

Self-Portrait-Introducing Ourselves

TIO, a registered, non-profit and intercultural association, serves as a meeting-place and information centre for Turkish women. Since 1978 it has advocated equal participation of female immigrants in German society. The TIO proceeds on the assumption that the integration of female immigrants is realised primarily through their integration into gainful employment. At present, the Association runs two counselling institutions and several courses of vocational training in Kreuzberg and Neukoelln.

The TIO Advisory Bureau operates in Kreuzberg. It offers female immigrants comprehensive (psycho)social and legal advice, practical assistance and support. Such advice is always resource-oriented and biased in favour of the right of self-determination of women. The focal point of its work is counselling female immigrants affected by violence. The staff-members- all female- are geared to work in crisis situations as well as to carry out preventive measures, to advise on protective measures against violence, to arrange for accommodation in refugee or women's homes, to help clarify residence status and assist in house-hunting. Counselling is also provided in marriage and family disputes, on immigration and asylum law, on access to social benefits, in cases of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The staff members' store of knowledge is also mediated through informative meetings, courses and participation in public discussions.

Within the framework of its counselling program on further training, TIO offers assistance, advice and training for female immigrants who wish to be employed, trained or re-trained. This is operative in Neukoelln since 1994.

Since 1990 the Association is an educational institution by way of its TIO-Qualification Project. About 30 female participants at a time are prepared for external school leaving certificates (Middle School and Extended Middle School) in fulltime courses of 18 months duration. Funds are provided by the Senate Administration for Economic Affairs, Technology and Women's Affairs and by the European Social Fund. At the same time, they receive basic vocational training in Social Service, Nursing and in Office and Service sector occupations. Subsequently, they are assisted in finding placements in regular professional training or re-training courses and provided assistance during their further training and in their professional life.

From 2007 onwards TIO conducts Job-Orientation courses for female immigrants. Such three months courses are specially addressed to female immigrants who have completed a good school education and/or vocational training in their home country and seek access to their own professional sector in Germany.

The model project "Intercultural Access" of the Berlin Administration for young female immigrants with middle grade school leaving certificates, financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, was conducted from 2004 to 2006. They were prepared in five months training courses for employment in the public administration sector, during which period they were under staff guidance. It was also during this period that the concept of intercultural further training of the training instructors was developed. Both components were planned to help open

up the Berlin administration in line with intercultural principles. The project is being continued since 2006. Participants are prepared in six month courses for aptitude tests in the public service as well as in the private sector. Assistance is provided during their training.

Within the framework of the Project “Girls Studio” financed by the Berlin Senate and the European Union, the TIO conduits, since April 2008, an additional course for young women with an immigrant background. It provides job orientation in the areas of Fitness, Cosmetics and Nutrition. At the same time they are coached to catch up on missed school leaving certificates. This project combines the young women’s interest in a smart personal appearance with the acquisition of knowledge in order to offer the participants who have left the school system in Berlin without a certificate the opportunity of obtaining one later and to enable them to enter a regular vocational training course.

Parallel to these regular offers, programs for different target-groups in various professional fields have been repeatedly conducted during the past years, among them the following:

- A further training project in office work as a model project of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Labour Department of South-Berlin.
- An MAE-program for young women with an immigrant background within the framework of the program “Future Jobs and Learning” of the Berlin-Neukoelln Job Centre.
- Training courses for female shop- assistants on behalf of the Labour Department of South-Berlin.
- Computer courses for female immigrants within the framework of the Program LOS.
- Service programs for coaching in preparation for and mediation to the Job Market for salaried employees within the framework of LSK-Berlin.

Experience in our further training programs clearly shows that we have on very many occasions successfully developed requisite-conform, group-specific, job market-oriented, efficient and reasonably priced offers for women with an immigrant background. This is indicated by the long waiting lists, the minimal quota of drop-outs, the external examination results and the very satisfactory quota of jobs mediated on course completion.

We are a certified further training institution of ArtSet(in accordance with SGB 111) in respect of our course offers. In addition, we have received two awards for our work. They were awarded by the Federal President Johannes Rau and by the Helga-and-Reuter Foundation for our exemplary work in the field of Integration.