Quarterly on Refugee Problems, 2023, Vol. 62, Issue 1, 35-58
ISSN 2750-7882, Section: Research Articles
Open Access Publication, https://doi.org/10.57947/qrp.v62i1.41

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Resettlement Services: Room for Improvement in Pre-departure and Post-arrival Services[1]

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Abstract

Resettlement is one of few legal pathways for refugees and offers enormous potential for stabilizing a humanitarian refugee crisis. This leads to the question as to why this program seems to be relatively unknown and how it could be improved in order to use its potential effectively. The present paper provides a deepened understanding of the resettlement process as a safe pathway for refugees and introduces possibilities for improving its pre-departure and post-arrival services. Therefore, it reflects on the resettlement strategy itself and explores the program's weaknesses and strengths. Additionally, this paper analyses the provision of pre-departure and post-arrival services: What services are provided to refugees in the phase directly before resettlement (pre-departure) and right after arrival in the resettlement country (post-arrival)? Who are their main actors and what potentials do those services have? Answering these questions will lead to first recommendations for the services. Subsequently, the theoretically based recommendations are further analyzed by using the results of two empirical expert interviews. The experts work in the field of pre-departure services in Jordan as a transit country and in the field of post-arrival services in Germany as a host country. The insights of the interviewees finally affirm and finalize the recommendations, providing a clear picture for the possibility of improvement. Moreover, this allows the identification of necessary skills for service providers that are needed to implement the recommendations. Ultimately, these results indicate the roles that social workers are able to undertake within the resettlement process.

Key Words:

social work; resettlement; pre-departure; post-arrival; services

1. Introduction

Refugees oftentimes must use illegal and dangerous pathways for reaching safe countries to claim international protection. For that reason, the development of safe and legal pathways for refugees is essential, although currently only few available options exist. One of these options is the resettlement program, a tool used to relocate refugees from a transit country to a host country.

Worldwide, several countries have established a resettlement program to respond to the need for safe pathways. This program follows a complex procedure, starting in the transit

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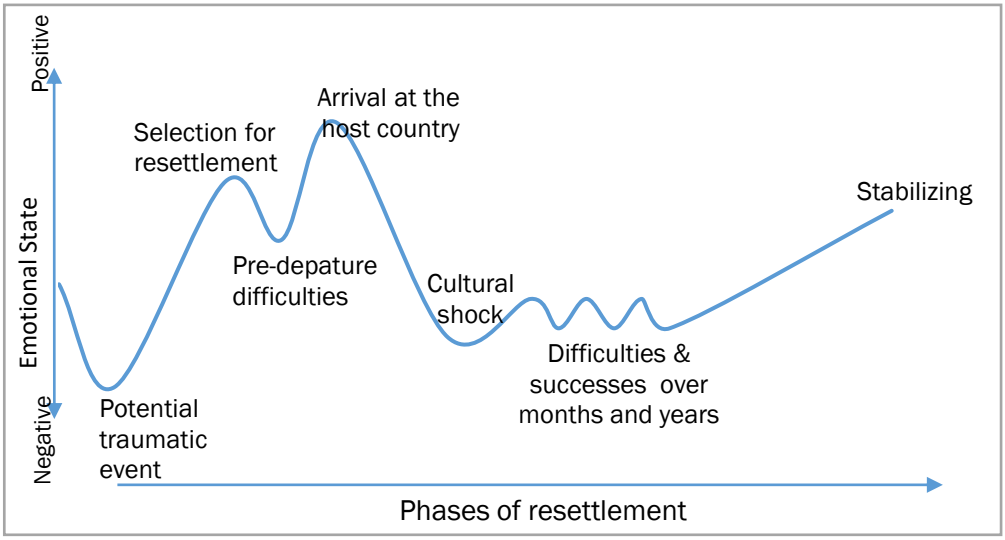
country with a selection process. After a successful approval, a pre-departure phase follows in which refugees wait for their departure. After this departure, people of concern arrive at the host country, where a reception phase takes place. During this stage, refugees can acclimatize to the unfamiliar environment, and post-arrival services are provided, such as language or orientation courses.

When refugees are resettled, the program leads to contradictory emotional states. The figure below illustrates the progression of the emotional state during the phases of resettlement (cf. Figure 1).

Figure1: Emotional state during the resettlement process (author's representation; Hazel & Phillman, 2011; Department of Education and Children's Services in Australia, 2007)



The potential traumatic event marks the first low point on the journey. It can occur due to violent conflicts, economic crises, natural disasters, or other threatening incidents. Afterwards, the positive decision received in the transit country to be resettled to a host country is a highpoint, as this increases the likelihood of improving one's own situation. Right after this highpoint, a downward-curve appears due to pre-departure difficulties. In this phase, people who will be resettled start to learn about their country of destination and start to realize the vast change in life. The realization of leaving, learning about a new culture, and raised awareness of accompanying difficulties – all this leads to a new low point. Despite such fears, the pre-departure phase can take up to two years. This extended period is perceived by refugees as exhausting (Baraulina & Bitterwolf, 2016). This phase, however, is essential, as services can be provided for gaining realistic expectations towards the country, for stabilizing the sense of well-being of the person, and for fostering the later integration process. Integration does not start in the host country, but at the exact point after the decision of the host country to resettle a person.

The arrival in the host country is usually a high point of the journey as the relief of being finally resettled is overwhelmingly positive. The remarkable downwards-curve afterwards

demonstrates the cultural-shock that is a rough awakening for refugees when realizing, for instance, that expectations are unrealistic, when noticing integration into a new society is extremely difficult, or when starting to feel lonely or homesick. This downwards-curve and the resulting low point prevent an effective and fast integration process and it might damage their mental health condition. The following ups and downs of the graphic illustrate difficulties, such as language barriers, and successes, such as passing a language course, that occur within the next period. How long this period lasts, depends on the individual and his*her environment. Only after months or even years, the individual stabilizes in the new environment. It must be noted that there are cases where refugees never reached this stage (Hazel & Phillmann, 2011).

A hindered integration-process and mental health impairment can create a downward spiral, as these factors are likely to indicate several negative results on a micro- and macro-level.

Preventing this downwards spiral is possible with rounding off the downwards curves by implementing pre-departure and post-arrival services. Effective services can later prevent mental health problems and facilitate the integration process in the host community. However, there is a lack of research on how these services are implemented concretely and how they could be developed further. This might be attributed to the lack of transparency of service provision: The services are either described roughly (see for example Caritas, 2013) or how they should be implemented ideally (see for example IOM, 2018). In both cases, there is no reflection of the reality, which makes it difficult to evaluate in order to develop services.

Therefore, this paper seeks to identify the current implementation of such services to find out if they are adequately provided – meaning, provided in a way in which the integration-process is facilitated and a stable mental health status is ensured. It focuses on the questions of how pre-departure and post-arrival services are carried out and how they can be developed. It further examines the role that social workers can undertake , and what skills are required of them to implement recommendations. To answer these questions, a theoretical analysis was conducted from which recommendations could be derived. Those recommendations were analyzed further by two empirical expert interviews with service providers, which led to the main findings of this paper.

The structure of this paper is divided into three main parts: The theoretical analysis, the empirical study, and the combination of theory and empirical results, that leads to the findings of this research. Firstly, the resettlement process and its pre-departure and post arrival services are identified by a theoretical analysis, which highlights the current state of research as well as the current implementation of services. This analysis leads to first recommendations for the services (Chapter 2). Those recommendations are further analyzed by using empirical expert interviews with two service providers (Chapter 3). The combination of theoretical analysis and empirical outcomes leads to the final recommendations. In conclusion, this paper focuses on the required skills needed from social workers to implement those recommendations (Chapter 4).

2 The Resettlement Procedure and Service Recommendations

2.1 A Safe Pathway under Critique

Resettlement means the relocation of refugees from a third country – mostly the first

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country of asylum – directly to a host country that has agreed in advance to host these persons long-term and to grant them protection. Resettlement is characterized by the component that those seeking international protection do not have to be in the host country to apply for it, as is the case for asylum applicants. The application procedure for resettlement is instead initiated in the transit country (UNHCR, 2011).

After World War I, an enormous number of people were displaced, which called for the implementation of such a program. In 1923, the first resettlement program relocated 20.000 people into 44 countries. After this success, the enhancement of migration via resettlement, not for economic reasons but for humanitarian reasons, became more likely, for example after World War II or during the Cold War (Kleist, 2016). The UNHCR, founded in the year 1950, became responsible for promoting durable solutions for refugees and thereby to coordinate resettlement (UNHCR, 2003). Nevertheless, the first Resettlement Handbook which presented concrete structures and recommended procedures was published relatively late, in 1996 (UNHCR, 1996).

In 2022, 23 countries provided resettlement locations for refugees in cooperation with UNHCR, and 58.457 refugees were received by host countries. The U.S.A. is the leading host country in this regard with 21.915 admissions, followed by Canada with 11.014 admissions. Germany resettled 4.787 refugees in the previous year (UNHCR, 2023). For the year 2023, Germany plans to resettle 6.500 refugees (BMI, 2023).In fact, since 2017 the United Kingdom and Germany have started to provide resettlement places in a similarly high amount like Australia, Sweden and Norway, who are main providers already since 2004. However, the U.S.A and Canada have remained as the two main destinations between 2004 and today (UNHCR, 2023).

Host countries decide for themselves whether to take part in the resettlement program. The European Commission offers support for countries that decide to become active. Since 2015, there has been legislation for the resettlement in the EU (ASIM 62 RELEX 633, 11130/15), which aims to stabilize safe pathways to EU territory and to strengthen a common policy amongst the Member States. As there is no distribution key with which the relevant quota for each country could be calculated, Member States can set their quota themselves and can even change those goals during the year (Solf & Rehberg, 2021). Resettlement countries can therefore set their quotas low which makes it easy for them to meet self-set targets

Even though the EU has established a voluntary framework for resettlement, in the end, the decision to resettle lies within the Member State's jurisdiction. Therefore, the single governments and their ministries for migration are the main actors for the resettlement procedure in the host countries. They decide on the procedure and the arrangements in their countries after refugees have arrived. Before the arrival phase, UNHCR is the main actor in the transit countries, examining and deciding on who can be submitted as a resettlement candidate. These submissions are sent to the governments' ministries for a final decision. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is another main actor, playing a key role after the final decision is made, as its Department of Operations and Emergencies coordinates case processing, health assessments, pre-departure orientation and the actual journey of the refugees from the transit country to the host country (IOM, n.d.).

Summarizing this, at first sight, resettlement seems to be a solution with a promising

future. It establishes a safe pathway for refugees to a host country, which in advance has agreed to grant these persons protection, to prepare the arrival and the stay, and to guarantee access to necessary services on-site (UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe, 2018).

Nevertheless, resettlement is also fragmentary, and the coordination and its related legislations face critique as well. First, the numbers of resettlement departures are inadequate and do not match the increasing need for safe pathways. Second, the division of responsibility and burden-sharing is not effective as some countries are overwhelmed by irregular migration arrivals, while other member states do not take part in resettlement at all.

Moreover – and this may be the most problematic point of critique – the central goal of resettlement, the protection of "individual refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in the country where they have sought refuge" (UNHCR, 2011: 3), does not seem to be the main motivation for governments' attempts to resettle. UNHCR tries to reach this goal by applying certain resettlement submission categories to determine who is and is not eligible for resettlement. The status of vulnerability is the key criteria in this regard. Host countries have established their own criteria, such as language skills or status of education. This leads to a preference of certain refugees with no regard to their vulnerability. It might lead to a selection process where the so-called ability to integrate into the host communities outweighs the categories set up by UNHCR (Baumer et al., 2017). UNHCR itself warns host countries not to forget the initial goal of the individual's protection and reminds that resettlement is "a tool to provide protection and a durable solution to refugees rather than a migration management tool" (UNHCR, 2016b: 1). The U.S.A., Canada and Australia, those countries with the highest resettlement arrival numbers, are likely to select refugees with regard to the best prospect of integration into the societies, as has been the case for a number of years (Oxfam, 2005). Nevertheless, also the EU member states, like Germany, have established their own selection criteria, and attempt thereby to control the migration and refugee flows into their country (Baumer et al., 2017).

However, a pragmatic perspective can be taken as well, according to which the individual selection criteria used by host countries are necessary to narrow down the number of applicants. These criteria involve selecting refugees who already have a connection to the country of destination, or who have other abilities that facilitate the integration process; in turn, this affects the individual well-being positively. On the other hand, an ethical analysis focuses on the resulting power imbalance in this procedure: Displaced people are passive participants who do not have a say in any decision-making process. UNHCR obtains the delicate task of balancing the interests of host countries and those of refugees, as it is responsible for the submission of resettlement candidates (Lindsay, 2017). Moreover, the selection criteria and the voluntary character of the program lead to obvious discrimination, as for instance Islamophobic portrayals of Muslim Arab men as terrorists, which is why host countries may avoid resettling them (Turner 2017). Another example of discrimination is related to the health status of applicants. Several host countries reject refugees due to their difficult health status, which is determined during their medical screening (UNHCR, 2011). People, diagnosed with for example HIV can be rejected by host countries, as there is no legal obligation to accept them. Host countries are free in their national selection policy and may reject these special cases by justifying the decision on the grounds of national security or avoiding financial burdens.

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An additional point of critique regards the power-imbalance between host and transit country within the context of resettlement arrangements. While the cooperation between those two countries is unofficially based on resettling displaced people from the respective third country, the goal to protect the individual is once again not the focus of this strategy. Instead, the third countries might be forced to change their politics into EU-desired directions to receive assistance and to share burdens.

As a consequence of these critical factors, resettlement cannot be seen as the perfect solution for safe pathways, and further procedural development is needed. Nevertheless, resettlement is a crucial tool for relocating refugees legally and safely, and therefore the continuous improvement of this durable solution must be a main goal for all actors. One way of reaching this goal is the analysis of the process in order to detect weaknesses and room for improvement. The pre-departure and post-arrival services are major steps within this process, which offer unique chances to optimize the process for both refugees and host countries.

2.2 Pre-departure Services and Recommendations

After a positive resettlement decision has been taken, the pre-departure processing starts, including services before the actual departure to the host country takes place. It is desirable to "consider the needs and concerns of each refugee, their health and well-being, arrangements for their safe travel and the prospect of their meaningful integration" (Swing, 2017: 5), not only because of the mental stability of the person but also because of economic reasons, since a facilitated integration process fosters this person becoming an contributing member of society. In order to ensure this, pre-departure services are offered to refugees that aim to assist during the travel and to provide preparations for life in the host community. Pre-departure training programs for migrants are not a novelty of this century. In fact, such programs were already used in the early 1960s to encourage a first orientation among labor migrants (Chindea, 2015). Pre-departure services for resettlement refugees should ideally include coordination regarding the travel arrangements and medical screening, including follow-ups. Additionally, specific cultural pre-departure courses should be offered.

These services enhance newcomers to become self-sufficient members of the host society which increases the likelihood of successful integration (Gray, 2008; Chindea, 2015; UNHCR, 2011). Beside this, pre-departure services have positive impacts on host countries as well, since labor market information is shared and assistance in credential recognition processes is given. For transit countries, pre-departure services have the advantage of reducing the stressful impact of the exhausting waiting period for refugees, which can prevent possible tensions or criminal behavior on-site (Baraulina & Bitterwolf, 2016).

Actors in the pre-departure service provision are governmental institutions, private sector organizations, and NGOs, but the main actors in pre-departure services are UNHCR and IOM (Gray, 2008; Chindea, 2015). The actual implementation of these services is carried out by the workers on-site, although there are no general job-requirements defined for this working field.

The arrangements for the departure vary concerning their duration and expenditure, depending on the host country to which the person will be resettled (Gray, 2008). In general, the three main objectives of pre-departure services are the following: medical

screening, which includes the examination of the mental and physical health status (Ekholm et al., 2005; IOM, 2014), coordinating travel arrangements, including assistance for visa matters and flight organization (UNHCR, 2011), and providing pre-departure orientation (UNHCR, 2011; IOM, 2015). The pre-departure orientation can be divided into four broad thematic categories. First is the provision of information about the host country, like daily life circumstances, social norms and values, and basic information about the labor market. Second is the development of certain skills which are needed to be a self-sufficient member of society, such as language training. The third category is defined as enhancing employment chances, which includes active job search and entrepreneurship guidance. Lastly, the thematic field of the labor market in the host country is covered, which includes the recognition of skills and competences, since recognition of foreign accredited credentials facilitates the integration, and it saves resources of the host countries in terms of social services. The coverage of all this information is the ideal, but does not imply that pre-departure services commonly cover all this in their content. However, most pre-departure orientation services cover more than one category (Chindea, 2015). A holistic pre-departure orientation program should cover all four categories, as all of them ultimately contribute to a successful transition. In the case of most host countries, the exact content provided during a specific orientation course is not documented in detail. In general, content and length of pre-departure orientation courses vary with regard to the responsible host country and its policies (Westerby & Ngo-Diep, 2013).

Germany subcontracts IOM with the task of pre-departure service implementation. Therefore, IOM provides the medical screening services and travel arrangements. As far as orientation is concerned, it initiates cultural orientation courses and certain travel arrangements (IOM 2015). Furthermore, information is provided on visa processes and news from Germany, with a special focus on integration-related services. There is a so-called integration class, which covers daily life aspects in Germany, and rights and responsibilities concerning the national law. The development of certain skills is mentioned in this context (without defining them closely) for the successful adaptation into German society (IOM, n.d.; UNHCR, 2016a). Orientation courses are usually implemented by either IOM or Diakonie, and last a maximum of 20 hours, in the countries of first asylum. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* – BAMF), they cover basic information about the country and life in Germany, regulations regarding the residency, dealing with local authorities, accommodation information, and basic knowledge of the German language. Furthermore a BAMF information sheet about Germany and its legislation is handed out in several languages to the newcomers (Grote et al., 2016).

Besides these pre-departure courses, Germany provides several services on the internet via apps, videos, or webpages. These services contribute during the pre-departure and post-arrival phase, and are further examined in the analysis of post-arrival services below.

Reviewing pre-departure services leads to several recommendations for service organizers and providers. Although these services have already existed for decades, the implementation still leaves room for criticism and thus for further improvement. The discussion that follows outlines several recommendations for pre-departure services. These focus on the necessity of a linkage between pre-departure and post-arrival services (PDS1-linkage), inclusion of counseling on several levels (PDS2-counseling), establishment of an effective waiting period (PDS3-waiting period), empowerment of

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refugees to become active participants throughout the process (PDS4-empowerment), inclusion of prevention of radicalization (PDS5-radicalization), acknowledgement of credentials (PDS6-credentials), evaluation of the services for improvement (PDS7-evaluation), and the establishment of other, informal sources of information (PDS8-informal sources).

With respect to establishing an effective linkage (PDS1-linkage) between these two stages, the combined outcomes of both will be more effective than the results of each single stage on its own. Pre-departure services can prepare refugees more appropriately if service providers know the specific procedure of the arrival phase. They must be continuously updated to always provide the most current information to refugees. Post-arrival services need to know the content of pre-departure services, as this enables providers to continue services at the specific level on which the prior services have stopped. An example of evidence for this missing linkage is the referral of pre-resettlement educational experiences as a "black box" (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). With this linkage, however, language courses would not have to start from point zero and information provision could continue at an advanced level. IOM confirms the relevance of this recommendation, as it perceives this linkage as one core principle for any resettlement operation (IOM, 2018).

The lack of attention to counseling for refugees generates a second recommendation (PDS2-counseling). Counseling should not just be part of the medical screening services but must be integral to the field of pre-departure orientation, as anxiety or depression can arise and expectations can be changed through orientation courses. When IOM introduces its role in pre-departure orientation, it does not mention counseling as a task, although it names the aspect as a challenge (IOM, 2014). However, appropriate counseling is a necessary aspect for stabilizing the psychosocial well-being of participants (Backer & Stephen, 2014).

Furthermore, the waiting period is perceived by refugees as frustrating, without any active possibilities (Baraulina & Bitterwolf, 2016). This period leads to the third recommendation concerning the waiting period (PDS3-waiting period). It is important for service providers to act speedily but precisely. The waiting period should be bridged effectively and adequately for refugees: Awareness regarding fast and at the same time careful processing needs to be raised among the responsible staff.

The fact that refugees do not have the chance to actively participate in the resettlement process – except for paying for a transfer in some cases – is another point of critique. They are not their own agents of change, and instead they can only hope for a better future, feeling powerless, and often not even knowing the status of their resettlement application (Baraulina & Bitterwolf, 2016). Consequently, the empowerment of refugees should also be listed as a recommendation (PDS4-empowerment). IOM confirms this recommendation, as well as the establishment of refugee-centered programs, which is named as one core principle (IOM, 2018).

Additionally, the topic of extremism and radicalization is not included in pre-departure services. However, there is a risk of refugees becoming radicalized in refugee camps (IOM, 2017; Sude, 2021). Pre-departure services must react to this challenge (PDS5-radicalization), by including approaches, first for the prevention of radicalization, and second for the detection of already radicalized refugees.

Another point of critique that implies a recommendation is the rarely covered service of the recognition of credentials (PDS6-credentials) (Chindea, 2015). Services in this regard must be included, as they are indispensable for successful integration in the host country, thereby facilitating employment. The refugee's resources, like knowledge, networks, and motivation can be used as a driving factor in successful preparation for the labor market. Ideally, the accreditation of credentials should take place already in the transit country, as the waiting period provides enough time for such a procedure which then can be saved in the host country.

The content of pre-departure orientation courses is difficult to review critically, as the exact content (not just the ideal case of what should be included), the implementation and the service providers themselves, cannot be examined accurately through literature review. This indicates the need for a recommendation to conduct continuous evaluation and monitoring, because this would ensure optimal implementation (PDS7-evaluation). Nevertheless, all of this is only possible with given transparency throughout the process of service provision.

The eighth recommendation concerns the various channels of information (PDS8-informal sources), since refugees use informal channels to inform themselves. Private networking for example, is one of the main means to gather information about the host country, as well as the usage of internet platforms and accessing available forums (Chindea, 2015). Host countries usually already provide the necessary data at internet platforms established for this purpose in several languages. Such platforms should be promoted strongly. Plus, as refugees tend to use private networks, this indicates the need for raising awareness among those refugees who are already in the host country, so that they can provide correct information to friends and family members who are still in the transit or home country.

These recommendations are meant to give advice for amendments to pre-departure services for further improvement. Although these results are extracted on the basis of, inter alia, the analysis of pre-departure services for Germany, they can be applicable for other host countries. Therefore, host countries must reflect their currently provided services and adapt where necessary.

2.3 Post-arrival Services and Recommendations

During the reception phase, post-arrival services are offered to refugees, implemented by NGOs at a reception center in the host country. Those services have several potentials for people of concern and for the host country. One major potential is the enhancement of the integration process for refugees, since they can receive a primary orientation and information about important services. Second, the mental health status can be stabilized, since expectations can be further clarified, and orientation can be given to prevent or at least decrease the impact of the cultural shock. Further potential improvements in post-arrival services are the coverage of immediate needs, and being granted access to general health care. Additionally, language skills and orientation courses foster the integration process. Moreover, considerations for the future life of refugees can be taken in this reception phase, such as employment and education. Post-arrival services prepare refugees specifically for their future life in the host country. Provision of counseling in several areas can ensure an optimal outcome of the reception phase. Ultimately, the protection of family unity, on the one hand, and protection of individuals, on the other

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hand, can prevent further harm (UNHCR, 2009; 2013). The relevance of the reception phase is acknowledged in several studies (Ekholm et al., 2005: 65; Hazel & Phillmann, 2011; UNHCR, 2001). However, as with the pre-departure services, the implementation of services vary due to the host countries regulations and possibilities.

The reception center *Grenzdurchgangslager Friedland* (GDL) is the reception center for resettlement refugees in Germany. At the GDL, refugees are provided with basic needs like accommodation and nutrition. Besides this, they receive financial resources as a welcoming gift, provided by the BAMF. Refugees receive access to the orientation course, *Wegweiser für Deutschland* (engl.: A Guide to Germany) (Niedersächsisches MI, 2013: 3). Data processing, distribution of clothing and hygiene articles, social care for children, coordination of interpreters, and the further distribution of refugees, are the main services provided in GDL. The costs of all services, accommodation, and care are covered by the federal level of Germany (Grote et al., 2016).

The *Wegweiser* orientation course aims to provide an overview of life in Germany. The course lasts for five days, and is always a full-day program. During the first half of each day, the intercultural language-studio takes place. This is not a customary language course, but a first orientation for an understanding of the language structure. As the time frame is extremely tight, co-teaching with someone speaking the native language of the newcomers often features in the language learning process. Besides language skills, improvement of intercultural competencies and provision of general orientation are the main emphases during the second half of each day. Thereafter, the course continues by covering certain topics that are crucial for daily life in Germany (Landesaufnahmebehörde Niedersachsen, n.d.).

The content for orientation provision is separated into several sub-topics. The course starts with explaining the free, democratic constitutional foundations of the Republic. The themes of basic values, tolerance, and security dominate the session. The content of the second day is practically orientated, covering issues of mobility, specifically how to use public transportation, and learning the rules of traffic. The third day focuses on education and employment. The schooling system, kindergarten, universities and information about the labor market are explained. On the fourth day, the main subject is the health system in Germany, focusing on the procedures for doctor's visits, hospital visits, and prevention of harmful drug use and other diseases. The last and fifth day of this course concentrates on the migration procedure in Germany, and covers how to deal with authorities and procedures; further regulations and duties are discussed. The aims of integration and related services are introduced, and at the same time, the possibility of returning is outlined. Participants receive a textbook which contains all the topics that were discussed during the course, so that they have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge independently (Landesaufnahmebehörde Niedersachsen, n.d.).

In the GDL there are two NGOs providing these services for refugees – Caritas Friedland and Inner Mission Friedland (IM Friedland). Both NGOs provide counseling services, mainly migration counseling for adult migrants which focuses on integration services in Germany, the right of residence, accreditation of credentials, material security, and personal or similar problems (Caritas Friedland, 2018). The principle of enabling the refugees to help themselves, in German commonly known as "*Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe*" (Paul, 2018), is at the center of attention.

Apart from services provided by the NGOs at GDL, there are online services for refugees and migrants available, with the goal of fostering the integration process. The Goethe Institute is the main provider of these services, being the main developer of apps and webpages. There are, for instance, the arrival-app (German title: *Ankommen-App*), the German language trainer A1 app (German title: *Deutschtrainer A1*), the city of words app (German title: *Die Stadt der Wörter*), or the language-guidance welcome app (German title: *Sprachführer Willkommen*). All these apps concentrate on transmitting German language skills, in either a professional way for adults, or in a playful way for children. Webpages for learning German are categorized for employers, with a webpage called German at the working place (German title: *Deutsch am Arbeitsplatz*), for the daily life the My-way-to-Germany website (German title: *Mein Weg nach Deutschland*) and for absolute beginners the German-for-you website (German title: *Deutsch für dich*). For children, there is the additional possibility to download podcasts of audiobooks for German tales in the Arabic language, so as to enhance the integration process by spreading knowledge about famous German children's stories that may provide insights to life in Germany and related, common values (Goethe-Institute 2018). The BAMF provides information for newcomers on their webpage called Welcome to Germany (German title: *Willkommen in Deutschland*). The webpage provides information regarding language courses, integration courses, accommodation, employment, education etc. (BAMF, 2018).

All these services are the main approaches to facilitate the start in Germany and to foster integration processes. There are various other service providers at the municipalities that offer counseling or implement integration and community work at a local level. However, these services are not part of the reception phase and therefore do not belong to the post-arrival services during the resettlement process.

Ultimately, it must be mentioned that the annual budget for resettlement provided by the federal state for resettlement services has increased significantly. In the year 2012 the budget was 450,000 Euro and in 2015 it more than doubled to 1,004,000 Euro (Grote et al., 2016). These numbers on their own indicate the value and status of the resettlement program for the future. Following this trend, Germany was the second biggest sponsor of the UNHCR in 2021 (after the U.S.A.), which suggests that supporting refugee programs is considered important (Auswärtiges Amt, 2022).

Reviewing existing services, guidelines, and principles, several recommendations for the reception phase at GDL can be extracted. First, information flow and cooperation must be ensured with a transparent linkage between provided services (PAS1-linkage). Furthermore, there must be continuous evaluations of post-arrival services and their effectiveness to ensure improvement (PAS2-evaluation). In addition, the municipalities need time to prepare themselves for the new arrivals and their specific needs (PAS3-municipalities). The option of differentiating services from resettlement refugees and other refugees and migrants during the reception phase must be explored, as this could lead to advanced courses (PDS3-differentiation). The establishment of a men's center at GDL should be considered to provide a safe space for men, similar to the existing example of the women's center (PAS5-men center). Finally, the development of bottom-up approaches (PAS6-bottom-up) should be part of the post-arrival service development.

As already outlined above in the recommendations for pre-departure services, a linkage between the pre- and post-phase is extremely relevant for adequate service provision, but also important is the interplay within the post-phase, meaning between GDL, online

Witter. S. (2023). Resettlement Services
Quarterly on Refugee Problems, 2023, Vol. 62, Issue 1, 35-58
ISSN 2750-7882, Section: Research Articles
Open Access Publication, https://doi.org/10.57947/qrp.v62i1.41

service providers, governmental authorities, and service providers for the time after the reception phase at GDL (PAS1-linkage).

In order to establish such a transparent flow of information, documentation and evaluation needs to be implemented on a regular basis (PAS2-evaluation). So far, there are only a few evaluation reports about the GDL in Friedland, (c.f. Niedersächsisches MI, 2013; Ministerium für Soziales und Verbraucherschutz – Sachsen, 2014); there were no new insights, reflections or evaluations about the procedure at GDL. Services in the reception phase should be evaluated to access whether they meet the needs of refugees. For this, transparency at all stages must be ensured so researchers can document and evaluate holistically.

Moreover, municipalities are often informed at short notice about who will arrive, at what time, and what possible special needs there may be (PAS3-municipalities). It is especially important to arrange medical treatment and services in advance; without information about respective needs, this cannot be done (Grote et al., 2016). Municipalities should also have advance awareness of counseling or education needs. The coordination of the resettlement process needs to become more structured and definite in order to enable preparation in advance.

A further recommendation concerns the equal service provision of resettlement refugees and other refugees and migrants at GDL (PDS4-differentiation). The pre-experiences of resettlement refugees are different from those who migrated via unsafe or illegal pathways. Resettlement refugees may have different expectations or fears, because their migration history differs from those who have entered the host country via another pathway. Because of this, Munich, for example, provides counseling exclusively for resettlement refugees and in Aachen there is a specialized department with social workers responsible for this group of refugees (Hergenröther & Kaufmann, 2015). Especially, some differentiation within the *Wegweiser* course seems an obvious necessity, as this first orientation should already have taken place during pre-departure services. Therefore, resettlement refugees would be in a position to start at an advanced level. Moreover, a differentiation due to age, gender, language abilities, or educational background must be considered when providing services.

Gender roles need special attention during the reception procedure. Refugees arrive in a new environment in which gender roles might be different compared to their home country. One initiative designed to strengthen the women's situation at GDL is the establishment of the women's center. However, this raises the question of why there is no men's center established yet (PAS5-men center). Men also experience the pre- and post-migration stressors and might develop difficulties coping with them. Refugees often come from patriarchal societies in which men have the role of the protector and being strong for the families. Therefore, it might be challenging for them to admit worries, doubts, or sadness openly. Furthermore, the cultural change they must face in Germany, due to the value of gender equality, may be difficult for them to understand.

Refugees want to build up a stable life in Germany and to establish a daily routine, including employment and education. This motivation must be used for fostering integration with bottom-up approaches instead of exclusively top-down measures (PAS6-bottom-up). Women for instance, even though their integration motivation is as high as that of men, on average integrate later into society than men because of family obligations

(Baraulina & Bitterwolf, 2016). Sufficient information should be provided for childcare opportunities and, and obviously such child-care opportunities should also be available. Aspects like this can only be involved in post-arrival services by including the ideas and skills of refugees in the service development.

All these recommendations must be taken into consideration when developing the reception phase. As the number of resettled people in Germany has been growing every year – except in 2020 due to the Corona Pandemic (UNHCR, 2023) – and the option of resettlement as a safe and legal pathway becomes more attractive – not at least because of the absence of alternatives – the improvement of existing structures and services is indispensable. The recommendations can be adapted to other host countries' situations, always taking into account the social, economic, and political situations specific to each.

3 Empirical Methods

The results of this paper are based not only on the theoretical analysis and literature review of the services but also on two expert interviews. First, desk research on pre-departure and post-arrival services was conducted, followed by a theoretical analysis to derive recommendations, as outlined above. Those recommendations were derived from a theory-based approach, yet without having considered practitioners' expertise. Practitioners, who work in pre-departure and post-arrival services are close to the clients, recognize strengths in their working fields, as well as deficits in the implementation. Therefore, adding practitioners' insights is indispensable to reconsider recommendations, add points of critique, or detect other discrepancies. Therefore, expert interviews were conducted with service providers in both, the pre-departure and the post-arrival phase. Even though requests were sent to several staff members of service providers (IOM, UNHCR, Caritas and Diakonie) only one of the pre-departure and one of post-arrival phase replied. This small number of interviewees places certain limitations on this research, since only one point of view for each phase is examined. Other staff members might describe the working field differently, and there is the chance that they would have other or no points of critique. However, since the questions about service implementation were very fact-based and non-emotional, the referring answers were objective rather than subjective. Therefore, the validity of the collected data can still be graded as high.

As the expert interview generates information about a definite field or aspect, which is neither biographical nor related to personal values (Kaiser, 2014), it is the appropriate methodology for this research, since the focus lies on gathering information about the service provision in the pre- and post-phase. A social worker, working in a transit country at IOM directly in the field of pre-departure services was chosen as the expert for those services. For the thematic field of post-arrival services, a staff member of GDL was willing to be interviewed.

For the interview with Exp-Departure, the procedure itself as well as the theoretically derived recommendations of the services were the basis for the interview. However, not all eight recommendations were discussed in this interview, as one of these did not fall under the scope of the interviewee (PDS8-informal sources). For the interview with Exp-Arrival, the strategy to establish theme blocks for the manual was the same as for the pre-departure field, by using the theoretical analysis and recommendations of the post-phase. However, the recommendation to open a men's center, similar to the existing women's center (PAS5-men center), has been considered as part of a backup question block – that

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ISSN 2750-7882, Section: Research Articles
Open Access Publication, https://doi.org/10.57947/qrp.v62i1.41

could be used either for filling gaps or if the dialogue flow provided an opportunity for it – as this recommendation only marked a service extension and not a general interdisciplinary change on several levels. Information on the role of the social workers, working in the expert's organization was sought throughout these several blocks in both interviews.

Since the method of qualitative content analysis is often quoted as the most suitable method for evaluating expert interviews (Bogner et al., 2014: 72; Wassermann, 2015: 61; Kaiser, 2014: 90), this method was used for the evaluation, and followed the nine steps proposed by Mayring (2000) for establishing a category system. For the evaluation process, the computer software MAXQDA was used, which is – especially in the German-speaking scientific area – commonly used for the analysis of expert interviews.

4 Findings

The combination of the theoretical analysis and the evaluation of the empirical interviews leads to a finalization of recommendations, for both pre-departure and post-arrival services. These recommendations are outlined further, based upon the information provided by the experts during the interviews.

By examining the recommendations, one can derive the specific skills needed to implement them, and offer guidance for service providers. This leads to an identification of the role of Social Work in this field, and allows conclusions to be drawn regarding the potential of the profession.

4.1 Room for Improvement

Germany has not established a linkage between pre-departure and post-arrival services yet (PDS1, PDS2). One option to facilitate this linkage would be to employ service providers for both stages – pre-departure and post-arrival. This approach is not a new one, since it has already been implemented by IOM for other host countries. Such employees not only strengthen the linkage, but additionally they accompany refugees throughout the whole process, which provides stability to people of concern. Another option for establishing a linkage would be to initiate annual conferences in which providers of both stages participate, like Australia already does (Chindea, 2015). According to Exp-Departure, the UK provides another example, as it offers training courses for the IOM staff in transit countries. Moreover, contact could be established between a social worker providing post-arrival services and refugees in the transit country in the form of a video call, which can build up trust and confidence (Swing, 2017). The other way around, the contact between refugees in the host country and their former social workers in the transit country gives refugees the chance to report first-hand experiences. This might be also possible as an online peer-to-peer approach from refugee to refugee. All these considerations demonstrate possibilities on how to improve the linkage between services. The examples of other host countries indicate the potential of such linkages and can be used as a blueprint for Germany.

Counseling (PDS2) as such is implemented in pre-departure services. However, according to Exp-Departure, there is not a relevant expert for each field of counseling; instead all fields are covered by one session. The recommendation to include more intense counseling opportunities in several fields is justified, as it is not possible to at once adequately counsel on all fields, such as legal aspects, health access, labor market,

accreditation of credentials (PDS6), and mental health issues. Furthermore, guidelines for each of these fields facilitate adequate service provision, such as the one already established for HIV counseling. Moreover, the requirement for counselors to have a university degree in academic disciplines related to counseling ensures that responsible staff have the necessary expertise.

The time duration between the resettlement decision and the departure can take up to two years (PDS3). Orientation courses take place shortly before departure and take three to five days. The rest of the period has to be adequately bridged equally well, as otherwise valuable time for preparation is lost. Therefore, the counseling services discussed in the paragraph above must be offered and made available already during this waiting period (PDS2). Implementing measurements of community work with the refugees selected for resettlement enables them, first to become active participants (PDS4, PAS6) and, second provides meaningful approaches during this transition period. This can, for instance, take place in the form of weekly meetings among refugees, comparable with a self-help group, supervised by a social worker. Host countries can provide material, which can be worked through without a teacher. Furthermore, experts from host countries can attend the first session to give input on how the sessions could be held in future. This also can enhance the linkage between pre- and post-phase (PAS1, PDS1). Such an approach needs a scientifically-based concept, as well as pilot projects that measure the effectiveness. Moreover, Exp-Departure pointed out that the time for the orientation courses is too short to provide an adequate orientation for refugees. This is confirmed by Exp-Arrival, who criticizes the fact of refugees being not adequately prepared for the labor market in Germany and for everyday life. Therefore, related orientation courses need to be extended, from few-days courses to few-weeks courses. To save resources, sessions do not have to take place every day, but weekly sessions with homework would ensure both adequate use of the waiting period and more time available for the orientation courses.

Exp-Departure confirmed the observation of refugees as being passive throughout the process (PDS4) and therefore empowerment strategies are needed. This recommendation is connected to the advice for post-arrival services to establish bottom-up approaches (PAS6), as both aim for refugees to be active participants in the program. The above outlined self-help group would be one strategy of empowerment in the pre-phase. A further consideration for this is fostering transparency about the status of the procedure, because knowledge of the procedure is the first step for involvement in the process. Moreover, refugees should be involved in the creation process of the orientation courses. There may be interests or relevant concerns that are considered by people of concern, and not by service providers. Staff members must furthermore perceive refugees as individuals at a strength-based level and therefore use empowerment strategies throughout the process, because according to Exp-Arrival, otherwise it will lead to dependency as a consequence.

Certain host countries continuously evaluate their pre-departure services by conducting regular visits, for example the UK or Australia (PDS7, PAS2), but German actors do not evaluate service provision directly on-site. This direct interaction and supervision enables the implementation of holistic evaluations for further improvement. As a side effect, it fosters the linkage between the phases (PAS1, PDS1). For post-arrival services in Germany, so far, no continuous holistic evaluation takes place. To ensure this evaluation in both phases, guidelines for documentation must be established. For the evaluation, measurable goals for services must be set. Moreover, feedback forms, complaints

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Quarterly on Refugee Problems, 2023, Vol. 62, Issue 1, 35-58
ISSN 2750-7882, Section: Research Articles
Open Access Publication, https://doi.org/10.57947/qrp.v62i1.41

procedures, or group consultations with refugees, can be strategies to monitor and evaluate (Hazel & Phillmann, 2011). All this is only possible with demonstrated transparency about content, structure, and coordination.

The information flow throughout the whole resettlement process needs to be improved. Municipalities in Germany must get to know who will be sent to their region and when (PAS3). As Exp-Arrival explained, it is not possible to receive the information earlier than two weeks beforehand, because the *Königssteiner* Schlüssel, a quota system to distribute refugees and resettled among the Federal States, can only be applied after their arrival in Germany. This would support the recommendation to establish a system within which the *Königssteiner Schlüssel* can be applied, already before the actual arrival of refugees, so that all stakeholders know during the pre-phase where they are bound to live. Nevertheless, this recommendation must be extended, since according to Exp-arrival not only municipalities are informed about arrivals at short notice, but also the actors at GDL. Therefore, the information flow among stakeholders must be improved in general, and not only with regard to municipalities (PAS1, PDS1).

The *Wegweiser* course at GDL is already differentiated with regard to resettlement refugees and other refugees. However, the course's content is the same for both, instead of starting at a more advanced level for resettlement refugees, who have taken part already in an orientation course during the pre-departure phase. This needs to be changed by providing a *Wegweiser* course part-one in the transit country, and continuing at GDL with a part-two. This recommendation is connected to the advice for establishing a stable linkage (PAS1, PDS1), as this is necessary to create courses that build up on each other.

Finally, the recommendation to establish a men's center (PAS5) must be reviewed, since according to Exp-Arrival, the number of refugees in need for such a center is small. Nevertheless, arrival centers should evaluate the need for such measures in order to prevent integration barriers or reduce mental health problems, for example, depression.

These finalized recommendations need to be further researched and implemented in pre-departure and post-arrival services, so as to grant effective and holistic service provision. Obviously, implementing all recommendations requires structured planning and implies a financial burden. However, host countries must calculate the costs and potential benefits of this implementation. Moreover, the mental well-being of refugees would be stabilized, which would help them to become self-sufficient members of the society and less dependent on medical care. Finally, an effective implementation of these recommendations can only be achieved by employing and tasking service providers who are specifically skilled in this regard.

4.2 The Role of Professionalized Social Work and the Required Skills

The connection between Social Work and resettlement is self-evident due to the challenges that occur along with refugee movements perceiving resettlement as a facilitator of such movements. These challenges are linked to professional fields of Social Work, and refugees are a target group of the profession (Heilmann, 2021). The achievement of outlined potentials of pre-departure as well as post-arrival services connect to several goals of Social Work, like, for instance, a stable mental status or successful integration processes.

Indeed, there is evidence of social workers being employed in post-arrival services of

certain countries, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Sweden. In other countries however, like the UK or Romania, no specific university degree is required, only appropriate experience and skills (Hazel & Phillmann, 2011). In Germany, social workers are employed, but not exclusively so. Regarding pre-departure services, Exp-Departure insists on a university degree in Social Work being crucial for an adequate provision. Regardless of this, according to the expert, there are still staff members employed at IOM who do not have a university degree.

Nevertheless, the staff clearly do need to have special skills to work within these services, especially to implement the recommendations summarized above. In the following discussion, those skills are connected to the recommendations. Additionally, it is shown that professionals of social work possess those skills.

The monitoring of the services requires documentation and evaluation skills (PDS7, PAS2), and the establishment of the linkage requires networking skills (PDS1, PAS1). These skills do not simply foster the linkage between the two stages, but also enable cooperation with stakeholders in general. Stakeholders are, for instance, ministries and departments responsible for education, health, or labor, local authorities, providers of integration services, or civil society representatives (UNHCR 2013). Social workers are trained to monitor and evaluate in order to improve the work in their fields, and to contribute with respective results to social sciences. Additionally, they develop a personal and communicative competence, which enable the required networking tasks (Leinenbach, 2009).

In addition, the ability to establish new scientifically-based concepts is required, as is the capacity to make them applicable for other target groups. With this skill, services can be changed so that they become suitable for different target groups and serve their diverse needs. Social workers are able to work scientifically, since social work education requires scientific understanding and its application (Bieker & Westerholt, 2021).

Clearly, diversity sensitivity and intercultural competences are also required skills in order to meet the needs of those different target groups. Social Workers learn and reflect such competences during their studies (Anish et al., 2021) and this could allow an adequate *Wegweiser* course to be created (PAS4).

The empowerment of clients is a central element of service provision, and therefore a further required skill is to be able to conduct the related relevant approaches (PDS4, PAS6). The effective bridging of the waiting period also requires abilities to create empowering concepts (PDS3). Empowerment, being a central element of social work, is always considered by social workers, and enabling the clients to be part of social work concepts (Herriger, 2020). Therefore, social workers are also able to empower refugees along their resettlement process.

The challenges of providing information to municipalities in advance can be managed with a distribution system that calculates the final destination of resettlement refugees before their actual arrival. In order to lobby for the policies to be changed, being familiar with the legal and political system is crucial (PAS3). Social workers must develop legal and political competences in general, since those are needed to represent their clients and to inform them about legal and political frames (Leinenbach, 2009). Since social work in the field of migration and refugees acts within a special legal framework, social workers have to be aware of international legal instruments of law, in order to apply and promote them

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ISSN 2750-7882, Section: Research Articles
Open Access Publication, https://doi.org/10.57947/qrp.v62i1.41

adequately (Roßkopf, 2021). This is why legal issues need to be part of each social work curriculum (DGSA, 2016).

As shown above, social work trains its professionals to develop those required skills which enables them to be employed as service providers during the resettlement process. Due to their skills, they can play various roles during that process:

Social workers can be implementers of the orientation courses, as these require cultural sensitivity, empowerment strategies, and approaches for enhancing integration. Furthermore, social workers always must be researchers in all their working fields, who document, monitor, and evaluate, so as to uncover irregularities or deficits, and possibly to create new concepts. Professionals must additionally be creators of access to services for people who cannot lay claim to the access by themselves. Refugees are passive participants in the resettlement procedure who often do not have access to information, transparency, or certain services. Additionally, social workers must take the role of human rights' promoters, as these rights are a central element of the profession that needs to be protected (Spatscheck, 2018). Moreover, professionals ought to be networkers who establish linkages between both phases, and who cooperate with other stakeholders. Professionals can be counselors in several fields if they have gained the necessary expertise by putting the main emphasis on the related field. Social workers can take the role of counselors due to their academic education, as required counseling skills are part of their curriculum (DGSA, 2016). This curriculum provides further justification for the identified roles above, as its content requires the teaching of relevant skills within the Social Work study program (cf. DGSA, 2016). Ultimately, social workers are always advocates for change and must be critical analysts of political and economic aspects, as it is a primary task of the profession to promote social change and development (IASW, 2014).

Considering all these needed skills and the fact that social workers gain those skills and can therefore perform the necessary roles of the resettlement process, responsible institutions should establish requirements for their employees to be degree holders in Social Work or at least to have a related educational background. According to Exp-Departure, there are employees who have not graduated from a university. In their opinion, the academic education of Social Work is enormously valuable for this field, and employers ought to recognize these advantages. They emphasized that Social Work education develops the ability to combine theory and practice with each other, and to apply theory to a field of practice. This skill is unique for social workers and it enables professionals to fulfill their tasks and roles.

Therefore, the employment of volunteers or peers must be reviewed critically, as unprofessional service provision might fail to take advantage of available services (Hazel & Phillmann, 2011). Volunteers are usually not trained and therefore increase the risk of inflicting harm. This indicates the special need for closely supervising volunteers during their work. The peer-to-peer approach is useful, to bridge the language barrier. Peers are also aware of cultural circumstances and flight experiences. However, this approach must be supervised carefully as well, as it quickly establishes a hierarchy among refugees, which may lead to tensions. In conclusion, this means that even though volunteers and peers are necessary workers in this field, their employment needs careful examination and awareness of possible pitfalls. Lastly, it must be added that a thematically related educational background, such as a Social Work degree, should always be favored over

employees without this background.

Summarizing all of the above, this means that there is not one specific role, but there are several roles for social workers in the resettlement framework, specifically in the areas of pre-departure or post-arrival services. Social workers can be implementers of orientation courses, researchers who conduct evaluations, creators of access for refugees to necessary services, promoters of human rights, networkers who establish linkages, advocators for change who continuously reflect the current situation. Finally, professionals can be counselors in several fields if they have placed an emphasis on the respective field of counseling during their studies.

5 Conclusion

Resettlement is a promising legal pathway for refugees. Even though it "appears to be the proverbial drop in the ocean when regarded in purely quantitative terms" (Popp, 2018: 17), it provides a mechanism for immigrating legally and for gaining protection with a long-term perspective (ibid). Still, the resettlement program is not yet an alternative to irregular arrivals. To become such an alternative, regulations regarding admission and exclusion criteria would need to be established, as well as fixed quotas for host countries being clarified.

The program as conducted today does not meet the main goal of resettlement completely, which is to provide a safe pathway to the most vulnerable refugees. Politics and economics influence resettlement admissions, as cooperation between third countries and EU Member States determine quotas. Furthermore, certain selection criteria require the capacities to integrate into the host society to foster the labor market. Although resettlement must always be initiated with the aim to relocate the most vulnerable refugees, requesting the capacity for integration is not wrong in itself. Clearly, it does make sense to resettle, for instance, a French-speaking person in France, while a person with a connection to Germany should be resettled to Germany. Nevertheless, the integration potential can only play a secondary role. As a priority, refugees with the highest vulnerability concerns must be selected.

Even in case of successful application of such selection criteria, there is still the bottleneck of fixed quotas. Host countries decide among themselves on the number of resettlement places, and the current quota demonstrates the consequences. For example, just 2% of people in need for resettlement have been resettled in 2020 (Solf & Rehberg, 2021). This answers the question as to why resettlement might be relatively unknown; it simply does not have a big impact yet. The number of available resettlement places must be raised enormously for the program to be taken into consideration as an alternative for irregular pathways.

Services provided during the pre-departure and the post-arrival phase are essential for refugees and host countries. All of the findings and recommendations target different changes and developments, but in the end, they relate to each other. The adequate use of the waiting-period (PDS3) in the pre-phase can, for example, be combined with the accreditation of credentials (PDS6), strategies to prevent radicalization (PDS5), distribution of informal sources (PDS8), provision of holistic counseling (PDS2), and adequate, long-lasting orientation courses, on which the host country can continue to build (PAS1, PDS1). Moreover, such courses require a framework based on evaluations (PDS7, PAS2) conducted during current service provision. The framework must consider several

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ISSN 2750-7882, Section: Research Articles
Open Access Publication, https://doi.org/10.57947/qrp.v62i1.41

target groups to be effective. Hereby, not only differentiation due the different pathways must be acknowledged, but also diversity aspects (PAS4). Gender, for instance, is a highly sensitive factor, as men require in certain circumstances other services than women. A men's, or women's center could respond to special needs (PAS5). Being blind to diversity aspects can result in gaps in the service provision. Besides diversity aspects, holistic concepts for service provision must always be established on the basis of empowerment (PDS4) to prevent dependency amongst refugees, and on bottom-up approaches (PAS6), so as to increase motivation. However, if the courses provided in the post-phase should build up on the prior one in the pre-phase, a linkage between the phases is necessary (PAS1, PDS1). The connection between service providers in the pre- and in the post-phase does not just increase the effectiveness of the services but enables a quick and simple information flow among all stakeholders (PAS3).

After reviewing all these recommendations, there are two central main points that should be focused on by service providers. First, one of the greatest potentials of these services seems to be the given time in the pre-phase before resettlement takes place, because most recommendations are feasible during this period. While refugees who travel via unsafe pathways are not known before they cross the borders of host countries, the data of resettlement refugees is available in advance. Responsible actors in host countries know who is going to be resettled, and therefore they could evaluate special needs in advance. They could detect certain abilities and skills in advance and develop strategies of how and where these skills can be used best. These examinations would lead to a win-win-situation for both, because people of concern are integrated more easily and better prepared, which stabilizes their mental health, while at the same time they become self-sufficient members of society faster, which relieves the burden on the state. This is a unique opportunity to facilitate the resettlement process. Currently, however, Germany neglects this chance as there is no sufficient linkage, and services do not build up on each other. This does not exclusively apply to Germany, but seems to be an international problem. As Exp-Departure explained, similar situations exist amongst other host countries. Therefore, all host countries need to reflect upon their service provision critically, to detect whether this applies to them as well.

The second main point, which is connected to nearly all recommendations, is the lack of research in the field, combined with the lack of transparency of the services. Literature provides information on how services should ideally be implemented, but not on current service provision in the field. When doing research, it can be easily assumed that publications intend to convince the reader to approve services. Details about the exact implementation of these, including transparent information on the responsible staff, the procedure, the content of orientation courses, is either not available to the public, or it does not exist at all. Scientific evaluations that can prove or disprove specific service provision do apparently not exist, but are obviously crucial for improvement. This indicates the clear need for further research.

In conclusion, it becomes obvious that implementing all the connected recommendations, enhancing improvement of services, and paying special attention to those two highlighted points, special skills are required by the staff, which you would typically find in the professional skill set of Social Workers. Therefore, one last recommendation can be derived according to which actors of pre-departure and post-arrival services should set relevant professional requirements for their employees, most notably an academic degree

in Social Work.

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