
Bertelsmann Stiftung (Hrsg.)

Herzlich willkommen in Studium, Stadt und Job!

Willkommensregionen für internationale Studierende

Abstract

For the first time ever, the number of foreign students enrolled at German institutions of higher education exceeds 355,000. Although the issue of labor and education migration is not currently a matter of considerable public attention, international students are widely acknowledged for their potential in providing Germany skilled labor. By the end of their studies, these students are often more or less socially integrated, have acquired language proficiency for everyday use and have cultivated their own personal networks. In short, by the time they've completed their studies, they have the necessary skills and tools under their belt for settling in Germany. They are well-trained, familiar with German society and have a realistic understanding of what life in Germany involves.

Nonetheless, most international students leave Germany after completing their studies. While many planned to leave upon graduating, others find themselves struggling to manage the reality of a daily life more difficult than they had imagined. Studies conducted by Prof. Roland Roth at the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration show that despite their high potential, foreign students face a series of structural barriers before they can join the resident skilled labor workforce in Germany.

In our experience, it is also the case that international students find it difficult to find a room or apartment to rent, finance their studies and build contacts with other students and/or potential employers and businesses.

Reducing or removing these and other barriers must therefore be a goal of universities and other local stakeholders alike. The lessons learned from our project activity presented here in this publication show that not only universities, but local community and municipal governments, as well as stakeholders in civil society and the private sector must act to make it easier to remain in Germany for those international students who see a future here. These young people may study at a German university, but they live in the city and should, ideally, later work at companies or in offices. We therefore need to work together in building a welcome culture for foreign students locally.

This publication presents the "A Welcome Culture for Foreign Students" project in the university town of Hanover that the Bertelsmann Stiftung followed. As a pilot location, the city of Hanover developed an impressive concept for the project that it has, in part, already implemented.

These efforts are portrayed here with the example of the apartment campaign. A second pillar of the project has involved establishing a national advisory network with 12 locations to address the promotion of a welcome culture for foreign students and provide participants the opportunity to exchange strategies and their experience.

This publication includes an evaluation report by Petra Pfänder (in puncto: pfaender & team) and Dr. Thomas Orthmann's summaries of good practices from the 12 university locations participating in the advisory network. The publication concludes with a list of recommendations for action by the project's academic adviser, Prof. Roland Roth. Creating a culture that builds rather than severs ties between high-potential foreign students and Germany is sure to draw growing attention.