

The challenges faced by migrants in Europe: The case of Germany.

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Introduction

Migration is a normal phenomenon in human history. Man has been moving from place to place for various reasons such as to escape war or conflict, famine, education, better economic opportunities (work) and marriage or family reunion. Others may move because of the adverse condition of climate change and natural disaster such as float, land slide and deforestation. These reasons for migration are known as the push or pull factors. Poverty or famine are considered a push factor while a better health care system or education is a pull factor. From the reasons mentioned above, one can surmise that migration can either be forced or voluntary. Research has shown that the difficulties a migrant may face is related to his reason of migrating.

The focus of this paper is to discuss the various problems or difficulties migrants can face when they arrive at their new destination. While I will use Germany as a case study, I believe that the facts presented in this essay may reflect the situation in many other countries.

Germany is a highly industrialized country with a population of about 83 000 000 inhabitants, the second most populated country in Europe after Russia. Germany has the biggest economy in the EU and is regarded as one of the richest countries on the planet. The role played by migrants in the economic development of Germany from post-World War 2 to date cannot be underestimated.

For clarity's sake, permit me to say that Germany is a beautiful country and there are many advantages of living, working, and studying in this federal republic. However, the focus of this discussion is to inform prospective migrants on what they may face when they arrive in Germany with the intention to help them better prepare or plan their journey.

1. Residence permit/ stay

The major problem faced by undocumented migrants is getting a legal status. To qualify as a refugee in Germany and many other countries, one must fulfil the requirements set by law. Getting a refugee status is very difficult even from people fleeing from war torn countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, and Sudan. It is very difficult for one to study or work as an undocumented citizen. Rejected refugees' applicants are mostly repatriated to their home countries.

2. Language barrier

This is a very big problem faced by migrants. Since Germany lost the first world war and hence her colonies in Africa, German is not an official language in any developing country. Due to this fact, most migrants must learn German to live and integrate in Germany. Learning German is very important but also time consuming. It is also costly if one must pay by his or herself.

3. Bureaucracy

Germany has a complicated bureaucratic system especially for Migrants from developing countries with little or no bureaucracy. To go to most offices, one needs an appointment. If one fails to pay certain bills, one is expected to pay an a fine. Also, getting a house is a major problem in big cities like Berlin, Frankfurt. According to Alexander Meyer, a German language coach, "Germany is notorious for its bureaucratic processes. From registering your address, opening a bank account, to obtaining a residence

permit, dealing with the German bureaucracy can be overwhelming for expats.”

4.Cultural shock

The weather in Germany is very cold. People from tropical countries have always find winter uncomfortable especially when newly arrived. Also, the same sex marriage is a shock to people from Africa and the Middle East where religion plays an important role in people’s lives. The children offices have the right to take away children from their parents if they have evidence that the children are abused or not well taken care of. Many African asylum seekers have suffered from this administrative or legal provision.

Also, finding new friends in Germany might be very difficult. Unlike in many African countries, having a friendly relationship with your neighbours might be a daunting task.

5.Cost of living

The cost of living in Germany is very high in comparison with developing countries. Rents, legal fees, medical bills for uninsured migrants, transportation cost are comparatively very high.

6. Recognition of academic qualification and training

Germany does not recognize the academic and professional qualifications from so many countries, including EU countries to be equivalent to the German qualifications. Migrants who face this hurdle will be mandated to do additional academic or professional training in Germany. Others might be asked to do internship. This might not apply to all professions but professions like lawyers, teachers and medical doctors are strictly regulated.

Conclusion

However, with proper planning, preparation, adaptability, and a positive mindset, these challenges can be overcome within a few years. The aim of this discussion is to present some of the difficulties migrants may face in

Germany with the intention to help them better plan and prepare their journey especially those travelling because of a pull factor like family reunion, education, and better economic opportunities.

We recommend all migrants to respect the laws and regulation of their host countries. Integrating in the society is the best thing any newcomer can do. Integrating among newcomers, what is called parallel integration will only exclude one from socio-economic and political participation in the society. Migrants are advised to contribute their quotas to the development of their host countries.