b>	<b>Output/Outcome</b>	<b>Status as of August 21</b>
a. Get to know the Community Foundation Stuttgart (CFS) better and their partners in the Education campus	Go/No Go decision on further partnership	Go, pending CFS approval. We feel positive about the synergies of working together.
b. Meet and observe programs of other potential partners in Stuttgart and beyond	Short-list of possible expansion partners	In progress. We identified and met with two national networks (IVFA and Netzwerk IQ) that have complementary programs.
c. Partnership conversations with expansion partners	Go/No Go decision on further partnership	In progress

- The Ausbildungscampus is a brand-new entity that only opened in April 2017. As a result, the number of refugees coming to the campus in June and July were a small fraction of the numbers they expect in the future as a more defined set of programs for refugees with various job needs is implemented. The campus is well-positioned to see steady traffic of refugee users starting in September/October. Our work with and on the campus focused on getting to know

the partners, and supporting planning activities with the staff and its partners in order to begin to lay the foundation for accomplishing our jobseeker placement goals.

- In addition to getting a landscape view in Berlin and Stuttgart of service providers and intermediaries that are playing a part in labor market integration of refugees, we validated that there is a need for a program overall like Upwardly Global’s that drives toward a placement outcome and specific programs that segment and serve the needs of skilled refugee jobseekers.
- Currently, no proven initiative or program exists that works at a large scale, like Upwardly Global, on both sides of the labor market transaction to individually coach and prepare qualified jobseekers to compete for open, professional jobs and that cultivates and educates employers on the mutual value add of hiring such candidates, and supports them to integrate newcomers into their hiring strategies, processes and practices.
- From our meetings and conversations, we have a strong sense of the current capabilities and challenges faced by the Ausbildungscampus, its partners, and other programs.

Next step:

We are currently discussing a partnership proposal with the Community Foundation Stuttgart/Ausbildungscampus to fully begin an 18-month pilot focused on job placement of skilled refugee professionals and to support the placement of refugee jobseekers who use the campus (across the skills spectrum).

<b>3. Progress Conversations with Possible Employer Partners</b>	<b>Output/Outcome</b>	<b>Status as of August 21</b>
a. Major corporations	3 partnership proposals being considered by employers	Started in mid-August
b. Demo UpGlo platform for possible employer partners	At least 10 participants from 5 different companies	On hold

- LinkedIn Germany helped us to market our jobseeker workshops through their site.
- We decided to focus our efforts on the service provider side of the equation for the summer to better understand both the jobseekers and the landscape of readiness services before approaching employers.
- Currently, there are some employers in Germany that are “walking the talk” and committing resources towards refugee labor market integration. However, given the scale of the need, there needs to be a larger, dedicated effort of developing relations with employers interested in hiring newcomers and fully supporting them to be successful in their efforts.

Next step:

We have identified that the small and medium business sector (i.e. The Mittelstand) is most primed to understand and participate in refugee labor integration efforts. We will be focusing on accessing this sector and leveraging our contacts with IHK and HWK (partners of the campus) who have developed employer membership networks to do so.

We have upcoming phone calls with Salesforce, Boehringer Ingelheim and Autodesk about employee volunteer programs to engage their employees in providing informational interviews and internship-to-hire opportunities for our first cohort of jobseekers.

<b>4. Assess Viability of UpGlo Platform to Meet German Market Needs</b>	<b>Output/Outcome</b>	<b>Status as of August 21</b>
a. Demo the platform for JobCenter/Arbeitsagentur (government) staff	5-10 staffers from at least 2 regions participate in demo	Shifted focus and completed demos for NIFA/IVFA, and Buergermut Stiftung
b. Demo the platform (Online training only) for refugees, both college educated and not college educated	At least 10 refugee participants in each skills group	On hold – We started with a series of focus groups, rather than demo
c. Decide go/no go to customize platform vs build new German one		On hold
d. If go, formulate list of customizations, in priority level, based on feedback from demo participants		N/A

- In early July, Upwardly Global’s Director of Technical Assistance determined through stakeholder feedback with current service provider users in the US that the platform needs to provide greater ease of use and access for effective use by other service organizations. Therefore, Upwardly Global began working with an Accenture consulting team ([Accenture is a long-time partner](#)) to determine an upgraded external platform solution that meets the needs of jobseekers and the service providers that work with them.
- We consulted with Accenture in August on the needs of the German service agencies. We provided input to Accenture team on global applicability of external platform tools and features that will be important for non-U.S. based organizations.
- One feature that Germans pointed to in the demos as very useful was the Resume Builder. We are considering options on whether the Resume Builder could and should be customized for the German market.

Next step:

We are seeking opportunities to present the platform solution to European decisionmakers interested in system-level solutions that advance job placements. We are seeking investors to support Upwardly Global and Accenture to build the German/European version of the platform, with the possibility to customize it for a national/local market.

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<b>5. Assess and Evaluate Viability of Revenue Plan</b>	<b>Output/Outcome</b>	<b>Status as of August 21</b>
a. Meetings with all potential funders listed in Revenue/Sustainability Plan	Meetings completed	In progress with key meetings happening in September/October
b. Assess probability of funding, amount, process and in what timeframe	Fundraising plan	In progress

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Next step: We are scheduling meetings with funders for September/October, including at the Metropolis (International Migration Conference) in the Hague on September 19-22.

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