



TÜR AN TÜR DIGITALFABRIK GGMBH

IMPACT SUMMARY 2019

The impact of the Digital Factory

Transparency through networks and digitalisation

Tür an Tür - Digitalfabrik gGmbH (Digital Factory) was founded in June 2016 with the aim of easing the arrival process for refugees in Germany. From the very beginning, this project was pursued in cooperation with established and experienced organisations and institutions as well as municipal administrations. The strong network that has accompanied the Digital Factory since the beginning of the Integreat project in 2015 has been the most important prerequisite for the unfolding impact of the organisation since then.

The vision that we pursue with our work and the realization of which is the benchmark for all activities of the organization is to make information understandable and accessible for all people by lowering the barriers. The marginalisation of people from other countries and cultures is often based on a lack of information. The reduction of information poverty through solutions such as Integreat and the resulting equality of access to information are important milestones for the development of a free and open society. In the long term, our offers - especially the information app Integreat - are designed not only to support refugees in finding their way around and obtaining information, but also to serve as a helpful support in everyday life for all newcomers and citizens and as a communication channel for local administration. As the name already implies, the Digital Factory wants to build digital bridges to strengthen local integration work, without wanting to replace personal advisory structures on site.

Creating an open and inclusive society and thereby facilitating the integration of newcomers is a complex challenge to which no unilateral response can be given by a single institution. Our self-conception as an organisation is strongly based on cooperation with other actors in the network. With our work, we are committed to connecting and harnessing different resources in the field of integration. Networking with long-established institutions from this field and local administrations creates special synergy potentials, which are tapped by the Digital Factory. We pass on expertise, create the structures through information and technology transparency to make common content and technologies usable and also make them available through our organisation.

Integreat: Outputs and impact

Building on last year's outputs and impact, the Integreat project has made further progress in 2019 for the primary target group of newcomers as well as on the municipal level. By the end of 2019 Integreat is available in 57 cities and districts in Germany and helps to successfully shape the information transfer to new immigrants within those. The increase in the number of Integreat municipalities has an effect on the target group of new immigrants on the one hand, since a larger proportion of them can be supplied with local information through Integreat. On the other hand, the communal partners of Integreat also benefit from a more widespread use of the platform, as more content and translations are produced, which in turn can be jointly used and lead to cost and time savings.

Through the activities of Integreat, effects on an intra-communal level and in inter-communal exchange could be achieved in 2019. Indicators for these effects are mainly personal reports and feedback from the communities or from the Integreat networking event in Bayreuth in November 2019.

The systematisation of information and the consolidation of existing offers on a central integration platform is one of the main reasons for the implementation of Integreat. Further reasons are the easy adaptability and expandability of the target group, the possibility to create transparency for consultants and volunteers, the completion of existing offers as well as the wish to set an example in integration work. Integreat is regularly being updated and the range of languages is constantly expanded to meet the needs of the users. The cooperation of the Digital Factory with the municipalities is rated in surveys as smooth and Integreat is easy to implement.

Consultants, newcomers and volunteers know and use Integreat, even if the marketing towards newcomers and older volunteers can be improved. Challenges that often occur after the introduction are the financing of new translations and the updating of translations, the long-term connection of Integreat to municipal structures, the local announcement of Integreat and the extension of the contents for new target groups in cooperation with different institutions and actors. The cooperation of Integreat with the municipalities is regarded as very positive as well as the possibility of independent maintenance of contents. Integreat offers many possibilities for the collaborative creation of information content on a municipal level. Most of the work is carried out by main persons in charge, but requests to other local actors, e.g. to update certain pages or contact details, are responded to positively. This shows the general interest and support of the Integreat Platform at local level.

Another positive indicator is that all contact persons reached by the annual municipal survey stated that they are planning long term with Integreat as part of their local integration work.

In 2019 Integreat was presented in 10 districts and 6 cities as well as at the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior. Workshops in the context of Integreat were presented in 7 counties and 4 cities, among others in the city of Dortmund, the city of Sydney and the county of Ludwigsburg. Technical trainings for the operation of the Integreat system took place in 13 counties and 5 cities.

The annual Integreat networking event with municipalities and districts from all over Germany has established itself as an important opportunity for all partner municipalities of Integreat. In 2019 more than 30 actors from 22 municipalities took part. The event is exemplary for the need for intermunicipal exchange. This year the focus was particularly on the exchange of expert knowledge and the transfer of best practices from local work. Impulse presentations from a total of four selected municipalities formed the basis for further discussions and the joint development of new solutions.

Other projects: Outputs and impact

For the projects in the Augsburg area, it can be observed that both the regularly held ffIT courses and the Internet offer in the accommodation are very well received by the newcomers.

After the first ffIT course was successfully held in 2018, the course format was repeated twice in 2019. Of the approx. 70 participants in all classes, around 50 of the newcomers were able to successfully complete the course and receive a certificate. They have now mastered the basics of computers, smartphones and the Internet - an important basis for independent apartment and job searches on the Internet.

Another Internet hotspot in the accommodation in Mühlmahdweg in Augsburg was successfully put into operation on 27.02.2019. The demand is high in all accommodations supported by the Digital Factory, indicating the strong need for Internet and information access for the people living there. By taking over the operation in the Schülestraße, we were able to relieve the workload of the volunteers in the circle of helpers, in particular, since monthly on-site appointments were necessary there to sell Internet vouchers to the refugees. By transferring the sale to a café in the city centre, there is no need for the volunteers, who can now again focus on other, more relevant support services.

Plans and goals

After focussing on the professionalisation and expansion of the cooperation with our municipal partners, the topic of labour migration, the promotion of Integreat outside Germany and the development of innovation processes in 2019, the year 2020 will be marked by sustainable development in financing, technology, strategy and organisational structure and the promotion of diversity within the organisation.

Sustainability as a basis

Financial independence and security are essential for the development of sustainable, long-term and therefore effective projects. The Digital Factory is a non-profit limited liability company and therefore not geared towards financial profit, but towards improving social conditions. In contrast to other social projects, which are often financed by donations, project-related business models enable the self-determined design of processes as well as a high degree of security through the ability to plan over time and across funding periods. As early as 2019, the Digital Factory began to stabilize project revenues and create a secure basis for new projects. These ventures are to be continued in 2020 in order to be able to operate financially independent in the long term.

Sustainable structures are also to be established at the organisational development level in 2020. Since the foundation of Digital Factory 2016, the team has initially grown in the context of the Integreat platform and with new projects also beyond. Structures of communication and cooperation developed organically with new needs and tasks. Due to the professionalization of the organization in the last years and the growing team, the need for clear structures and transparency in internal communication becomes more and more obvious, so that new employees can quickly find their way around. First steps have already been taken with a clear online documentation and the expansion of team structures. Furthermore, time-intensive tasks, especially municipal support, are to be distributed on several shoulders in order to be able to act independently of individual persons in the long term.

For the Integreat project, technical sustainability will be an additional focus in 2020. The new Integreat platform will be placed on a new technological foundation (React). The advantages: Modern architecture, better loading times and above all shorter development cycles, i.e. new functions can be developed more quickly. The content management system of the Integreat platform, which is used by integration actors throughout Germany to create and maintain content, is also to be made more user-friendly and intuitive with a new technology. Thus, the required technical support by our consultants can be minimized and the Integreat technology can be adapted more easily for other contexts.

Diversity

As a social enterprise, the Digital Factory not only considers the effectiveness of individual projects to be an important component, but also the positive design of internal structures. Gender diversity and interculturalism are to be particularly promoted in the acquisition of new employees and volunteers. The corporate culture of the Digital Factory, which is characterised by the part-time model, flexible working hours and the opportunity to work from home, contributes to making this possible. By promoting a positive work environment the development of social projects in the digital sector be made inclusive.

Opportunities and risks

As already foreseen in the last impact report, there has been a movement in municipal integration work within the target group of Integreat and integration is increasingly seen in the context of EU migration. The integration of refugees is no longer the focus of attention to the same extent as it was a few years ago, and in this sense less funding is available or funding programmes are being phased out. This influences both the direct financial viability of Integreat for municipalities and the provision of further long-term resources (e.g. full-time posts for content maintenance) and the updating or expansion of translations. The Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz (Immigration of Skilled Workers Act), which came into force in March 2020, is an additional influence on this development. Entry and the receipt of a residence permit will be made considerably easier. However, there is a great need for information and support in the recruitment of foreign specialists. Cooperation between the players in the economy and the labour market and those involved in integration work plays an important role in successfully securing and integrating workers from abroad. The Digital Factory actively monitors these developments and develops existing and new projects accordingly.

The exceptional social situation caused by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) at the beginning of 2020 illustrates the relevance of fast, simple and comprehensible information transfer to all people. The need for digital solutions may contribute to an increasing demand for support services such as Integreat in the future.