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Working with children with migrant experience – a case study of the organization Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

**Praca z dziećmi z doświadczeniem migracyjnym –
na przykładzie organizacji Stadtpiraten Freiburg
e.V. we Fryburgu Bryzgowijskim w Niemczech**

Abstract: It is the objective of this article to present the case study of a non-governmental organisation conducting supportive activities for the benefit of children with the experience of immigration in Freiburg im Breisgau in Germany. In this article, the theoretical context depicting the policy of the intercultural opening of services and institutions to immigrants and refugees, and also the conception of 'interinclusion' in the policy of intercultural opening, is presented. In the further part of this article, the analysis of the practical activities of the non-profit organisations as exemplified by Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. in the context of the presumptions behind the policy of the intercultural opening of services and institutions is presented in more of a detail.

Keywords: children with the experience of immigration, social work, NGOs, the intercultural opening of the institutions and services (IOIS).

Introduction

The processes of exile and immigration into the European Union, driven by inequalities and conflicts, are becoming more and more intense in 21st century. They have become a part-and-parcel of the transformations, altering the reality of European societies receiving refugees and immigrants in the social, economic and cultural dimensions (Pasamonik and Markowska-Manista, 2017). One of the countries of the European Union which, in the course of the 'migrant crisis' in the years since 2014 until 2016, received an enormous group of refugees from the Near East was Germany. Each of the *länder* implemented activities the objective of which was to support individuals looking for a safe shelter under its internal policy of collaboration with institutions, non-governmental organisations and local communities (Mayer and Vanderheiden, 2014, pp. 21-26). These activities are based upon the policy of intercultural opening (Schröer, 2016, pp. 85-96), and have been directed at providing a temporary and long-term support of the adults and children connected with the processes of adaptation and integration.

This article presents the case study of a non-governmental organisation conducting supportive activities for the benefit of children with the experience of immigration in Freiburg im Breisgau in Germany. It was written as a work of two collaborating authoresses, and its contents are based upon the scientific experiences of dr Urszula Markowska-Manista, of working at a German university with students having diversified cultural background in the course of the seminar 'Education and Migration' (2017-2021, SFU Berlin) and a research trip to the Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg in November, 2014. The objective of the trip in question was to make herself acquainted with the research and comprehensive activities directed by governmental and non-governmental entities as part of the policy of intercultural opening to immigrants and refugees in the receiving society of the city of Freiburg. Upon the basis of that, theoretical part of this article has been prepared, and also the conception of 'interclusion' has been presented and developed.

This text has as well been based upon the practical experiences of volunteering and the field work conducted by Edyta Januszewska – in July and August, 2021, she worked as a volunteer in the Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. organisation in Freiburg im Breisgau in the land of Baden-Württemberg. Apart from work with child refugees and young refugees, she conducted field work and free-form interviews both with adult refugees, as well as with individuals assisting them – Evangelical priests, deacons and social workers. Altogether, 15 interviews have been conducted – six of them were with the workers of Stadtpiraten. The lion's share of those were recorded with the use

of a data storage device (voice recorder), and some were written down in a hard-copy version.

At the beginning, theoretical context picturing the policy of the intercultural opening of services and institution to immigrants and refugees in Germany is presented (Griese and Marburger, 2012, pp. 1-23; Schröer, 2018, pp. 773-785). In the further part of this article, the analysis of the practical activities of the non-profit organisations as exemplified by Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. in the context of the presumptions behind the policy of the intercultural opening of services and institutions is presented in more of a detail.

Policy of the intercultural opening (IO) of institutions and services to refugees and immigrants

In different countries of the world, there are diversified approaches to the integration and inclusion of immigrants and refugees (Bhabha, 2018). Apart from distancing oneself and the rejection of the duty to receive refugees, for instance, by the states of East Europe (in the years since 2015 until 2016), or constructing physical barriers (between USA and Mexico, between Hungary and Serbia, between Israel and Palestine, and between Poland and Belarus and Lithuania and Belarus), we can find the instances of a partial or significant intercultural opening of institutions and services to refugees and immigrants. Since the year 2015, German approach has been reflecting so-called 'complete political inclusion' constituting a response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Syria and the escalation of conflicts in the region. Of course, this approach is occasionally met with the reluctance of society (Otten, 2019, pp. 193-230) and practices excluding and selecting individuals and groups which have been looking for, and are still looking for, a shelter and a better life in Germany.

Intercultural orientation in the social policies of German *lander* is driven by the presumption of social integration, and including refugees, and also immigrants, in the practice of the everyday life of the receiving society (Engin, 2015, pp. 89-93). It is based upon several years of experience connected with 'learning from one's own mistakes', which were made in the case of *Gastarbeiter* in the 1960s and 1970s. In 21st century, this notion refers to inclusion as the basis of activity not exclusively 'for the benefit of', but also 'with', individuals provided with support. By the same token, it is to serve the purpose of the development of all human resources and the participation of refugees and immigrants in activities they are the target group of, both in the dimension of meeting principal needs and in the area of involving them in the processes of education, language and job-related instruction, and also

pro-health and pro-social activities in the culturally-diversified society of Germany (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, 2019).

The term 'intercultural openness' was coined and defined in the context of social care services becoming open to the needs of immigrants in the 1990s (Barwig and Hinz-Rommel, 1995). It was a response to the criticism of the earlier policy of ignoring and the lack of equal treatment of immigrants, seen as the beneficiaries of social, health and educational services in Germany perceived as the liability for business and people (Schröer, 2016, p. 89). In the latest three decades, the policy of intercultural opening has undergone a transformation from a social and political standing to the strategy of the risk of the development of an organisation (Handschuck and Schröer, 2012), providing immigrants with support (in diversified dimensions) and with access to services, with neither of them being dependent upon their cultural origins (Mayer and Vanderheiden, 2014, pp. 21-26). This approach is connected with the evolution of the strategic function of an institution, evolving from unilateral support towards activities directed at the inclusion, participation and integration of the diversified groups of immigrants with the majority of a society. By the same token, non-profit organisations supporting immigrants pay a particular attention to overcoming barriers and cultural mechanisms of exclusion and ignoring immigrants, as participants in, and the performers and recipients of, services (Engin, 2015, pp. 89-93). What is of significance, in this approach attention is also paid to involving individuals representing the majority of a society in offered activities serving the purpose of communication and social integration with immigrants. In this case, intercultural openness concerns the possibility of immigrants' participating in the diversity of educational, social and cultural practices of the majority society (Reichwein and Rashid, 2014, pp. 29-34), and also rendering it possible for them to voice their views and to participate in the provision of the services of this kind, and, by the same token, increasing their participation in the life of a society in which they constitute a minority. The policy of IO involves the diversified kinds of mutual experiences (between majority and minority and between different minorities). Its results are reflected in top-bottom and bottom-top changes in the practices of including immigrants in the social life of a society in which they are a minority (Gögercin, 2018, pp. 31-41). Another objective of them is to prevent the exclusion and the marginalisation of immigrants from the diversified areas of their everyday functioning in a receiving society (Januszewska and Markowska-Manista, 2017). On the other hand, this policy ought to take under consideration the knowledge, abilities and experiences of individuals providing services, and

usually representing a receiving community. Therefore, a crucial significance in that case is that of identifying the challenges with which majority and minority participating in the process of intercultural opening are struggling.

‘Interclusion’ in the conception of intercultural opening

Intercultural opening exerts influence upon the structures, processes and results of social activities, and the reason for that fact is that it results from, and leads to, changes in these very structures and procedures of organisation, and also determines practices conducive to the inclusion of new cultural minorities in a society in which they are a minority. And a significant step in the process of intercultural opening is, therefore, the identification of (both observable and tangible and concealed alike) barriers connected with the individual difficulties of immigrants in the realm of adaptation, removing them, and also approach based upon inclusion in integrative practices. Vimal Vimalasekaran from the European Christian Mission in his speech ‘Refugees and interclusion’ (Vimalasekaran, 2016) postulates combining the practices of integration with the inclusion of immigrants in a society in which they are a minority. The neologism ‘interclusion’, coined by him, refers to two levels of the functioning of immigrants and refugees in a new environment. The former one of the two is relevant to integration, therefore, the command of a language, acquaintanceship with the culture and lifestyle of a receiving country, so as to function without problems and be able to become part of society. The latter level is relevant to inclusion comprehended as retaining the right to possess one’s own identity and to be treated as equal, regardless of differences in the conditions of functioning in a new society. The author indicates that, in the case of this approach and from the level of inclusion, it is exclusively the values concerning respect for identity and the protection of human rights that ought to be considered and combined with the level of integration in the form of providing support for immigrants and refugees in adjusting to functioning in a new place (language, knowledge about culture, and knowledge about society).

Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. – a non-profit organisation working with child refugees

In the year 2014, more than 57,000 individuals, principally from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkan Peninsula (Freiburg im Breisgau, 2022) arrived in Baden-Württemberg. According to Hans Steiner and Antje Reinhard, in the year 2015 more than 400 refugees arrived in Freiburg every month (Steiner, Reinhard, 2018, p. 382). The fragment in question of this

article has been based upon, among others, an interview with Theresa Kappus, the co-organiser of ‘child’s corner’, and also a financial director in Stadtpiraten. There are also references to the field diary kept by XX1 in the course of her research.

Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. in Freiburg im Breisgau is a non-profit organisation, and it was formally established in the year 2015 (even though the conception of it had been taking shape since as early as in the year 2009). In the year 2016, it initiated carpentry workshops and a course of the German language for refugees being the residents of Freiburg, and, in the year 2017, it was nominated to the German Integration Award. These activities brought the fruit of publicity and increase in the interest of future sponsors (among others, Aktion Mensch, Oberle Stiftung, Landesjugendring Baden-Württemberg e.V., Neumayer Stiftung and Deutsche Postcode Lotterie). Since that moment on, the activity of the organization has been in the field of working with young exiles and their families. In the year 2018, an initiative was presented that camps for children and young people be organised, and, one year later, it was followed by the integration programmes for minor refugees. The mission of the organisation is expressed in the following words: ‘We want every single child in Freiburg feel that they are wanted, that they are talented and that they are loved’ (from the presentation prepared by Theresa Kappus, which is a part of the private collection of Edyta Januszewska). On the website of the organisation, one can find the following words:

We are convinced that every single child and every single young person has a precious potential in the scope of shaping our society and co-existence in Freiburg. It is our objective to provide a ray of hope and create particular perspective for life owing to a wide assortment of offers, which are both enjoyable and making life meaningful (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V., 2021).

Since the year 2019, the seat of Stadtpiraten has been in the office of the House of Engagement at 9 Rehlingstraße. Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. is a Christian organisation. According to Theresa Kappus herself:

As Christians, we believe that every single human being is loved by God. For children from the milieu of exiles, faith and religion are of significance because these two are anchored in their culture. I think that values, vision of a man, view of the world and faith are connected in a direct way. We want to talk about with children and teenagers.

On the website of the organisation, one can find the following words:

Religion, as a timeless value, may play the crucial role in an individual and social context. Particularly for people with the experience of being a refugee from a country of the Near East, religion matters in the process of developing Stadtpiraten (<https://stadtpiraten-freiburg.de/de/arbeitsbereiche/stadtpiraten/piraten/transparenz.html>).

Stadtpiraten has chosen a dialogue between religions and cultures as its method of action as it:

it helps to prevent conflicts and provide space for mutual understanding. Owing to that, one can experience trust and respect of among others, the followed of different. Relations, authenticity, mutual respect, acceptance and recognition are the basis of a dialogue (<https://stadtpiraten-freiburg.de/de/arbeitsbereiche/stadtpiraten/piraten/transparenz.html>).

The organisation clearly refrains from the manipulative and intrusive dissemination of religious confessions: 'Being a Christian does not constitute a *conditio sine qua non* for gaining access to our offers. We want to treat all in the same manners, regardless of their origins, biography, sex, religion and cultures, and also treat every single human being with respect and recognising their value' (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V., 2021). It ought to be emphasised that parents are informed about the Christian profile of the association.

The name 'Stadtpiraten' ('City Pirates') was coined using the first letters of the names of values adhered to by the organisation. The word 'PIRATEN' is composed of the following letters: *Perspektive* (perspective), *Interesse* (interest), *Respekt* (respect), *Abenteuer* (adventure), *Transparenz* (transparency), *Echt-Sein* (being real/ being oneself), and *Nächstenliebe* (charity). 'Perspective' is love of a neighbour resulting from Christian mercy. 'Interest' results from willingness to comprehend another human being whilst simultaneously to refrain from judging and assessing. 'Respect' is manifested by expressing the acceptance of the convictions, cultures, religions and experiences of refugees. Another notion is 'adventure', which means fulfilling personal dreams by children and young exiles, collaborating in achieving objectives, and also search for their own paths of development. 'Transparency' is the clarity of rules and principles governing the organisation, and also an open and frank communication between workers and refugees. 'Being real/ being oneself' is the acceptance of making mistakes, and also using them as a springboard for personal development. Finally, 'charity' is: 'Not closing eyes to people living

in difficult conditions, rendering it possible for them to have a say, and willingness to assist them' (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. Jahresbericht 2020, p. 10).

The principal objective of the association is to create space for children and young exiles, and also the German ones, to get to know one another above the social and cultural divide. Diversity and variety constitute the starting point for upbringing and educational work. The objective of the organisation is to promote and reinforce the personal and social abilities of child refugees, shaping personal identity, reinforcing self-esteem and encouraging to discover personal assets, and, in the further course, to develop and extend these very assets upon a constant basis. The central point of the activities in question, there is the promotion of education, healthy lifestyle, pro-social behaviours, and also the intercultural, communication and linguistic competences of young people. Owing to such activities, young exiles have an opportunity to develop themselves and to fully participate in the life of society. Taking advantage of the offer of educational and integrative programmes, children learn to apply proper names to their own emotions, to be resilient to stress, to solve conflicts, to respect themselves and to respect one another, and also to open to variety. The foundation of contact are relations, building friendships and collaborating in a group (<https://stadtpiraten-freiburg.de/de/arbeitsbereiche/stadtpiraten/piraten/transparenz.html>). Young people need individuals whom they can trust, and who will provide them with support and assist them in a difficult situation, and this is the role fulfilled by Stadtpiraten. It is the objective of the organisation as well to conduct a social discourse upon the issues of responsibility, racism, religion, faith, and also on the social exclusion of children and young people from the milieu of immigrants. Stadtpiraten collaborates with diversified institutions and organisations in Freiburg, such as: Klimagarten in Weingarten im Dietenbachpark, Waldmobil, Offende Kinder und Jugendarbeit and Stadtjugendring. The classes with child refugees are conducted by the organisation on leased premises, among others, being the property of Freie Evangelische Gemeinde, Liebenzeller Gemeinde, Evangelische Chrischona-Gemeinde, PaulusSaal & PaulusKirche, and also in the gym being the property of Reinhold Schneider School.

The target group is young exiles residing in public shared and subsidised social accommodation in Freiburg (Flüchtlingsrat NRW e.V., 2022; Redaktion DAHAG Rechtsservices AG, 2021). According to the *Amt für Migration und Integration*, 1,975 refugees have been accommodated in them, and 1,556 of all those have received lodgings in public shared accommodation. Of them, 699 were minors (state of the matters as of 30th September, 2020)

(Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. Jahresbericht 2020, p. 6). In the programmes offered by Stadtpiraten, 80% of participating children with the experience of being a refugee reside in public shared accommodation (*Gemeinschaftsunterkünften*, GU), whereas 20% of them reside in subsidised social accommodation (*Sozialwohnungen*) (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. Jahresbericht 2020, p. 19). The former ones, used by the young beneficiaries of the offer of Stadtpiraten, are: Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Hermann-Mitsch-Straße Am Flugplatz, Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Bergäckerstraße in Littenweiler, Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Merzchauser Straße Im Vauban and Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Bissierstraße In Betzenhausen (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V., 2021).

Children and young people do not have appropriate conditions for studying because of a limited space in public shared accommodation, and, frequently, do not receive support and assistance from parents in the aspect of learning; their parents struggle with challenges and difficulties in a new country of residence themselves. In their families, we observe the phenomenon of parentification, which renders it very much difficult to function socially and individually in the local environment. Because of their social status (the low incomes of parents, poor command of the German language and marginalisation), children and young people experience difficulties with access to the offer of extracurricular activities and non-formal education. Frequently, they do not possess computers, which means they are excluded from diversified educational activities in the aspect of technology in general and of IT. The consequence of that is isolation from society in general and from peers, identity crisis, poor self-assessment, behavioural disorders, addictions, delinquency, a low level of formal qualifications and a high level of dropout from secondary school. The situation is deteriorated by the fact that the families of refugees frequently have unregulated legal status and do not know if they will be permitted to remain in Germany for a longer period of time.

To meet these challenges and to overcome them, Stadtpiraten directed its offer, first and foremost, to children and young exiles. This offer is very rich and based upon 4 modules: weekly group meetings, one-to-one private lessons, summer camps and 'the chest of treasures' ("SJR" – Stadtjugendring Freiburg e.V., 2022; Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. Jahresbericht 2020, pp. 15-16). The former one of them consists in recreational activities, in the course of which children and young people play, prepare meals and go on trips – doing all those things together. Most frequently, these activities are conducted in small groups, which consist of six children and two volunteers. It is owing to them (the activities in question) that relations and friendships are established,

and that young refugees can enjoy a safe haven in which to share their problems, joys and achievements. They also have the possibility to obtain 'The Passport of an Urban Pirate', which is a book filled with creative exercises, for instance: 'How to say 'Thank you' in different languages' or 'Why is the protection of the environment of significance'. On Friday, there are two meetings for teenage girls at the ages between 11 and 13 and between 14 and 16 years at Liebenzeller Gemeinde Freiburg (address: 8 Luisenstraße). The girls cook, bake and participate in activities within the scope of craftsmanship together. On Fridays it is as well sport classes for boys at the age between 12 and 16 years, and also 'football at midnight', for boys at the age older than 16, that are organised (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V., 2021). The second module is 'Dock3', namely, an integrative offer for afternoons, including private lessons. The meetings being the part of it are held in Paulussaal (PaulusSaal & PaulusKirche Freiburg. Informationen und Pläne, p. 3), which is the venue of the dialogue of culture, science and religion and which is a part of the Evangelical church known as Pauluskirche. These activities are conducted together with the community known as 'Dreisam3' (the name originates from the street and the number of the building at which the church is situated, namely: Dreisamstraße 3, (Paulussaal, 2021) two times a week – on Tuesdays for children at the age between the sixth and the twelfth year of life, since 12.30 pm until 4.00 pm, and on Wednesdays for young people at the age between the twelfth and the sixteenth year of life. The principal objective of them is to assist child refugees and young exiles in learning, and also to provide this same kind of assistance for German children, who participate in them as well. At 12.30 pm, the participants arrive at a leased room in the church, in which meal is prepared, then homework is done with the assistance of the volunteers, and, finally, all those present play together. The volunteers are in touch with the teachers of primary schools (Hebelschule, Turnseeschule and Lessingschule), which are attended by the child refugees, and know what material is found to be the most difficult by those under their care and what, therefore, ought to be revised. The classes in the module known as 'Dock3' offer children the opportunity to spend leisure time in a constructive manner, to get to know one another, to develop linguistic, cognitive and social competences, and the assistance provided by volunteers for individual attendees renders it possible for them to catch up with school work so that 'no child is left behind' (Stadtpiraten Freiburg e.V. Jahresbericht 2020, pp. 16, 22, 26 and 30). The third module is constituted by vacation camps, which are organised two times a year. These last for three days, and are participated in by approximately 60 children and young exiles. In August, 2021, the

leitmotif of the camp was 'circus'. The last module is 'the chest of treasures'. In a large wooden wheeled Cargo chest, attached to a bicycle, there are plenty of toys and outdoor games, as well as sport equipment, which can be taken to any place in the city. Owing to these activities, children's motor skills are developed, and close relations with fellow child refugees and volunteers, who actively participate in games, are established. Every week, the activities in the integrative offer are participated in by approximately 160 children and young people from the milieu of immigrants.

In the year 2020, the number of the members of Stadtpiraten amounted to 67 (most of whom were volunteers – students of pedagogical majors), and in the year 2022 seven individuals were employed on part-time contracts, together with three interns and 80 volunteers (<https://stadtpiraten-freiburg.de/de/arbeitsbereiche/stadtpiraten/piraten/transparenz.html>). The members of the team are in charge of different tasks, ranging from the purchase of food products to managing finances. They are responsible and reliable, and boast social, intercultural and inter-religious skills, are competent in the aspect of work with socially-excluded and marginalised young people, and also have excellent manners (which I have been able to experience many times – XX1).

In the course of her work as a volunteer in the Stadtpiraten in Freiburg organisation, XX1 had the opportunity to participate in numerous of the above-mentioned activities and classes. First and foremost, on every Tuesday and Wednesday, she participated in meetings in the course of which children received assistance in learning. The children that participated in these activities came, among others, from former Yugoslavia, Syria and Chechnya, but also from Germany. The greatest problems for young refugees were caused by reading texts in the German language – they did not know characters, and their pronunciation was incorrect. Regardless of the fact that they had been living in Germany for a few years, they still experienced difficulties in learning the language. As the authoress wrote in her field diary:

Children of foreigners attend classes of years: five – six, and work with the curriculum of year two. On their schoolbooks, digit II is covered, therefore, the children do not know that the material with which they work is intended for younger school attendees. As it is shown by conversations with volunteers assisting children in doing their homework, this may be justified by the fact that if the children knew they were working with a schoolbooks for year 2, they would not want to learn with the use it (13.07.2021).

In the course of doing homework, it was frequent that young refugees were deconcentrated, kept leaving for restrooms and constantly looked at their watches hoping that the period assigned to doing homework (one hour) would soon come to an end. The situation was different in the case of teenagers, who were usually more motivated to learn than their younger colleagues of either sex. XX1 would go with children and young people for trips away from the city, participated in team-building meetings of female teenage exiles on Friday afternoons, played ball games with children in the gym of Reinhold Schneider School. Moreover, since 5th until 7th August, 2021 (and that means from Thursday until Saturday) she worked as a caregiver on a camp for child refugees, which was organised in the building of Freie Evangelische Gemeinde in Freiburg (this choice of the venue resulted from the fact that it had been raining for a few days and the classes could not possibly be held outdoor). It was a camp for young refugees from Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Hermann-Mitsch-Straße Am Flugplatz. 35 children at the age between the sixth and tenth year of life and 15 volunteers participated in them. As the authoress wrote in her field diary:

The principal activities were held in the building, but, during the breaks, if it was not raining, we would take our 'chest of treasures' and go to a park or a playground. The children played badminton, ringo, football, 'jumping ufo', diabolo and pogo. In turn, in the building of the church, minor refugees prepared a programme connected with a circus, so as to present it on the third day of the camp. Apart from that, games such as: 'memory' and hula-hoop were played. There was as well a table for table football and music was listened to with the use of the <Silent Disco> headphones (05.08.2021).

Another camp was commenced on 9th August, and this time, its venue was outdoor, namely, on a large clearing in the city of Breisach am Thein, not a long way away from Freiburg. The camp was participated by children from Gemeinschaftsunterkunft Bergäckerstraße in Littenweiler. It had the same programme as the first one had had. The highlight, as it was revealed, was a game of skill, which consisted in walking on a five-centimetre wide band, hung and stretched between trees at the height of more than a dozen centimetres (*Slackline*). On the final day of the camp, there was a bonfire and the game known as 'Foxes and Chickens', and the participants enjoyed the latter one a lot. The two camps were participated in by children that came from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Turkey, Kosovo and Serbia.

The participation of refugee children and young exiles in the activities of the Stadtpiraten in Freiburg im Breisgau organisation rendered it possible for them to establish friendships with German colleagues of both sexes, to make themselves acquainted with the culture, history and tradition of the receiving country, and also to feel that they were able to retain their own identity in the conditions of living in a new culture.

Recapitulation

The activities of the non-governmental organisation in Germany which are presented in more of a detail in the text of this article indicate how significant it is to comprehend and to apply the approach known as intercultural opening (IO), and means opening to immigrants in the case of social, educational and cultural institutions. The conception of IO is of a particular significance in work with children from the majority society and with children with the experience of immigration and being refugees. Such an approach results from treating variety as an opportunity to develop and to collaborate effectively. The conception of the intercultural opening of institutions and services indicates that the principal objective of the processes of intercultural opening is to guarantee the just and equal access to all diversified areas of services: public administration, social care, health care, educational and cultural services, and the media (Hinz-Rommel, 1998, pp. 36-41) for individuals being the members of the social majority and for immigrants, and also to counteract exclusion of the latter one. The policy of intercultural openness is a significant response to increasing economic immigration and the phenomenon of refugee in multicultural nation states in the European Union.

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