

## **Hands Across the Campus**

### **Lesson Unit 2**

Subjects: History, Social Studies, German

Methods: Brainstorming, tandem, mind map, discussion with rotating partners, maps, group work, wall newspapers, gallery walk, group career ladder

Materials: Work paper, paper in poster format, newspapers and other materials to create migration histories, glue and scissors

### **Germany – An Immigration Country!**

#### Overview

The students consider the history and present situation of migration from and to Germany. Using biographical portraits as examples, they describe and reflect upon the social, cultural and economic contribution migrants have made to German society.

#### Competence

In the context of their own lives and considering the situation of other people and groups, the students explain the significance of migration for life and coexistence in a democratic society. They consider the biographies of immigrants. By considering their lives, problems, and social strategies, they describe the conflicts of minorities in majority societies. The problems of racism, everyday discrimination, and equal opportunity are analyzed.

#### Process

1. In a brainstorming session, the students name groups of people who have immigrated to or emigrated from Germany. Their names are written on the board.
2. The students research historical migratory movements, consider the accompanying circumstances in each case, using the text in AB 1, and in a tandem, develop Germany's migration history in graphic structure in the form of a mind map. Afterwards, they bring a number of tandems together, exchange mind maps and supplement or correct their own.
3. The students produce a map of family histories of migration by positioning themselves throughout the classroom—starting from the site of the school, in the middle of the classroom—depending on where their parents, grandparents and other relatives come from. This activity requires them to ask their families beforehand about migratory movements.

4. In small groups, students each read a biographical portrait (AB 2a-2e) and develop a presentation of their case study on a wall newspaper containing key data and quotes, as well as reasons for migration and difficulties associated with it. They may decorate their posters with drawings or pictures. The results will be exhibited on the walls of the classroom. The students take a gallery walk to view the work of the other groups. One student from each group remains near the wall newspaper to answer questions. The others view the exhibited posters in rotation.

5. The students stay in their small groups and take on the perspective of “their” person. They now climb a sort of “career ladder,” in order to learn about equal opportunity. The students stand in groups at a starting line. Starting with the questions in AB 3, they move ahead step by step or stay still. Students in one group can position themselves differently, since different individual strategies are possible. If the steps are especially surprising, the movement forward or backward is discussed in the classroom.

6. At the end, the students discuss Germany’s immigration policies. They analyze what basic values were linked to immigration policies in the past and the present. In small groups, they do research beyond the available information on changes in immigration policy and the positions of representatives of open and restrictive immigration policies, and set them out in a table. They assess what conflicts continue to exist over immigration and develop suggestions to solve these conflicts fairly.

#### Homework and Follow-Up Projects

- The students put together an exhibit on Germany’s immigration history. They supplement the available information with internet research and illustrate it with pictures. They then show the exhibit at school.
- The students explore the place they live and interview people with migrant backgrounds in their neighborhoods. They develop a series of questions, video- or audiotape the interviews, and turn them into portraits for a radio or television piece, a newspaper article, or an exhibit.
- The students invite representatives of migrant groups and reflect with them on what needs to be done so that no one feels like a stranger in his or her own country. They develop a catalogue of intercultural measures and try to implement them in their classroom, their school, their sports team, or in other contexts.
- In German lessons, literature can be read by authors with immigrant backgrounds, for example Dilek Güngör or Hatice Akyün.
- Students deal with citizenship tests given in the various German states to immigrants applying for German citizenship. These tests are supposed to examine attitudes toward Germany’s free, democratic system. The students attempt to answer the questions in the citizenship tests and then discuss their views on the effectiveness of this measure.

## **AB 1 “All of World History is, at Bottom, the History of Migrations” Franz Oppenheimer, 1923**

Introduction: Read the following text. Then, in the group, create a mind map on a poster, with Germany in the middle. From a timeline of immigration on the right side, with the arrow pointing towards Germany, and a timeline of emigration on the left side, with the arrow pointing away from Germany, use branches to describe the various migratory movements and accompanying circumstances in key words.

German history can be seen as a history of migration. In every period, and for various reasons, people have crossed national borders. The history of migration since the Middle Ages can be classified as various stages of immigration and emigration.

### **Stages of Emigration**

One of the first significant migrations from the area of today's Germany to Eastern Europe took place in the Middle Ages. Starting in the 12th century, many people began moving to the East in hopes of a better life, generally encouraged by the ruling elites. These hoped that immigrants would bring better economic development and Christianization to the areas of settlement to which they were assigned. Since that period, there have been German minorities in Romania, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and the countries of former Yugoslavia.

The largest migration across the ocean from Germany, especially to the United States, took place in the 19th century. Nearly 6 million Germans crossed the Atlantic between 1820 and 1930 in search of better economic conditions and political and religious freedom. But the German newcomers faced the hostility of the American public, which had previously immigrated from various countries. They feared growing competition on the labor market and saw threats to their own national identity. The emergence of German districts, schools and churches was criticized, and the German immigrants were accused of not wanting to integrate and of causing social problems. In 1900, approximately 8 million German-Americans lived in the United States, making up 10% of the total population.

The violent colonization of African countries between 1885 and 1919 represented a new stage in emigration from Germany. While the German military, the so-called “Protection Force,” bloodily suppressed native populations and drove them from their lands in the area of today's Namibia, Tanzania, Cameroon and Togo, many Germans settled the conquered territories as the new rulers. The German settlers exploited and oppressed the native peoples.

During the reign of Nazism (1933-1945), 800,000 Germans emigrated to save their lives, including primarily Germans of the Jewish faith, but also political opponents and people persecuted as “racially inferior.” Their main destinations were the United States, Great Britain and Palestine. With the intensification of Nazi persecution, emigration became

increasingly difficult, especially for German Jews. For one, they became ever more impoverished as a result of the “Jewish property tax,” expropriation and the blocking of their bank accounts, until emigration was finally prohibited in 1941. For another, possible countries of refuge often refused to grant asylum to penniless Jews or to raise their immigration quotas.

In the course of the annihilation campaign in the East, a particular type of German emigration began. Under the motto “Nation Without Territory,” they settled the Eastern territories bordering Germany, while the native Slavic and Jewish populations, stigmatized as “racially inferior,” were systematically expelled or murdered. In this way, these territories were to be brought permanently under German control.

After the end of World War II, in 1945, people continued to emigrate from Germany. Between 1954 and 1997, some 2 million people left Germany. Since 1989, emigration figures have risen, peaking in 2004 at around 150,000, the highest emigration figure in a hundred years. Not for the first time, the main reason for emigration for Germans today is the hope of finding better economic conditions abroad.

#### Stages of Immigration

In the 14th century, the Jewish community in the German-speaking regions grew as many French Jews were driven from their homeland. Sinti began to arrive starting in the 14th and 15th centuries, after having to flee their northern Indian home. As religious refugees, they at first received letters of protection from various princes.

At the end of the 17th century, around 44,000 Huguenots, who were being persecuted in France for their Protestant beliefs, found refuge in Germany. The German princes hoped that French immigrants would solve the serious economic problems following the Thirty-Years' War and that they would import new crafts and forms of production. Even today, many French place names and last names in Germany are reminders of this stage of immigration.

In the course of 19th-century industrialization, many people from Poland immigrated to the Ruhr region, where they were needed as cheap labor in the mines and steel mills. The Poles, for their part, were driven by the hope of a better living in the rising industrial metropolises of the Ruhr region. But the natives saw the “Ruhr Poles” mainly as competitors on the labor market who kept wages down, and were hostile to them. Nevertheless, because everyone worked together in industry, they gradually integrated. The fact that industrial workers shared the same social conditions helped to overcome national and religious differences. Many Polish workers stayed for good, and the numerous Polish last names in the Ruhr region are evidence today of their immigration.

Starting in 1885, people from Africa began to arrive in Germany from the German colonies. Many were forcibly kidnapped as servants or subjects of observation for scientists, or as public spectacles. Others went to Germany voluntarily as students and actors.

The Russian revolution of 1917 and, in its wake, the persecution of opponents of the revolution and “class enemies” resulted in hundreds of thousands of Russians fleeing to Germany in the 1920s and 30s.

During the Nazi period, between 1939 and 1945, forced laborers were brought to Germany from the areas conquered by the German army. There they were forced to work in the German war industry. In 1944, over 7 million forced laborers were working mainly in industry and agriculture, making up almost 20% of all workers. They received almost no pay, were fed only enough to maintain their ability to work, and were housed in barracks surrounded by barbed wire. After World War II, most forced laborers left Germany. Many returned to their homelands; others emigrated abroad, since in the USSR, especially, they faced continued persecution as collaborators with the Germans.

In the final years of the war and after the end of World War II, many Germans from the formerly German eastern territories fled to Germany. They fled for fear of the Red Army or of being punished for crimes they had committed during Nazism, or were driven out of the new or restored Eastern European countries. By the time the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, 3 million Germans had also emigrated from the Soviet occupied zone, and then East Germany, to West Germany. Thus by 1961, a total of over 13 million Germans had immigrated to West Germany, making up almost a quarter of the entire population. While the newcomers first faced the hostility of West Germans, their integration proceeded relatively rapidly. They possessed all the rights of citizens and were urgently needed as workers for economic reconstruction.

Because of continuing labor shortages during the West German “Economic Miracle,” almost 14 million so-called guest workers were recruited as cheap labor between 1955 and 1973 from Italy, Spain, Greece, Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey and Yugoslavia. Most returned to their homelands after a brief stay. This group, including 30% women, sought a better economic future in West Germany as well as greater political and personal freedom. Their expectations were often bitterly disappointed: housed in deteriorating buildings, the guest workers generally had to do the dirtiest, most monotonous industrial work and received less pay than their German coworkers. In addition, they often had to deal every day with racist and hostile treatment by the German public. With the beginning of economic crisis, West Germany imposed a recruitment moratorium. But most of the 2.3 million guest workers had long since decided in favor of life in Germany, despite all adversity, and used the right of family reunification to bring their relatives to Germany. For that reason, the number of immigrants continued to rise even after the moratorium.

In East Germany, too, workers were brought in from abroad to combat the prevailing labor shortage. Starting in 1963, numerous treaties were concluded with so-called socialist brother countries for the employment of contract workers in East German industry. The workers first came from Poland and Hungary, and then, after 1980, more and more from Vietnam, Bulgaria, Cuba, Algeria, Mozambique and Angola. Like the first guest workers in West Germany, they were separated from the German population in special dormitories, paid less, and given the least attractive work. But while guest workers in West Germany had the opportunity to decide to stay permanently with their families, the contract workers in the East were forced in every case to return home at the end of their contracts. Concern was so great in East Germany that the foreigners would stay permanently that workers who became pregnant were not allowed to bear their children in their guest country; that is, for example, Vietnamese women had a choice between abortion and immediate return home, while women from Mozambique, who were not allowed to have abortions under Mozambican law, were always deported. Among the 91,000 contract workers who lived in East Germany in 1989, the Vietnamese were most heavily represented, with 60,000 workers. In 1990, in the context of German unification, all existing contracts were terminated; thousands suddenly lost their jobs, and with them, their residency permits. To avoid being deported and to be able to remain in Germany, many of the former contract workers applied for asylum or remained in Germany illegally.

After 1950, there were still 4 million people in Eastern Europe who had claims to German citizenship. Members of this group often immigrated to Germany as so-called resettlers. With the end of the Cold War and the opening of the Eastern European borders, migration to Germany increased. In 1990, the number of these immigrants increased by a factor of five, to 400,000. The German government then limited the number of immigrants to 200,000 resettlers per year. The majority of these people sought better economic conditions in Germany or felt persecuted as part of a minority in Eastern Europe.

Refugees make up another group of immigrants. Between 1949 and 1993, Article 16 of Germany's constitution guaranteed the right to political asylum in Germany for victims of political persecution. This broad-based, individual right to asylum was a result of the persecution and extermination of minorities and members of the opposition under the Nazis. Until the 1980s, few asylum seekers came to Germany. They were mostly refugees from socialist countries, like the Vietnamese "boat people" who fled socialist Vietnam through the Sea of China in the 1970s and 80s in unseaworthy boats. As a result of worldwide crises and conflicts, such as the civil wars in Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia and the persecution of the Kurdish minority in Turkey, the number of asylum seekers rose sharply in the late 1980s. In addition, because of progressive limitations on the right of entry, the right to asylum was one of the few possibilities of legally immigrating to Germany. By severely limiting the right to asylum, the German government tried in 1993 to close the last opening for migration. Under the "asylum compromise," refugees may only apply for asylum if they arrive directly in Germany from the state in which they were persecuted. If they travel through a so-called secure third state, with which, according to the law, Germany is

surrounded, refugees are immediately deported back to that state. Asylum seekers can now only arrive by air or sea or through illegal entry if they wish to apply for asylum in Germany.

From 1990 to 2005, however, Jews from the Soviet successor states had unlimited refugee status. Anyone whose Jewish heritage was officially verified would be admitted to Germany. In addition to bad economic conditions, many Jews were driven to emigrate by the virulent anti-Semitism that persisted there. At times during these 15 years, more Jews emigrated to Germany than to Israel. In some places, the Jewish communities greatly increased within a few years. A total of 200,000 Jews came to Germany from the CIS countries.

Because of increasingly restrictive overall immigration policies, illegal migration has increased since 1993. More and more immigrants live in Germany illegally. Their lack of rights makes them especially easy to exploit in construction, restaurants, or as cleaners in private homes. Since the 1980s, more and more of those who are illegal refugees or possess only tolerated status, and who can be threatened with deportation at any time, are Roma. They come from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, where they have become victims of systematic human rights violations. In Kosovo, for example, the Roma have faced pogrom-like persecution and threats since the end of the war.

The 2005 immigration law, passed after five years of debate, for the first time acknowledged the historical reality that Germany is a country of immigrants. At the same time, however, it attempts to guide immigration according to Germany's economic interests. Sharp distinctions are made between the desirable immigration of highly qualified people such as scientists and technical specialists, and undesirable immigrant groups, such as refugees.

## AB 2a Fatma's Story

Introduction: Read the following text and take notes. Afterwards, discuss it in your group. In particular, elaborate the reasons for immigration as well as the difficulties associated with it. Then present "your" story in a poster containing significant biographical data and quotes from the text. You may decorate your poster with drawings and photos.

"My family's story is surely similar to the stories of many Turkish families who came to Germany.

"My father had a dream: to open his own cabinetmaking shop in Turkey! Unfortunately, no one would give him a loan, since he couldn't offer any security, since his family was poor. So he was recruited by Germany in the early 1960s. My father ended up in construction with many other Turks and other so-called guest workers from other countries. Basically he just wanted to save some money to achieve his dream. But the reality was different: siblings who needed money to marry, a large family hoping for a better life. So my father stayed longer and longer; in the meantime, he married, but continued to live alone in Germany. When he saw that there was no end in sight for his "German period," my mother also came to Germany, of course also as a 'guest worker.'

"A year later, I was born. The happy family was complete, but my parents wanted to return to Turkey before I started school. Well, nothing came of that.

"I went to primary school here and then went directly to *Gymnasium*, although my primary school teacher thought I should go to a different kind of high school (*Realschule*), since *Gymnasium* might be too hard for me. But I wanted to go to the *Gymnasium* with my friends. I was lucky that my parents' greatest wish for me was always a good education. Because of their family's financial situation, both of them were only able to attend primary school in Turkey. Yet both of them had hoped for so much more from their lives.

"My start in *Gymnasium* was not easy. Many new subjects, a new language, and in addition Turkish lessons and Koran school. My parents supported me however they could. They couldn't help with my homework, but they always gave me the feeling that they trusted me and loved me very much. They offered to let me give up Arabic lessons in the mosque for a while.

"At my school, I was the first and until then the only Turkish student. That was so special that I got an award from the Turkish school for having made it to *Gymnasium*. Fortunately that changed over the years. I didn't want to be the "showpiece," but I was anyhow.

"Everyone who knew me was proud of what I was doing. But of course there were also people who thought that girls didn't have to go on to higher education. My parents did not

let themselves be influenced. Their greatest hope was that their children should have it better, that we should have better chances than they had, and that meant education! And Germany offered all these opportunities.

“So I got through the not always easy period at the *Gymnasium* until my final exams, which I did very well on. I was so happy to hold my diploma in my hands: the first Turkish girl in my school to earn a diploma.

“Now life began in earnest: college!

“I was very excited and didn’t know what I should study. Because my parents wanted me to stay nearby, I decided to study languages. I learned a new language, Spanish, and also studied English to become a translator.

“At the beginning I commuted to my university, but very soon I got very tired of the long trip. So I asked my parents if I could live in a dormitory. That was a difficult step for my parents: a girl alone without her parents in another city—impossible. What would the other Turks say? Of course there were Turks like that, who expressed their negative opinion about all the things that could happen if a girl lived without her family. But I am very proud of my parents, that they had a great deal of trust in me and knew that nothing would happen. What could happen? I was going to the university to study, in order to have an ‘easier and better life’ later, a job I enjoyed, in order to secure my future.

“And all the effort and the trust paid off. When I held my university diploma in my hands, my parents cried with joy that I had traveled the long road of education, and that all their support, whether material or their great love and trust in me, had been worth it.

“While my parents made a pilgrimage to Mecca, I started my first job. My first paycheck! I invited my entire family out to eat.

“In a year I went abroad for the German government’s development office. I worked in Latin America for two years—a very interesting and unique time.

“When I went to school, there were not yet many Turkish youngsters attending high school. But when I went to college I saw that more and more young people were taking advantage of the opportunities this country offers. Education is a basis for your whole life—you only realize that when you don’t have that chance, like people in Latin American countries, or like my parents. They appreciated what it meant to be able to go to school and made that route possible for me. I am eternally grateful to them for that.

“While I was studying, I wanted to pass this positive attitude toward life on to other Turkish young people and their parents, because unfortunately not all parents are like my parents—I was shocked to realize that.

“I worked with other Turkish students and we not only helped young people with problems in school, we also spoke to their parents—to show them that their children could do more with their lives than going to work at 16, generally without any vocational training. We Turkish students were an example of how things could be different. Whether you go to college or get vocational training after graduating from school, you have to take advantage of the opportunities. It is a lot of work and it’s not always easy, but it’s worth it!”

## AB 2b Yelena's Story

Introduction: Read the following text and take notes. Afterwards, discuss it in your group. In particular, elaborate on the reasons for immigration and the difficulties associated with it. Then present "your" story on a poster containing significant biographical data and quotes from the text. You may decorate your poster with drawings and photos.

"I emigrated to Germany from St. Petersburg, formerly Leningrad in the Soviet Union, as a Jewish emigrant. My story of migration is different from the dramatic or terrible events that war refugees or some asylum seekers, for example, experienced before they found a secure refuge in Germany. But that doesn't mean that I was spared migration-specific problems and the depression associated with them. I have been in Germany for 13 years, and in that period I've experienced low points as well as high points.

"I come from a Jewish family that, like many Jews in the former Soviet Union, was quite removed from Judaism in the religious sense, but at the same time constantly felt the state anti-Semitism.

"So, for example, I couldn't study at the college I wanted to study at, because I was a Jew. There were special admissions requirements for Jews. You couldn't find that anywhere in writing, but everyone knew it. At the respected colleges and universities, there was an admissions norm: of all the students, no more than 2% could be Jews.

"Jews had to be twice as good as everyone else to achieve anything. Everyone knew that, for example, many, or at least some Jews worked in the scientific departments of various organizations. Regardless of their achievements or organizational talents, the heads of the departments were always Russians, Ukrainians, etc. The whole situation was considered 'normal' at the time. In the early 1990s, the general situation got worse. Perestroika quickly ruined or paralyzed the old economic structures. But no new ones had yet been created. Democratic reforms and the gain in freedom and pluralism, on the one hand, and chaotic conditions on the other led criminal structures to blossom rapidly.

"The situation peaked when people began talking about Jewish pogroms in Leningrad. We couldn't believe it. I knew that such things had happened in Czarist Russia. But today, in our time, in our country! That was our country, which had defeated the Nazis. And we were children of this country—stepchildren. It was in this period that we decided to leave. But where to? At first, Israel was at the heart of our discussion. Many relatives of ours had emigrated to Israel. The main argument against Israel was the climate. Because of my father's health, we couldn't go there. Then we found out that 'Russian' Jews were being taken in by Germany. First my parents left; my husband and I followed seven months later.

“Before our departure we had no precise ideas or plans regarding our life in Germany. I did not know German, only English. My mother spoke German. At the beginning, when we lived in the dormitory, my mother always went with us.

“We spent a year in the dormitory. There I completed my first language course and three days later had my baby. For three months, the three of us lived in a room 10 square meters large, until we rented an apartment in Hanover, not without difficulty. At the time we were getting welfare. My degree as an economist, earned with honors in St. Petersburg, was not recognized here, so that I had to plan my career path again. Of course I wanted to go to the university again. As a foreigner, an admissions requirement for studying was to pass the required German test. My son was one and a half years old.

“After a three-month internship, I began to study social work.

“That wasn’t easy at all, especially given my language abilities. Despite all the German tests I had passed, sometimes I could not understand at all what the professors and my fellow students were talking about.

“At the time, I thought, I have to integrate—a little more, a bit more, and I’ll be just like the others. But my environment always made it clear to me, directly or indirectly, that I was a foreigner. From being a Jew there, I became a foreigner here, once again segregated out from the rest. As always, I graduated the specialized college with top grades. After a *Berufsanerkennung* year, I found a job as a social worker at the Jewish Community.

“Am I an example of ‘successful’ integration? I only arrived at my point of view once I stopped being ‘more Catholic than the Pope.’ (I don’t know a Jewish equivalent of that saying). I respect all the parts of my patchwork biography. Over-adaptation in the early phases of immigration can lead to rejection of integration. I am what I am. I like my profession and I accept my accent. I help my clients who seek my advice. For me it’s not just about helping with purely social issues. Sometimes it’s a type of coaching, life counseling, psychosocial counseling, counseling that helps people find their own point of view, activate their own strengths and resources. The statement ‘You speak such good German’ is no longer a compliment to me, but a sign of exclusion. During the World Cup I cheered for the German team. But at the same time, sometimes I listen to Russian music and watch Russian DVDs. I read “*Sacrilege*” by Dan Brown in Russian. My child, born in Germany, speaks Russian and knows that he’s Jewish. Aside from the fact that his grandmother and grandfather were Holocaust victims, he doesn’t see Germany as a country of perpetrators.”

## **AB 2c Ngyen Thi Thuy and Duc Thi Thao's Story**

Introduction: Read the following text and take notes. Afterwards, discuss it in your group. In particular, elaborate the reasons for immigration as well as the difficulties associated with it. Then present "your" story on a poster containing the significant biographical data and quotes from the text. You may decorate your poster with drawings and photos.

Duc Thi Thao: "We came to East Germany from Vietnam in 1987 as contract workers. I never thought of returning voluntarily to Vietnam. But after the government treaty between the German government and Vietnam, I don't know what will happen. My wife and I are among the contract workers who stayed here in Germany. But we did not get an extension of our residency permits and can be deported at any time."

Ngyen Thi Thuy: "It was and is very desirable in Vietnam to work in Europe. At the time, East Germany was at the top of the wish list for employment in the European socialist countries. Before we left Vietnam, we had a three-day preparatory phase in Hanoi. Mainly we were told that we should work hard and go to East Germany as representatives of Vietnam. But we got no concrete information about conditions in East Germany. Also there was hardly any information in the Vietnamese press about other countries."

Duc Thi Thao: "After arriving in Berlin we were given new clothes, and a few days later assigned to our workplace. Like most of the contract workers, we worked in the textile industry. Ngyen went to the VEB Progress as a seamstress. She worked in shifts for an average wage of 600 to 800 Marks per month. As a presser in the same shop, I was one of the higher earners. I received 1,000 to 1,200 Marks. When the shift was over, we mostly stayed in the dormitory. We all lived there separated by gender. We had around 5 square meters per person, and were no more than 4 people to a room. We got dormitory IDs that were checked at the entrance, and when we left the dormitory we had to give them our keys. Visitors had to leave by 10 pm and give their personal information at the entrance. We had very little privacy. Many of us had a hard time with that. We had little chance to meet Germans. In the first two months, there was a language course, but it was only enough for minimal knowledge of German. And the Germans were expressly discouraged from having contact with us. If they did nevertheless, they were monitored. Our rooms were regularly inspected by group leaders, who were caretakers and minders at the same time."

Ngyen Thi Thuy: "During the East German period, it just wasn't possible to be pregnant. The condition was that a woman was not supposed to get pregnant. I was given birth-control pills on my very first day in Germany. Aside from that, my husband and I did not even have our own room or even a room with some privacy. My daughter was born in 1990, my son in 1992. A year after his birth, we moved out of the dormitory. The rent had risen to 400 Marks for a single room. Aside from which, the walls were very thin. It was too loud for the children in the dormitory. Our daughter goes to preschool here. She understands Vietnamese very well, but only speaks German at home. She refuses to speak Vietnamese."

Our son goes to the government day care center. We don't get any child subsidies from the government, because we only have a residency authorization, not a residency permit."

Duc Thi Thao: "We found out about the fall of the Berlin Wall from our master in the shop. A lot was unclear to us, and it became difficult to organize daily life. The translators just took off. Because we weren't allowed to have bank accounts, currency exchange was also difficult. Our factory was restructured, and at the end of 1990 many contract workers were let go. In early 1991 we got our dismissal papers, although our five-year contract would not have run out until mid-1992. I didn't find out until three months after my termination that I was supposed to register with the unemployment office because I had a right to unemployment. We had serious money problems. For us, selling cigarettes was the only chance to survive. We didn't know that selling things on the street was illegal. We didn't know the new laws, and many Germans bought cigarettes on the street. In East Germany we never had contact with the police. And suddenly our IDs were constantly being checked."

Ngyen Thi Thuy: "In that period, the cigarette trade in our dormitory was organized by Polish traders who brought the cigarettes to the dormitory and sold them to us. When I was arrested for the second time in 1991 for selling cigarettes, I gave it up."

Duc Thi Thao: "One morning two police officers rang our bell. They said they wanted to talk to me and I should come with them. They didn't say that they wanted to deport me. They placed me in police custody and told me that I was going to be put on the last flight to Hanoi that evening. Ultimately I was able to stop my deportation by banging my head repeatedly against the radiator in the cell. Because of that, I was unfit to travel and was freed the next day."

Ngyen Thi Thuy: "We don't want to go back to Vietnam. We got to know a much more liberal and democratic society here. You can't compare that with Vietnam. In Vietnam the official unemployment rate is 25%. We certainly wouldn't find work."

Duc Thi Thao: "Our life here is insecure. But life underground with two children is impossible. What happens if one of us gets sick? The children have to go to school. We need a permit to sell things legally on the street. Maybe it's easier to work illegally in other European countries, but in Germany I can't imagine it. In East Germany we were sure of having work and a place to live. Now we have to fight for both. I would like to work in a factory again. But in the last four years I've been offered only one position, as a presser. But then I didn't get the job."

(Source: Heike Kleffner, "Nicht mehr gebraucht. Die Vietnamesischen DDR-Vertragsarbeiterinnen in der BRD," in BUKO-Arbeitsschwerpunkt Rassismus und Flüchtlingspolitik (ed.) (1995): "Zwischen Flucht und Arbeit. Neue Migration und Legalisierungsdebatte," Hamburg, pp. 133-145. The interview took place in 1995).

## AB 2d The Story of Taaraa

Introduction: Read the following text and take notes. Afterwards, discuss it in your group. In particular, elaborate the reasons for immigration as well as the difficulties associated with it. Then present “your” story on a poster containing the significant biographical data and quotes from the text. You may decorate your poster with drawings and photos.

“In 1979, the Shah was overthrown by Khomeini. I was 17 years old and, like everyone else, was politically active against the Shah’s regime. Khomeini took power with false promises such as freedom of expression for all, democracy, equality, etc.

“When many supporters of the Shah and army officers were executed without trial shortly after he took power, I should have been able to see what awaited all of us. But my generation was too young to recognize this, and the generation before me was either too dumb or too opportunistic.

“I was active in a Marxist organization when the war against Iraq began. The young people went to war in droves. No one thought he could die in a war. Everyone thought that only the enemy dies.

“My brother, who was 15 years old at the time, also went to war. He had become a real Islamist. But first he denounced me for being a Marxist. I had to hide. During the war the government also began to execute its opponents *en masse*. Many of my friends were arrested and executed. I escaped arrest twice.

“A year later, my brother ended up a prisoner of war. I was able to rent a room with a fake ID. That took some of the pressure off. But the fear of arrest was still great. My friends advised me to leave the country. But I still hoped that the regime would soon be overthrown.

“In 1986 I realized that the political situation was only getting worse. And if the war ended and my brother came home, my situation would get worse. So with a heavy heart, I decided to leave Iran.

“Because I didn’t have enough money to pay someone to smuggle me out, I took the risk of leaving the country legally. I got a transit visa for East Berlin and took the bus to Istanbul (there was no flight from Tehran to East Berlin). The whole way to the border I was shaking, because I was afraid of being arrested at the border. I spent a week in Turkey before getting a flight to East Berlin.

“When I arrived in West Berlin, I applied for asylum, and only then could I breathe freely. The asylum process took two years. I lived in a home for asylum seekers in Saarbrücken.

“Because I had no hope of returning to my homeland, I tried to build a life here: learn the language, make German friends, just live with the Germans.

“My studies in Iran were not recognized, because I couldn’t bring enough proof with me. So I had to start more or less from the beginning. But that didn’t bother me; I was young and full of energy. It didn’t bother me, either, that wherever I went, every German asked, ‘Where are you from?’

“Over the years, and the more I learned the German language, the more I realized that for Germans I remained a stranger—a dark-haired person.

“Before September 11, 2001, I was always a foreigner, and only after that, a Muslim—even though almost my whole life I had been, and am, active against Islam and the Islamists.

“The older I get, the less energy I have to constantly explain myself. To constantly explain that I’m an individual and not a mass. I can’t be identified with my hair color or with a religion that I’ve rejected since my youth.

“The longer I live here, the less Iranian I am—I’ve lived half my life in Germany.

“Life with the Germans is not easy, since they have ready-made pigeonholes for ‘others.’

“Recently, a German friend whom I’ve known for 10 years said to me: ‘The fact is that you women from Islamic countries are less emancipated.’

“She said this despite the fact that I helped her get out of a violent relationship. I found a counseling center for her. I went with her. I stood by her until she could stand on her own two feet. And after all that, she thinks I am less emancipated than she is, just because I come from an Islamic country.

“I just smiled bitterly. What should I answer? There’s no point in discussing it.

“If you ask me today where my home is, I say Cologne. That’s where I feel at home, and not in any other city in Germany.”

## **AB 2e Ben's Story**

Introduction: Read the following text and take notes. Afterwards, discuss it in your group. In particular, elaborate the reasons for immigration as well as the difficulties associated with it. Then present "your" story on a poster containing the significant biographical data and quotes from the text. You may decorate your poster with drawings and photos.

"My name is Ben, I'm 30 years old and I come from Cameroon. My country is in Central Africa, north of the equator. It has some 16 million residents. Over 240 languages are spoken in Cameroon, but French and English are the official ones. Cameroon experienced three different forms of colonialism: first German colonialism, which continued from 1884 to the end of World War I in 1918. That was followed by the period of Franco-British colonialism, during which the country was divided into two zones of influence. The two zones became independent in 1960 and 1961 and then ultimately in 1972 joined together to form one state; the United Republic of Cameroon. After 22 years in power, Ahmadou Ahidjo passed the leadership in 1982 to his prime minister, Paul Biya. Biya still governs.

"When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the winds of democracy also began to blow on the African continent. The people of Cameroon who breathed them demanded a little more freedom—for example freedom of expression, the chance to vote for different parties, and protection of human rights. In the early 1990s, these demands for democracy gained strength, young Cameroonians took to the streets, and the university became a field in the battle for change. Classes were boycotted, the campus was occupied by the army, and people who took part in demonstrations were arbitrarily arrested and tortured.

"I was arrested three times. The first time was during a demonstration in Yaoundé, the political center of the country. With about twenty other young people, I was released because of my age—I was only 17—after they had served us what they called 'coffee on the house': beatings by the police. A second time I was apprehended by a patrol, along with comrades from the opposition party SDF (Social Democratic Front), while we were distributing flyers in the city. I was arrested, but escaped when the police station was attacked with stones the next morning by neighborhood residents.

"When things quieted down months later, I returned to Yaoundé to complete my schooling and go to college. In 1997, before the presidential elections, there were once again campaigns in the country for free and transparent elections. And once again, martial law was imposed in the regions where the opposition dominated. Once again, there was brutal repression and arrests, and once again I found myself in the hands of the police. I was lucky to be able to escape after two weeks and three days. Now I was wanted for breaking out of jail, disturbing the peace and inciting revolt. I had only one alternative: to leave.

"At the end of November 1997 I arrived in Germany, where I applied for asylum at an absorption facility in Düsseldorf. I was immediately photographed and my fingerprints were taken. I spent one night in a boat where refugees were housed, and the next morning I

received a paper that I had to submit at my next destination: the absorption facility in Eisenhüttenstadt in Brandenburg. I was given a map, a train ticket, and a small bag of food and, after being brought to the train station, had to figure out how to get there.

“In Eisenhüttenstadt I was photographed again and had to fill out documents and sign. I received a chip card with which I could eat in the canteen and which I needed to enter and leave the facility. In addition, I received an ID card with a photo that contained my residency permit for Germany. It only allowed me to be in Eisenhüttenstadt.

“A week later I was asked for my reasons for fleeing, and three weeks later I was transferred to Hohenleipisch, some three hours by train from Berlin. My future home was an old East German army barracks, surrounded by mines and located in the middle of the forest. Here there were no neighbors. Three other asylum seekers already lived in my room. Two of them were also from Cameroon and had been living in this place for two or three years already. That’s how I met Féfé, who told me that he had to pay a fine of 285 DM because he was caught in Berlin by the police. That was my first encounter with the infamous law of residency that applies to asylum seekers in Germany.

“We lived four to a room of about 16 square meters, equipped with a small refrigerator. The toilets, the showers and the kitchen had to be shared with others. After only a week I noticed that many asylum seekers were depressed, nervous and aggressive. Many of them were drunk all day long. Here I started to really think about the state of human rights in the world. If people are so badly treated even in a democratic country like Germany, do human rights really apply to everyone? Or only to certain groups of people, or even only to a certain ‘race’? I asked myself these questions when I met Mr. K from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is an asylum seeker and has lived here with his family for six years. His 16-year-old son doesn’t go to school anymore, because he was told he only has a right to education until the age of 13. Since they arrived, Mr. K and his wife have only received vouchers for around 160 Euros and some 40 Euros in cash each month. You can only buy certain things with the vouchers, and only in certain stores. You can’t get beer, cigarettes, clothes or shoes. And you can’t pay your lawyer, who costs at least 25 Euros a month, with vouchers.

“As a rule, all the asylum seekers’ efforts are in vain. Mr. K was ultimately deported with his family. Like all other asylum seekers, I am in the same situation as Mr. K: we have no rights, no prospects, other than deportation. And that will come, whether we want it to or not.”

### **AB 3 Equal Opportunity?**

Introduction: Put yourself in the position of the person whose story you analyzed. In your small group, consider whether you can now answer the following questions with “yes,” in which case you may take one step forward, or if you have to answer “no,” in which case you must stay where you are. Explain and record your steps. Think about whether you have an idea of how to improve your situation. If everyone in the group finds this solution achievable, take one step forward. There can also be different opinions within the group. In this case, you can each position yourselves differently.

If you have additional questions, ask the other groups. At the end, compare your position(s) on the career ladder with those of the other small groups.

At the end, discuss the question of equal opportunity in a classroom discussion.

Can you . . .

- take out car insurance?
- take a vacation in your homeland?
- plan five years in advance?
- practice your religion openly, without problems?
- go to a disco without problems?
- feel safe on the street after dark?
- vote in the next local elections?
- expect fair treatment by the police when reporting a theft?
- assume that you or your children will not be discriminated against in school?
- have average chances when applying for a job?
- freely choose a job within the EU?
- assume that your coworkers will accept you as their superior?
- freely choose where to live?

- be sure not to hear such things as: "You speak good German," "You're not like the others," "Is this also how they do things where you come from?"

Further questions: