

## 4.5 “Parents’ guides”: A module for a qualification programme for involving parents from an immigrant background

The urgently needed improvement of the educational success of children and young people from an immigrant background depends to a considerable extent on the parents’ support. Many immigrant parents are ready to get involved in their children’s education and to cooperate with nurseries and schools. Their own family and institutional experiences form their attitudes towards education. They don’t always agree with the beginnings of education in daycare centres, nurseries and school and this can result in irritations. If the consequence is not to be a retreat of the immigrant parents, possibilities must be created to reflect on these irritations in conversations to direct a change in perspective and to open up possibilities of parents being involved in the educational institutions.

On the other hand, active cooperation of immigrant parents demands also the intercultural participation of nurseries and schools and a rapprochement on both sides. Motivating and strengthening immigrant parents, overcoming barriers, and new kinds of interculturally oriented cooperative work on an equal footing between parents and education authorities are foundation stones for a successful outcome.

With this background information, parent guides – especially if they have an immigrant background themselves – can help immigrant parents to reflect on their experiences and to gain further knowledge about education. They can develop motivation and they become empowered to take an active part in the educational matters of their children by attending common seminars and/or round tables. What is more, they are able to give suggestions and stimuli to the educational institutions as they are more open to the concerns of immigrant parents than they used to, and they are also able to seek and strengthen cooperation. The parent guides become a kind of bridge or link between parents and institutions.

### Project idea

The idea of the project emerged from the bilateral German-Turkish working party in the Ministry of Culture of Lower Saxony. It was further developed together with the Lower Saxony Cooperative Immigration Organisation and with the inclusion of quite a few institutions and projects in the existing implementation plan. It is based on the concept of parent guides which is already being successfully used in the districts of Schaumburg and Osnabrück.

Starting from the knowledge that there is a great need for action to improve the educational success of children and young people from a Turkish background and whose parents in comparison to their proportion of the general population are only in very small numbers attending parents’ committees, this group should be taken into consideration. This should be achieved conceptually through a process in two steps:

- In 2007: qualification of parent guides in an ethnically mixed multicultural group on the basis of the current regional facts, using variable concepts
- In 2008: further qualification of parent guides of Turkish origin to work with parents of their own ethnicity.

## Aims

The present concept serves to qualify and accompany parent guides.

People who dispose of at least their own immigrant experiences are prepared to guide immigrant parents through the themes of education and school and to motivate them to work together with the educational institutions o:

- increasing the number of immigrant parents attending parents' committees in nurseries and schools
- strengthening immigrant parents in their educational competence
- working together with educational institutions on their support courses at the initiation of active parents' work with immigrant parents
- developing forms of exchange with immigrant parents and the (self-)reflection of educational ideas
- discussing fundamental themes from the field of education against the background of areas with the conflicts "majority – minority" and "institution – immigrant parents"
- working towards the beginnings of intercultural conflict resolution

## Implementation

The present concept may be taken as a basis to apply for funding from the Guide Integration Programme of the Interior Ministry of Lower Saxony.

At the same time it must be noted that the present concept can only be a rough outline of both content and structural form and could be modified with respect to the current local facts. The competences and needs of the qualified group should be grasped next, in order to be able to set up goal-oriented and structured further training measures.

Up till now, the experiences of the qualification of integration guides have shown that the additional advisory role of the guides is always particularly successful, if a close connection to the educational facility is maintained and if an exchange of experiences takes place among the guides and if networking is enabled. The deployment of parent guides should therefore be tied in with the local structures and be coordinated by experts.

With regard to the later advisory role of the guides, it is sensible to fall back on the competences of the experts already in the qualification stage in the networks and to seek to collaborate with them.

- They can offer professional advice on intercultural education
- There are about 35 teachers state-wide who advise schools and experts in intercultural questions and in the field of language development. They work closely with teachers who are native speakers. An overview of all the names and deployment places can be found on the Lower Saxony education server  
 ➔ [www.nibis.de](http://www.nibis.de) (under the menu "Schwerpunktthema", main themes and submenu "Interkulturelle Bildung" intercultural education, the specialism intercultural education can be found)

- The role of native speaker teachers can be discussed.
- Contact with them can best be made via the subject advisors and the advisor for intercultural education.
- District advisors and advisors for intercultural education work in the departments of the state school authorities.

These teachers coordinate the work of the subject advisors and advisors for intercultural education. They can arrange contact with the native speaker teachers and are also experts in many aspects of intercultural education and language development:

- Rainer Langner, Landesschulbehörde, Hannover
  - Susanne Hopp, Landesschulbehörde, Braunschweig
  - Axel Erdmann, Landesschulbehörde, Lüneburg
  - Alexandra Marsall, Landesschulbehörde, Osnabrück
- The deployment of school social workers can be arranged.
  - Educationalists can be consulted.

Further information on subject work and networking opportunities can be found in the following conceptual model.

Appended is additional information about a successful project for the qualification of culture interpreters through the Institute of Applied Cultural Research in Göttingen. Further contextual and methodological proposals can be procured from there.

## Applications

Applications from interested parties should be lodged as soon as possible, as steps have to be carried out still for the year 2007 for internal management reasons. The relevant documents can be found at  
 ➔ [www.uni-oldenburg.de/kmn/19445.html](http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/kmn/19445.html)

The additional qualification of the Turkish origin guides in the year 2008 was open to funding by the Lower Saxony Ministry of the Interior (MI). According to a press release of the MI of the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007, the 2008 Funding for the Qualification and Deployment of Integration guides will be made available.

Information about the present model concept is available from:

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 Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium,  
 Referat 26  
 Tel. 0511/120-7314,  
 E-Mail: [claudia.schanz@mk.niedersachsen.de](mailto:claudia.schanz@mk.niedersachsen.de)

Winfried Schulz-Kaempf  
 Universität Oldenburg, Koordinationsstelle  
 „Kooperative Migrationsarbeit Niedersachsen“  
 (KMN)  
 Tel. 0441/798-4009,  
 E-Mail: [schulz.kaempf@uni-oldenburg.de](mailto:schulz.kaempf@uni-oldenburg.de)

Additional material (brochure „Das Niedersächsische Schulbildungssystem – Informationen für Eltern, Schülerinnen und Schüler“ and film) can be ordered in several languages from:  
**Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium**  
 ➔ [www.mk.niedersachsen.de](http://www.mk.niedersachsen.de)

## Implementation of a possible seminar plan for the qualification of “Parent Guides” (The present concept is structured into two modules)

### Module 1

Contents and structure are based on “Integrationslotsen-Handbuch” by Christina Müller-Wille (ed.: Stadt Osnabrück, Dezernat 2, Referat für Bildung, Sozialplanung und Integration, March 2007).  
The following concept was slightly modified with regard to the target group “parent guides”.

The basic training shown here comprises 64 sessions of 45 minutes each which altogether can be undertaken in 13 seminars consisting of 9 evening classes and 4 whole day seminars.

#### Basic training

Time	Lesson 45 min	Theme	Outcome
Evening course	3	Introduction Trainer: Course Tutor	Getting to know you, setting up group work, a programme and outlining outcomes
Whole day seminar Saturday	8	Biographic reflections on the process of integration Trainer: Course Tutor	Reflection of one’s own experiences in the immigration and integration process (“bridges” and “brakes” in immigration, drawing a map of integration)).The trainees will be supported in using their own experiences to formulate an idea of integration. The trainees should discover similarities and differences and initiate negotiation processes. The experiences with educational institutions should also be picked out as a central theme. The trainees should begin to formulate their experiences as existing knowledge.
Evening course	4	Models of incorporation/ integration from a sociological and psychological viewpoint (possibly other forms of immigration) Trainer: Course Tutor and external trainer in the field of science, culture, education authorities, advisory service in intercultural education etc.	The trainees will learn that migration processes show a universal pattern spanning cultures and can proceed in various ways for the individual. They test whether the theoretical models match their own experiences or contradict them (possibly, further information on different reasons for moving and background conditions for migration).

**Module 1**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Lesson 45 min</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Evening course	3	General laws for immigrants including Immigration law Rights of residence Nationality law Trainer: Course Tutor and officer from foreign affairs	The trainees are informed about the development and the current position of immigration in the local area. The trainees get an insight into the legal restrictions. They gain understanding about the resulting conduct and the duties of the participating officials.
Whole day seminar	8	A look at the Lower Saxony School System and structure Lower Saxony school law Basic issues Organisation Other regulations The implications of transition from one educational phase to the next Intercultural conflicts Trainer: tutor and colleagues in the Ministry of Education, state school officials from intercultural education, local education authority and/or representative from the state parent council	The trainees receive information about the development and the current situation of the Lower Saxony School System, of school legislation and important basic issues. Additionally, there is detailed up-to-date information from the local area. The trainees will take a look at fundamental legal regulations in school and gain understanding of the resulting conduct. They will be informed about the duties of the participating officials. Intercultural conflicts in school and possible solutions will be discussed in case studies.
Whole day seminar	4	Communication Part 1 Models and styles of communication	
Whole day seminar	8	Communication Part 2: Communication and awareness of the prejudice – intercultural dimension Communication problems und misunderstandings in nurseries and schools: solutions and advice Opportunities and limitations of advice via parent guides, professional counselors Trainer: Course Tutor and school social worker and/or integration counsellor and or other counsellor	Extension of the “Communication” evening course: Trainees reflect on misunderstandings and resolutions in intercultural communicative situations in school through exercises and with the help of case studies. Trainees recognise the meaning of non-verbal communication, acquire the foundations of non-directive conversation structure and the positive effect of conversation situations. Trainees reflect on stereotypes and prejudices and practice self awareness and awareness of others. They derive initiatives for their own counselling work from this and get to know professional counselling services in their local area (if possible consider counselling services with immigrant staff).

Time	Lesson 45 min	Theme	Outcome
Evening course	4	Coping with conflicts Trainer: Course Tutor	Extension of the work on possible conflicts in school and nursery. Developing solutions within the framework of the rules of conflict resolution.

## Module 2

Time	Lesson 45 min	Theme	Outcome
Evening course	4	Personal reflection on one's own resources and the work of the voluntary sector The meaning of intercultural competence in relation to the work of the voluntary sector Trainer: Course tutor	Self awareness and awareness of others, setting of goals and personal standards for work as a parental guide; preparation for the job profile for one's own work. What can I achieve? What am I prepared to do? What information do I still need? How do I evaluate.
Evening course	3	Conditions of voluntary sector work Development of performances to the exploitation of the task of a parent guide Trainer: Course tutor and worker in a contact role for the voluntary sector from e.g. the district or a school head or nursery head	Information about the voluntary sector and transfer to one's own situation How much can I do and how much do I want to do? Further work on one's own job profile as a parent guide; development of (cooperation with actual organisations how? when?)
Evening course	3	Further fields of activities are presented	Trainees become familiar with the integration landscape and many kinds of tasks in nurseries and schools in the district and exchange with the professionals who work there.

Time	Lesson 45 min	Theme	Outcome
Whole Day course	8	Presentation of further fields of activities Negotiation processes – development of an individual work profile Further development of the work of Parent Guides in specialized courses Trainer: Course tutor	Continuation of the previous evening, reports Further work on the development of someone’s own requirement profile. The participants learn to differentiate between an honorary post and a paid job. The participants acknowledge their own skills and finalise their individual parent guide profile. Information on the tasks within the specialisation course (e.g. use of media, setting limits, violence, language development, development disorders, various tests, handling of certificates, healthy diet, interpreting service, ...)
Evening course	4	Final session Trainer: Course manager	Conclusion and analysis, prospects and transition to the specialisation course and the network. The participants are to be used in a network regarding their qualification. The aim is for them to have concrete contact persons, experience concrete support, to be accompanied during their work and to reflect on their work (see further advice on “network”); certificate award

## Further important information

### Course tutors

It has been found beneficial to deliver the course through team teaching. This corresponds also to the recommendation in the guidelines: the use of two tutors is recommended ideally with contrasting features e.g. male and female, young and old, and they should be of different cultural backgrounds if possible

Possible contenders would be

- School social workers
- Social educationalists
- Cultural interpreters
- Native speaker teachers (contact via School Authority, the Landesschulbehörde, specialist counselling Intercultural Education)
- Subject advisors for intercultural education (contact the state education authorities or local advisor, look on [www.nibis.de](http://www.nibis.de) website in Lower Saxony intranet)
- Qualified teachers whose training is not recognised in Germany could be well suited to the role of parent guides (enquire at the job centre)
- Tutors who already work in further education (enquire at colleges)
- Interested parties from Turkish or other clubs who are entrusted with adult education (enquire at local clubs)

### Qualification of the course tutors

It is desirable that they are trained according to the handbook of Frau Müller-Wille as the current components of the parent integration guides programme are being adopted.

Possibilities are:

- the tailored trainer course for Basic Qualification according to the Osnabrück Model (Christina Müller-Wille's handbook) taken at night school, enquire on site
- minimal education via existing integration guide education, enquire on site

- at the moment there are no central training possibilities but they are being investigated by the MK and KMN (if interested please apply to Schulz-Kaempf, [schulz.kaempf@uni-oldenburg.de](mailto:schulz.kaempf@uni-oldenburg.de)).

All these options will be not funded by the State of Lower Saxony, but must be financed by the institutions who are currently organising the projects.

Not all the alternatives could be financed by Lower Saxony, so the other respective institutions organising the projects had to step in.

### Networking

MI guidelines state, "For the success of this demanding job it is important for the integration guides to exchange the experience, network with each other and not be alone. The adoption of voluntary parent guides must be linked within local structures and be coordinated by teachers."

A link into a network has a decisive, lasting and positive influence on the work of the guides; there must be guarantees that problems can be solved early.

Who is involved in the organisation of a network?

- educational institutions
- central bodies such as
- co-ordination offices for integration,
- migration information centres: MEB, JMD, IB
- school bodies,
- integration counsellors,
- integration commissioners in the local authority
- prevention councils
- parents' councils
- self-organisation

The individual contribution of the institutions required by MI will be by personnel costs, daily allowance for travel, room reservations, material etc.

## Module 2

### **Extension of the basic qualification via a specialist course aimed at the further training of Integration Guides of Turkish origin**

As time was rather short in 2007, the offer of a course for specialists could not be made until 2008. The Ministry of Education checks out whether cooperation with Turkish Community is possible.

Basically, the arrangement is that the further specialisation courses are a matter for the respective institution which trained the parent guides in the basic course.

The Arkadas Association in Hannover provided a plan for the qualification of native Turkish parent guides which is attached below and can be used as a rough guide.

In addition, the following institutions have gathered experience in activating parents of Turkish origin. The documents listed below can help to form a concept.

Federation of Turkish Parental Associations in NRW e.V. (Hg.): Dokumentation der 1. Elternakademie, 25.06.2005-11.02.2006, E-Mail: info@turk-egitim.de

Working party "New Education". (Ed.): Letters to parents (Turkish, with a background of migration) (bilingual: Turkish/German), [www.ane.de/elternbriefe](http://www.ane.de/elternbriefe).

### **Additional Information on the Göttingen Project "Cultural interpreters"**

The following information was put together by the Institute of Applied Culture Research (ifak) in Göttingen.

#### **A profile of the work field of a Cultural Interpreter:**

Cultural Interpreters can make a useful contribution to the improvement of the difficult communication between home and school in the case of parents with a background of immigration. Their task is to mediate between cultures – their primary partners in culture communication are the children, the parents and the teachers. They give information, they offer advice, they accompany parents' evenings, they translate, they help solve conflicts, they write letters and they assist the schools in setting up their integration plans.

Information on the Cultural Interpreter project can be found at:  
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