



**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**Refugee Education in Germany: A Document Analysis**

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### **A Message from the Research Team**

This document analysis is a synthesis in English of documents written in Germany on the topic of refugee education. With the large influx of asylum seekers to Germany during the years of 2015-2017, organizations that are a part of or associated with German educational authorities responded by creating documents for teachers or volunteer teachers working with school-aged children. An analysis of these documents sheds light on the discourses in Germany at the time.

As a research team, we saw value in compiling a list of documents easily available online and analyse the nature and messages of these documents for an English-reading audience. The data collection was through online searches done in Hamburg, Germany during three research visits: June 2017, June 2018, and May 2019. Since Google searches are localized, the documents here represent a particular time and place, but all are still available and accessible at the time of writing.

We would like to thank the Research Office of Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary for providing us the means to complete this document analysis with a WSE Research Fellowship Outbound Grant. We also offer our gratitude to those colleagues who have supported us in this work and offered us insights during our research.

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## **Executive Summary**

### **I. Language Learning**

- Germany is linguistically diverse and as a result, German classrooms are too.
- Newly arrived children begin in preparation classes and transition to mainstream classrooms after 1-2 years.
- Both every day and educational communication occur in classrooms.
- Everyday language includes learning about school routines and how to navigate the neighborhood they live in.
- Teachers scaffold the learning of academic language for educational communication.
- An inability to express oneself with precision in the language of instruction can contribute to a lack of understanding of concepts in content class such as Mathematics.
- Content class teachers benefit from an awareness and use of German as a second language strategies in their instruction of specific subjects.

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**II. Intercultural communication**

- In some schools in Germany, as many as 30 different languages are spoken.
- Acknowledgement of the value of a student's home language is a valuable first step in intercultural learning.
- Growing up in a home that values, frequently speaks, and has a good foundation for their (non-German) home language leads to a strong foundation in literacy.
- Challenges to a child's learning and level of education arise when living under adverse social conditions.
- The use of the home language in language in childcare, schools and other educational settings should be valued and supported.
- Clear and ongoing communication with parents can help teachers bridge the large variation of educational expectations among parents with a migration background.
- Strategies within schools include providing a designated facilitator to help parents understand the new system and find supports in the community.

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### **III. Trauma-informed Pedagogy**

- Flight from one's country can lead to different negative consequences: traumatic experiences, sorrow, culture shock, speechlessness, poverty, or disrupted family systems.
- Refugee children need understanding and compassion; a sense of being welcome and valued; security; stability; and structure.
- Refugee students need to be prepared for both the language and the school system of Germany.
- Everyday rules and rituals within a school setting provide these individuals with a sense of structure and stability.
- In addition to supporting their school achievement, the child needs to be supported holistically through a partnership between schools and parents.
- Artistic expression can provide refugee children and youth a means to express and share emotions: wishes, hopes and dreams for themselves to support a more positive outlook on life.

## Terms of Reference

This report provides a document analysis of online documents relating to refugee education across the following themes:

1. Language learning –the learning of German as a Second Language (*Deutsch als Zweitsprache – DaZ*)
2. Intercultural communication – teachers learning about the home cultures of the refugee students or students learning about German culture
3. Trauma-informed pedagogy – how teaching can support students who have been through trauma through the content or structure of lessons

The document analysis is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. The table below summarizes which themes were touched on in each document:

Documents by hyperlinked title [translated title]	Language learning	Intercultural communication	Trauma-informed pedagogy
<a href="#">Bildungsplan Grundschule: Deutsch als Zweitsprache</a> [Educational plan elementary school: German as a Second Language]	x		
<a href="#">Impulse für den Mathematikunterricht in der Grundschule</a> [Inspiration for mathematics instruction in elementary school]	x		
<a href="#">Deutsch als Zweitsprache im Fachunterricht</a> [German as a Second Language in content classes]	x		
<a href="#">Sprachsensibler Unterricht in sprachlich heterogenen Klassen – Hinweise und Anregungen</a> [Language awareness in linguistically heterogeneous classes]	x		
<a href="#">Sprachförderung: Unterrichtseinheiten für die Beschulung der Kinder und Jugendlichen in der ZEA</a> [Language support: Lesson units for children and youth enrolled in Primary Refugee Admitting Facilities]	x		
<a href="#">Sprachliche und kulturelle Vielfalt an bayerischen Schulen</a> [Linguistic and cultural diversity in Bavarian schools].	x	x	

<a href="#"><u>Forschungsschwerpunkt – Sprachliche Bildung und Mehrsprachigkeit 2013-2017: Projektvorstellungen und Zwischenergebnisse.</u></a> [Research focus - Literacy education and multilingualism; project introductions and preliminary results]	x	x	
<a href="#"><u>Bildungs- und Erziehungspartnerschaft zwischen Schule und Eltern mit Migrationshintergrund</u></a> [Educational partnerships between schools and immigrant parents].	x	x	
<a href="#"><u>Interkulturelle Bildung – Unterstützende Angebote für die Schule</u></a> [Intercultural education – supports for schools]	x	x	
<a href="#"><u>Willkommenskultur: Umgang mit Flüchtlingskindern in der ersten Woche ihres Schulbesuchs.</u></a> [The welcoming culture: Interactions with refugee children during the first weeks of school]	x	x	x
<a href="#"><u>Übergangsklassen – Herausforderung und Perspektiven</u></a> [Transitional classes – challenges and perspectives].	x	x	x
<a href="#"><u>Neu zugewanderte Kinder und Jugendliche in bayerischen Schulen</u></a> [Newly-immigrated children and youth in Bavarian schools]	x	x	x
<a href="#"><u>Flüchtlingskinder und jugendliche Flüchtlinge: in Schulen, Kindergärten und Freizeiteinrichtungen.</u></a> [Refugee children and youth: in schools, daycares and leisure settings]	x	x	x
Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts (2015). <a href="#"><u>Children for Tomorrow annual newsletter.</u></a>	x	x	x
Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts (2016). <a href="#"><u>Children for Tomorrow annual newsletter.</u></a>	x	x	x
Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts (2017). <a href="#"><u>Children for Tomorrow annual newsletter.</u></a>	x	x	x



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## Background on refugee education in Germany

Germany has historically not been considered a land of immigration. As such, immigration policy differs considerably from that of countries like Canada. There is no set quota for immigrants (*Immigranten*), refugees (*Flüchtlinge* or *Geflüchtete*) and asylum seekers (*Asylbewerber*). Those whom we refer to as Syrian refugees, 980 000 in 2015, were actually asylum seekers who arrived in Germany with no guarantee of staying. Upon arrival, the application process for refugee status began, but this status is considered temporary, must be renewed regularly, and is not a pathway to immigration.

Germany has a law that children must go to school (*Schulpflicht*). Since education is the responsibility of the states (*Länder*), the ministry of education in each decides when this compulsory schooling must begin, whether upon arrival or within a given amount of time. In some cases, classes were set up in the Primary Refugee Admitting Facilities (*Zentrale Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen*). Although families with children arrive with no guarantee of staying, schooling for these children usually involves separate classes for 1-2 years before integration. Children are placed in preparation classes (*Internationale Vorbereitungsklassen*), special German as a Second Language (DAZ) classes to get them to the level of German that is equivalent to A2 or B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), although they are not tested at the end. Upon completion of one year, they are moved to regular classes (*Regelklassen*) after a logical break such as school holidays. There are a few exceptions. Children who are illiterate (*analphabet*) in their home language may first enter a literacy class (*Basisklasse*) for one year, prior to their year in the preparation class, leading to two years of separate schooling before integration into the regular system. If children are at the age where they would “age out” before completing their schooling in a regular class, teenagers who would turn 18 shortly after they are done with the preparation class, are given two years of preparation classes with an end goal of a school leaving certificate (*Schulabschluss*). This is an important consideration since many children have limited or interrupted schooling (SLIFE in English; *unterbrochene Schulbahn* in German). As a result of this latter situation, for the first time, some academic high schools (*Gymnasien*) have preparation classes housed within them.

While the above description fits generally for the situation in Germany, it most closely resembles the situation in Hamburg, Germany, the city-state in which the research for this document analysis was conducted. Generalizations are difficult to make, so researchers need to keep that in mind when drawing from this description.

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## **I. Language Learning**

In this section, we present documents that primarily focus on messages regarding language learning. In this context, the language is German, which for almost all students is a second or additional language. In some cases, students will have begun to learn other languages while en route to Germany, but once in Germany, German is the language of instruction in the schools.

- Germany is linguistically diverse and as a result, are German classrooms too.
- Newly arrived children begin in preparation classes and transition to mainstream classrooms after 1-2 years.
- Both every day and educational communication occur in classrooms.
- Everyday language includes learning about school routines and how to navigate the neighborhood they live in.
- Teachers scaffold the learning of academic language for educational communication.
- An inability to express oneself with precision in the language of instruction can contribute to a lack of understanding of concepts in content class such as Mathematics.
- Content class teachers benefit from an awareness and use of German as a second language strategies in their instruction of specific subjects.

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*Bildungsplan Grundschule. Deutsch als Zweitsprache in Vorbereitungsklassen.*  
[Educational plan elementary school: German as a Second Language]. (2011).  
Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung. <https://www.hamburg.de>

This manual provides a description of duties and responsibilities of elementary schools in Hamburg (*Grundschulen*). The main goal of elementary school is to lead students to autonomous learning and provide a safe haven and place of ‘togetherness’. Two terms framing the learning experiences in the elementary setting are: individualization and cooperation. The text breaks down the acquisition of language competencies in learning. It focusses on individualized learning experiences, grammar, articulation, writing, linguistic and intercultural competencies, and general classroom materials. Scaffolding of discipline-specific vocabulary and language knowledge takes place in all subject areas, while providing students of languages other than German with materials and strategies to successfully participate in class. If students have not achieved outlined learning goals by grade 3 or 4, remedial efforts (*Fördermaßnahmen*) are put into place.

Students learning German as a Second Language (*Deutsch als Zweitsprache*) – with minimal or no prior knowledge of the language – are enrolled in preparation classes (*Vorbereitungsklassen*). Within these classes, students engage in language learning that is initially geared towards everyday language encounters, strengthening their social and self-competence. In the next phase of language learning, students begin to express their own ideas and needs in German, voice and argue own opinions and comment on simple texts. After participating in these prep-classes, students are moved to mainstream classes (*Regelklassen*) for another year of acclimatization.

Hering, B. (Ed.). (2016). *Impulse für den Mathematikunterricht in der Grundschule.*  
[Inspiration for mathematics instruction in elementary school] <http://epub.sub.uni-hamburg.de/epub/volltexte/2018/75215/>

This document, aimed at mathematics teachers, examines the topic of subject-specific language in the elementary math classroom. The key message is that an inability to understand or express oneself with precision in the language of instruction can contribute to a lack of understanding of the mathematical concepts being learned. The document includes sample lesson plans with sentence frames and key vocabulary. It also provides pedagogical commentary for teachers, and a lexicon of math terms in German, Russian, Turkish, and Arabic. Additionally, there is a list of literature and links to other documents pertaining either to German as a Second Language or language in mathematics. The main points are reinforced through the provision of

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exemplars from children. Although it does not address refugee children specifically, it does make specific reference to children with a migration background.

Lehrer, H., Lux, I., & Vogl, I. (2014). *Deutsch als Zweitsprache im Fachunterricht* [German as a Second Language in content classes] (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 4).  
[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/14408/schiff\\_ausgabe4\\_rz\\_web\\_140210.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/14408/schiff_ausgabe4_rz_web_140210.pdf)

This document is # 4 in in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). It is aimed to provide subject or content class teachers in German schools with knowledge about German as a Second Language teaching to assist them in teaching of students whose first language is not German. The key message is that there are two very different ways of communicating and interacting with language: everyday communication and educational communication. It is the teacher's job to scaffold the latter. Everyday communication is often held in incomplete sentences, includes many filler words (*Füllwörter*) and grammatical errors, jumps in thoughts (mental leaps), imprecise use of words, and circular argumentation. Attributes of educational communication (*Bildungsbereich*) are complex and complete sentences, few filler words, precise use and choice of words, minimal repetition, and linear argumentation. Teachers need to exhibit patience and react calmly to learners' struggles with educational communication. Planning needs to be appropriate and according to scaffolded incremental steps. Academic learning takes place within a bath of language (*Sprachbad*) (p.3), in which the teachers differentiate instruction and create supportive, engaging activities for students. These activities involve ample opportunities to listen to rich, diverse language, play with language and practice speaking.

Lehrer, H., Lux, I., Brinster, O., Ummenhofer, I., & Amm, M. (2018). *Sprachsensibler Unterricht in sprachlich heterogenen Klassen – Hinweise und Anregungen* [Language awareness in linguistically heterogeneous classes] (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 8).  
[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/20446/schiff\\_8\\_internet.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/20446/schiff_8_internet.pdf)

This document is #8 in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). Similar to #4, it focuses on strategies for German as a Second Language instruction, but for a more general audience that includes language and content teachers at all levels of German schooling. It begins by establishing the nature of linguistic diversity in Germany and German classrooms. It provides concrete pedagogical strategies that acknowledge the linguistic identity of all learners and allow

them to draw upon their diverse linguistic resources. It also emphasizes the need for teachers to scaffold academic language instruction for linguistically diverse students.

*Sprachförderung: Unterrichtseinheiten für die Beschulung der Kinder und Jugendlichen in den Zentralen Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen (ZEA)* [Language support: Lesson plans for children and youth enrolled in Primary Refugee Admitting Facilities]. (2015). Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung. <https://li.hamburg.de>

This handbook is a resource for teachers of German as a Second Language in Primary Refugee Admitting Facilities (*Zentrale Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen – ZEA*). These teachers, sometimes volunteers, could use these lessons to teach German refugee students new to the Hamburg area. The document set out general goals of helping the students with living in Hamburg, working in groups, and eventual integration into school. Much of the document is taken up with thematic lesson plans on:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• me and my family</li> <li>• in the classroom</li> <li>• food (eating and drinking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clothing</li> <li>• hobbies/ leisure activities</li> <li>• the body, being ill/ sick</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emotions</li> <li>• time</li> <li>• weather</li> <li>• orientation to Hamburg</li> </ul>
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For each of these topics, an ‘important vocabulary’ list is provided, as well as some smaller exercises and suggested changes to be made to the room/ working space (e.g., labeling objects within classroom, utilizing colour coding, dialogues).

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## II. Intercultural Communication

In this section we present documents that examine intercultural communication. Many of these also cover language learning in their messages as well.

- In some schools in Germany, as many as 30 different languages are spoken.
- Acknowledgement of the value of a student's home language is a valuable first step in intercultural learning.
- Growing up in a home that values, frequently speaks, and has a good foundation for their (non-German) home language leads to a strong foundation in literacy.
- Challenges to a child's learning and level of education arise when living under adverse social conditions.
- The use of the home language in language in childcare, schools and other educational settings should be valued and supported.
- Clear and ongoing communication with parents can help teachers bridge the large variation of educational expectations among parents with a migration background.
- Strategies within schools include providing a designated facilitator to help parents understand the new system and find supports in the community.

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Amm, M., Heyde, G., Hurnaus, E., Klowat, A., Lehrer, H., & Zirngibl, M. (n.d.).  
*Sprachliche und kulturelle Vielfalt an bayerischen Schulen* [Linguistic and cultural diversity in Bavarian schools]. (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 1).  
[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/14401/schiff\\_web1.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/14401/schiff_web1.pdf)

This document is #1 in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). The audience is educators working with immigrant children and their families. Recent statistics indicate that almost a fifth of the German population has a migration background (*Migrationshintergrund*) and in many schools more than 30 languages are spoken by students. A key factor to success in school and social integration is being competent in the societal language, so students need early support in language acquisition, while also valuing their home language. Diversity has its challenges but can also be seen as a great opportunity for intercultural education, which involves mutual respect (*Anerkennung*). Intercultural competence means having a chance to learn about and understand that there are different ways to approach solving problems and various ways to communicate. Numerous concrete examples of ways to support culturally and linguistically diverse students are provided in the document.

Forschungsschwerpunkt Sprachliche Bildung und Mehrsprachigkeit. (2017).  
*Projektvorstellungen und Zwischenergebnisse*. [Project description and preliminary results]. [http://www.kombi-hamburg.de/pdf/KoMBi\\_Broschuere\\_final.pdf](http://www.kombi-hamburg.de/pdf/KoMBi_Broschuere_final.pdf)

This booklet is geared towards staff working directly with children with migration background in settings such as childcare or schools. The reported study looked at children with a Turkish, Russian, or Polish background, so while it did not focus on refugees, the reader gains an understanding of the learning processes of multilingual children. The preliminary results reveal no negative impact on the literary competencies of the child when children grow up in a home that values, frequently speaks, and has a good foundation for their (non-German) home language. However, living under adverse social conditions influences a child's learning and level of education. Support for multilingualism in all subject areas through providing discipline specific vocabulary in the language of the child leads to increasing performance. Children are benefited when their home language is appreciated and valued, rather than forbidden, in childcare, schools and other educational settings.

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Kripp-Renz, C., Lehrer, H., Lux, I., & Vogl, I. (2013). *Bildungs- und Erziehungspartnerschaft zwischen Schule und Eltern mit Migrationshintergrund* [Educational partnerships between schools and immigrant parents]. (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 3).  
[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/14403/schiff\\_ausgabe3\\_web.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/14403/schiff_ausgabe3_web.pdf)

This document is #3 in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). This text focuses on the importance of parent involvement within the school community and parent board. Immigrant parents often feel insecure towards teachers of their children, trust them less, are less likely to cooperate/ include themselves, and get into contact less with the school and staff. Most immigrant parents are not involved with parent councils, largely due to language barriers, but also to a lack of representation and recruitment by the council. A trusting cooperation between the family home and school is a prerequisite for students' success in school. Visuals can be used to greet families from different backgrounds and invite their active participation. Translators and displaying work of students with different ideas, cultures, languages, etc. is also encouraging. Teachers need to be aware of a large variation of educational expectations among parents with a migration background. Clear and ongoing communication with parents can help break down barriers.

Lehrer, L. H., & Lux, L. I. (2015). *Interkulturelle Bildung – Unterstützende Angebote für die Schule* [Intercultural education – supports for schools] (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 6).  
[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/17396/schiff\\_ausgabe\\_6\\_interaktiv.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/17396/schiff_ausgabe_6_interaktiv.pdf)

This document is #6 in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). The audience is teachers and other educational staff working with refugee and migrant students new to the school or school system. With an influx of large numbers of refugee students, many schools did not have specialized teachers with a German as a Second Language qualification. This lack of specialized teachers meant that it was even more important for all staff to work together for the successful integration of these students. One strategy is that of integration facilitators (*Integrationslotsen*), individuals in charge of helping parents understand the local schooling system and expectations as well as find supports for families where and when needed. Some specific programs and classes in Bavaria were identified, which included Islamic religious lessons at schools, intercultural engagement at middle schools, and a network of teachers with a migration background.



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### **III. Trauma-informed pedagogy**

In this section, we highlight documents that have aspects of trauma-informed pedagogy as their primary focus. While trauma-informed pedagogy was not a common term in the documents, messages about how teaching can be structured to be sensitive to the learning needs of children who come with trauma are included.

- Flight from one's country can lead to different negative consequences: traumatic experiences, sorrow, culture shock, speechlessness, poverty or disrupted family systems.
- Refugee children need understanding and compassion; a sense of being welcome and valued; security; stability; and structure.
- Refugee students need to be prepared for both the language and the school system of Germany.
- Everyday rules and rituals within a school setting provide these individuals with a sense of structure and stability.
- In addition to supporting their school achievement, the child needs to be supported holistically through a partnership between schools and parents.
- Artistic expression can provide refugee children and youth a means to express and share emotions: wishes, hopes and dreams for themselves to support a more positive outlook on life.

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Arslan, M., Bauer, D., Dourakaki, V., Görgner, M., Kaynak, I., Lederer-Majdalan, M., ... Wünsche, S. (n.d.). *Willkommenskultur: Umgang mit Flüchtlingskindern in der ersten Woche ihres Schulbesuchs*. München.

<https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/16080/willkommenskultur.pdf>

This document is designed as a collection of practical tips for welcoming refugee students in their first days of school. It contains information about how to make the school environment appear friendly and welcoming, how to brief all staff, greeting to teach and learn, and icebreaker activities to use. Within the school, a mentorship or buddy system is encouraged. A welcome packet of useful introductory school materials is suggested. Within the classroom, there are numerous roles that classmates can play in making new students feel welcome. The document concludes with brief information about trauma-informed pedagogy and an extensive list of literature and resources.

Lehrer, H., & Lux, I. (2014). *Übergangsklassen – Herausforderung und Perspektiven* [Transitional classes – challenges and perspectives]. (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 5).

[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/15713/schiff\\_ausgabe\\_5\\_interaktiv.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/15713/schiff_ausgabe_5_interaktiv.pdf)

This document is #5 in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). The topic of this document is the challenges and advantages experienced by teachers in transitional classes for young immigrants and refugees. It emphasizes that these students need to be prepared for both the language in Germany and the school system in Bavaria. In addition to supporting their school achievement, the child needs to be supported holistically through a partnership between schools and parents. Since some students in transitional classes have experienced trauma, they require special attention from teachers and other supervising educators, who often become important caregivers in their lives.

Lehrer, H., Lux, I., & Brinster, O. (2017). *Neu zugewanderte Kinder und Jugendliche in bayerischen Schulen* [Newly-immigrated children and youth in Bavarian schools]. (SCHüler Interkulturell Flexibel Fördern No. 7).

[https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/19271/schiff\\_7\\_internet.pdf](https://www.isb.bayern.de/download/19271/schiff_7_internet.pdf)

This document is #7 in the SCHIFF series by the Bavaria's State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (*Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität und Bildungsforschung*). The audience is teachers and pre-service teachers working with (newly) immigrated students and refugee students. The document provides general

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information about language learning, noting that to support the learning of written language, students need to have exposure to storytelling, rhyming, read alouds, and playing with language. Teachers and students need to become aware of the written and spoken differences between the target language (German) and the students' native language. Students are categorized into 3 groups based on their knowledge of reading and writing competencies a) within a Roman alphabet; b) another writing system; or c) are lacking reading and writing competencies in any language. Suggestions include offering books and other text engagement in dual language format and make language explicit during content instruction.

The resource provides additional information about traumatized children and youth from warzones. Traumatization in students presents through so-called permanent high-tension (*permanente Hochspannung*). Symptoms of trauma include, but are not limited to: aggression towards self or others; (internal) restlessness; pacing back and forth; "jumpiness" (*Schreckhaftigkeit*) and high irritability; emotionally numb and reclusiveness; flashbacks; frequent fighting and war games; drawing pictures of death and violence; frequent head- and stomachaches; deficiency in concentration and inability to learn or absorb new knowledge; regression into younger developmental stages; taking on the role of adults; suicidal thoughts, drug abuse, and alcohol abuse.

Traumatized children and youth need to be met with understanding and be given a sense of belonging. They need to feel welcomed and appreciated in an environment that provides them with a feeling of safety and stability. Clear, everyday rules and rituals within a school setting provide these individuals with a sense of structure and stability. They help evoke emotions connected to feeling sheltered and protected. The document provides teachers with tips in dealing with flashbacks and help peers respond to and deal with difficult situations.

Shah, H. (2015). *Flüchtlingskinder und jugendliche Flüchtlinge in Schulen, Kindergärten und Freizeiteinrichtungen* [Refugee children and youth: in schools, daycares and leisure settings]. Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg.  
[http://www.schulehombrechtikon.ch/cm\\_data/Hombi\\_Fluechtlinge.pdf](http://www.schulehombrechtikon.ch/cm_data/Hombi_Fluechtlinge.pdf)

This booklet is designed for educational staff working with refugee children Germany-wide. It can be found online for other Ministries of Education as well as in hard copy for the Ministry of Education for Hamburg.

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The document identifies six negative consequences (*Belastungsfaktoren*) that may accompany flight from one's home country: trauma, sorrow, culture-shock, speechlessness (*Sprachlosigkeit*), poverty, and disrupted family systems.

1. Traumatic experiences often do not surface until some time has passed. They may be awoken by triggers (e.g., the colour red may remind a child of blood, BBQ smells may remind them of burnt flesh). The students may react to hearing loud sudden sounds or seeing people in uniforms (e.g., police, hotel workers). Signs of this fear and anxiety can be restlessness, jumpiness and aggression.
2. Sorrow is often not easily recognizable. Sorrow goes beyond sadness, which is limited by time, because it is long-term and may be accompanied by many additional feelings, such as anger, pain, grief, despair, and shame.
3. Culture-shock often requires a large adjustment process and is complicated by a lack of language competency.
4. Speechlessness may result from not understanding a language since this is exhausting and energy-sapping (*kraftzehrend*). One is very dependent on gestures, tone of voice, environment/ atmosphere, and body language. Some children experience dual speechlessness when their lived terrors cannot be put into words or are not spoken about due to fear of miscommunication or misunderstanding.
5. Poverty is a reality for many children growing up in poor living conditions in the new country (e.g., tight living quarters, shortage of money). As a consequence, they may experience shame, stigmatization, and/or limitations to any social interactions that cost money (e.g., going to movies, pubs, sporting events)
6. Disrupted family systems result from a lack of reliable attachment figures, children taking on the role of the adult, missing extended family, unaccompanied minor status, or strict gender roles.

Refugee children need understanding and compassion; a sense of being welcome and valued; security; stability; and structure. On the first day of school, fears and insecurities can be taken by giving short, simple information. The acquisition of language is most important. Unencumbered (*unbelastete*) children to the age of 14 may pick up conversational language in as little as six months. Encumbered children therefore need more time. They learn best through same age peers, so facilitating children in partner work, groups, and clubs is helpful.

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These children need to be met with clear, straight-forward rules and rituals, avoiding unnecessary decision-making. This may mean the same rules for all institutions and a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination. Cultural misunderstandings should be facilitated through explanations. Showing interest and compassion, but not pity, is important. During out-of-school hours, caregivers should also receive information to support the children accordingly. Food and drink adjustment also take time. Children's talk-time and imagination need to be supported. Play and movement enhance well-being and sense of belonging. Play can be in form of sports, drama, music, film, etc. As well, teaching staff shall always try to establish and enhance family- and parent contact. They shall also educate parents of refugee children to understand the German schooling system and help build confidence and trust in it.

Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts (2015). *Children for Tomorrow annual newsletter*.  
<http://www.children-for-tomorrow.com/newsletter/>

Children for Tomorrow is a charitable foundation in the Hamburg area that initiates and facilitates projects supporting the healthy development of refugee children and youth who are victims of war, persecution, and other forms of organized violence. The audience for this online newsletter is anyone in Hamburg area seeking support for refugee children and youth who have witnessed any form of violence or oppression. This edition of the newsletter focuses on stories of the work that the foundation supports. The examples of therapy sessions and narratives of flight and trauma illustrate the situations that refugee students and their families are experiencing. The newsletter highlights therapy methods through examples and pictures such as “a house of emotions (*Haus der Gefühle*)” to help students recognize, verbalize and label feelings and “the inner helper (*der innere Helfer*)” to help children recognize their personal coping resources. A strong focus is on art therapy and how it can help students work through trauma to the point of reducing nightmares, fears, and other possible consequences of war and flight.

Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts (2016). *Children for Tomorrow annual newsletter*.  
<http://www.children-for-tomorrow.com/newsletter/>

This edition of the newsletter for the Children for Tomorrow charitable foundation discusses the various programs offered to refugee children and youth and showcases their positive outcomes. Children for Tomorrow offers experiences such as dance, music and art therapy, as well as intervention through individual and group therapy sessions. All experiences are geared towards allowing refugee children/youth to share and work through their emotions and trauma. They are given a voice to express and

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share their personal experiences and stories through a variety of media. The newsletter shares many quotes from children, that support the positive, engaging nature of this program.

Structure during program times is an important factor for guidance and allowing participants to gain a sense of timing as clear beginning and ending rituals mark experiences. Different forms of artistic expression are utilized as outlets for refugee children and youth to express and share emotions that cannot be put into words. Children are given opportunities to explore wishes, hopes and dreams for themselves to support a more positive outlook on life. Through this artistic engagement, refugees can free themselves from stressors and tension; free improvisation allows direct access to emotions, which in turn provides access to process these. Collective singing experiences, e.g., also support speech and language development in a fun, non-pressuring environment.

Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts (2017). *Children for Tomorrow annual newsletter*.  
<http://www.children-for-tomorrow.com/newsletter/>

This edition of the newsletter for the Children for Tomorrow charitable foundation presents a project in collaboration with the Ministry of Education for Hamburg called *Honighelden*. This collaboration allows the foundation to target school-aged children to provide therapy in elementary school settings. It fills a gap in ambulatory care for children and holds promise for great impact since children who have experienced trauma before the age of 11 are 30% more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It offers individual therapy, groups, consultations, supervision, and professional development.

This issue of the newsletter also highlights the benefits of music and art therapy. It describes what happens during a music therapy session and provides examples of songs participants co-write around key coping messages. It contains many pictures and descriptions from art therapy classes as well.

The newsletter is also a rich source of personal narratives and statistics on working with refugee students.

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## **Conclusion**

Each section of this document analysis highlights the key messages around language learning, intercultural communication, and trauma-informed pedagogy contained in the online documents written in German. Most of the documents carry messages that stress the importance of all teachers and educational staff collaborating on welcoming refugee students and their families into the schools. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of students learning German through both their segregated introductory classes and later in mainstream classes, through the use of German as a Second Language teaching pedagogy and the integration of second language learning into content-based classes. Intercultural communication is predicated upon awareness of and empathy for the students' lived experiences and building strong relationships moving forward. Trauma-informed pedagogy provides educators with an awareness of how trauma may be experienced during flight and how educational settings can be structured to respond to the unique needs of students who have experienced trauma. The messages from the three sections are interdependent, such that viewing the document analysis as a whole is informative for teachers, staff and researchers interested in the information available online in German.

We hope that the document analysis we have provided will be helpful to educators, school authorities, scholars and others interested in this timely and relevant topic.

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