



EUROPÄISCHE UNION

Europäischer Fonds für regionale Entwicklung

Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Energie und Betriebe



EASING THE WAY FOR REFUGEES INTO PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND FORMING FRIENDSHIPS FOR LIFE? HÜRDENSPRINGER IS DOING THAT IN NEUKÖLLN!

SAMIRA FLED FROM SYRIA and has been in Germany for one year now. Starting anew in Berlin was anything but simple for her. She had neither relatives nor friends, could not speak German and the culture was very foreign to her. She found a volunteer mentor through the Hürdenspringer Neukölln project of Unionhilfswerk Berlin, and the mentor is helping her along the way to working life. With her help, Samira is coping with daily school life in Neukölln and has a good chance of starting successfully into professional life - and with that comes prospect for an autonomous life in Germany.

»WE SHALL FIND THE RIGHT MENTOR FOR EVERY PARTICIPANT IN THE PROJECT. IN THAT WAY WE CAN LOOK AFTER THEM AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS.«

Stefanie Corogil,
Head of Project Mentoring Section

THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ERDF) made it possible for the project to start in April 2016. Thanks to the grant from the ERDF the Hürdenspringer Neukölln youth mentoring project is supporting teenage refugees in their struggle to cope with daily school routine and to start their professional lives. Hürdenspringer secures companies for the project, which offer apprenticeships for the young people. A wide network of supporters is working for the success of the project: apart from employees of Unionhilfswerk, language mediators, asylum experts and other cooperation partners (among others the district office in Neukölln) and adult education centres are involved.



Hürdenspringer Neukölln



UNIONHILFWERK
Stiftung Unionhilfswerk Berlin

THE MENTORING PROGRAM

Hürdenspringer Neukölln is promoting goal orientation of young asylum seekers aged between 18 and 35. The precondition for the mentoring is a good prospect of staying in the country and a place of residence in Neukölln. Depending on their age, interests and language proficiency, they are brought into direct contact with a mentor. This creates a tandem which tackles tasks together and can set goals for themselves. This special care is a unique feature of the project. Mentors work voluntarily and are accordingly trained for that purpose. Most of the mentors come from Germany and know the education system as well as the job market. After the training they are well equipped to offer continuous support to their mentees during the orientation period. During that process care is taken to build upon the resources and skills that the refugees already have. With the freshly acquired knowledge, the mentees will be able to connect better with training programs, university education or an occupation.

WITH SUCCESS

Through the activities of Hürdenspringer Neukölln, more and more refugees find their personal mentors who help them in the search for suitable training or the right job. This is the main task of the mentors. They give their mentees advice on every topic, but special focus is directed at professional orientation and opportunities for further education. The results of their cooperation are not long in coming: Young refugees, who were not able to speak a word of German during their first months in Neukölln, are now applying for jobs or found one already. Others are doing internships and the project motivated them to help others. Samira was able to improve her German very fast, primarily because she speaks so much German outside the language classes when she is out on walks with her mentor in Neukölln. A close friendship has quickly developed out of her tandem. This is a further positive aspect of the project: it promotes tolerance and understanding for other lifestyles, strengthens intercultural generational ties between young refugees and long-established residents of Berlin and, last but not least, civic engagement is practiced together in a democratic framework.

THE ERDF IS MAKING AN IMPACT IN BERLIN

The ERDF in Berlin supports sustainable urban development and improvement of the social infrastructure. Within the „Zukunftsinitiative Stadtteil II“ (ZIS II) program, measures for education, integration and sustainable social stabilisation are promoted and at the same time dissimilar intra-urban living conditions continue to be dismantled while local potentials are specifically activated. Thanks to the ERDF even refugees are able to take advantage of numerous educational and integration programs, they can integrate themselves better through those programs and are able to contribute to professional life and society.

The ERDF ensures in concrete terms, that

- refugees can integrate themselves quickly.
- mutual prejudices are removed.
- refugees get training and further education, establish themselves professionally and find an occupation which matches their competence.



Samira and other mentoring participants



Networking meeting



Project management

FUNDING GUIDELINES:

FUNDING PRIORITY 4

Sustainable urban development,
Campaign ZIS II

GRANT AMOUNT

approx. € 376,600, 50% EFRE

PROJECT TERM

01.04.2016 - 31.12.2019

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