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Cantonal Integration Programmes 2014–2017

Interim Report

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Foreword



Dear Reader,

Immigration is a process: some people leave, others arrive. In the long run, those migrants that stay in their new host country determine the impact migration has on society. It is vital, therefore, that migrants can integrate successfully in Switzerland, and make a contribution to the development of our national economy and society. A peaceful and mutually beneficial co-existence is unattainable if newcomers are unable to carve out a place for themselves here. Integration is a responsibility for society as a whole, and particularly for the migrants themselves. It is also a process that requires the involvement of private and civil society stakeholders – charities, associations, vocational trainers and businesses – as well as government and public institutions. Indeed, Article 53 of the Swiss Foreign Nationals Act stipulates that integration support is a joint task of the communal, cantonal and federal authorities.

Since 2014 and the launch of the Cantonal Integration Programmes (CIP), the whole of Switzerland has pursued the same set of targeted integration support goals. The initial CIP implementation phase runs for four years, affording the cantons and communes time to develop and expand their integration support activities in a sustainable and permanent way.

The present report takes stock of the first two years of the Cantonal Integration Programmes, and identifies the integration support efforts undertaken at both cantonal and communal levels. As you will see, there have been many successes, both minor and major. Nonetheless, you will realise that considerable challenges remain. No one said integration is easy.

On behalf of the SEM, I would like to thank everyone who works day in day out to foster integration. I would like to extend a special thanks to the cantons who work closely and constantly with the communes and civil society actors to ensure the ongoing development and implementation of the Cantonal Integration Programmes. Thanks to their commitment, integration at the local level succeeds.

Mario Gattiker
Director State Secretariat for Migration

In Focus



Latitude for the cantons and communes

Integration happens locally. One strength of the CIPs is that while they set the same goals, the means to attain them may differ according to local needs and circumstances. The cantons and communes are free to set their own priorities.



Integrating refugees in the workplace

To achieve financial independence, it is important that refugees find work as soon as it is possible. They need to demonstrate initiative and quickly acquire the necessary language and occupational skills. They need support and employers who are willing to give them a chance.



Address of welcome and orientation

Locally organised welcome events and one-to-one talks provide newcomers with an orientation upon arrival explaining them how day-to-day life works in Switzerland. This approach paves the way for good relations, and facilitates the integration process.



Valuable role of volunteering

Volunteering allows to meet different people on equal terms and learn from one another. Many locals work for free to help newcomers settle into their new life in Switzerland. Without the input of volunteers, the integration process would be much more challenging.

“You need to get a job and fend for yourself.”

Interview with:

Alfred Aebersold, Vocational trainer, Bern Technical College

Meron Ghebremeskal (right), from Eritrea, 17 years old, arrived in Switzerland two and a half years ago, apprentice carpenter and studying for the Federal VET (Vocational Education and Training) Certificate in Woodworking

Robel Okubay (left), from Eritrea, 18 years old, arrived in Switzerland four years ago, apprentice carpenter and studying for a Federal VET Certificate in Woodworking

Meron: “I completed 8th and 9th grade in Kehrsatz. I really enjoyed handicraft classes at school. It was my teacher who found me a placement in order to get work experience. This was one year ago, and I’m still here. In the beginning, the machines frightened me because my colleague over there injured herself while using a machine. Now, though, I enjoy learning how to use the machines and tools. My colleagues and boss are nice and help me a lot. Every morning I get up at 6 am in order to get here. I’m also taking German lessons, going to classes at vocational college and receiving extra help with homework. My parents are very happy with me. Where will I be in 10 years from now? After completing the Federal VET Certificate in Woodworking, I’ll gain the Federal EFZ (Swiss Certificate of Competence) Certificate in Carpentering as well, I’ll work with great colleagues, be punctual and disciplined and have my own flat.”

Robel: “After I finished 9th grade, I went on to 10th grade, but it didn’t work out so well because practically the only language spoken was Tigrinya, which meant I didn’t learn enough German. Back in Eritrea, I had already worked as a carpenter’s apprentice, which I enjoyed. Here, though, the career advisor told me that as a foreigner I didn’t stand a chance to find an apprenticeship placement as a carpenter. I remembered what my grandma told me: ‘if you truly believe in something, it will happen!’ I applied for a trial here and did the entrance test for the diploma course. I organised everything myself in order to be here. You need to have a job and be able to fend for yourself. I like the work I do here. The machines, the tools... In Eritrea, a lot is still made manually. I also realised that the language is the key. My goal? I want to go for the Federal EFZ Certificate in Carpentering.”

Alfred Aebersold: “Once they completed their Federal VET Certificate in Woodworking, both of them will have the qualifications to find a job. There are jobs out there but they’re not easy to find. The firms that offer our students apprenticeship positions are often so pleased with their work that they offer them a job at the end. If Meron and Robel want to go for the Federal EFZ Certificate, they both have to work on language skills and improve in their other subjects as well. The Bern Technical College has always welcomed migrants. All we ask is that they pass the entrance exam, just like anyone else. How to define integration? It starts with culture and language.”

In 2015, the Bern Technical College launched a pilot project – a two-year “VET Certificate in Woodworking” programme – specifically designed for refugees and temporarily admitted persons. As well as the standard curriculum, students attend intensive German-language classes. A second pilot project, launched the same year, offers this target group the opportunity to attend a one-year specialist building course.

tfbern.ch/berufsbildung/angebot-fur-fluchtlinge-und-vorlaufig-aufgenommene/

Cantonal Integration Programmes CIP

The three pillars of integration

26 Cantonal Integration Programmes (CIP) help newcomers integrate swiftly into Swiss society.

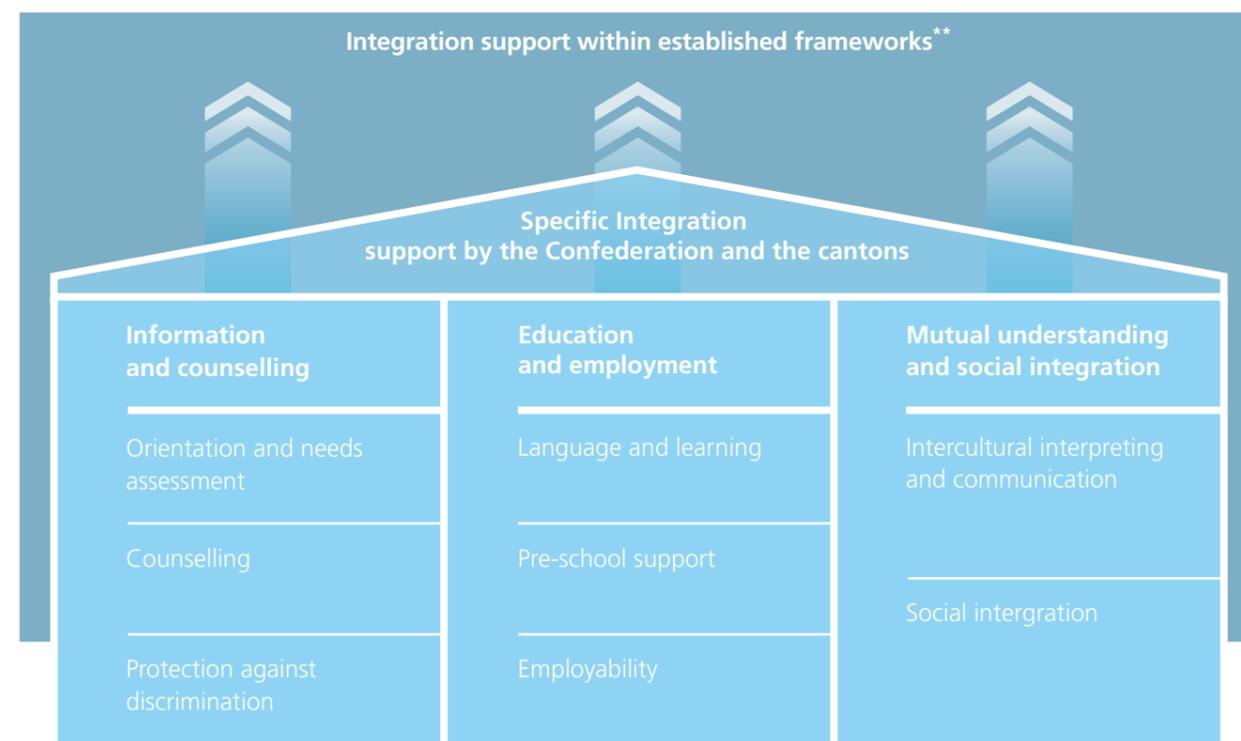
The integration of newcomers in Switzerland is mostly successful. An OECD study* found that the vast majority of migrants play an active part in economic, social and cultural life here. Compared to other European countries, Switzerland is well positioned in terms of labour market integration, education and income.

This success is the result of strenuous efforts on the part of the migrants themselves, industry, civil society and the federal, cantonal and communal authorities. The launch of the CIPs in 2014 was a milestone for Switzerland's integration support strategy as the whole of the country now pursues the same set of goals. To implement these goals, each of the 26 cantons has set up their own CIPs. These are governed

by programme agreements with the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

The CIPs are based on three pillars: information and counselling, education and employment, and mutual understanding and social integration. In the three pillars a total of eight areas of action are covered.

For the first time the same integration goals are pursued nationwide.



* Study OECD (2015), Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015, OECD Publishing, Paris.

** Schools, VET providers, administration, health-care sector and employers'/workers' organisations.

Strategic goals

Areas of action	Strategic goals
Pillar 1: Information and counselling	
Orientation and needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All foreign nationals moving to Switzerland for the purpose of establishing long-term legal residence should feel welcome in Switzerland and receive important information regarding living conditions and integration support measures. Migrants facing serious integration challenges should receive suitable integration support at the earliest possible, but no later than one year upon arrival.²
Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrants are informed and advised on language courses, day-to-day life and social and professional integration. Institutions within established frameworks and other interested parties receive information, advice and assistance on removing obstacles to integration, increasing intercultural openness and providing measures for specific target groups. The population is informed about particular situations that foreigners face, the goals and basic principles of the integration policy and the integration support strategy.
Protection against discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions within the established framework and other interested parties are informed and advice on anti-discrimination issues. People who are discriminated based on origin or race receive professional advice and support.
Pillar 2: Education and employment	
Language and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrants possess sufficient knowledge of one of Switzerland's national languages for everyday communication and appropriate for their employment situation.
Pre-school support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrant families enjoy equal access to pre-school support services adapted to their family situation.
Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrants with no access to the services offered by established frameworks receive support offers to improve their employability.
Pillar 3: Mutual understanding and social integration	
Intercultural interpreting and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In special situations (communication of complex information, highly personal matters, administrative procedures), migrants and the personnel of established frameworks can avail of high-quality, professional intercultural interpreting services.
Social integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrants participate in the social life of their local community, whether at communal or neighbourhood level, and in civil society organisations.

² By law, integration measures are not compulsory for EU/EFTA nationals.

CIP Funding 2014–2015

Integration is worthwhile

The Confederation and the cantons co-fund the joint CIP venture.

Most newcomers to Switzerland are financially independent from the outset. In contrast, those who come here in search of protection generally arrive penniless. Until a decision is made on their right to remain, they have limited access to any source of earned income. One of the central aims of integration support is to enable migrants who are dependent on social welfare to become financially independent.

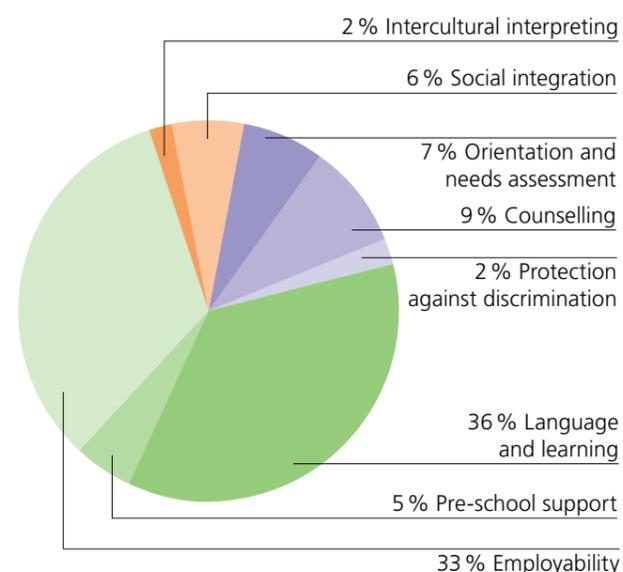
Mutual funding by the Confederation and cantons

Article 55 of the Foreign Nationals Act (FNA) and the Ordinance on the Integration of Foreign Nationals (FNIO) contain provisions on the funding of the Cantonal Integration Programmes (CIP). The Confederation makes a financial contribution towards cantonal integration support efforts. These federal contributions come from two sources of funding.

Flat-rate payments for the integration of recognised refugees and temporarily admitted persons (IP):

The precise amount of these payments is calculated according to the number of positive asylum decisions and temporary residence permits granted by the State Secretariat for Migration. For each person assigned to a canton, they receive CHF 6'000. In order to help the cantons budget for their integration activities, during the first phase of the CIP (i.e. 2014–2017), CHF 38.6 millions per year were distributed among the cantons. This brings federal funding to CHF 154.4 million for the whole 2014–2017 period.

Breakdown of funding allocation by area of action



If the funds to which a canton is entitled exceeds the amount fixed for the canton – owing to the high number of positive decisions – the Confederation provides a compensatory payment.

Contributions for the integration of all foreign nationals (FNA credit): These contributions can be used to support the integration of all foreign nationals moving

to Switzerland for the purpose of establishing long-term legal residence. Roughly CHF 138 million has been budgeted for the 2014–2017 period. The Swiss parliament therefore has agreed a guaranteed credit for integration support efforts. However, these funds are only granted if the cantons are able to guarantee the same amount. Thereby, the cantons can also factor in funding provided by the communes. The programme agreements set out the amount of the contributions that the federal authorities and cantons are expected to pay.

Current budget status

The table on the opposite page shows the current CIP bud-

get for the 2014–2017 period. The amounts given are the effective costs for 2014–2015 plus current budget plans for 2016–2017. Both sets of figures show that the lion's share of funding is invested in two areas of action: language & learning, and employability.

Due to the sharp rise in the number of positive asylum decisions and temporary residence permits, the Confederation had to make compensatory payments in 2014 and 2015. Compensatory payments are also foreseeable during the 2016–2017 period due to the high number of positive decisions.

Current budget status: Total costs 2014–2017*	Total Federal + Cantonal	Cantonal (incl. communes)	Federal (FNA)	Federal (IP)
Orientation and needs assessment	43 131 981	16 776 627	19 484 446	6 870 908
Counselling	51 086 471	28 277 667	19 344 565	3 464 240
Protection against discrimination	11 110 711	4 617 502	6 301 772	191 437
Language and learning	211 524 675	90 356 704	47 013 856	74 154 115
Pre-school support	31 762 539	15 573 809	14 945 751	1 242 979
Employability	192 351 367	21 562 043	7 204 164	163 585 160
Intercultural interpreting and communication	15 144 041	5 910 378	8 903 236	330 426
Social integration	34 492 111	16 539 840	12 654 132	5 298 140
Total	590 603 896	199 614 570	135 851 922	255 137 404

* Figures may vary slightly due to rounding differences.

Effective costs 2014*	Total Federal + Cantonal	Cantonal (incl. communes)	Federal (FNA)	Federal (IP)
Orientation and needs assessment	8 490 055	3 946 980	3 439 312	1 103 763
Counselling	10 627 268	5 911 571	4 141 578	574 119
Protection against discrimination	2 232 618	1 161 401	1 030 806	40 411
Language and learning	43 507 680	21 746 776	10 578 693	11 182 211
Pre-school support	6 825 438	3 380 786	3 154 094	290 558
Employability	28 905 269	3 716 808	1 049 653	24 138 808
Intercultural interpreting and communication	3 284 402	1 396 868	1 824 098	63 435
Social integration	9 865 978	3 983 542	2 429 700	3 452 736
Total	113 738 708	45 244 733	27 647 934	40 846 041

Effective costs 2015*	Total Federal + Cantonal	Cantonal (incl. communes)	Federal (FNA)	Federal (IP)
Orientation and needs assessment	9 892 460	4 264 261	4 056 705	1 571 494
Counselling	12 998 174	7 386 051	4 649 500	962 624
Protection against discrimination	2 644 937	1 157 613	1 431 580	55 744
Language and learning	55 421 821	24 618 155	11 029 991	19 773 676
Pre-school support	7 368 331	3 804 386	3 224 286	339 659
Employability	48 445 278	6 845 947	1 539 560	40 059 771
Intercultural interpreting and communication	3 564 566	1 379 739	2 095 701	89 127
Social integration	7 788 385	4 174 125	3 095 213	519 047
Total	148 123 953	53 630 275	31 122 536	63 371 141

* Figures may vary slightly due to rounding differences.



“Mother & toddler courses also lift migrant women out of their isolation, enable them to meet new people, and help them to find their feet more quickly.”

An interview with:

Sonja Tschachtli and Nelly Suarez, teachers of mother & toddler German courses, machBar Bildungs-GmbH, Aarau

Steinmatt school, Derendingen, in the canton of Solothurn: seven mums and their preschool children are sitting in a circle. Teacher Sonja Tschachtli wants to start her mother & toddler German lesson but her colleague and co-instructor Nelly Suarez has not turned up. Everyone starts to wonder what has happened. Just then, the door opens and all eyes are fixed on Nelly Suarez as she shuffles into the room. Her face is alarmingly red. She coughs, sniffs and clasps a hand to her head. “Nelly’s sick”, exclaims five-year-old Ilayda.

“We teach children German through play. At the same time, they acquire social skills and learn how they are expected to behave within our structures. We also equip mums with the German that they will need for their everyday life here”, explains Sonja Tschachtli.

“How can we help Nelly?” From a box, children take out a hot-water bottle, a thermometer, some cream and a packet of tablets. “What’s this?” – “Cream.” They then place each of the objects on the corresponding flash card. Everyone says, repeats and processes the word. Before long, Nelly is feeling much better.

“Mothers play a key role in pre-school support efforts. They have to take responsibility. Often, the concept of helping their children to learn is alien to them, simply because they have never come across it before. Our courses provide them with a real impetus. We also address education-related issues, which gives the mothers a much better understanding of Swiss life and etiquette.”

Nelly Suarez has made a full recovery and dances along to German-language songs with the children. Meanwhile, the mums have relocated to a side room where they take part in a role-play exercise. Amongst other things, they practise arranging a doctor’s appointment by telephone and describing how they feel, physically.

“Mother & toddler courses also lift migrant women out of their social isolation, let them meet new people, and help them to find their feet more quickly. As for the children, they are much less at an educational disadvantage when they finally start school. It is no surprise that schools are among our strongest supporters. What does integration mean to me? Being arrived with your heart.”

The mother & toddler German classes in Derendingen have been running since August 2010. They are aimed at mothers with little or no knowledge in German, and their pre-school children.

mbb.ch > MuKi-Deutsch

Cantonal Integration Programmes CIP

Main developpements to date

The four-year timeframe of the Cantonal Integration Programmes means that the cantons can adopt a longer-term and more strategic approach to their project planning.

Thanks to the four-year timeframe, cooperation with other cantonal and communal agencies as well as social partners has flourished, and new areas of actions were identified. Many cantons spent the first two years setting up their programme. This development phase was dominated by three focal points.

Integration: a shared responsibility

Integration is a cross-cutting issue as well as a process involving a wide range of agencies. Take the case of a young refugee hoping to serve an apprenticeship. Often a place is only found once the refugee social service teams up with careers guidance providers and the vocational training authorities. Yet, the success of the process still depends on the labour market authority issuing a work permit in time. Many cantons have set up or commissioned interinstitutional advisory groups to ensure that the widest possible range of stakeholders are involved in the implementation of their integration programmes. The cantons also seek to improve coordination between the participating agencies, ensure a steady flow of information and, where necessary, launch joint projects.

Integration support now enjoys greater visibility and acceptance thanks to the CIPs, and is increasingly perceived as an important addition to existing measures. Although cooperation has greatly improved in many cantons, major obstacles remain, particularly in relation to the funding of services and determining responsibilities.

Communes: Key players

Integration happens at the local level. Consequently, communes have a vital role to play in integration support efforts. They now take a more active part in the provision of orientation and social integration services. Their involvement and activities are determined, among others, by service-level agreements which set out the strategic objectives set up jointly by them and the canton. For their part, the cantons grant compensatory contributions, provide seed funding or help support locally-based projects. There is also a demonstrably greater willingness among the communes to invest in integration support efforts. Here, they rely on expert input. The

sustainable development of locally-rooted integration support efforts demands perseverance and patience.

Integration of refugees

The integration of refugees and temporarily admitted persons is another CIP priority. The number of asylum applications has strongly risen, mainly due to the developments in Syria. As a result, the number of persons who are temporarily admitted or granted asylum increased as well. Over the last two years, this upward trend has led to more multiagency cooperation, as well as the need for the greater involvement of the business community. If refugees are to integrate successfully in the workplace, apprenticeship and traineeship positions have to be provided. The integration and asylum offices work with vocational training providers, labour market authorities and social partners to devise solutions which offer real prospects to refugees.

Areas of action: Successes and challenges

Successes	Challenges
Pillar 1: Information and counselling	
Orientation and needs assessment A growing number of communes offer orientation services and host welcome events. Newcomers can better familiarise themselves with their new environment and find out about their rights and responsibilities.	For the communes, providing orientation services and organising welcome events entails a great deal of effort and investment. The introduction of services takes time and their benefits will only be felt in the longer term.
Counselling Access to low-threshold advice services has improved. Suitable integration measures are identified more quickly, and important processes can be launched.	The challenge is the implementation at local level. Not all government agencies are yet equipped to provide newcomers with efficient and effective advice and support.
Protection against discrimination Training courses mean that cantonal administrations now address the issue of discrimination. Anti-racism campaigns help raise public awareness of discrimination.	In individual cases, conflicts are not easily resolved. Raising awareness of integration and discrimination issues among established frameworks remains a challenge.
Pillar 2: Education and employment	
Language and learning Many cantons have expanded the number of courses they offer and improved their quality. They are also more easily accessible and better geared towards the various target groups.	Demand for language courses outstrips supply. Teaching content should be geared more towards the actual language needs of the students. Instructors should attend further training to hone their teaching skills through training.
Pre-school support Many cantons aspire to provide good quality services for pre-school language acquisition. Daycare and playgroup staff continue to develop and hone their intercultural skills.	Families in need of special support are hard to reach. There is no guarantee that language promotion efforts are invested in those children who need them most.
Employability The cantons not only expand their workplace integration services for refugees and temporarily admitted persons, but also improve their interinstitutional cooperation.	Many newcomers are unskilled. Yet, qualification programmes are resource-intensive and places are limited. Hence, there is a need for a good selection process.
Pillar 3: Mutual understanding and social integration	
Intercultural interpreting and communication The services of qualified intercultural interpreters and communicators are increasingly called on. Through better understanding each other, the work of established frameworks has become easier.	Often funds are lacking at the local level (e.g. schools and doctors) to pay for these services. The use of intercultural interpreters is still not a given in many places despite the clear benefits they bring.
Social integration Municipalities and neighbourhoods especially have expanded the services and opportunities in relation to social integration.	The mentoring and coordination of volunteers is resource-intensive. Some projects lack clear ideas and plans, and fundraising efforts should be better organised.

Orientation and needs assessment

Arriving and quickly settling in

The first steps towards successful integration are informative introductory talks and agreeing on the way forward.

Anyone who takes up residence in Switzerland should be able to find their bearings and feel at home as quickly as possible. Knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, provision of clear rules, as well as guidance are key to the successful integration of migrants. Therefore, orientation and the prompt assessment of integration support needs became a new priority to the specific integration support. For the first time official welcome events are held across Switzerland. Since the launch of the CIPs, more information and counselling services for newcomers have come onstream, while the cantons make every effort to ensure that introductory talks, orientation events and counseling services are as regionally or locally based as possible. Involving the communes, though, proved to be challenging.

Understanding what matters

Orientation refers to the personal welcome given to migrants who have recently moved to the commune. As part of this event, they receive general information on life in Switzerland, their rights and responsibilities, and on integration-related matters generally. Often, these meetings take place at the communal residents' register office or at the cantonal integration office. Added to this are official information and welcome events. The cantons tend to opt for locally-rooted models in this regard.

Welcome brochures and flyers provide information on integration services on offer and the rights and responsibilities of newcomers to the area. The cantons and communes have made huge efforts to translate and publish this information in a variety of languages. A great deal of important information and contact addresses are also available on the internet. Most cantons have overhauled their online presence or even created a new website. With a few clicks, newcomers are for example able to enrol in a language course of their choosing.

Identifying exactly what someone needs

Assessing integration support needs is a major challenge. It is vital that migrants with special support needs are identified as early as possible and given the assistance they need. Yet, most cantons are reluctant to undertake extensive assess-

ments due to the substantial effort that this procedure entails. Instead, they tend to concentrate on those with special support needs, such as individuals who have come to Switzerland for the purposes of family reunification. Generally, the needs of these groups in terms of language acquisition and labour market integration are assessed. It would though be helpful to extend the assessment to other areas, such as pre-school support in the case of migrant parents.

The greatest difficulty is reaching, with reasonable effort, everyone who needs integration services.

The cantons tend to apply one of two models. Model 1: Integration support needs are generally assessed in a one-on-one discussion during or after the welcome-meeting. Depending on the outcome, an integration service visit is recommended or, in some cases, ordered. Model 2 assumes that people avail themselves of information and counselling services and in some cases incentives are used, such as discounted fees if persons sign up for courses within the first few months

Integration agreements – a panacea?

Integration agreements can be concluded with third-state migrants with special integration support needs. Non-compliance with these agreements may be penalised. Consequently, much is often expected from these agreements. In general, they are most effective if they address the actual integration support needs of the person concerned. That's why a prior to an integration agreement a one-to-one discussion on the anticipated integration efforts is very important. Given the considerable effort involved in reaching such an agreement, and monitoring compliance with it, few cantons make systematic use of this option; most prefer to focus on providing the mandatory orientation service. However, in some cases, integration agreements are used as preventive measure when significant barriers to integration exist.

after their arrival. Tools to assess integration support needs are seldom used. In practice, the cantons tend to deploy a combination of the two models. Quite a few cantons, cities and communities provide newcomers already with considerable information and recommendations in relation to language courses and more in depth counseling sessions during personal introductory talks.

Improving access to information

Several approaches are used to ensure that newcomers have easy access to the information and services they need. However, the form they take depends on the institutional level at which information is initially provided. Hard-to-reach individuals can be accessed through collaboration with key persons, intercultural communicators and migrant organisations. Experience shows that migrants can be reached best at communal level. Here, everyone knows each other, so the inhibition threshold not to turn up for appointments with local providers is higher than if the meeting was with a cantonal institution.

It is easier to reach migrants at the communal level than at the cantonal level.

Professionalism has to be nurtured

In order for needs assessments to produce promising results, it is important that one-to-one discussions are carried out by suitably qualified staff. New members of staff need to receive the necessary training and tools to ensure that they can carry out these assessments with the professionalism required. Between 2014 and 2015, a great many courses and programmes were organised, particularly intercultural skills training.

jura.accueil

The association jura.accueil was mandated by the integration division of the canton of Jura to coordinate the reception of newcomers to the area. Specially trained support assistants of the association, most of them former immigrants themselves and living in the canton for many years, contact newcomers and suggest a meeting. The meeting aims to give them, in their mother tongue, information and brochures and help them familiarise themselves quickly with the rules and practices of the canton of Jura.

jura.ch/DIN/SPOP/juraaccueil/juraaccueil.html

Zurich: Study on the effectiveness of orientation services

The canton of Zurich commissioned Büro BASS to evaluate the impact of personal, individualised orientation services as part of integration support efforts. The researchers surveyed some 1700 newcomers, with encouraging results. Individuals who attended introductory talks were better informed, tended to be enrolled in a German class and perceive the authorities as friendlier. Whether they actually attended such a talk or not, individuals who had received a personal invitation felt more welcome than those who had not.

integration.zh.ch > Unsere Angebote > Studien & Berichte

"I translate more than just words; I convey the actual message they contain."

Interview with:

Gulistan Daoud, intercultural interpreter with "comprendi?", a community interpreting service, Bern

Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Pfammatter, head of the Department of Paediatric Cardiology, Inselspital Bern

Gulistan Daoud: *"I fled Syria six years ago. I had previously studied economics in Damascus. During my first two years in Switzerland, I lived very isolated. One day, I said to myself that I'm here for the long run, so I need to start integrating. I started taking German classes and spent two years working in a shop. During this time I learnt a lot about life in Switzerland, and discovered new opportunities.*

For the last year I have been working as an Arabic-Kurdish interpreter with "comprendi?", a community interpreting service. I enjoy helping people. I work with the Swiss Red Cross, Caritas, and the social services. I'm also called on to interpret at parent-teacher meetings, as well as at lawyers' offices and in hospitals. I also do volunteer work for local parishes. As an interpreter, I always remain neutral. I serve as a kind of translation machine. But it's really important that I don't just translate each word, but also convey the actual message the words contain. Migrants need to understand exactly what is being said to them, and the implications. To provide a quality service, you need to be completely familiar with the two languages and the two cultures involved. Sometimes, my job can take an emotional toll. For example, I recently had to explain to a Syrian cancer sufferer that his prognosis was not good."

Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Pfammatter: *"It would be virtually impossible to treat migrant children if it weren't for interpreters. I can tell if the interpreter has done a good job by the questions that the patients and their parents subsequently ask me. I am rarely disappointed."*

Gulistan Daoud: *"At Intercultura, I passed the first module of the intercultural interpreting course. I'm currently in the second module. My goal is to work in the social education field. What does integration mean to me? Integration is both a right and a requirement. Everyone has the right to become an integrated member of society. At the same time, everyone has to make the effort to integrate. This is why there are anti-discrimination measures and penalties for individuals who refuse to integrate."*

"comprendi?" is the specialist provider of professional intercultural interpreting services in Bern. It is supported by the charity Caritas. It offers interpreting services in many different languages and all its interpreters have a Swiss-recognised certificate from INTERPRET and/or intercultural interpreting qualifications/experience.



Counselling

Good advice opens doors

Newcomers rely on professional and pertinent advice to help them settle in and build a better future for themselves.

Where can I find a language class that suits my level of proficiency? How can I have my diploma recognised? What options in the Swiss education system are open to my daughter?

These and other numerous questions can be hard for migrants to answer. Sometimes, even the extensive information on day-to-day life in Switzerland that they are given shortly after they arrive does not equip newcomers to deal with certain situations appropriately. Many migrants rely on the support of their neighbours or friends, but this may not suffice either. This is why professional advice may be needed to prevent misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations, and in doing so ensure that migrants integrate swiftly and successfully.

Valuable support for established frameworks

The cantonal and communal integration offices help the divisions within the established frameworks responsible for vocational training and the labour market to fulfill their duty to provide information by creating interinstitutional working groups or by providing them with translated documentation. Most cantons also have advice centres specifically for migrants. During the first two years of the CIPs, the cantons have developed and expanded their counselling services and contact points for the migrant community and the authorities. Here, migrants can receive help in finding the right integration support services for their situation.

Quality: a fast track to success

Migrants can avail of professional advice on a wide range of subjects: from everyday life in Switzerland, family matters, workplace integration right up to health care provision. If possible they are referred to the appropriate point of contact within the established framework concerned. However, this relies on effective cooperation between the main advice bureaus. The higher the quality of the counsellings dispensed, the quicker everyone involved achieves their goals. Where the subject matter is more complex, intercultural interpreters or communicators may be called on to facilitate communication and understanding between participants. Continuing education and training opportunities are key to ensuring that the quality of the services delivered by the involved professionals remains high.

Good accessibility is key

Many migrants are hard to reach with information, particularly the elderly, those who live in remote areas or are socially isolated. Often, the easiest way to provide them with information is through key persons, who tend to come from the same cultural background as the persons concerned and are well accustomed to life in Switzerland. Cooperation with immigrant associations also makes it easier for recently arrived migrants to access services geared specifically to them.

Raising awareness and educating the public

The CIP area of action "Counselling" also includes public relations work. The cantons do much to inform the public, the authorities and the business community about integration support efforts. They use many different channels of communication, including their websites where they post a wealth of information and a list of the integration support services that are available. They also publish articles in various media, give presentations, as well as organise meetings and conferences. Moreover, a few cantons and communes also have their own integration awards.

Lausanne: A centre of integration expertise

For more than four decades, the "Bureau lausannois pour les immigrés BLI" in Lausanne has been providing newcomers with information and advice. Thanks to the CIP, the BLI has developed and enhanced its services, particularly information provision (e.g. brochures, website, newsletters), introductory talks, integration workshops, outreach activities, integration projects and anti-racism efforts.

lausanne.ch/bli

Protection against discrimination

Fairness: a cornerstone of cohesion

Equality is a fundamental right. Non-discrimination applies to the established local community and newcomers alike.

People looking for somewhere to live can find themselves at a disadvantage simply because of their name. Or while looking for a job because of their origin, colour of skin or religion. Discrimination, whether deliberate or inadvertent, makes the integration process much more difficult. Since 2014 and the launch of the CIPs, anti-discrimination measures have been intensified. This acknowledges the fact that integration is a two-way process: migrants need to adapt to their new surroundings, while the local population must show openness and fairness towards newcomers.

Advice and support

People who are discriminated should receive advice and support from a specialist centre or contact point. Even before 2014, several cantons already had such services in place. However, since the launch of the CIPs, they have developed, expanded and redesigned their existing services. In cantons that created such services since the start of the CIPs, the form they take varies. For example, the cantons of central Switzerland developed a common specialist centre in intercantonal cooperation. In contrast, other cantons outsource these services to third parties or link existing specialist centres in order to fulfill a new task.

The challenge for many cantons is developing a low-threshold, professional counseling service that actually reaches its target audience. During their introductory talks with recently arrived migrants, many cantons address the issue of protection against discrimination and present the services they offer in this regard. They also distribute flyers and newsletters, and publish more detailed information on their website. Nonetheless, finite human and financial resources make it difficult to devise advanced-level communication strategies and actively provide information. Another issue that needs to be resolved is data collection and monitoring at cantonal, intercantonal and national level.

Raising awareness and educating stakeholders

From the naturalisation authorities to hospitals, from schools to letting agencies and landlords, it is simply impossible to

simultaneously tackle discrimination everywhere. Consequently, when implementing the CIP goals, every canton tailors its strategic priorities according to its specific circumstances and needs. Cantons find it particularly challenging to bring the relevant institutions and offices within the established framework on board.

The local population must show openness and fairness towards newcomers.

Several cantons raise awareness of the discrimination issue directly within their administration and the established frameworks. They also seek ways to make sure that the administration makes protection against discrimination an integral part of its in-house training programmes. Public awareness-raising efforts are also undertaken. Indeed, several cities and cantons run an annual anti-racism week.

Guideline: Helping the public administration tackle discrimination

The public administration is in contact with an increasingly diverse group of clients. What can be done to ensure that everyone enjoys equal and non-discriminatory access to public services? Anti-discrimination officials in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland have discussed this question and produced a practical guide for tackling discrimination in the public administration.

www.edi.admin.ch/frb > Discrimination and Integration

“We can plough more of our energies into bigger projects.”

Interview:

Monika Geisser, integration officer, canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden

Ms Geisser, your job did not exist before the Cantonal Integration Programme (CIP) was introduced.

That's right. But that doesn't mean that we were doing nothing on the integration front. The canton enacted its own Integration Act and Ordinances since 2009. Likewise, schools had their own integration strategies in place, and there were German classes open to all. However, few of these services were coordinated prior to 2014. Thanks to the CIP, the canton set up a designated Integration Office.

What has changed since the Integration Office opened?

First, tasks were re-assigned. I now deal with all eight CIP areas of action. In the past, responsibility lay with other agencies, such as social welfare or the asylum system. The transition was tough. Not only were tasks re-assigned but funds also had to be re-allocated. Coordinating the activities of the various institutions and agencies involved was, and continues to be, a challenge.

What are the benefits of this reorganisation?

For the first time, the canton has a central point of contact for all integration-related matters. The demand for our services is high. Thanks to our introductory talks, migrants are better informed about the services available to them. Also, we can plough more of our energies into bigger projects, such as our employment and integration bridging programme. It comprises general education components, such as intensive German classes and maths, as well as vocational training components in cooperation with the cantonal VET Office. The programme also address other general and integration-specific topics.

Can you describe a typical working day?

We are a small canton. Although I work part-time (70%), I am directly responsible for a whole range of services: introductory talks, German classes, workplace integration, roundtables, accompanying clients to parent-teacher meetings, billing, reporting etc.

If you could change something about the CIP, what would it be?

In order for smaller cantons to implement priority projects, there needs to be a bigger flexibility in terms of how funds can be allocated to each of the areas of action.

What does integration mean to you?

It is a process in which locals are opening up to newcomers, and newcomers learn to live in a new culture.

The Integration Office of the Canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden coordinates the integration support activities of the various service providers working in the field. It organises regular meetings where the different administrative offices can share their experiences and insights, and acts as a single point of contact for the federal authorities.



Language and learning

Finding the right words

Language is key to effective communication and successful integration.

Talking to your neighbour, asking the pharmacist for the medicine you need or successfully finding a job: these are some of the many situations in which newcomers to Switzerland may find themselves and where knowledge of a national language is vital. From the outset, language plays a leading part in the integration process. It is therefore not surprising that the lion's share of federal and cantonal CIP funding goes on the "Language and Learning" area of action.

Language classes: demand still outstrips supply

Learning a language is tough. It requires a lot of work, perseverance and commitment. Nonetheless, as the huge demand for language classes shows, migrants are highly motivated. In 2014 and 2015 the cantons had to expand and develop their language-learning services. Yet, in many places, these classes are still over-subscribed. Many migrants find it difficult to juggle their work and family commitments with lessons. That's why demand is particularly high for classes that include babysitting services, evening classes, intensive classes and classes up to Level B1 ("independent user"). Cantons have also started to devise classes aimed at improving basic skills, particularly literacy. In addition, innovative alternatives to traditional classroom-based teaching have begun to emerge, such as outreach classes held in local parks, in childcare facilities or in companies. These low-threshold courses enable even migrants facing many obstacles to learn a national language.

Rise in tailor-made courses

In most cantons, the majority of language classes are geared towards a very broad audience. They tend to have a standard course structure and the learning objectives are the same for all. The first two years of the CIPs, though, saw the emergence of a growing number of language courses with specific learning objectives. Demand is especially high for job-specific language classes, particularly among social partners and especially within the hospitality, construction, care and cleaning sectors. In many cantons, the social partners work closely with the integration offices.

Job-specific courses take the needs of employers into consideration. The development of these courses requires consider-

able expertise, experience and commitment on the part of the teaching staff, coupled with a high degree of professionalism on the part of the course providers. Other tailor-made courses are also much sought after, particularly language classes for parents/mothers & toddlers. Most of these include professional childminding services. However, this is often only possible because of good cooperation with local childcare facilities and playgroups.

A language class has achieved its goal when students can directly apply what they have learnt in their everyday lives.

Inform, motivate and offer tailor-made training opportunities

There is a wide range of language classes targeted at specific groups. What is more important, though, is that participants attend the course that is best suited to their needs. Consequently, many cantons have improved their selection and referral processes. If newcomers are to acquire the skills and knowledge they need, targeted information and easy course accessibility are key. Since the launch of the CIPs several can-

fide label: a mark of quality

The fide label was created to guarantee the quality of language teaching provided as part of integration support efforts. It shows that language course providers have designed and deliver their services according to fide principles. Teaching, organisation and coordination are all assessed according to a set of specially designed quality standards. At the moment, a broad-based trial involving six cantons and 14 providers is undertaken. The appropriateness of these standards is reviewed, and the procedure is being piloted.

fide-info.ch

tons have created internet platforms and information material in connection with language learning. Also, during introductory talks, newcomers are informed of the language-learning opportunities available to them. Many cantons and communes rely on key persons, i.e. individuals from the same community or well-connected members of the neighbourhood. The word-of-mouth strategy tends to bear the most fruit when it comes to encouraging migrants to learn the local language. Many cantons also offer incentives such as education vouchers or free German classes.

Effective language courses are relevant to everyday life

Highly professional teaching staff are key to guaranteeing the quality of language-learning services. However, this is not as simple as it sounds. Instructors, whether they are volunteers or paid professionals, are expected to have a vast set of skills, which includes adult education expertise, language teaching skills and intercultural competence. The fide training module, which was introduced in 2015, helps to ensure that instructors are well-equipped to provide a quality service. Between 2015 and 2016 over 130 teachers successfully passed the "Language teaching in the field of integration" programme. Many cantons co-funded this training module as part of their CIP activities. Thanks to its activity- and needs-centred approach, fide ensures the effectiveness of the language teaching provided. Nonetheless, quality assurance remains an imperative. Evaluations of the language-learning provision in several cantons found that classes which are needs-based and designed around everyday life have greatly helped students apply what they have learnt in their everyday life.

Two funding models, one goal

Most cantons provide language course providers with subsidies. Since the launch of the CIP, some cantons have introduced a system of recipient funding, for example through the award of education vouchers. The challenge here lies in the fact that the effectiveness of such a system depends on participants taking ownership of their learning. Adequate information provision and service accessibility are therefore key.

Language classes for expectant mums

Female migrants tend to have no access to information and prevention services prior to the birth of their child. As a result, they and their babies are more prone to health problems after the birth. This observation prompted 12 institutions in eight cantons to devise a language course that specifically deals with pregnancy and early infancy. In the canton of Vaud, for example, these are run by the organisation "Espaces Femmes Appartenances". Participants acquire basic skills in the local language, which they then can use at appointments with their midwife or paediatrician. Greater language skills also gives them the confidence to deal with pregnancy- and family planning-related issues, and to become better-informed. In light of its success, in 2016 the project was incorporated into the CIP of the canton of Vaud.

dialog-integration.ch/de/aufwachsen

St Gallen: Evaluation of the fide pilot project

Between 2014 and 2015, the canton of St Gallen applied, on a trial basis, the fide approach to 14 German classes ranging from levels A1 to A2 and B1. Language schools were encouraged to offer fide courses so that the canton could draw on experience when deciding on the way forward. To this end, the canton offered these providers assistance contributions. A total of five language schools took part. Students on the pilot courses learnt, for example, to write a job application or fill out a patient registration form before a consultation. For the teachers, devising needs-centred learning content was undoubtedly time-consuming. Their hard work paid off: in certain instances, the achievements far exceeded the teachers' expectations.



“At the end the day, meaningful integration is good for everyone.”

Interview with:

Remo Buob, head of the Residents Register Office and Integration Officer, Wettswil am Albis;
President of the Association of Canton of Zurich Residents Register Offices (VZE)

Mr. Buob, you invite all newcomers to attend an introductory talk. Why?

We want our residents to be as well-informed as possible and play an active part in village life. This way, everybody wins. Take the example of someone not disposing of their rubbish correctly because they simply were unaware of the rules in this regard. These inadvertent actions can nonetheless provoke conflicts.

Can you describe what happens during these talks?

Newcomers, including migrants, come to our office here in the community centre. After they have registered, we explain how things work in the village and in Switzerland generally. We have created information brochures which specifically address the needs and questions that newcomers typically have. If issues of a more sensitive and confidential nature need to be addressed, we relocate to a separate office. We listen to what our new residents have to say, take their needs on board, provide them with the details of the competent authorities or quickly clarify something for them. Customer satisfaction is a top priority for us, which is why we work according to the principle of “By people for people”.

What are the advantages of your particular approach?

These talks are absolutely low-threshold, cost-neutral and can be organised and led by ourselves. We don't send out any written invitation with a set date and time, and from the outset we develop a good instinct for the individuals we come into contact with.

As part of its CIP activities, the canton of Zurich wants to develop standardised solutions for the communes to implement in their orientation services. Is this feasible?

The canton is fully committed to these efforts, but attitudes to integration vary across communes and towns. Some fear that it means more work and expense. Elsewhere, the staff does not cooperate, or implementation is politically tricky. I have frequently heard that our pragmatic model is extremely well-suited to smaller and medium-sized communes.

What does integration mean to you?

Succeed, with minimal effort, in providing people with a point of contact and the right information to enable them to settle into their new environment. At the end of the day, meaningful integration is good for everyone.

The commune of Wettswil a. A. has a resident population of around 5'000. Even before the introduction of the CIP, the commune organised introductory talks with newcomers. As part of its CIP service-level agreement with the canton of Zurich, it has expanded this service and created more detailed information brochures. It also took part in the study on the impact of orientation services, which was commissioned by the canton of Zurich (see p. 17).

[wettswil.ch > Online-Schalter > Abteilungen > Einwohnerkontrolle > “Herzlich Willkommen Broschüre”](#)

Pre-school support

Giving children a head start

The first years of a child's life lay the foundations for its future development and health. This is why integration should begin as early as possible.

For a child, nursery school is a much more fun experience when it understands the language. It is also essential that parents are equipped to seek the right treatment for their baby's middle-ear infection. In no other phase of life do humans learn as much as in early childhood. This potential must be exploited because both the child and society generally will ultimately benefit. Studies unequivocally demonstrate that children who receive promotion in their early years do better at school, in further education and in the workplace. Regrettably, there is a higher risk of underdeveloped potential among children from socially disadvantaged families, who are often from an immigration background. The area of action "Pre-school Support" focuses on ensuring that migrant families enjoy equitable access to the services they need.

Appreciation for pre-school support services is high.

In Switzerland, child and youth policy, including pre-school support, is primarily a cantonal responsibility. Even prior to the introduction of the CIPs, a number of cantons already had a strategy in place. Others, thanks to CIP funding, have gone on to develop a pre-school support strategy. However, in certain cantons, this is still in progress.

Networking is vital

When it comes to implementing the programme goals, it is vital that a stakeholder network is in place and coordination happens both horizontally and vertically. This is owing to the fact that neither the SEM nor the cantonal or communal integration offices have overall responsibility for pre-school support. Integration delegates are strongly encouraged to develop a network of contacts within the cantonal offices and with the communes. They also must be familiar with and coordinate the activities of the preschool support stakeholders and the services available. In many cantons, the communes oversee pre-school support measures. Cooperation often helps to convince the communes of the value of pre-school support. Training courses provide a platform for pre-school support professionals to build a network of contacts.

Empowering parents

Parental behaviour and attitudes are strong determinants of childhood development. Parent outreach schemes focus on providing parents with the support they need to honour their child-rearing responsibilities. One particularly useful tool are home-visit programmes. For example, the "Schritt:weise" project. It receives support from around 10 cantons via their CIPs. This prevention programme is targeted at socially or educationally disadvantaged families with children aged between one and five. Weekly home visits provide children with age-appropriate promotion and help parents strengthen their child-rearing skills. The effectiveness of these measures is further increased in combination with other services that also pursue a clear set of goals. These include parental education, support and advice, health promotion as well as regular control of the child's development. Counselling for mothers and fathers, which is available nationwide, plays a key role in family outreach efforts and, in some instances, are supported via the CIPs.

Learning a first and second language simultaneously

Migrant children from socioeconomically or educationally disadvantaged families are often ill-prepared for nursery school. Their language skills in one of the four official Swiss languages tend to be worse than the skills of children who learned one of these languages as first language. The provision of early years' language-learning support in a family, day care or playgroup setting is a key objective of integration policy. Many cantons support such services, whether it is language-learning schemes in a playgroup or day care setting, such as "SpielgruppenPlus" (implemented in various cantons), or projects that involve parents in the language-learning process.

Guaranteeing quality at all levels

Almost all cantons promote basic and advanced training courses aimed specifically at childcare professionals working in day care facilities and playgroups. This training tends to focus on interculturalism, cooperation with parents, health and early years' language-learning support. Advanced training programmes, such as the intercantonal "Valoriser la diversité dès l'enfance" (Valuing diversity from infancy) course in

French-speaking Switzerland, provide professionals with useful platforms to share their experiences and insights. In terms of the CIPs, existing pre-school support services can be adapted to the needs of the local migrant population and, where necessary, supplemented with targeted integration measures. Delivering good-quality services advance the development of every family, and every child. The biggest winners are children from socially disadvantaged families. Research clearly shows that receiving quality pre-school promotion can have a very positive influence on a child's development.

Removing stumbling blocks

Feedback from the cantons shows that the appreciation for pre-school support services is high. This is motivation enough to continue down this route and remove the many remaining obstacles along the way. Some cantons cited problems which were owing to their financial situation or difficulties with parent outreach. From an institutional perspective, funding is also a problem owing to the lack of legal provisions on the matter. This is why it is so important that a network of different governmental and non-governmental actors is established and their activities are better coordinated. Service provision still tends to vary considerably across communes, with many having had little time to review or adapt their offerings.

Geneva: "entre nous – 99 dessins"

The communes of Carouge, Lancy and Plan-les-Ouates, the canton of Geneva, the University of Social Work (HETS), the University of Applied Sciences and Art of Western Switzerland and the organisations Camarada and PPro Enfance, carried out a project aimed at simplifying communication in relation to infants and toddlers. "entre nous – 99 dessins" is a set of cards featuring pictures of everyday situations, needs and emotions. Migrant families can use these to communicate non-verbally with pre-school support institutions as well as the authorities and medical professionals. This makes it easier to share information and thus improve the well-being of the young children concerned.

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Employability

Jobs are hard work

Successful integration hinges on being able to earn a living and provide for the family.

Employment is the main reason for people to move to Switzerland. However, not all migrants are able to join the workforce straightaway. This is due to issues like administrative barriers, a lack of education or formation in the country of origin, inadequate proficiency in the local language or a dearth of sociocultural skills, such as not knowing how the job-seeking process works in Switzerland. Employment facilitates and speeds up the integration process, as migrants interact with co-workers, form a new circle of acquaintances, actively practice their local-language skills and become better accustomed with Swiss workplace culture, its values and norms. All of these aspects have an extremely positive effect on integration.

A growing number of cantons now assess job-related potential and capabilities at a very early stage.

Providing access to established frameworks

The main goal of the CIP area of action "Employability" is to enable the target public to gain access to the labour market. Employability measures such as language classes, training schemes and qualification programmes are already available to a large part of the migrant population. Certain groups within this target public have bigger difficulties to access the labour market due to their status or personal circumstances. This applies primarily to refugees, temporarily admitted persons, as well as young people who immigrate to Switzerland in order to rejoin family members already established here. Special integration support measures target precisely these groups.

Support for young people arriving after compulsory schooling

20-year-old Mirlinda from Kosovo moved to Switzerland in order to rejoin her fiancé Valdet, who has been living here for some time already. She has hairdressing experience but had not completed her training before leaving for Switzerland. At the moment, she works in the hairdressing salon belonging to Valdet's cousin. Even though she and her fiancé both are

working, they still do not earn enough to make ends meet. If Mirlinda is to become a fully-fledged member of the Swiss workforce, she will need access to an appropriate training programme. As she no longer is of compulsory school age, Mirlinda is not automatically informed of bridge-year programmes and training opportunities existing in Switzerland.

In this kind of situation, specific integration support plays a key role in coordinating the services provided by established frameworks and cantonal measures. Experience from the CIPs to date shows that interinstitutional cooperation can have a real impact on improving the employability of migrants. Of particular note are measures such as coaching and counseling services, mentoring schemes, bridge-year courses which prepare young adults for an apprenticeship, careers guidance as well as course work certificates and diploma recognition. Specifically, it became apparent that well-qualified migrants are in particular demand. In certain instances, established frameworks at cantonal level had to adapt in order to meet the needs of this particular target group. Given that many teenagers move to Switzerland in order to rejoin their family not before the end of the summer holidays, one canton piloted a school programme that began in late Autumn 2015. Since these young people often live with their parents or other family members, it is important to address them too. The cantons therefore have supported parent advice services and information projects on ways to get young people into work.

Refugees and temporarily admitted persons are a top priority

The biggest field of action in relation to employability measures is the workplace integration of refugees and temporarily admitted persons. It is important that the capabilities and potential of each candidate is assessed at the earliest possible. Afterwards, a tailored integration plan should be drawn up. Most cantons have developed schemes, instruments and resources to this end. A SEM study found that, despite these efforts, much still remains to be done. The cantons draw on their positive experiences and the challenges they have faced in order to acquire a better grasp of the situation and on what actions need to be taken. There are now more opportunities

available to refugees and temporarily admitted persons to acquire qualifications and improve their job prospects.

In this regard, closer cooperation with the vocational training system has been especially valuable. Additional measures are taken forward with a view to achieving the strategic goals and creating longer-term employment prospects. These measures include the use of job coaches, making work and qualification a priority, as well as the provision of innovative training courses and measures that are tailored to the needs of a given target group. Close cooperation with the business community and assisting employers that hire refugees and temporarily admitted persons also play an important role.

Successful labour market integration yields considerable economic benefits. As well as plugging labour and skills shortages, it pays socio-political dividends too.

Every refugee and temporarily admitted person has its own personal history and its own specific needs. An individual can arrive in Switzerland with such severe trauma that swift integration in the labour market is simply not possible. To assign these individuals to case-appropriate measures, e.g. psychotherapy provided within the right setting, leads to a considerable workload in terms of the selection process and counselling provision. Thanks to the CIPs, the cantons have put in place and adapted the requisite structures. New instruments such as monitoring and case management are now available and many counsellors have received the necessary training. Another key factor is information. Employers, and trade associations in particular, receive detailed and regular information, whether by means of information material the local authorities received, checklists and tools for employers, or work-related information events that enable refugees and employers to establish direct contact, to name but a few examples.

Challenges

In the past, there was a lack of legal provisions governing the (financial) responsibility for labour market integration measures aimed at young people arriving after compulsory schooling within the asylum or immigration process. CIP resources were used to provide generous seed funding, which enabled the relevant structures (e.g. the VET system) to quickly adapt their bridge-year schemes to this new set of circumstances. In terms of asylum, the situation can change rapidly due to the unexpected emergence of new crisis hotspots. Having to continually adapt their services to an ever-changing refugee/ temporarily admitted persons population while still guaranteeing quality delivery presents the cantons and the established frameworks with a significant challenge. It takes a long time for the necessary interinstitutional cooperation to become firmly established.

Neuchâtel: Interinstitutional cooperation

Integration support services in the canton of Neuchâtel cooperate with social welfare, the labour office and post-compulsory education and immigration services. This interinstitutional cooperation is in keeping with the canton's labour market integration strategy, which focuses on the target group and their needs rather than on their residence status.

Zug: The 20+ bridging scheme

I-B-A-20+ is a scheme designed specifically for migrants over the age of 20 to help them move a step closer to finding a job. Three days a week, the young students attend German, maths, IT and general education classes. Additionally, they learn how to apply for a job. They work with coaches to set their career goals, decide on their learning causes and the type of internship they would like to attend in order to gain the necessary work experience.

zg.ch/behoerden/volkswirtschaftsdirektion/iba-20plus



“fide does not place excessively high demands on students.”

Interview with:

Brigitte Huber Keller, educational director of “German as a second language” at the Adult Education Centre, Thun (left)

The Adult Education Centre in Thun has devised a pilot German-language course according to the national language training principles of fide.* How do migrants benefit from fide?

They benefit on a variety of levels. They acquire language building blocks which they can use in their everyday life, as well as they learn how everyday scenarios play out and what they are all about. For example when visiting a doctor. This will quickly give them a sense of mastery. The classes help to empower them by encouraging the persons to think about what they want to learn and choose the learning products they believe will facilitate their day-to-day life. They also incorporate their own knowledge and experiences into the learning process. This “co-construction” approach boosts their self-esteem. I notice at a daily bases that the fide strategy does not place excessively high demands on students, such as having to learn grammatical rules in isolation. The fide building blocks allow them to communicate in most of the situations they encounter. This is a huge advantage.

What are the challenges in terms of teaching?

fide places high demands on the teaching staff. They find themselves in front of a class with no set programme. It forces them to work outside of their comfort zone. fide is ultimately a question of attitude: am I prepared to re-think how I teach, and consider what would benefit my students the most?

What does it take to make fide classes a success?

Extensive training and support is key. All of the teaching staff here benefit from the committed support of the team in charge of the fide pilot project. We can also make use of fide’s online resources when designing our classes. It is also important that the institution is completely behind fide – both financially and, more importantly, in terms of their attitude.

What does integration mean to you?

For me, integration is a process in which both sides give something: openness towards others and a willingness to develop understanding for other modes of behaviour and lifestyles.

Every year, the Adult Education Centre in Thun organises some 25 “German as a second language” classes, covering a range of levels. Certain classes introduced scenario-based learning as part of the fide pilot project. The fide-concept was developed, on behalf of the SEM, by a team of partners working in the fields of language research and language teaching and learning.

Intercultural interpreting and communication (ICIC) Understanding more than just words

Intercultural interpreting and communication has a vital role to play in communication situations involving complex issues or decision-making.

The parents of eight-year-old Warda from Iraq are not acquainted with the requirements of the Swiss school system and do not speak any of Switzerland's national languages. All the better if someone can translate in this situation and help bridge both the linguistic and cultural divide. This considered, it is not surprising that the demand for intercultural interpreters and communicators is growing. The goals of intercultural interpreting and communication is to enable migrants to access the services offered by established frameworks, and to prevent costly misunderstandings through clear communication. Communication is made easier and more effective through ICIC, particularly when the subject matter is complex, highly sensitive, or involves administrative procedures. This greatly facilitates the work of established frameworks, as well as it guarantees the quality and efficiency of their efforts.

Specialist agencies

There are 18 agencies nationwide that provide intercultural interpreting and communication services, and with whom the cantons have signed service-level agreements within the context of their CIPs. Authorities, schools, hospitals and other interested parties within the established frameworks are thus able to make use of these services. These agencies also make sure that service delivery runs smoothly and is of the best possible quality. Take for example situations within the hospital setting: neither children nor domestic services personnel should assume an interpreting role in this context. The umbrella organisation INTERPRET plays an important role here. INTERPRET is responsible for the qualification and training of intercultural interpreters and communicators. This has had a decisive impact: in 2015 interpreters/communicators with an INTERPRET certificate or a federal certificate put in 54% of the total hours worked. inter-pret.ch

In growing demand

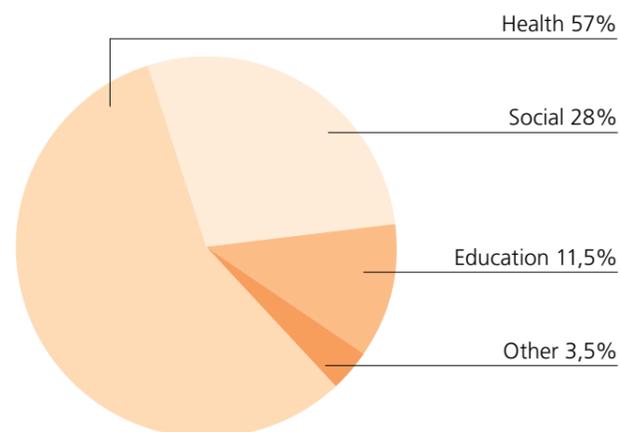
In 2015, intercultural interpreters worked over 245 000 hours (2014: 187 000). There are two main reasons behind this steep rise in demand. On the one hand, Switzerland has issued a high number of resident permits to refugees. On the other hand, campaigns advertising for these services and raising awareness of the benefits they yield have had the desired

effect. In 2014 and 2015, the most popular languages were Tigrinya, Arabic and Albanian.

The funding challenge

The use of intercultural interpreters and communicators can help cut costs, as demonstrated by studies carried out in the health care sector. They proved that these services help to avoid high follow-up costs owing to misunderstandings or incorrectly understood instructions. The Federal Office for Public Health (FOPH) generously supports the basic and advanced training of interpreters. However, there are still no clear rules on the funding of intercultural interpreting and communication services.

Areas of work 2014–2015 (average)



Grisons: Funding for intercultural interpreting in the health sector

In 2016, the cantonal integration office renewed its funding commitment to the use of professional interpreting services by primary care providers and specialist physicians. They discover the extra value that intercultural interpreters can bring to their day-to-day work. In 2015, this special scheme was used around 50 times. What is striking is that doctors who had used the service once went on to book these services again.

gr.ch/DE/themen/Integration > Interkulturelles Dolmetschen

Social integration Coming together and moving forward

Integration is a two-way process to which both the local community and newcomers must contribute.

Whether shopping, playing sport or in the playground, many migrants are able to integrate easily and naturally. Sometimes, though, this is not the case. In these instances, services and schemes are needed to bring newcomers and locals together, and to encourage them to become active members of society.

Project support in places where real life happens

Integration primarily occurs at the local level: in communes, neighbourhoods and one's immediate environment. Civil society – including associations and migrant organisations – have an important role to play here. Most cantons issue calls for projects that promote co-existence, and provide funding for these efforts. Many projects raise awareness and educate both the local and migrant communities. Support is also given to projects that promote intercultural exchanges and encounters, as well as neighbourhood development schemes and sporting projects. There are also events and platforms that provide opportunities for political participation, as well as interfaith dialogue platforms. What all these projects have in common is that they strengthen the links to and within civil society, and thus social cohesion. They enable migrants to become active participants in community life and enhance the understanding of the local population.

According to the cantons, developing a close collaborative relationship with a great number of different civil society stakeholders is their greatest challenge. Migrant organisations are often unfamiliar with the requirements that organisational structures are expected to meet. As a result, many cannot be given partner status. In addition, project development and implementation can be a difficult undertaking for them. Some cantons support migrant associations in their efforts to adapt their structures and acquire the necessary skills to create and carry out projects according to the required standards.

Volunteers: Vital to success

Volunteers make an important and valuable contribution to social integration projects. Without their input and commitment, many projects would not have come about. Volunteers often facilitate low-threshold access to points of contact and services. They create spaces for informal learning and promote

SOS Ticino: Sotto lo stesso sole

Sport is one way for people from different cultures to come together as equals. The Ticino branch of the Swiss Labour Assistance (SLA) devised the project "Sotto lo stesso sole" (under the same sun) that raised awareness of the integration issue among coaches, youth & sport programme leaders, cantonal sports federations and local sports departments. The inclusion of these stakeholders should increase the number of migrants who are active members of sports clubs, and promote co-existence.

Schaffhausen: Cycle training courses for migrants

The association Pro Velo Schaffhausen provides cycling lessons to adult migrant women. The courses have proved popular: not only is cycling beneficial for the health, it also helps the women to become more independent. It promotes communication, is an activity that all the family can enjoy, and makes shopping expeditions and commuting much easier. In many ways, bicycles are not only a means of transport but a means of integration too.

provelo-sh.ch > Aktivitäten > Velofahrkurse

integration through shared activities. In addition, their efforts help building valuable networks. According to a study commissioned by the SEM, 2015 saw a considerable rise in the number of volunteers actively involved in efforts to help those who fled their countries in order to seek refuge in Switzerland.

“The three letters – PIC – have become part of our everyday language.”

Interview with:

Nicolas Roguet, integration delegate, canton of Geneva

Mr. Roguet, how do you remember the transition to the CIP?

The consultation and drafting processes were very challenging and complex. Thanks to the CIP (french: PIC), we had to – and could – develop a truly coherent, pragmatic and efficient system. Over 300 institutions and associations based in Geneva were involved in this process. It was a bit like moving up from Challenge League to Super League!

As the integration delegate for the canton, what does your job entail?

For me, the job means being an architect, engineer and bricklayer, all rolled into one. This enables me to devise and implement projects and measures that are as close as possible to the needs of the community. On a day-to-day basis, it is my job to oversee the implementation of the canton's integration policy, develop partnerships with all relevant institutional and community stakeholders working in the fields of integration and discrimination protection, as well as linking up academic research to public action. All of these activities are geared towards fulfilling the objectives prescribed by the Confederation and State Councillor Pierre Maudet.

Has the CIP raised the visibility of integration efforts in your canton?

Absolutely. We have developed our own distinctive PIC (CIP) “brand” that enhances the visibility and credibility of integration efforts in our canton. The three letters have become part of our everyday language, not only among our integration partners but also among parts of Geneva's community. The use of the CIP logo, the launch of targeted campaigns like “I am 8” (years here), “(language) classes in the park” and our “Anti-racism week”, as well as the creation and distribution of over 30'000 information brochures, the use of social networks, regular coverage of the CIP in the media: all of these activities have raised awareness of the different facets to the canton of Geneva's integration programme.

What does integration mean to you?

Just off the top of my head, several words spring to mind: social cohesion, diversity, otherness, rights and responsibilities, citizenship, not to mention challenge, future, innovation, potential, dialogue and solutions. Finally, for us at this present time, integration above all means “CIP”. In other words, pragmatism, confidence and a great deal of determination.

The integration of foreign residents is a key factor in social cohesion, especially in cantons like Geneva that have a high share of foreign residents (40%). The CIP developed by the canton of Geneva comprises over 80 concrete integration measures that are tailored to the needs of both the local and the migrant community.



Going Forward

For many decades, Switzerland has been a country of immigration. One third of the Swiss population comes from an immigration background. So far, integration and peaceful co-existence has been largely successful. In order for this to persist, the state needs to support integration in a manner that offers the migrant population opportunities and prospects, which in turn helps them to fulfil their rights and responsibilities and to become active members of society.

The first two years of the Cantonal Integration Programmes (CIP) have demonstrated the advantages of a common federal and cantonal integration policy. In terms of implementation, the cantons enjoy a high degree of autonomy, which allows them, in cooperation with their towns and communes, to tailor their integration support efforts more closely to the needs on the ground. Ultimately, this makes it possible to adopt a longer-term and more strategic approach, and to make more efficient use of the finite financial resources at disposal. In their first two years, the CIPs have achieved much, though integration support will continue to face major developments and challenges, especially in three areas.

“Opening up” of existing structures: Integration happens at all levels and in all aspects of society. The CIPs, as well as the public debate on migration – owing not least to the current refugee situation – have led government agencies and civil society stakeholders to take a more inclusive stance with regard to the migrant community. This can lead to all kinds of actions, for example careers guidance services organising multilingual one-to-one meetings and parents’ evenings. Or a local club decides that it wants to attract more members from the migrant community. Now halfway through the first implementation phase, the CIPs have gradually managed to make a wider-ranging impact. Support for this process should continue.

The key role of the communes: Integration should be an obligation. It should be linked with expectations but also offer prospects. Such an obligation can only be realised through direct contact at the local level. The vital role that towns, cities and communes play became clear during the first half of the four-year CIP implementation phase. After all, key spheres for integration, such as education and social welfare, are largely a communal responsibility. Yet, not all communes perform such a key role. It takes time for integration services like information, counselling or tuition to become embedded at the local level. The CIPs enable the cantons and communes to work over a longer period of time on establishing a strong collaborative relationship. This is a real and considerable advantage.

Integration of individuals from the asylum domain: The accelerated asylum procedure, approved by Swiss voters in the referendum on 5 June 2016, will have consequences for integration support efforts. The sooner a decision is made on whether a person will or may remain in Switzerland in the long-term, the quicker their integration can begin. In the coming years, the asylum-seekers who will move from the federal asylum centres to their assigned canton are likely to have been victims of persecution in their home country or whose case is legally complex. This raises the question of how the time spent waiting for the asylum decision

can be best used to ensure that the integration opportunities open to successful applicants are not compromised. Asylum-seekers should be given the opportunity to take part in employment programmes and learn one of the national languages as soon as possible. In doing so, they can make a contribution to the local community and, at the same time, benefit from a clear and well-structured daily routine.

The CIPs form Swiss integration support activities into a process with clear strategic goals. The State should demand commitment to integration. However, state-led integration support is only one factor among others. These efforts cannot, and should not, be seen as a cure-all. Successful integration will only be possible if it is seen as a responsibility for us all: newcomers, the local community, social partners and government authorities alike.

