Germany for Newcomers

Trainers' Handbook on Transcultural Preparation in the Context
of Vocational Training and Labour Migration

Table of Contents

List of figures

Proposed Duration of the Modules

Module	Duration of essential parts (Breaks not included)	Duration including in-depth parts (Breaks not included)
01. **Getting Started**	90 min.	90 min.
02. **History I**	70 min.	100 min.
03. **History II**	90 min.	100 min.
04. **Migration**	110 min.	180 min.
05. **Fundamental Rights and Modern Socio-political Debates in Germany**	110 min.	140 min.
06. **Political and Social Systems**	80 min.	170 min.
07. **Germany and the European Union**	85 min.	175 min.
08. **Rights and Duties as an Employee in Germany**	90 min.	120 min.
09. **Arriving in Germany**	35 min.	40 min.
10. **Finding my Way Around in Germany**	95 min.	185 min.
11. **Living Securely and Healthily in Germany**	95 min.	160 min.
12. **My Individual Culture and Transcultural Competence**	130 min.	195 min.
13. **Culture Navigator; Cultural Characteristics (Part 1)**	110 min.	185 min.
14. **Culture Navigator; Cultural Characteristics (Part 2)**	105 min.	170 min.
15. **Interacting with People and Resolving Conflicts**	125 min.	190 min.
Total duration:	**1,420 minutes / 23.7 hours**	**2,200 minutes / 36.7 hours**

Introduction to the Handbook

Goals	Contents
→ Introduction to the main objectives of the Handbook → Explanation of the didactical approach	→ Objectives → Didactical approach and structure → Requirements for the trainer → Checklist and general tips for training implementation → Further didactical hints

CHAPTER I: GERMANY – A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Module 1: Getting Started

Goals	Contents
→ Getting to know one another, building trust within the group → Managing expectations → Giving an orientation on the objectives and structure of the training → Providing a brief overview of Germany and its geography	→ A warm welcome [essential] → Expectation management [essential] → Facts and data on Germany [essential] → Further material

Duration: Essential: 90 minutes

Module 2: History I

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about: → The First German Reich and the Second German Reich → German colonial history → World War I → World War II and the Holocaust → The resulting German responsibility and the country's special relationship with Israel	→ Overview and the First Reich (200 BC–1871) [essential] → The Second Reich (1871–1918) [essential] → The Weimar Republic, Germany's first democracy (1919–1933) [in-depth] → The rise of Adolf Hitler (1934–1939) [essential] → World War II and the Holocaust (1939–1945) [essential]

Duration: Essential: 70 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 100 minutes

Module 3: History II

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about: ➜ The division and occupation of Germany following World War II ➜ The East-West conflict ➜ The year 1989 as a turning point in German history ➜ Major challenges facing Germany	➜ The end of World War II and a new beginning (1945) **[essential]** ➜ The Basic Law and the anchoring of federalism in West Germany (1949) **[essential]** ➜ Foundation of the German Democratic Republic and the 'Cold War' (1949–1989) **[essential]** ➜ Peaceful revolution and reunification (1989–1990) **[essential]** ➜ First two decades following reunification (1990–2010) **[in-depth]** ➜ Major emerging challenges (2010–2020) **[essential]**

Duration: Essential: 90 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 100 minutes

Module 4: Migration

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about: ➜ The most important German immigration waves ➜ Different reasons for migration ➜ The significance of migration for Germany ➜ The controversies surrounding migration in Germany	➜ Migration until 1945 **[essential]** ➜ Migration and flight following World War II **[essential]** ➜ 'Gastarbeit' and immigration **[essential]** ➜ Immigration in the GDR **[in-depth]** ➜ Migration following the fall of the Iron Curtain **[essential]** ➜ Asylum-related immigration **[in-depth]** ➜ Irregular and regular migration **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 110 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 180 minutes

CHAPTER II: POLITICS AND LAW

Module 5: Fundamental Rights and Modern Socio-political Debates in Germany

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about: → The Basic Law *(Grundgesetz)*, fundamental rights and non-negotiable principles/values in Germany → Modern socio-political debates in Germany	→ Introduction **[essential]** → Non-negotiable principles and values **[essential]** → Sex, gender and sexual orientation **[essential]** → Conflicting fundamental rights **[essential]** → East-West inequality **[in-depth]** → Special responsibility for Israel **[essential]** → Immigration and integration **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 110 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 140 minutes

Module 6: Political and Social systems

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about: → The federal structure of Germany → The separation of responsibilities → The civil protection/security structures	→ The federal structure of Germany and the separation of responsibilities **[essential]** → The division of powers **[essential]** → Elections **[in-depth]** → Governing and opposition parties **[in-depth]** → Security structures **[essential]** → The solidarity system **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 80 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 170 minutes

Module 7: Germany and the European Union

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about: → The founding and historical development of the EU → The most important EU institutions → The composition of EU institutions → EU rights and values	→ The beginning of cooperation for a peaceful Europe **[essential]** → What is the EU? The institutions **[essential]** → EU treaties and the principle of subsidiarity **[in-depth]** → Rights and values **[essential]** → Fundamental freedoms and the internal market **[essential]** → EU Blue Card **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 85 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 175 minutes

Module 8: Rights and Duties as an Employee in Germany

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	➔ Fundamental rights based on labour law **[essential]**
➔ The rights and duties of employees	➔ Duties of employees **[essential]**
➔ Tax and social contributions	➔ Importance of mutual data protection **[essential]**
➔ Data protection and confidentiality	➔ Employee representation and protection **[essential]**
➔ Workers' representation and other work-related bodies	➔ Secondary employment opportunities **[in-depth]**
	➔ Overview of salaries and taxes **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 90 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 120 minutes

CHAPTER III: EVERYDAY LIFE IN GERMANY

Module 9: Arriving in Germany

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	➔ Flat registration **[essential]**
➔ How to officially register	➔ Registration for licence fee **[essential]**
➔ How to register for radio licence fees	➔ Applying for a residence permit **[essential]**
➔ How to get a residence permit	➔ Opening a bank account **[essential]**
➔ How to open a bank account	➔ Taking out health insurance **[essential]**
	➔ Taking out liability insurance **[in-depth]**
	➔ Mobile telephone **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 35 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 40 minutes

Module 10: Finding my Way Around in Germany

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	➔ Mobility **[essential]**
➔ Different means of transportation in Germany	➔ Flat hunting **[essential]**
➔ How to find a flat	➔ Mobile phones, the Internet and television **[essential]**
➔ Organisation of telecommunication; how to find a suitable provider	➔ Post and parcel shipping **[essential]**
➔ Postal traffic in Germany	➔ Shopping for goods **[essential]**
➔ Procurement of goods for daily needs	➔ Consumer rights **[in-depth]**
	➔ Media **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 95 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 185 minutes

Module 11: Living Securely and Healthily in Germany

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	→ Basic insurance in Germany **[essential]**
→ Statutory and private health insurance	→ European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) **[in-depth]**
→ How to access health care services	→ Access to healthcare **[essential]**
→ Preventive health services in Germany	→ Preventive health services **[essential]**
→ How to take care of their mental health and where to turn to for professional help	→ Sport and leisure **[in-depth]**
→ Gender and sexuality	→ Nutrition guidance and eating habits in Germany **[in-depth]**
	→ Mental health **[essential]**
	→ Gender and sexuality **[essential]**
	→ Contraceptive methods and reproduction **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 95 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 160 minutes

CHAPTER IV: TRANSCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Module 12: My Individual Culture and Transcultural Competence

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	→ Introduction **[essential]**
→ The concept of culture and related terminology	→ Iceberg model **[essential]**
→ The iceberg model and the culture navigator *(Kulturnavigator)*	→ Culture navigator **[essential]**
→ Transcultural irritations as opportunities	→ Individual culture **[in-depth]**
→ Rising awareness about transcultural differences	→ General components of transcultural competence **[essential]**
→ How to change perspectives through intercultural competence	→ Development of transcultural competence **[essential]**

Duration: Essential: 130 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 195 minutes

Module 13: Culture Navigator; Cultural Characteristics (Part 1)

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	➜ Introduction to the first three pairs of cultural traits **[essential]**
➜ Fact versus relationship orientation	➜ Cultural traits: Fact orientation versus relationship orientation **[essential]**
➜ Individualism versus collectivism	➜ Cultural traits: Individualism versus collectivism **[essential]**
➜ Hierarchy versus heterarchy	
➜ One's own imprint	➜ Cultural characteristics: Hierarchy versus heterarchy **[essential]**
➜ Options for action in moments of irritation by enabling alternative interpretations	

Duration: Essential: 110 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 185 minutes

Module 14: Culture Navigator; Cultural Characteristics (Part 2)

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	➜ Introduction **[in-depth]**
➜ Structure versus impulse	➜ Cultural traits: Structure versus impulse **[essential]**
➜ Security versus risk	➜ Cultural traits: Risk versus security **[essential]**
➜ Heteronomy versus autonomy	➜ Cultural traits: Heteronomy versus autonomy **[essential]**
➜ One's own imprint	➜ Overview **[in-depth]**
➜ Potential moments of irritation	
➜ Options for action in moments of irritation through alternative interpretations	

Duration: Essential: 105 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 170 minutes

Module 15: Interacting with People and Resolving Conflicts

Goals	Contents
Participants Learning about:	➜ Establishing contacts, friendships and romantic relationships **[essential]**
➜ Ways to build a social environment in Germany	➜ Feedback culture and non-violent communication **[essential]**
➜ Ways to deal with conflicts; the potential productivity of conflicts/irritations	➜ Dealing with conflicts and irritations **[essential]**
➜ The feedback culture in Germany and non-violent communication	➜ Discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice **[essential]**
➜ Stereotypes and prejudice and how to reduce them	➜ Sensitive and controversial topics **[in-depth]**

Duration: Essential: 125 minutes; **incl. In-depth:** 190 minutes

Introduction to
the Handbook

Table of contents

i　Objectives

Migration to another country always entails challenges stemming from environmental changes: different languages, cultures, value systems and behavioural expectations, among many others. Effective preparation is indispensable to mitigate such challenges and achieve a smooth start in a new country. Beyond language preparation, well-structured transcultural preparation is essential for migrants to develop an understanding of their new environment. Only by learning about the history, values and behavioural patterns of their destination country can migrants properly find their way through their new daily life, fully participate in public life, leverage their new rights and comply with the rules and regulations of their new country. Thus, the 'Partnership Approaches for Development-Oriented Vocational Training and Labour Migration (PAM)' project commissioned this handbook as a guide for trainers on the conduct of transcultural preparation, particularly in the context of vocational education and labour migration to Germany. PAM is a project of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) which is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. For more information, please visit **www.pam-partnerships.org** or Qualifying experts and promoting labour mobility (**giz.de**).

The overall objective of this handbook is to enable trainers in PAM partner countries and beyond to prepare and conduct transcultural preparation sessions with a focus on vocational training and labour migrants. This objective is reached by:

➜　Providing a summary of the most relevant historical, cultural, societal and everyday topics regarding Germany

➜　Proposing didactical approaches to training, including face-to-face and digital formats

➜　Enabling trainers to adapt to their target audience and time frame by offering a variety of optional exercises

ii　Didactical approach and structure

The handbook is divided into two parts. The first part, comprising chapters I and II (modules 1–8), covers the history of Germany as well as its most relevant socio-political topics. The second part, comprising chapters III and IV (modules 9–15), covers transcultural preparation and necessary information about the daily life in Germany. Given their practical relevance to migrants' daily lives, modules 9–15 constitute the heart of this handbook and should therefore be prioritised amid time constraints. Participants could review modules 1–8 independently if necessary.

This handbook is rooted in the concept of **transculturality**, which views culture as a relational network on various levels (individual, communal, social). It assumes that diverse cultural imprints are evident across these cultural levels. These different cultural influences are not to be understood as clearly separated from one another, but as a patchwork of imprints collected throughout life across various contexts, such as family, social group, workplace and society. Transcultural preparation strengthens participants' ability to interpret patterns of action and communication. While this handbook understands cultural imprints at the individual level, there is still a need for orientation in new cultural environments. This orientation is provided by the 'culture navigator' – a concept introduced in modules 12–14 – who simplifies reality and provides information on tendencies without resorting to generalisations.

For the orientation of the trainers, each module begins with the following information:

Page 1

➜　Title of the module

➜　Duration of the module

➜　Goals of the module

➜　Materials needed for the module (for both face-to-face and online settings)

Page 2

→   Table of contents

→   Recommended procedure (steps to be followed within the given module)

→   Content summary

→   Links to sources relevant to the module's topic

If time is short, trainers can focus on content labelled as '**[essential]**'. With no time constraints, trainers can take deep dives into topics by including sections labelled as '**[in-depth]**'. '**[Essential]**' sections cover the most important content, constituting the bare minimum, while '**[in-depth]**' sections comprise more detailed content and can be skipped if there is not enough time. This handbook also provides optional exercises that trainers can use to make sessions more interactive or to put emphasis on a specific topic.

Given the distinction between '**[essential]**' and '**[in-depth]**', there are two different durations listed for each module. Please keep in mind that these durations do **not** include breaks. Thus, we recommend that trainers plan additional 5–10-minute breaks every 45–60 minutes. In addition to the module durations, individual content sections, group activities and exercises also include duration estimates.

Facilitating structure at the beginning of each session and module is helpful for orienting participants. Such orientation should come alongside a needs-focused approach, through which the trainer reacts to requests from the group. This approach enables participants to understand what to expect from the training and the reasons behind it. We recommend trainers provide participants with an overview of the entire training plan by creating a schedule, showing all of the modules and their goals in order. Trainers should present this schedule to the participants at the beginning of each training session and each module. On the first day, trainers are advised to present the schedule after conducting expectation management (see Module 1). Trainers can take the needs-focused approach by – in response to participants expressing deeper interest in specific topics – adding or skipping certain exercises or researching additional information via the provided links.

The general didactical approach comprises three steps. First, starting with the input, trainers should present the content, define the facts and explain their interdependencies. The goal here is for participants to be able to remember the content. Second, activities between sections enable participants to reflect on the content by relating it to their personal experiences and existing knowledge. Third, deepening exercises enable participants to apply their new knowledge and more heavily analyse the content, strengthening their understanding.

The procedure that we recommend (for all modules but Module 1) is based on this approach and, therefore, comprises the following steps:

Step 1: Give **input** on the '**essential**' sections in order (e.g., using a Power Point presentation).

Step 2: To **activate the group** and let participants reflect on new information, conduct one of three types of interactive activities:

a.   **Group activity:** Short interaction with participants during a plenary led by a guiding question or another short element (e.g., quiz)

b.   **Reflection exercise:** Deeper reflection during a plenary or with smaller groups structured by a specific question

c.   **Group exercise:** Longer structured exercise for elaboration or research conducted with smaller groups

Each module features an activity listed as 'essential', meaning that each module's procedure prioritises certain included activities over others.

Step 3: Conduct the provided **deepening exercises**, of which there are usually only one or two in each module. These exercises facilitate deeper analysis and the application of newly acquired knowledge. Participants work in smaller groups but prepare their results for sharing in the plenary.

Step 4: To close the session, give a summary of the module (using the 'summary' section at the beginning of the modules as a reference), emphasising some highlights. Afterwards, let participants ask questions using the following formulations:

- ➔ Is anything still unclear?

- ➔ Is there anything you would like to point out?

- ➔ Is there anything you would like to know on this topic?
  (If participants express further interest, the trainer can prepare additional materials)

The closing should take no more than 5 minutes and should be repeated in each module.

1. Input	**2. Activity**	**3. Deepening exercise**
Goal:	**Goal:**	**Goal:**
Define and remember	Relate and reflect	Apply and analyse
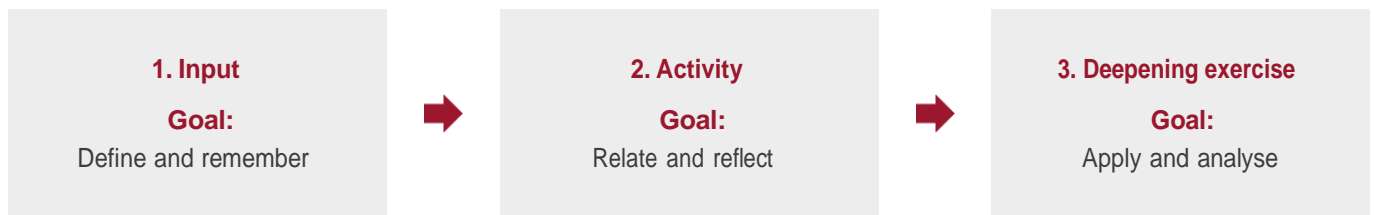
Figure No. 1: General didactical approach

iii   Requirements for the trainer

Trainer profile

To competently conduct training using this handbook, trainers must meet several basic requirements:

- ➔ Basic training experience and experience working with groups

- ➔ Advanced knowledge of Microsoft PowerPoint

- ➔ Experience conducting digital training (experience using video-conferencing tools and digital whiteboard)

- ➔ Solid command of the English language

- ➔ Preferred: Experience with Germany/prior knowledge of Germany; intercultural experience

iv   Checklist and general tips for training implementation

Checklist for the preparation of each training session

- ☐ Schedule, including a timetable and module goals

- ☐ (Online) Classroom

- ☐ PowerPoint presentation with slides on the respective content sections as well as slides with the respective exercise instructions

- ☐ (Online) Necessary materials for participants (as listed in each module)

- ☐ Links for video-conferencing and other digital tools (e.g., Whiteboard, Mentimeter, Miro, Mural) sent to participants.

Tips for training implementation

➔ Pay attention to the **BASIC** and **ADVANCED** designations in the extensive exercises at the end of each module. These symbols tell you the degree of preparation or knowledge necessary for each exercise.

➔ Among reflections, exercises and activities marked as 'optional', trainers can choose which to implement based on group preferences and time constraints.

v   Further didactical hints

A.   Framework conditions

In general, trainers should be sensitive to external conditions experienced during training, effectively fulfilling a moderating role. Beyond solid preparation, moderation entails the creation of an environment in which everyone feels comfortable. Trainers should pay attention to the following aspects to achieve sufficient moderation:

➔ **Time frame:** Plan sessions in advance and pay attention to the time

➔ **Objectives:** Provide structure and create a red thread within modules (e.g., by using transitions, by making connections) and throughout the entire handbook

➔ **Space:** Ensure adequate online spaces (e.g., send links in advance); utilise the space in face-to-face settings (e.g., swap seats to create new dynamics, open windows for fresh air)

➔ **Group:** Adapt methods to group size (e.g., digital training: leverage verbal exchanges in smaller groups, leverage chat functions in larger groups)

In addition, trainers should consider the following elements to achieve successful moderation:

➔ **Create social proximity by:**

  ➔ Making eye contact

  ➔ Calling participants by name

  ➔ Making connections between the input of different participants

  ➔ Treating all statements with respect

  ➔ Starting and ending on a positive note

➔ **Maintain the attention of participants by:**

  ➔ Offering, motivating and activating scenarios (e.g., with the group activities provided by the handbook)

  ➔ Ensuring variety

  ➔ Visualising information

  ➔ Posing questions

  ➔ Scheduling regular breaks

➔ **Ensure an effective working atmosphere by:**

  ➔ Watching out for participants going-off the topic and, when they do, gently guiding them back ('That is also an important aspect, but let us focus on…')

➜ Making goals clear to participants

➜ Ensuring that everyone can get involved

➜ 'Translating' statements by repeating them in your own words
and summarising important concepts at the end of each content block

➜ Maintaining neutrality on topics, persons and statements

➜ Resolving conflicts, if they arise, with and within the group

B. How to deal with heated debates or conflicts within the group

In general, trainers should have a solid grasp on interactions within their group and knowledge about communicative processes, allowing them to successfully resolve conflicts or calm down heated debates. In such cases, we recommend the use of the 'five steps of verbal de-escalation':

➜ **Establish contact:** Get the attention of all involved individuals. We recommend directly addressing involved participants by their names.

➜ **Build relationships:** Demonstrate understanding. In doing so, we recommend using 'I' statements that illuminate your own perceptions and feelings (e.g., 'It seems to me…', 'That makes me...', 'I noticed...', 'I wish...')

➜ **Concretise:** Ask open-ended questions and employ active listening. Non-verbally signal your listening, repeat what has been said in your own words, and ask clarifying questions ('Did I understand that correctly?')

➜ **Clarify needs:** Respond to participants' wishes and demonstrate a willingness to find solutions (e.g., by offering alternatives)

➜ **Leave the conflict field:** In cases of escalation, consider ending the discussion by bringing attention back to the goal of the module (e.g., 'I would like to focus on our goal today…', 'The goal of this module is …, so let's focus on that')

Under no circumstances should participants be commanded, disciplined or judged. Trainers must avoid placing blame and levying hurtful criticisms. Depending on how heated the discussion is between participants, it may be useful to empathetically interrupt the discussion by noting that it is okay to have varying perspectives while urging a shift to the next topic using an 'I' statement. Trainers should avoid 'discussions of principles' – attempts to determine who is in the right – which focus on subjective perceptions.

C. How to deal with sensitive issues

Different issues can turn out to be sensitive over the course of training sessions based on varying group dynamics and participants' unique experiences, cultural backgrounds and belief systems. This handbook points out potentially sensitive issues to ensure that trainers are aware when topics may cause irritation. Importantly, the goal of this handbook is not to change participants' opinions or stir debate on sensitive topics; its goal is to convey **knowledge about the values and positions** that exist in Germany to ensure that participants understand the 'spectrum of normality' in the public sphere. Whenever participants get irritated and start discussing sensitive topics, trainers should bring their focus back to the goals of the module.

Generally, trainers should avoid asking overly personal questions and discussing personal matters. They should also always be mindful of their language to avoid inadvertently using offensive or discriminatory language.

Chapter I

Germany — A Journey through Time

1 Getting started

Duration

→ Essential: 90 minutes
→ In-Depth: 90 minutes

Goals

→ Getting to know one another, building trust within the group
→ Managing expectations
→ Giving orientation on the objectives and structure of the training
→ Providing a brief overview of Germany and its geography

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation with introduction and schedule
→ Flipchart, notes, marker, printed map of Europe, sticky dots

Online Training

→ Presentation with introduction and schedule
→ Digital survey tool
→ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

Procedure

1. Hosting a warm welcome, a round of introductions and at least one of the suggested icebreaker exercises
2. Conducting an expectation survey
3. Presenting the schedule (including a timetable) and goals of the whole training
4. Conducting the deepening brainstorming exercise
5. Presenting facts and data on Germany
6. Conducting the group activity

Summary

This module is all about achieving a gentle start for the training by letting the participants get to know one another and conveying the structure of the training plan to them. Beyond an extensive exercise regarding prior knowledge of Germany, this module includes a survey of expectations to compare participants' expectations with the actual goals and offerings of the training. A brief overview of Germany and its geography close out this module.

Further Sources

Federal Statistical Office	➜	**www.destatis.de/EN/Home/_node.html**
Facts about Germany	➜	**www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en**
Fun facts about Germany	➜	**www.takelessons.com/blog/fun-facts-about-germany-z12**
Make it in Germany	➜	**www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/discover-germany/german-states**

1.1   A warm welcome

Goal: First, you should greet the group and introduce yourself. To ensure familiarity within the group, ask the participants to introduce themselves right at the beginning of the session. This process should take no longer than **30 minutes**.

Method: This introductory process can be conducted in the same way across face-to-face and online settings. Participants should introduce themselves within one or two minutes. Therefore, we recommend the following questions, adapted as you see fit:

Questions

➔   What is your name?

➔   What city / village are you from?

➔   What are you looking forward to in Germany?

Icebreaker exercises to get to know one another

1.   Icebreaker exercise

Method: Ask everyone to write down three keywords that describe them – something more personal than just their name or background. The participants should then present these keywords to the group. To foster connections among the participants, the order in which they present should be determined as follows: the person who presents next is someone who can relate to a keyword that has just been presented. This participant should speak up and explain why they can relate to the keyword. This exercise can be conducted in the same way across face-to-face and online settings.

You should emphasise that none of the participants is obligated to reveal anything that makes them uncomfortable. They only need to be as open as they want to be. This exercise can also be used in a later training session to loosen everybody up and start a new day. The following categories can serve as examples to spark ideas among the participants:

➔   Hobbies

➔   Character traits

➔   Passions

➔   Special interests

2.   Icebreaker exercise

Method: Ask everyone to tell the group their name and something unique about themselves (e.g., something interesting that they have done in their life). The next person needs to memorise the name and unique fact of the previous speaker and repeat the information before saying their own name and fact. Ultimately, the last person needs to recall the name and fact of every participant. Through this exercise, everyone strives to remember one another's name and characteristics. This exercise can be conducted in the same way across face-to-face and online settings.

Examples

➔   Participant one: 'My name is Franz, and I won a sailing competition when I was 14.'

➔   Participant two: 'His name is Franz, and he won a sailing competition when he was 14.
        My name is Leonie, and I speak three languages.'

3. Icebreaker exercise

g **Face-to-face:** Each participant receives a piece of paper on which they write a question that is helpful to get to know other people better. Creative questions are welcome here. After everyone has written down a question, all the pieces of paper are collected and shuffled. Then everyone has to draw a piece of paper, say their name and answer the question that is written on it.

Exemplary questions

➔ 'Who is your favourite musician?'

➔ 'What is your favourite hobby?'

➔ 'What is the best thing that happened to you last year?'

w **Online:** For online sessions, you can use the following virtual question generator:
www.questionsgenerator.com/getting-to-know-someone.php

One participant should start by choosing another participant whom they intend to ask. Next, you click on the 'Generate Random Questions' button. By sharing your screen, the participants can see the generated question. This effect adds to the excitement about the next question that might come up.

1.2   Expectation management

ESSENTIAL Duration: 15 minutes

Goal: You should get an overview of the participants' expectations from the training and work to align them somewhere between the training manual's intentions and the participants' needs. This gives you an opportunity to ask the participants about any specific interests or motivations that you may be able to address or fall back on throughout the various modules.

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare a flipchart and write down the two questions below.

w **Online:** Prepare the survey using Mentimeter (**www.mentimeter.com**) or another digital survey platform. Set the survey tool in advance to show participants three empty fields in which they can write their expectations. Share the link to this survey with the whole group. Mentimeter automatically generates word clouds without any further input. The more often a word is entered, the larger it appears in the word cloud. Alternatively, you could show the collected expectations in the form of speech bubbles at the end.

Questions

➔ What are your expectations from the training?

➔ What do you hope to learn from the upcoming transcultural training?

Implementation of the exercise

1. Give the participants **five minutes** to answer the questions. Then, collect all of the answers and present them to the group.

   g **Face-to-face:** While the participants vocally state their expectations, write them down on the flipchart.

   w **Online:** Show the results collected by the survey tool using word clouds or speech bubbles.

Optional: While collecting expectations during the plenary, you can also write them down on the PowerPoint presentation or a digital whiteboard. You could assign the task to the participants by letting them use the chat feature. Give them five minutes to do this.

2.   Go through the expectations and reflect on them together with the participants. Look for repeated answers and discuss how they align with upcoming training objectives. This part should take about **10 minutes**. Confirm whether their expectations are covered by the training. Regarding those that are not covered, you can decide whether you would be comfortable covering them on your own through additional research. If not, simply tell the participants that the material is not covered. You can always provide participants with resources to help them do their own research.

3.   Use the expectations to transition to the objectives and structure of the training (see the introduction of the handbook).

1.3   Deepening exercise   ESSENTIAL

Plenary brainstorming exercise   BASIC T   Duration: 35 minutes

Goal: On the one hand, this exercise serves to determine the participants' level of prior knowledge about Germany and its culture, which should give you a solid impression of the people you are working with. On the other hand, it provides information about who has already been to Germany, the main aim being to find out what surprised them – be it in a positive or negative sense – about Germany. If none of the participants has previously been to Germany, you can ask about previous experiences with German people or what they have heard about Germany and its culture.

Materials / methods

➜   PowerPoint with instructions

➜   Two separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

Online

➜   Two flipchart sheets

➜   Sticky notes

➜   Markers

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare two flipcharts: one for the participants to pin their notes on and another for you to divide into five recommended categories (see below), to which you can later pin the collected notes.

w   **Online:** Prepare two frames on a digital whiteboard: one for the participants to put their notes on and another for you to divide into five recommended categories (see below), to which you can later digitally place the collected notes. Additionally, prepare digital post-its for the participants by placing them in the blank frame.

Assignment / questions

➜   Write down the first thing that comes to your mind about Germany as a country: its history, its inhabitants or its society as a whole. Feel free to formulate whatever you like. This can include facts, personal experiences or prejudices you have heard about. Feel free to write several things, but please use only one sticky note per thought.

Implementation of the exercise

1. Present the assignment through a PowerPoint Presentation and give the participants about **10 minutes** to write down their thoughts.

   Optional: In both face-to-face and online settings (using breakout rooms), it is possible to conduct this exercise in smaller groups of 3 – 4. Plan a few extra minutes for this. Through smaller groups, the participants can properly discuss their experiences with and knowledge about Germany. This also helps the participants to get to know one another.

2. Let the participants pin their notes on the blank flipchart or digital whiteboard.

3. Once the time is up and all notes are pinned, go through them and categorise them on the other flipchart or digital whiteboard. You should do this within about **five minutes**. This should structure the exercise to provide participants with greater insight. The five recommended categories are as follows:

   ➜ Facts (e.g., capital, population)

   ➜ Society (e.g., social structures, income, education, values)

   ➜ Culture (e.g., cuisine, traditions, holidays, religions)

   ➜ Prejudices (Germans are punctual, humourless etc.)

   ➜ Personal experiences (sometimes difficult to separate from culture / society / prejudices)

4. Next, lead a discussion, inviting all participants to share the experiences and knowledge that they have written down.

5. Address the things described by the participants and rearrange the notes in the meantime. While sorting the notes, you can involve the participants by asking them to group the notes as they see fit. Pay attention to common answers to elaborate on them with the group. While you should briefly mention each point, not every point warrants a detailed discussion. Certain facts can easily be summarised, while certain experiences require clarification. It is important that you comment on the categories and highlight instances of prejudice. This portion of the exercise should take no longer than **20 minutes**.

6. Finally, do not throw away/delete the categorised notes after completing the exercise. Ideally, you would keep them and present them to the group during the last session, allowing for a direct comparison between their level of knowledge before and after the training.

1.4   Facts and data on Germany

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 5 minutes**

The country: Germany is a federal republic composed of 16 federal states (*Bundesländer*). In 1949, Germany was divided into the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic until reunification in 1990. Germany is a country rooted in immigration: of the 83.2 million people living in Germany, 21.9 million have an international family history, and 11.4 million have a non-German nationality.

Capital: Berlin, located in the country's northeast, is the capital of Germany. Home to about 3.7 million citizens, it is the most populous city in Germany. Berlin is diverse, with residents representing over 190 nations. The city's unique history, diversity and excellent cultural and gastronomic offers make Berlin very popular among tourists.

Location and GDP: Germany is an export-oriented nation. It is the most economically important member state of the European Union (EU). Its GDP in 2021 was 3.567 billion euros. Its most important sectors include automotives, electrical engineering, chemicals and, increasingly, services.

Geography: Germany lies in the centre of Europe, sharing its borders with nine states. In the north, Germany borders the Baltic and North Seas; in the south, it borders the Alps. With 357,340 square kilometres, Germany is the fourth-largest country in the EU. Germany boasts a temperate climate. The average temperature is -0.5 degrees Celsius in January and 23.6 degrees Celsius in July. Germany's time zone is UTC/GMT +1 during the winter and UTC/GMT +2 during the summer.

Employment: The employment rate in Germany is 75.5%. As the population decreases and the average age increases, the national workforce is currently in a steady decline. Therefore, the immigration of skilled workers is playing an increasingly important role.

Group activity

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 5 minutes**

Goal: The participants should deepen their knowledge of the geographical location of Germany and its European neighbours. However, they do not need to immediately guess the right locations. This activity is merely a playful examination of Central European geography that serves to activate the participants.

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Print a blank map of Europe (see material below), attach it to a flipchart and prepare sticky notes for the participants. Write down the questions (see below) next to the map.

w **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with one frame featuring a map of Europe. Prepare digital post-its for the participants and place them next to the map. Write down the questions (see below) alongside the map in the frame.

Questions

➜ Where is Germany in Europe?

➜ Where is the capital of Germany?

➜ Where are Germany's neighbours located?
(Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands)

Implementation of the exercise

1. Show the participants the blank map of Europe.

2. Set the participants put the post-its where they think Germany, its capital and its neighbours are located (writing their name on each post-it). Give the participants **five minutes** to do this.

3. Complete the activity by correcting the post-it placements if the participants were not able to place them correctly on their own.

1.5 Further material

➔ A map of Germany with its federal states can be found at:
www.derweg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/deutschlandkarte_big.png.

➔ Empty map of Germany for the exercise:

Figure No. 2: Map of Germany

➔ Source: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Karte_Deutschland.svg [accessed on 16.02.2022]

Figure No. 3: Map of Europe

➔ Source: **de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Europa.svg** [accessed on 16.02.2022]

2 History I

Duration

→ Essential: 70 minutes

→ In-Depth: 100 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

→ The First German Reich and the Second German Reich

→ German colonial history

→ World War I

→ World War II and the Holocaust

→ The resulting German responsibility and the country's special relationship with Israel

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation for input

→ Flipchart, pinboard, pins, cards, post-its and markers

→ Printout of the timeline

→ Printout of the quiz

Online Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Digital whiteboard

→ Digital survey tool

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

This chapter provides a brief overview of the main periods of German history, including the influence of the Roman empire on the Second Reich, World War I, the Weimar Republic, and the darkest chapter in German history: World War II. The chapter explains the complicated nature of German history and the frequent changes in constitutional structure, from an empire to a democracy and, later, to a totalitarian Nazi dictatorship and the extermination of European Jews.

Further Sources

World War I	➔ **www.firstworldwar.com**
World War II	➔ **www.britannica.com/search?query=world+war+II**
Yad Vashem	➔ **www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about.html** (the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre)

2.1   Brainstorming exercise

Optional warm-up exercise

Goal: This activity serves as a warm-up for the module. Therefore, all of the information that participants can think of regarding Germany's history should be collected. The main goal here is simply brainstorming prior to getting into the details of the module. There are no specific answers that need to be mentioned during this exercise. In turn, it is not a problem if some participants cannot think of anything. This exercise should help you to get a solid understanding of the participants' existing level of knowledge and determine whether the participants are particularly interested in certain aspects of German history.

Materials / methods

➜ PPT with instructions	➜ Pinboard
➜ Digital whiteboard	➜ Moderation cards
➜ Frame with digital post-its and stickers	➜ Pins
Online	➜ Markers
	➜ Stickers in two different colours
	Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare a pinboard with moderation cards, pins, markers and stickers in two different colours.

w   **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with one frame, digital post-its and stickers (e.g., dots) in two different colours.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Everyone should recall what they already know about German history, writing down keywords or central ideas. This exercise is not limited to a certain historical period. Emphasise that the goal is to brainstorm – they will not need to explain their notes in detail. Give them **5 – 10 minutes** to do this.

   w **Online:** The participants can use the digital whiteboard to write down any facts, names or historical events that they can think of.

   g **Face-to-face:** The participants can write down any facts, names or historical events that they can think of on the distributed cards. You should use one card for each key point. Afterwards, each of the cards should be pinned to the pinboard.

2.   After everyone has pinned their cards/digital post-its, try to get an overview of the notes while asking the participants if they want to add any explanation or underlying thoughts. Discuss anything unclear if necessary. This portion should take no longer than **10 minutes**.

3.   Next, you should sort the cards/digital post-its in roughly chronological order. Take a few minutes to do this.

4.   Now you should provide stickers in two different colours. Have them post the stickers in one colour to topics that they have never heard about and stickers in the other colour on topics that they want to learn more about. Give them **5 minutes** to do this. This should provide you with an overview of the participants' points of interest and level of pre-existing familiarity. This awareness should help you over the course of this and the next module.

2.2   Overview and the First Reich (200 BC – 1871)

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

German history can be divided into the following periods:

➜   **The First Reich** 843 – 1806

➜   **The Second Reich** 1871 – 1918

➜   **The Weimar Republic** 1919 – 1933

➜   **The Third Reich** 1933 – 1945

➜   **Post-World War II and reunification** 1945 – 1990

➜   **United Germany in the heart of Europe as a key player in globalisation** 1990 – present

When the Romans arrived in the land of modern-day Germany, they encountered small, independent Celtic and Germanic tribes. These tribes fought the Romans for years, ultimately uniting to form larger tribes (e.g., Saxons, Franks, Bavarians). The Germans continued to expand, pushing back the Roman Empire under the domination of the Franks. In 843, the **Frankish Empire** was divided along the Rhine into West Franconia and East Franconia, the former later becoming France and the latter later becoming the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation'. This empire was founded in 962 under King Otto I – also known as Otto the Great – as a symbolic successor to the actual Roman empire. The Holy Roman Empire existed for centuries as a loosely united monarchy comprising smaller kingdoms and duchess until it was abolished by the French Empire under Napoleon in 1806. The **French Revolution** inspired several decades of rising nationalism in Germany, prompting many to call for unification into a single nation-state. In 1866, Prussia – at this point, the dominant power in the land of the former Holy Roman Empire – set up the Northern Germanic Confederation. The southern German states ultimately joined this confederation during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71, forming the **German Empire** with the King of Prussia as its Emperor.

2.3   The Second Reich (1871 – 1918)

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 10 minutes

By this point, Germany had become the strongest power in Europe – an **economic world power**. This status can be attributed to the fact that, since 1840, Germany underwent a substantial degree of **industrial development**. There was also rapid population growth, from 25 million in 1815 to 50 million in 1890. Additionally, the development of railways and inland waterways facilitated the creation of a large, unified market.

By 1900, Germany ranked second in world trade, aided by its acquisition of colonies in Africa and the South Seas since 1884. In 1914, the German **colonies** constituted the third largest colonial empire by area behind the British and French. The **German colonial empire** included parts of the present-day states of the People's Republic of China, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Namibia, Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Papua New Guinea as well as several islands in the Western Pacific and Micronesia.

Several uprisings took place in the German colonies, ultimately being violently suppressed. German colonial rulers committed **genocide** against the Herero and Nama peoples in German Southwest Africa – generally considered by historians to be the first genocide of the 20th century.
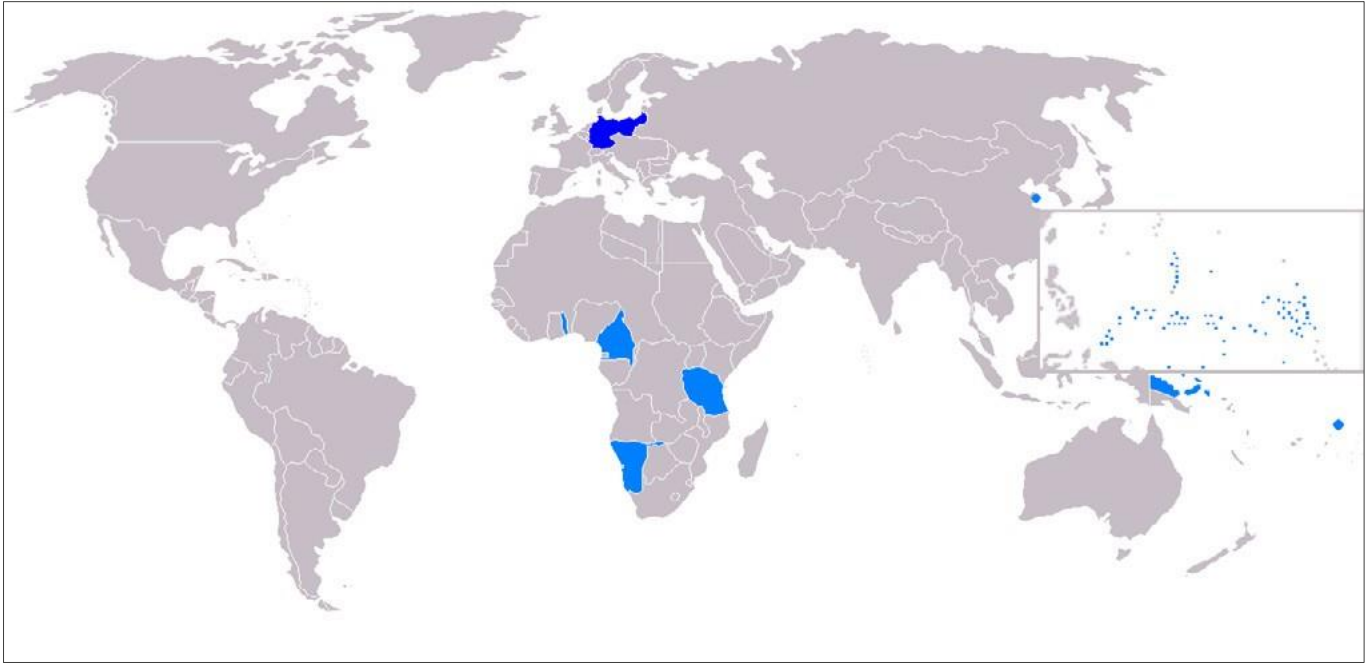
Figure No. 4: German Colonies
➔   Source: **de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Map_of_the_German_Empire_-_1914.PNG** [accessed on 18.02.2015]

World War I: 1914 – 1918

Kaiser Wilhelm II ruled as the last German emperor from 1888 to 1918. He wanted to pursue a new course relative to **Otto von Bismarck**, the first Chancellor of the German Empire whose term of office ran from 1871 to 1890. Bismarck is considered to have completed German unification and to have founded the modern welfare state. Kaiser Wilhelm II's aims, in contrast, entailed a more aggressive foreign policy to secure Germany a 'place in the sun'. Bismarck sought to communicate that Germany was sated, but Wilhelm II pursued an imperialist course that ultimately led to **World War I** and the end of colonial rule.

In 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophia Duchess of Hohenberg were assassinated by a young Serbian. Kaiser Wilhelm II joined forces with Austria-Hungary in retaliation. The global war that followed – known today as **World War I** – pitted the Central Powers (mainly Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey) against the Allied Powers (mainly France, the United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, Japan and, from 1917, the United States). The war concluded with the defeat of the Central Powers. Following its defeat in 1918, Germany was summoned to Versailles to sign a peace treaty and cede its colonies. However, the end of the German colonial empire was primarily a formality. Foreign rule in the former colonies continued, and patterns of thought and perception shaped by colonialism survived even beyond colonial revisionist discourse. The severity of Germany's punishment resulted in severe economic collapse in the country. In 1921, the Allied Commission set the total amount of compensation to be paid by Germany within 30 years at 132 billion gold marks – an immense sum that the bled-dry country could hardly afford.

Optional group activity: World War I Quiz

Goal: This task tests the participants' newly acquired knowledge in a playful way, activating and involving them.

Method: Distribute the following multiple-choice questions using a digital survey tool
(e.g., Mentimeter: **www.mentimeter.com**) or by printing them out.

Questions

➜   **When did World War I take place?**

   A   1814 – 1818
   B   1914 – 1919
   C   **1914 – 1918** *(correct)*
   D   1919 – 1921

➜   **How long did World War I last?**

   A   Two years
   B   Three years
   C   **Four years** *(correct)*
   D   Five years

➜   **What triggered World War I?**

   A   **Assassination of Sofia Duchess of Hohenberg** *(correct)*
   B   The end of the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm I
   C   The end of Germany's colonial empires
   D   Bismarck's interventions in French colonies

➜   **How did World War I affect Germany's history?**

   A   Germany won the war
   B   German colonies continued to exist
   C   The war ensured a strong position for Germany in Europe
   D   **The German economy collapsed** *(correct)*

Implementation of the exercise

g   **Face-to-face:** You can either send the quiz's Mentimeter link to the participants' smartphones or hand out print co-pies. Give them instructions and let them answer the questions individually for about **five minutes**. Afterwards, you can discuss the correct answers with the participants.

w   **Online:** Share the link to the Mentimeter survey in the chat and give instructions to the participants. Each participant should take the quiz individually within about **five minutes**. Afterwards, you can discuss the correct answers with the participants. If you cannot use Mentimeter, you can prepare a PowerPoint slide with the questions and ask the participants to post their answers in the chat (A, B, C or D).

2.4 The Weimar Republic, Germany's first democracy (1919 – 1933)

IN-DEPTH Duration: 5 minutes

The German people felt powerless in accepting the Treaty of Versailles, perceiving it as a great injustice. German society came out of World War I deeply divided, evident by the large number of intensely different parties. The moderate parties of the political centre were flanked by parties loyal to the Kaiser who sought to restore pre-war conditions, radical right-wingers who wanted a dictatorship and radical left-wingers who pursued a socialist republic.

Free elections were held for the National Assembly in Germany on 19 January 1919, with **women admitted to the polls** for the first time. Voter turnout was very high at 83 per cent. Fearing unrest in Berlin, the National Assembly convened in **Weimar**, giving the young German republic its name. At this point, Germany was a **parliamentary democracy**. However, this post-World War I democracy was struggling with high unemployment and widespread hunger. Additionally, party leaders were forced to answer for Germany's loss in the war in front of the people and the fatherland. For many nationalists and veterans, the severe punishments imposed by the Treaty of Versailles was a humiliation; they wrongly believed that the war could have been won if the army wasn't betrayed by politicians and protesters. This conviction paved the way for conspiracy theories and strong nationalist movements. During the 'Golden Twenties' (1924 – 1929), the Weimar Republic experienced an **economic recovery**; German arts, culture and science were blossoming. However, this bright period was followed by the **global economic crisis** in 1930 – 1933, leading to hyper-inflation.

2.5 The rise of Adolf Hitler (1933 – 1939)

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

In 1932, over three million Germans were unemployed; economic conditions were dire. These circumstances constituted an advantage for **Adolf Hitler** in his pursuit of power. Hitler promised a stronger, brighter Germany. In '*Mein Kampf*', a book that he wrote while in prison after unsuccessfully committing a coup against the Weimar government, he blames Germany's misfortunes on its Jewish population and calls for rebuilding the country's strength by winning new territories. On 30 January 1933, Hitler became Reich Chancellor via democratic means after his party – the NSDAP (the National Socialist German Workers', or 'Nazi', Party) – won a plurality in the 1933 federal election and he was appointed by President Hindenburg. In turn, the constitution was suspended, and the Nazis established totalitarian rule. Their rule was anchored by the 'Ordinance on the Protection of the People and the State', which suspended citizens' basic rights and enabled the persecution of political opponents (communists and social democrats).

Following the death of Paul von Hindenburg, the President of Germany from 1925 to 1934, Hitler gained full control over the country, eliminating the parliament as the government's controlling body. In pursuit of his vision, Hitler introduced compulsory military service in preparation for the war, violating the Treaty of Versailles. With the Nuremberg Race Laws passed in 1935, he began the **persecution of Germany's Jewish population** through disenfranchisement, expropriation, and exclusion. They lost their German citizenship and were no longer allowed to marry 'Aryans'[1]. On 9 November 1938, on the so-called **'night of broken glass'** *('Reichspogromnacht')*, Jewish shops and synagogues were attacked in numerous locations across the German Reich. Subsequently, Jews began to be arrested and deported to concentration camps.

---

[1] In the racist ideology of National Socialism, an 'Aryan' is a member of the allegedly intellectually, politically and culturally superior Nordic group of peoples (particularly defined in contrast to the Jews).

Group activity

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 5 minutes**

Goal: This activity serves to briefly activate and involve the participants. The socio-political dynamics that led to Hitler's rise to power should be looked at in detail to gain a solid understanding of how the Nazi regime was established.

Method: Ask the question below and let the participants discuss it. Allow this discussion to go on for five minutes. While the participants share their thoughts, collect the answers as bullet points on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise the collected answers at the end or add information if necessary.

Questions

➜ How did Adolf Hitler come to power? What societal factors made his rise possible?

2.6 World War II and the Holocaust (1939 – 1945)

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 10 minutes**

On 1 September 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, starting **World War II**, a global conflict on an unprecedented scale – costing 60 million lives – that would last until 1945. The **Wannsee Conference** in 1942 gave the green light to the 'final solution': the mass murder of all Jews across Nazi-dominated Europe, making names like Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka synonyms for inconceivable cruelty and barbarism. In total, six million Jews were systematically killed in **concentration camps** and **extermination camps**. The word **'Holocaust'** (or 'Shoah') refers to this industrialised extermination of European Jewry. Other victims of this mass extermination campaign were disabled people, Romani people, Jehovah's Witnesses and political opponents as well as homosexuals. Soviet, Polish and Serbian civilians comprised an additional 13 million victims.

Ultimately, **Hitler's Nazi Germany** was defeated by the Allies: the Soviet Union from the east and the United States, France and the United Kingdom from the west. The unconditional surrender of the German Armed Forces *(Wehrmacht)* came into force on 8 May 1945.

In 1996, the 27th of January was introduced by German President Roman Herzog as a day of **remembrance for the victims of National Socialism**. This day was chosen because the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by Soviet troops on 27 January 1945. Since 1996, an annual hour of remembrance for the victims of National Socialism has been held in the German Bundestag. In 2005, the United Nations declared 27 January to be the International Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust.

Due to **Germany's responsibility** for the Holocaust, Germany has a unique relationship with **Israel**, reflected in the fact that Germany consistently stands up for Israel's right to exist. In addition, Germany has made compensation payments to victims of National Socialism, amounting to about 79 billion euros by the end of 2020. In the United Nations, Germany has advocated for fair dealings with the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations on 12 May 1965, **German-Israeli relations** have deepened and intensified both at the official evel and on the field of civil society. The establishment of German-Israeli intergovernmental consultations in 2008 started a new chapter in their bilateral relations.

(**Note:** The special relationship between Germany and Israel is discussed further in Module 5.6.)

Figure No. 5: Map from 1945 showing four Allied occupation zones and Berlin as the seat of the Allied Control Council.

➔ Source: **upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a9/Germany_occupation_zones_with_border.jpg** [accessed on 12.05.2022]

2.7   Deepening exercise

Variant I

BASIC T   **Duration: 40 minutes**

Goal: The participants should develop a deeper understanding of Germany's 'remembrance culture' and how people in Germany deal with their country's difficult past. They should come up with ideas on how to make sure that something like World War II and the Holocaust could never happen again.

Materials / methods

➜   PowerPoint with instructions

➜   Two separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

➜   Two breakout rooms

Online

➜   Flipchart

➜   Markers

➜   Two separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare to present the video linked below. Make sure that the audio functions in advance. Write the reflection questions on a flipchart; create as many flipcharts as there are groups. Make sure that you have at least one marker for each group.

w   **Online:** Prepare to present the video linked below. You can share the link in the chat. Alternatively, if you would like to show it via screen sharing, make sure to also share the audio (which may require you to adjust the 'share audio' setting). Prepare a digital whiteboard with one frame, in which you should write the reflection questions. Prepare post-its in different colours and place them next to the board. Use as many colours as you have groups and assign a colour to each group.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Show the video made by Deutsche Welle: 'Hitler, Nazis and World War II: How Germany Deals With Its Dark Past | Meet the Germans': **www.youtube.com/watch?v=L90ehLuSrKI**.

2.   Divide the participants into small groups of 3 – 4 and pose the questions below. Send them into breakout rooms online (one room per group) or, in a face-to-face setting, into different areas of the room and let them discuss the questions for **20 minutes**.

3.   Ask them to write down their main thoughts. In an online setting, the participants should write down their thoughts on post-its below each question. In a face-to-face setting, the participants can write down their thoughts just below each question on the flipchart.

   ➜   Why is it important to remember what happened in the past?

   ➜   How can a country reduce the risk of something like World War II and the Holocaust happening again?

   ➜   How does Germany deal with its past? What different positions did you hear in the video?

4.   Once the allotted time has passed, bring the participants back to the plenary.

5.   The group members should present their highlights in the plenary for about **10 minutes**. You can add information to their input as you see fit, and you can also allow for input from other participants.

Variant II

Goal: The main aim of this exercise is to visualise the historical process from the First Reich to the end of World War II. This visualisation should give participants a better understanding of how various circumstances contributed to the two biggest wars in history. The participants should realise that political conflicts always stem from the intersection of a wide array of socioeconomic factors – often crises. Note that the participants do not need to be able to match each picture perfectly to an event or person. Rather, this exercise serves as an engaging examination of German history.

Materials / methods

➔   PPT with instructions

➔   Digital whiteboard
     with a timeline and pictures

Online

➔   Printed pictures

➔   Markers, post-its

➔   Space to display the
     pictures (floor / wall / board)

Face-to-face

Preparation

Prepare a visual timeline from 843 to 1945, highlighting important events (which you can choose freely from this module). Find pictures that correspond to these events and print them alongside the year in which they occurred.

g   **Face-to-face:** Print each picture alongside the year in which the corresponding event occurred. Make sure that the printout is big enough to be clearly seen from a distance of about two to three meters (e.g., A4 sheets).

w   **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with an arrow to represent the passing of the time. Put the pictures and years along the arrow in chronological order. Place digital post-its under each picture.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Based on their newly acquired knowledge, task the participants with finding out which events correspond to each picture. Depending on how many events you chose to include and how quickly the participants recognise them, the duration of the exercise can vary greatly. On average, you can expect this exercise to take about **20 minutes**.

     g **Online:** Participants discuss each picture as a group to determine the corresponding event. One person from the group should be responsible for writing their answers on the digital post-its.

     w **Face-to-face:** Participants discuss each picture as a group to determine the corresponding event. One person from the group should be responsible for writing their answers on the post-its.

2.   After some time, if the participants have not figured every picture out on their own, you can complete the task for them and present the correct information.

2.8   Conclusion

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜   Is anything still unclear?

➜   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
(If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

3 History II

Duration

➔ Essential: 90 minutes
➔ In-Depth: 100 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

➔ The division and occupation of Germany following World War II
➔ The East-West conflict
➔ The year 1989 as a turning point in German history
➔ Major challenges facing Germany

Material

Face-to-face Training

➔ Presentation with input
➔ Flipchart, post-its, markers
➔ Printed pictures and timeline

Online Training

➔ Presentation with input
➔ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1.   Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2.   **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3.   Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4.   Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

After the end of World War II, Germany was occupied by four victorious powers. The differing ideologies of these powers led to the division of Germany. While democratic institutions and a liberal market emerged in West Germany, communist institutions prevailed in East Germany. Germany reunited in 1990, but the integration of East and West Germany proved to be a lengthy process. Following the euro's introduction in 1999, the most formative issues of the 2000s were the global financial crisis and global social and environmental challenges, which remain significant today.

Further Sources

German reunification – A short history | DW Documentary
➔ **www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNAxfWCwDsw&t=1669s**

German history after 1945
➔ **www.deutschland.de/en/german-history**

Germany's foreign and European policy principles
➔ **www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/ themen/policy-principles/229790**

What still divides East and West Germany
➔ **www.dw.com/en/german-reunification-what-still- divides-east-and-west/a-55078166**

3.1 The end of World War II and a new beginning (1945)

ESSENTIAL Duration: 15 minutes

Germany capitulated to end the European theatre of **World War II**. With German cities and villages destroyed, the German economy in shambles and no government in place, the **four victorious powers** – the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union – took power, dividing Germany into **four occupation zones** and Berlin into **four sectors**. Through the Potsdam Agreement, the victorious powers agreed on principles for German development. Each victorious power would determine the economic and political development in its zone and sector as it sees fit.

However, this amicability among the victorious powers did not last long. The ideological gap between the **Soviet Union** and the three **Western powers** led to the gradual **division of Germany**. Despite the victorious powers advocating for German unity, self-interest and mutual distrust prevailed. Germany's poor economic situation also accelerated the division of the country. In **East Germany**, the Soviet Union built a socialist society based on state control and surveillance. The Western powers, in contrast, built a democratic society and liberal markets in **West Germany**.

At the so-called London Six-Power Conference in 1948, the Western powers decided to form a West German state. This conference consisted of the foreign ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom and France as well as those of the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) given that they are West Germany's direct neighbours. This conference paved the way for the foundation of the **Federal Republic of Germany**.

Early in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Christian Democratic Union government under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer pursued Western integration. With the help of the three Western powers, it achieved a parliamentary democracy. In East Germany – officially the **German Democratic Republic (GDR)** – the first Chairman of the Council of State, Walter Ulbricht, rebuilt the country in line with Soviet institutions. Both West and East Germany became increasingly integrated into the Western and Eastern power blocs, respectively. Politically, economically and socially, the two German countries developed in opposite directions.
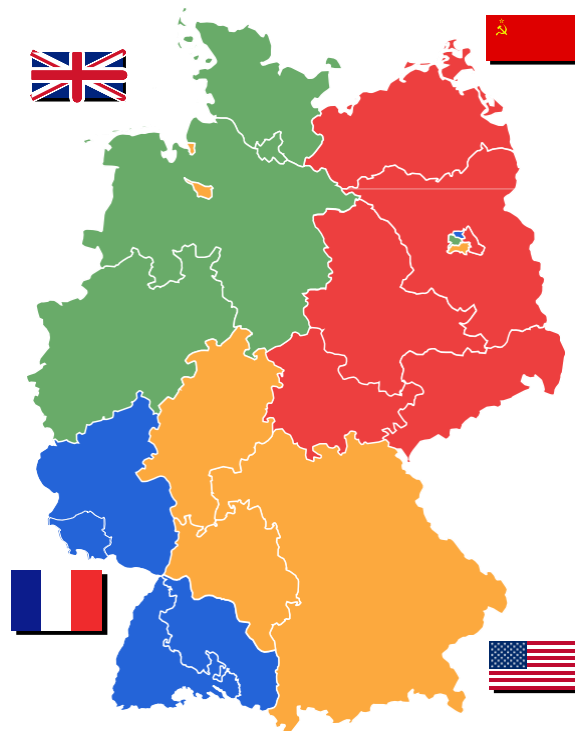
Figure No. 6: Occupation zones of Germany after World War II
➜ Source: **commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutschland_Besatzungszonen_-_1945_1946.svg** [accessed on 12.05.2022]

3.2 The Basic Law and the anchoring of federalism in West Germany (1949)

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

As a result of **East-West antagonism**, the division of Germany continued. With the Frankfurt Documents, the Western powers called on the minister presidents of the German states on 1 July 1948 to initiate the founding of a West German state. The Parliamentary Council was then instructed to draft the **Basic Law** *(Grundgesetz)*, which was adopted on 8 May 1949. (**Note:** The topic of the Basic Law is discussed further in Module 5). Soon after, the **Federal Republic of Germany** *(Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BRD)* was formally founded.

Federalism is the core principle of state organisation in the Federal Republic of Germany, being constitutionally enshrined in 1949 by the Basic Law. The German federal system is characterised by sovereignty of the 16 federal states *(Bundesländer or just Länder)* on the one hand and their close cooperation with the federal government on the other hand.

The most important function of federalism in Germany is to protect democracy from being endangered by the unilateral exercise of power. At both the federal and state levels, there is mutual control of governments and parliaments as well as an independent judiciary **('horizontal separation of powers')**. In addition, there is the special federal division of power – a limitation on the power of the federal government by the rights of the states **('vertical division of powers')**. For everyday politics, this means that the federal states share the responsibility for political decisions with the federal government (**Note:** For more detailed information on federalism, see Module 6).

3.3 Founding of the German Democratic Republic and the 'Cold War' (1949 – 1989)

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

In 1949, the 'People's Congress Movement for Unity and Just Peace' in the Soviet occupation zone gave rise to the first German People's Council, which drafted and formally adopted a constitution on 19 March 1949. This adoption formally founded the **German Democratic Republic, GDR** (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR) – a communist dictatorship based on the Soviet model.

The **United States** and the **Soviet Union** were the main opponents in the so-called **Cold War** – a serious conflict between hostile states fought with propaganda but without direct 'hot' conflict. The beginning of the Cold War shaped the new beginning of Germany. The US and the Soviet Union were at the head of two ideologically opposed international camps. The United States led the Western countries, striving for **liberal** and **pluralistic democracies** with **free-market economies**. The Soviet Union led the Eastern Bloc, which believed in **communist societies** in which the state would develop a planned economy. Industrial and commercial enterprises in the **GDR** were nationalised, while the economy in West Germany abided by free competition. The GDR was largely isolated from the non-socialist world, while West Germany was connected to the international community (e.g., with regard to the economy and culture).

People in West Germany had access to **international consumer goods** (e.g., chewing gum, cigarettes, yoghurt, jeans) and **cultural offerings** (e.g., American music, films), many of which were denied to people in the GDR. Working life differed as well. While West Germany boasted a **capitalist economic system**, people in the GDR worked in **collectives**, in which a planned economy regulated by the government sought to eliminate competition. For example, party leadership in the GDR decided how many raw materials companies needed for production, how many workers they should employ and how high their wages should be. In addition, there was a **duty to work** in the GDR, which is evident in the proportion of women in employment: 90 per cent in the GDR and just 50 per cent in West Germany. Interestingly, this difference actually produced positive results in the GDR, as the work situation of women in the GDR led to a comprehensive public childcare offer which was much less in Western Germany and is still a challenge in the country until these days.

Building of the Berlin Wall (1961)

Over time, qualified workers in the East began to flee to West Germany in pursuit of freedom and better living standards. Through the construction of the **Berlin Wall** in August 1961, East German rulers sought to prevent further GDR citizens from fleeing and cemented the division of Germany.

The **Berlin Wall** shaped an entire era and brought suffering to generations of Germans. It shattered dreams, careers, families and friendships. At least 139 people were killed while trying to cross the 160-kilometre-long, heavily guarded border. Berlin was divided for nearly 30 years. Today, fragments of the wall can be found all over Berlin, the most famous part being the 'East Side Gallery', which is the longest surviving section of the wall. In 1990, it was decorated by more than 100 artists.

Reflection exercise: East and West Germany

ESSENTIAL Duration: 15 minutes

Goal: This exercise should prompt participants to reflect on and fully imagine the different living situations across East and West Germany.

Method: Ask the questions below and allow time for a group discussion. First, let the participants collect their thoughts individually for five minutes. Next, open the discussion and hold a group discussion for 10 minutes. While the participants share their thoughts, collect the answers as bullet points on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise the collected answers at the end or add information if necessary.

Questions

➔ What were some major differences between the everyday lives of West Germans and East Germans?
What are some of the challenges that families may have gone through as a result of living in separated countries?

Museums in Germany where the participants can learn more about the country's divided history:

➔ GDR Museum Berlin: **www.ddr-museum.de/en**

➔ Haus der Geschichte Bonn: **www.hdg.de/en**

3.4 Peaceful revolution and reunification (1989 – 1990)

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Liberalisation across the Eastern Bloc and economic decline in the GDR led to rising discontent across the country. Mass emigrations and non-violent demonstrations exerted more and more pressure on the East German government. Ultimately, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) saw no way out and announced political changes. On 9 November 1989, the **peaceful revolution** finally brought about tangible change when the **Berlin Wall fell** that evening. The **Unification Agreement**, which came into force on 3 October 1990, formally reunified Germany.

Optional group activity

Goal: This activity is merely intended to briefly activate and involve the participants, so not much prior knowledge is necessary. The participants should reflect on the socioeconomic inequalities that remained following reunification. (Afterwards, this question can be answered in more detail based on the information in the following paragraph and section 3.5.)

Method: Ask the question below and let the participants discuss it. Allow this discussion to go on for **five minutes**.

Questions

➜ What challenges might have arisen during the process of reunification?
There are no right or wrong answers here – this is about activating your imagination.

State unity fundamentally changed Germany and presented it with major challenges. Berlin was once again the capital of all of Germany. The conversion of the East German economy to a free market was difficult and expensive. Many formerly stateowned enterprises were found to be ailing and unproductive. New laws privatised about 6,000 stateowned companies and shut down 3,700, leaving millions of East Germans unemployed and worried about their future. The development of modern infrastructure (e.g., roads, railways, telephone networks) in the East was also cost-intensive. To finance the cost of unification, the federal government introduced a **solidarity contribution** in 1991, collected as a tax from every German taxpayer until 2021. The integration of East and West Germany proved to be a lengthy process.

3.5   First two decades following reunification (1990 – 2010)

IN-DEPTH   **Duration: 20 minutes**

In July 1990, Chancellor Helmut Kohl made a promise: 'Through a joint effort, we will soon succeed in transforming East Germany into flourishing landscapes again, where it is worth living and working.' The unification and Chancellor Kohl's vision of the future created euphoria in society; regardless, East Germany experienced its worst economic crisis since 1945. The promised **'flourishing landscapes'** were proving to be difficult to achieve, with depopulated villages and structurally weak regions emerging instead. East Germany was supposed to transform into the world's most modern and dynamic economic area; instead, 14,000 businesses were closed.

Germany's post-reunification social development fluctuated between euphoria and disillusionment. In the exuberance surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, people often overlooked the difficulties that the upcoming structural changes would entail. Mass unemployment, sociocultural unfamiliarity and the devaluation of previous institutions, norms and achievements triggered a **'transformation and unity shock'** among many East Germans, leading to widespread uncertainty, disappointment and resignation. Although Germany was reunited, two distinct societies still existed. Post-reunification challenges included economic, social and financial policy as well as foreign and security concerns.

In terms of 2000s foreign policy, Germany frequently demonstrated its willingness to assume comprehensive international responsibility to help resolve conflicts and promote civil society.

In November 2005, a woman became the head of government in Germany for the first time: **Chancellor Angela Merkel**. She shaped the period of Germany's greatest prosperity.

As a founding member, Germany has been a part of the **European Union** since it was known as the European Community in the 1950s. The European Union (EU) is an association of democratic European states that have made the preservation of peace and the pursuit of prosperity their primary goal. Since 1985, the EU has enabled **free movement** within the **Schengen**

Area – mainly consisting of EU countries – allowing citizens to travel, work and live in any constitutive country (**Note:** For more detailed information on the European Union, see Module 7).

The foundation of the **Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union** was laid in 1992, when the governments of the EU Member States, including Germany, signed the Maastricht Treaty. The euro was formally introduced as a common currency on 1 January 1999. Initially limited to electronic transactions, euros were issued as cash three years later on 1 January 2002. Germany, alongside 10 other countries, was part of the common currency area from the very beginning. The euro was initially met with great scepticism; many citizens wanted to hold onto the German mark. Since its creation, however, the euro has proved to be a robust currency. Germany benefited from the expanded **internal market**, with around 40 per cent of German exports going to EU countries. The euro advanced trade and, in turn, boosted employment in Germany.

Globalisation brought the world closer together, both economically and politically. In 2008, however, globalisation's downsides revealed themselves when the US bank Lehman Brothers, which had been heavily involved in real estate lending, filed for insolvency – with far-reaching consequences. This **financial crisis** peaked when, for the first time since World War II, the German economy shrank by about five per cent in 2009. Since 1946, only five years had seen negative economic growth in Germany. The German government implemented two economic recovery packages, which collectively provided about 80 billion euros to boost economic growth.

3.6   Major emerging challenges (2010 – 2020)   `ESSENTIAL` `Duration: 5 minutes`

In the last decade, demographic change towards an ageing society has put pressure on German healthcare and pension programs. Challenges have also emerged from foreign policy developments, including global economic threats, growing instability (particularly in the Middle East and Africa), the Ukraine crisis and the subsequently shaken relationship with Russia, rising migration, secessionist tendencies across the EU and, more broadly, global social and environmental challenges.

Since February 2020, the **COVID-19 pandemic** has also impacted Germany. The first 'shutdown' of public life in March 2020 led to struggles across politics, business, culture and society at large. 'Rescue packages' and severe restrictions in public life led to significant movements against government measures as well as **counterdemonstrations** by the so-called '*Querdenker*'.

Optional group activity   `Duration: 5 – 10 minutes`

Goal: This activity serves to briefly activate and involve the participants. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has had a global impact, the participants should all have at least a minor answer to this question. (**Note:** In addition, this exchange can pave the way for later discussions about COVID-19 demonstrations in Germany, which can be found in module 5.)

Method: Ask the question below and let the participants discuss their thoughts, experiences and impressions as a group for **5 – 10 minutes**, depending on how much the participants have to say.

Question

➜   What is public opinion like in your home country regarding the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Caution! Be aware that participants may discuss their personal opinions within this exchange. While some participants may be in favour of COVID-19 measures, others may be against them and/or not believe in the severity of the virus. The potential for conflict exists with this topic. Please keep this in mind and, if necessary, refer to the tips in this handbook's introduction regarding dealing with heated debates or conflicts.

3.7   Deepening exercise

Variant I

BASIC T | Duration: 35 minutes

Goal: The participants should review all of the topics that they have learned about so far and dive deeper into specific aspects that have remained in their memory. They should summarise the Western and Soviet influences on Germany and reflect on why these differences may still exist today. (**Note:** This reflection can pave the way for later discussions about the inequality between East and West Germany in Module 5.)

In addition, the participants should review events that they remember from the module to gain a deeper understanding of development throughout German history and enable them to draw connections to modern debates and dynamics.

Materials / methods

→   PPT with instructions

→   Two separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

→   Two breakout rooms

Online

→   Flipchart

→   Markers

→   Two separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare two flipcharts and write the questions for one of the topics below on each. Make sure that you have at least one market for each group.

w   **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with a frame for each group. Write the questions for one of the topics below in each. Prepare digital post-its in two different colours – one colour per group.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants into two groups. Each group is given one topic to discuss and reflect on. The groups should summarise their discussion by writing down key points on their flipchart. The two topics are as follows:

   →   **Topic 1:** Which countries influenced the different parts of Germany from 1945 to 1990?
   In what ways did these countries influence Germany?

   →   **Topic 2:** What specific events do you associate with Germany from 1945 to 2020?
   What happened during these events?

   g   **Face-to-face:** Give each group a prepared flipchart and send them to a designated work area to work on the questions for **20 minutes**.

   w   **Online:** Create two breakout rooms for the two groups. Prompt them to work on the questions for **20 minutes**.

2.   Have the participants return to the plenary to present the highlights of their discussion for about **15 minutes**. You can add necessary information as you see fit or have other participants provide their input.

Variant II

Goal: The main aim of this exercise is to visualise relevant events throughout the history of Germany so that the participants get a better idea of how the different events are connected. The participants do not need to be able to match each picture perfectly to an event. This exercise serves rather as a playful examination of German history.

Materials / methods

➔   PPT with instructions

➔   Digital whiteboard
     with a timeline and pictures

Online

➔   Printed pictures

➔   Markers

➔   Post-its

➔   Space to display the pictures
     (floor / wall / board)

Face-to-face

Preparation

Prepare a visual timeline from 1945 to 2020, highlighting important events (which you can choose freely from this module). Find pictures that correspond to these events and print them alongside the year in which they occurred.

g   **Face-to-face:** Print each picture alongside the year in which the corresponding event occurred. Make sure that the printout is big enough to be clearly seen from a distance of about two to three meters (e.g., A4 sheets).

w   **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with an arrow to represent the passing of the time. Put the pictures and years along the arrow in chronological order. Place digital post-its under each picture.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Based on their newly acquired knowledge, task the participants with finding out which events correspond to each picture. Depending on how many events you chose to include and how quickly the participants recognise them, the duration of the exercise can vary greatly. On average, you can expect this exercise to take about **20 minutes**.

     g **Online:** Participants discuss each picture as a group to determine the corresponding event. One person from the group should be responsible for writing their answers on the digital post-its.

     w **Face-to-face:** Participants discuss each picture as a group to determine the corresponding event. One person from the group should be responsible for writing their answers on the post-its.

2.   After some time, if the participants have not figured every picture out on their own, you can complete the task for them and present the correct information.

3.8   Conclusion

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜   Is anything still unclear?

➜   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
(If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

4 Migration

Duration

→ Essential: 110 minutes

→ In-Depth: 180 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

→ The most important German immigration waves

→ Different reasons for migration

→ The significance of migration for Germany

→ The controversies surrounding migration in Germany

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Post-its

Online Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Digital whiteboard and post-its

Table of contents

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

Migration is an essential part of German history. It has undoubtedly shaped the territory and socioeconomic dynamics of modern Germany. This module illustrates the history of migration in Germany from the 19th century to the present, highlighting the underlying reasons behind it.

Further Sources

Federal Statistical Office	➔ **www.destatis.de/EN/Home/_node.html**
Federal Office for Migration and Refugees	➔ **www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite_node.html**
Principle of the Humanitarian Visa	➔ **www.migrationundmenschenrechte.de/de/topic/541.remap.html**

4.1   Migration until 1945

Migration – whether driven by a search for work, for new perspectives, to further one's education, to start a family or to flee hunger and persecution – was standard and politically desirable in the 19th century, especially in structurally weak regions. **Industrial centres** such as the Ruhr region and the **coal and steel industry** in Saxony attracted hundreds of thousands of workers and their families. **Seasonal employment in agriculture**, which grew increasingly unattractive to locals, made the recruitment of **Russian and Polish agricultural workers** highly profitable. Additionally, the large infrastructure projects in **canal and railway construction** could only be implemented thanks to workers from **Italy**, the **Netherlands** or the **Habsburg Empire**.

Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, a thirst for perspective and adventure led more than five million **people from Germany** to emigrate oversea – mainly to **North America** and the United States. Similarly, about five million transit **migrants from Eastern Europe** sought to go to North America via German and Western European ports but got 'stranded' in Germany for financial, medical or familial reasons.

These migration flows came to an abrupt halt with the onset of World War I. The number of emigrants from Germany to overseas **declined significantly** with the exception of a brief peak in the early 1920s. Notably, European labour migration to Germany came increasingly under state control during World War I. As with every war, expulsion and flight were common during World War I, but its conclusion led to abundant migration on account of the political redistribution of territories in peacetime.

The National Socialist dictatorship and World War II brought about an unprecedented level of **state-induced forced migration** through deportation, flight, expulsion and resettlement. Around 300,000 Jewish emigrants left Germany after the 1933 federal elections; the total number of Jewish refugees rose to around 600,000 following the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. Nazi persecution also resulted in about 25 – 30,000 political emigrants. Over the course of the war, the number of civilian and military forced labourers in Germany reached nearly eight million, most of them from Russia, France and Italy. About nine million people were expelled from German-annexed territories in Eastern Europe, partially to make room for about one million ethnic Germans `coming back' for repatriation from Eastern Europe.

Optional group activity

Duration: 10 minutes

Goal: This activity should teach participants about the varying push and pull factors behind migration, especially those relevant during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Push factors push people away from their home (e.g., war). Pull factors pull people to a new home (e.g., economic opportunity).

Method: First, explain the difference between push and pull factors to the participants. Present a list of factors alongside a table in PowerPoint (that you prepared in advance) with push and pull as the columns and socioeconomic factors, political factors and environmental factors as the rows. Discuss where each factor should go in the table with the group. Examples of relevant factors include high crime/low crime, crop failure/fertile land, drought/low risk of natural hazards, poverty/economic security and war/peace. This discussion should go on for about **10 minutes**.

Question

➜   What were the main motivations behind the first immigration waves in the 19th and early 20th centuries?

4.2   Migration and flight following World War II   ESSENTIAL   Duration: 10 minutes

The flight and expulsion of **Germans from Central and Eastern Europe** represent a unique chapter in Germany's migration history. The looming of the Red Army during the final phase of World War II and the border shifts following the conclusion of the war led to extensive flights, especially towards the West. By 1948, almost a quarter of the population of the Soviet-occupied zone were refugees.

Post-war Germany was deeply divided and characterised by **forced migration**. Its division into two German states – formalised in 1949 – made for a unique dynamic of internal mobility. About 3.1 million people moved **from the GDR to the Federal Republic** by the time East Germany began to limit border crossings in 1961; only about 500,000 had **migrated from West Germany to East Germany**. While these migration flows were exploited for propaganda purposes by both governments against the backdrop of the Cold War, the admission of 'GDR refugees' was always controversial in the West; they were accused of not being real refugees, only coming to the Federal Republic for selfish economic reasons.

Evidently, the questioning of the motives behind migration was present even in the early days of the Federal Republic. In the GDR, on the other hand, the government sought to limit discourse on migration, especially that pertaining to 'resettlers': those who had come to the GDR from young Poland during the post-war period. The Federal Republic of Germany, in contrast, created a **legal right to immigration for 'ethnic Germans' from Eastern Europe** as part of extensive integration services.

The economic boom that followed reconstruction created a rise in demand for labour. This demand was met in the Federal Republic through **immigration from the GDR** and the immigration of other **ethnic German returnees**. Conversely, the exodus of skilled young workers intensified the GDR's labour shortage, prompting it to fortify its external borders and construct the Berlin Wall.

4.3   *'Gastarbeit'* and immigration   ESSENTIAL   Duration: 10 minutes

Shortly after World War II, farms and companies in the Federal Republic of Germany began to once again **employ workers from abroad**, especially those from **Austria** and **Italy**, using contacts from the interwar and wartime periods. Given the labour shortage in the GDR, this form of labour recruitment rose in importance: the number of foreigners employed in the Federal Republic rose from about 73,000 in 1954 to 329,000 in 1960, 711,000 in 1962 and, in 1965, exceeded one million for the first time (1.2 million). Outside of a brief decline in 1967, the number continued to rise, ultimately peaking at 2.6 million in 1973 – the year of the recruitment stop. In total, one-third of foreign workers were **'guest workers'** *(Gastarbeiter)*, many of whom were from **Turkey** and **Eastern Europe**.

An important principle of guest-worker migration was the **'rotation of labour'**. Migrants would come to work in the **industrial centres of Europe** for a few years and then return with the money they had saved to make room for new workers. This system worked for a long time: between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1970s, about 14 million foreign workers came to Germany, 11 million of whom ultimately returned to their country of origin. Over time, more and more guest workers **extended their stay** and brought their families with them, resulting in a situation that was officially denied for a long time. However, instead of countering this migration (as was already the case for emigrants and transferees) with appropriate integration measures, discourse emerged over the 'unbearable burden of foreign employment'. In the summer of 1973, the government implemented a recruitment stop, which resulted in a **slower increase** in the employment of foreigners.

With the recruitment stop, the Federal Republic inserted itself into two opposing European patterns: on the one hand, all Western European industrialised countries **stopped the recruitment of new foreign workers** between 1970 and 1974 or severely restricted access to their labour markets for non-Western Europeans. On the other hand, the **freedom of movement for workers**, which was agreed upon in the Treaty of Rome and gradually implemented after 1968, had already taken effect. Thus, the recruitment stop had no effect on **Italian 'guest workers'**, for example, while Turkish and Yugoslavian nationals now needed to think very carefully about whether they should stay in the Federal Republic and bring their families with them or return home for good.
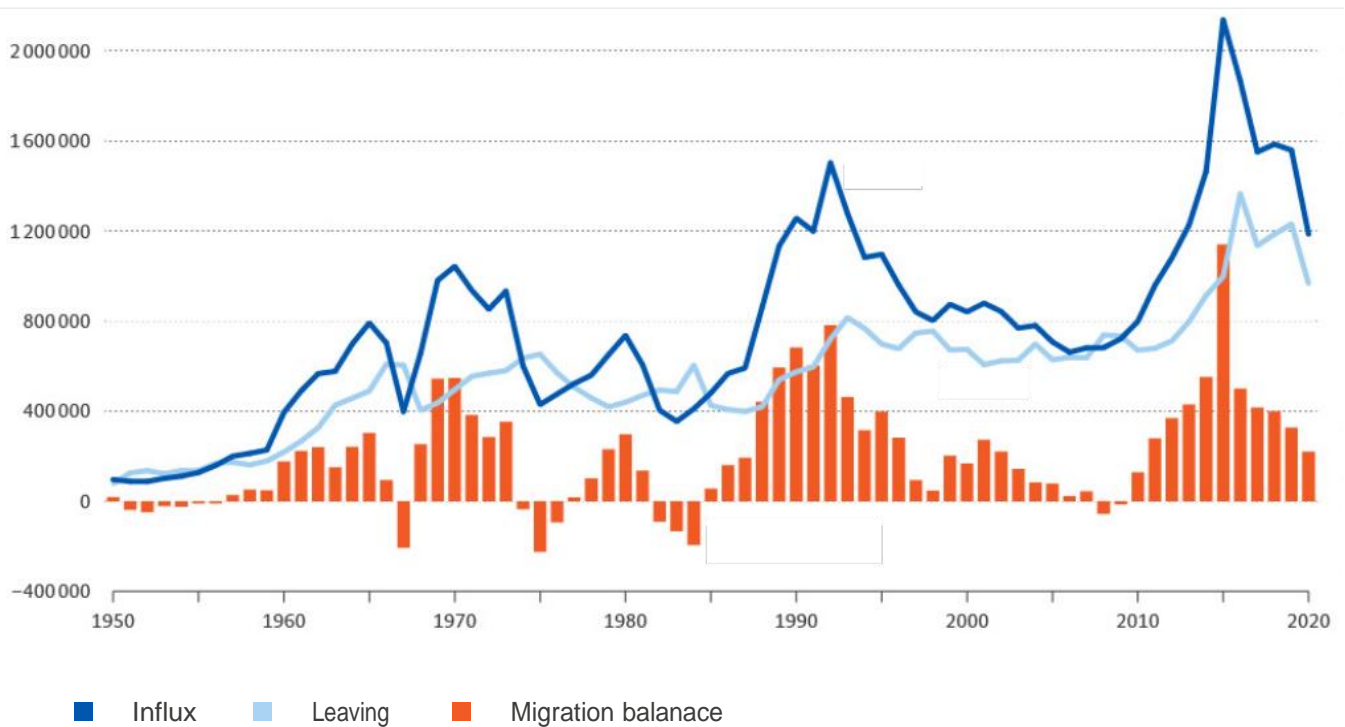
Figure No. 7: Migration rate in Germany

➔ Source: **Federal Statistical Office: www.demografie-portal.de/DE/Fakten/wanderungen-ausland.html**
[accessed on 07.06.2022]

Optional group exercise: 'Guest workers'

Duration: 15 minutes

Goal: The participants should reflect on potential identity crises or inner conflicts that so-called 'guest workers' may have faced as a result of playing an active role in the German economy's growth while simultaneously dealing with prejudice, discrimination and underappreciation on account of their origin. They should also reflect on the extent to which this issue may continue today.

Method: Divide the participants into groups of three to five people. Read the question below to them and let them discuss it within their groups for 10 minutes, tasking them with writing down a group consensus. After the **10 minutes** are up, ask them to present at least three highlights from the discussion to all of the participants. This process should only take about **five minutes**.

Question

➔ How can these inner conflicts stemming from playing an active role in the German economy's growth while simultaneously dealing with prejudice, discrimination and underappreciation on account of their origin still be a present issue for migrants today?

4.4   Immigration in the GDR

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 5 minutes

The GDR also experienced immigration. The largest group of GDR immigrants consisted of **labour migrants** from the early 1960s onwards. In contrast to the Federal Republic, however, the GDR sought recruitment contracts exclusively from other socialist states. Initially, it recruited workers from **Poland** and **Hungary**. Later, it signed bilateral agreements with **Algeria**, **Cuba**, **Mozambique**, **Vietnam** and **Angola**. On a small scale, Mongolia, China and North Korea also sent workers to the GDR.

The employment of foreign workers was organised by the state. Contract workers arrived in groups, meaning individual contract negotiations between employer and employee were not feasible. Additionally, foreign workers were not allowed to choose their own place of residence. Instead, their accommodation was organised by their company in dormitories that only housed foreign workers. The GDR did not plan for long-term stays among foreign contract workers; they were usually sent to their country of origin after a maximum of five years. Foreign workers were often subject to discrimination and racism in the GDR despite the ideological pretence of a racism-free society denying this reality.

Rising tensions in the autumn of 1989 affected the relationship between GDR citizens and migrant workers, who suffered from the citizens' projection of fear and anger and were increasingly perceived as competitors in the struggle for scarce resources. As the GDR's political system collapsed, the liquidation of state-owned enterprises against the background of rising xenophobia resulted in the vast majority of labour migrants **returning to their home countries**.

4.5   Migration following the fall of the Iron Curtain

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 10 minutes

The high degree to which migration movements are influenced by **international crises** became increasingly evident in the late 1980s. The crumbling Iron Curtain[2] not only enabled more and more **GDR citizens** to illegally emigrate to the **West**, but it also opened **transit routes for migrants** from other parts of the world seeking protection, security and prosperity in the Federal Republic of Germany. Still, most migrants arriving in the reunified Germany in the 1990s came from Eastern Europe.

The end of the Cold War led to a **resumption of traditional migration relations**, which were initially more extensive than expected. Between 1988 and 1993, around 7.3 million people came to **Germany**, while only 3.6 million departed – a net inflow of 3.7 million. Nevertheless, Germany continued to have a self-image of a 'non-immigration country', lacking appropriate discourse on migration. This misjudgement led to serious political disputes, ending in racist violence that led to over 50 deaths in the early 1990s. Further consequences were the **restriction of legal immigration opportunities** (especially for Eastern Europeans) and a drastic **curtailing of the basic right to asylum**. Towards the end of the 20th century, civil wars in the disintegrating Yugoslavia, increasing internal migration throughout Europe, growing global interdependencies and, above all, pressure from an increasingly self-confident immigrant population and their descendants finally led the Federal Republic of Germany to confront its immigration history. In 2000, a **new citizenship law** came into force that facilitated the naturalisation of immigrants' descendants born in Germany, and the federal government appointed a commission to draft a **new migration law**.

[2] The 'Iron Curtain' was the political, military and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union following World War II to seal itself and its dependent Eastern and Central European allies off from open contact with the West and other non-communist areas.

Migration Balance East – and West Germany (excluding Berlin)

Persons counted in thousands
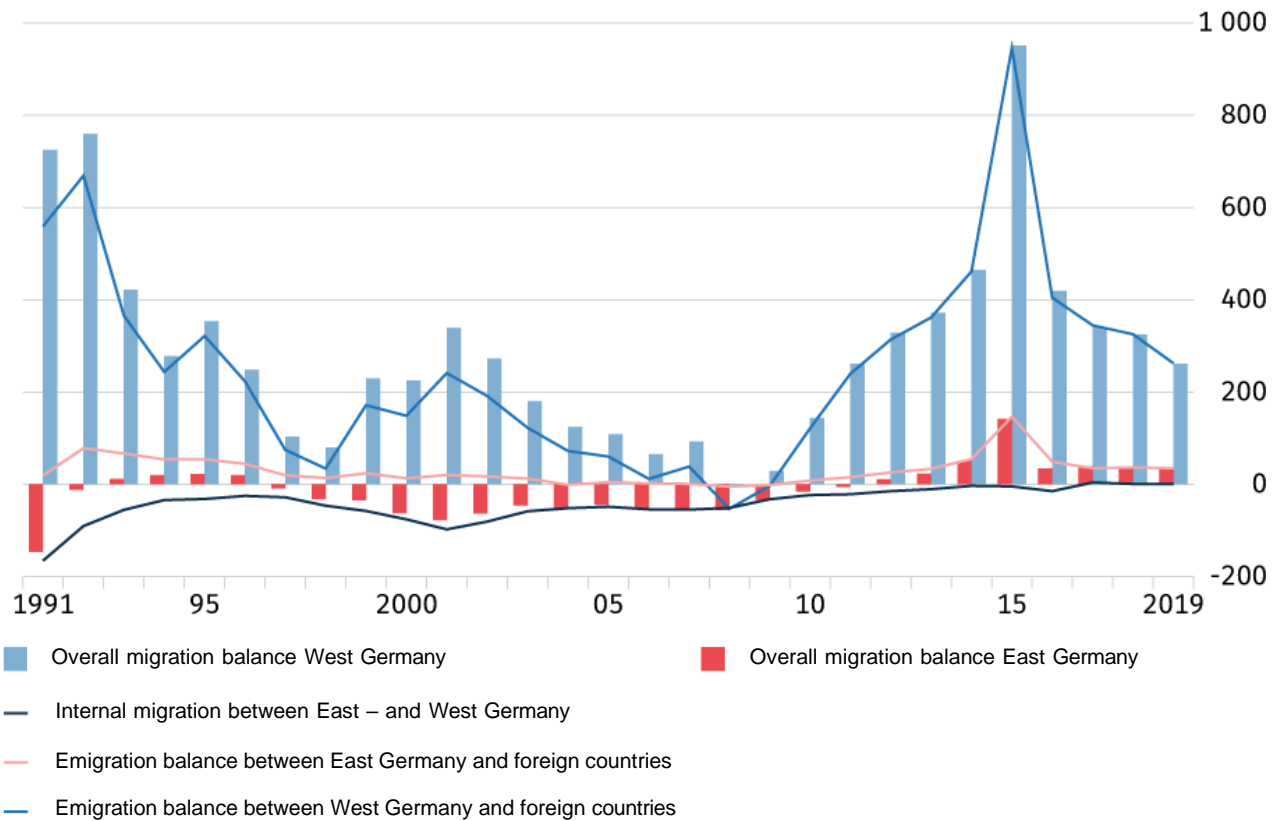
Figure No. 8: Influx and leaving rates in East and West Germany

➜   Source: **Federal Statistical Office: www.destatis.de** [accessed on 16.02.2022]

Optional group activity

<div style="float:right">Duration: 10 minutes</div>

Goal: This exercise serves to activate the participants by having them reflect on what they have learned – and what has surprised them – from the input so far. This exercise will also encourage them to ask each other questions and discuss their misunderstandings.

Method: Divide the group into pairs and let them interview each other for about **10 minutes** (five minutes each). Give them the following questions to use in their interviews – but encourage them to ask their own questions as well. In online settings, participants can conduct these interviews in breakout rooms; in face-to-face settings, each pair can find a spot in the training facilities.

Questions

➜   What have you learnt about migration so far today? What surprised you about it?
      Has the content inspired you to learn more about anything in particular.

4.6　Asylum-related　immigration

Among the immigration groups discussed so far, **asylum seekers** played a negligible role for a long time. Not until 1980 did their number exceed just 100,000 people per year. This high figure stemmed from a military coup in **Turkey**. Later, the fall of the communist regimes in **Eastern Europe** and the disintegration of **Yugoslavia** from 1988 onwards led to the **strongest immigration** of foreigners since the recruitment of guest workers. In addition, the intensifying conflict in the **Turkish Kurdish regions** had a significant impact on asylum-related immigration. In 1992, asylum applications accounted for about 30 per cent of all immigrants to Germany and almost two-thirds of all immigrants to Europe. It is worth noting, however, that political debates of this era vastly exaggerated the number of asylum seekers and their share of immigration. While about 1.5 million people applied for asylum in Germany between 1990 and 1994, another 2.1 million came through **family reunification** or by **using their rights as EC** (now EU)[3] **citizens**.

From 2000 onwards, **asylum-related immigration declined sharply** and remained at a low level until the 2010s. This dynamic **changed drastically in 2015**, when almost one million people sought asylum in Germany in large part due to the ongoing war in **Syria**. This sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers led to an administrative and infrastructural crisis, commonly referred to as the **'refugee crisis'**, and stirred fierce debate. While fewer asylum seekers entered Germany in later years, the number of people fleeing war and persecution around the world continues to rise. Since 2015, the issue of asylum policy has become an important one throughout Europe, and the EU Member States are still struggling to find a **unified asylum policy**. Some countries want to take in as few refugees as possible, while Member States at the external borders complain about being left to manage the 'flood of refugees' on their own. EU Member states are caught between the conflicting demands of advancing their own interests by strictly regulating migration and respecting **fundamental human rights**. This dichotomy is particularly notable at the **EU's external borders**, where the EU strongly claims to respect human rights but often does not live up to that claim. EU Member States employ various strategies to limit access to the **asylum system**. For example, they **cooperate with third-party countries** to prevent refugees from ever reaching EU borders. Alternatively, they close European ports to rescue ships. While these decisions are generally made by the Member states, the EU tolerates them.

To **apply for asylum** in Europe, refugees must first enter Europe. To do this **legally**, they need a **visa**. But people in crisis areas generally have no way to get a visa. Studies suggest the creation of accessible **legal migration routes** to the EU and the use of the **humanitarian visa** (for more information on this topic, see 'Further Sources' above). This would enable people to apply for such a visa at foreign missions and legally go through the asylum procedure in the EU.

---

[3] European Community (EC); European Union (EU)

4.7   Irregular and regular migration

There is no universally accepted definition of **irregular migration**, though it usually refers to any movement that takes place outside the official norms of the countries of origin, transit and reception. Migrants in an irregular situation may be subject to one or more of the following circumstances:

➜   The person may **enter the country irregularly** (e.g., with forged documents, without passing through an official border crossing)

➜   The person may **be in the country irregularly** (e.g., in breach of the conditions of an entry visa/residence permit)

➜   The person may **be irregularly employed in the country** (e.g., authorised to be in the country but not to take up paid employment there).

It is important to note that the phenomenon of 'irregular migration' refers to both the undocumented **movement** of people and the number of migrants whose **status** may be undocumented at any given time. **Changes** in the stock of irregular migrants in a country occur not only when undocumented migrants **enter or leave the country**, but also due to **changes in the status** of migrants already in the country.

Irregularity refers to the status of a migrant at a given point in time – **not to the migrants themselves**. Migrants can 'enter' and 'leave' irregularity when laws and policies change. For example, migrants fleeing conflict or persecution and seeking protection in another country may be counted as irregular migrants at the time of their border crossing, but their status may become regular once they apply for asylum. Migrants can also become 'irregular' when their visa or permit expires, making them undocumented.

Most migrants coming from outside the EU need a **permit to legally migrate to Germany**. In German law, this permit is called a 'residence title'. Residence titles are granted to those who enter Germany for a specific purpose (e.g., to work) and meet certain requirements. People who enter the country in a regular manner are usually initially given a temporary 'residence permit'. If they want to extend this, they must submit an application to the foreigners' authority. People who have had a residence permit for five years are allowed to stay for the long term. If they are able to **finance themselves**, have **sufficient German language skills** and have **no criminal record**, they can receive a 'settlement permit'.

Reflection exercise: Migration history of Germany and participants' country of origin

ESSENTIAL Duration: 35 minutes

Goal: The participants should reflect on the migration history of their country of origin, comparing it with that of Germany. (You may need to find out separately beforehand about the historical and current relations between the countries in the context of migration.) The bonus question is a bit more challenging, so it does not necessarily need to be answered if some participants do not know enough.

Questions

➔ What similarities exist between the migration histories of your country and Germany?

➔ What are the greatest differences between the migration histories of your country and Germany?

➔ What major events have influenced the course of migration in your country?

➔ **Bonus:** How is the migration history of your country intertwined with those of other countries?

Implementation of the exercise

w **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with a frame for each question and digital post-its in different colours, placing them in their respective frames. First, present the questions via PowerPoint and send the participants the link to the digital whiteboard. Then, give the participants **15 minutes** to write down their thoughts using the coloured post-its. Once the allotted time is over, go through each question with the group. Ask for clarification on certain notes whenever warranted to facilitate a group discussion. This portion should not exceed **20 minutes**.

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare a pinboard with four headers (one for each question), cards, pens and pins. First, present the questions to the participants via PowerPoint. Distribute the cards to the participants; give them **15 minutes** to write down their thoughts and pin them under the corresponding questions. Once the allotted time is over, go through each question with the group. Ask for clarification on certain notes whenever warranted to facilitate a group discussion. This portion should not exceed **20 minutes**.

Optional: You can give the participants the opportunity to do their own research on their smartphone or laptop if they would like to. In this case, you should allow about 10 additional minutes for this exercise.

4.8   Deepening exercise

ESSENTIAL

Role-playing exercise

BASIC T   Duration: 40 minutes

Goal: The participants should develop a deeper understanding of the various migration movements to Germany. They should grasp the motivations behind migration as well as its accompanying challenges and hopes.

Materials / methods

➔   PPT with instructions

➔   Digital whiteboard with post-its

➔   Two breakout rooms

Online

➔   PPT with instructions

➔   Post-its

➔   Space for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Write a previously discussed migration movement on each post-it (four in total).

w   **Online:** Prepare a frame with digital post-its. Write a previously discussed migration movement on each post-it (four in total).

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants into four groups. Let each group choose one of the migration movements from the post-its.

2.   Instruct one person from each group to represent a person who migrated to Germany during their selected movement. Each group should prepare a story for that person to tell the plenary. Try to imagine the following details and make them part of your migration story:

   ➔   What is your name?

   ➔   Why did you decide to migrate to Germany?

   ➔   In what year and how did you arrive in Germany?

   ➔   What is your family situation?

   ➔   What kind of challenges did you encounter in Germany?

   ➔   What chances do you see for your life in Germany?

   ➔   What are the next steps in your life?

   ➔   Is there anything else you would like to share about your story?

3.   Give the groups about **20 minutes** to prepare these stories.

4.   Bring the participants back to the plenary. Have one participant from each group tell the story, allowing input from the other participants to get a discussion going. This portion of the exercise should take about **20 minutes**.

4.9   Conclusion

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜   Is anything still unclear?

➜   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
       (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

4.10   Further Material

According to the definition of the Federal Statistical Office, a person has a 'migration background' if they or at least one of their parents did not have German citizenship at birth.

Distribution of the population* in Germany in 2020, by migration background

	Share of population
Population without migration background	73.3%
Population with migration background (in the wider sense)	26.7%
Among these: Germans with own migration experience	5.9%
Among these: Germans without own migration experience	8.2%
Among these: foreigners with own migration experience	10.7%
Among these: foreigners without own migration experience	2%
Population with migration background (in the more narrow sense)	24.3%

Figure No. 9: Percentages of the population with and without migration background in Germany

➜   Source: **Mikrozensus - Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund 2020, page 32: www.statista.com/statistics/ 891809/german-population-by-migration-background** [accessed on 07.06.2022]

Chapter **II**

Politics and Law

5 Fundamental Rights and Modern Socio-political Debates in Germany

Duration

➜ Essential: 110 minutes

➜ In-Depth: 140 minutes

Goals

➜ The Basic Law, fundamental rights and non-negotiable principles/values in Germany

➜ Modern socio-political debates in Germany

Material

Face-to-face Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Internet access and a device for research

➜ Pinboard, pins, cards

Online Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

This module provides insight into fundamental civil rights in Germany, which are anchored in the Basic Law. However, it also shows instances in which these rights are not fully granted or in which there is a conflict between applicable rights (e.g., protests against COVID-19 measures). In addition, the module presents the most relevant socio-political topics, such as East-West inequality and responsibility for Israel.

Further Sources

Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany	➜	**www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/index.html**
Enriching Diversity	➜	**www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de**
LGBT rights in Germany	➜	**www.equaldex.com/region/germany**
Migration and identity	➜	**www.dw.com/en/flipping-the-script-a-different-kind-of-political-debate/a-58819091**

5.1   Introduction

Modules 2–4 detailed the historical development of Germany from its foundation to the present day. This foundation was laid to enable the participants to understand Germany as a country.   As history shapes the present, this module focuses on the prevailing socio-political debates in modern-day Germany. It addresses the two questions below. Share this information with the participants so that they understand the intentions of this module.

1.   *What principles and values can be found in German society? Which are non-negotiable?*

The goal of this section is to give the participants a good idea of the positions laid out in the Basic Law and represented by the majority of German residents. The topics covered here are sensitive and require special attention; improper communication can cause severe irritation in German social environments. These positions are non-negotiable and must be internalised by the participants. Of course, the participants are not expected to simply change their opinions and adopt those presented. Rather, they should become aware of these non-negotiable positions and come to understand the expectations that people will have of them in Germany.

2.   *What socio-political debates can be currently observed in Germany? What positions are represented?*

The goal of this section is to give an overview of the socio-political debates taking place in modern-day Germany. These debates are usually driven by a clash between differing opinions or by instances in which reality does not align with the mainstream or 'politically correct' position. This will help the participants to understand the different positions and controversies currently dominating German discourse, many of which they will encounter while in Germany.

5.2   Non-negotiable principles and values

Germany has learned its lessons from its past: the **Basic Law** *(Grundgesetz)*, which came into force in 1949, has a notable focus on civil rights. It lays out the rights that all human beings and, in particular, all German citizens have with regard to the organs of sovereign power. These include the protection of human dignity, freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and freedom of religion.

Freedom is one of the central non-negotiable values in German society. It is rooted in the Basic Law as follows:

Article 2 (1, 2) Basic Law:

'Every person shall have the right to free development of their personality insofar as they do not violate the rights of others or offend against the constitutional order or the moral law.'

'Every person shall have the right to life and physical integrity. Freedom of the person shall be inviolable. These rights may be interfered with only pursuant to a law.'

Based on these stipulations, German citizens are free to choose their profession, workplace, place of residence and social environment. They are free to choose whether and with whom to have a romantic relationship, whether to have children and their sexual orientation. They are free to choose whether to affiliate with any religion and where their political beliefs lie.

The forms of **group-based enmity** detailed below are not tolerated, as they violate basic human and civil rights. 'Group-based enmity' is the term we use to describe derogatory and exclusionary attitudes towards people on the basis of their assigned membership of a social group. If people are marked as 'different', 'foreign' or 'abnormal' due to some aspect of their identity, 'different' can quickly become 'unequal'. Such discrimination is a core element of right-wing extremism, which often manifests as xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, sexism and homophobia.

Article 3 (3) Basic Law:

'No one may be discriminated against or given preferential treatment because of their sex, descent, race, language, home country and origin, faith, religious or political views. No one may be disadvantaged because of his or her disability.'

The Basic Law emphasises the **equality** of all people in the eyes of the law as well as their right to live the life that they want. A non-negotiable principle derived from this is that people have the right to be **different** and must be treated equally regardless.

Article 3 (1, 2) Basic Law:

'All persons are equal before the law.'
'Men and women shall have equal rights. The state shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and shall work towards the elimination of existing disadvantages.'

While the above examples of civil rights are rooted in the Basic Law and represented as core values of German society, some of these principles are, in reality, not fully implemented in certain spheres of everyday life. These areas generally result in debates, with society fighting to more effectively implement the rights laid out in the Basic Law. Here are two examples of the right to **Equality** not being fully realised:

➜   Equal payment for the labour of men and women: statistically, the gender pay gap in Germany is 21 per cent, meaning that, on average, women earn 21 per cent less than men for doing the same work with the same skills.

➜   People with an immigrant background are underrepresented in politics, corporate management and the media in Germany. While German language skills are a pivotal prerequisite to integration, there are also systematic hurdles when it comes to finding housing, dealing with authorities and receiving an education.

Optional group activity

`Duration: 10-15 minutes`

Goal: This activity serves to activate and involve the participants. It prompts them to reflect on the topic of gender equality and raise awareness of the gender pay gap and efforts to mitigate it.

Method: Show the below video (duration: **4:30 minutes**) about the reasons for the gender pay gap in Germany. Pose the questions below and allow participants to give their thoughts, experiences and impressions in the plenary for **5–10 minutes**. If you would like to show the video via screen sharing, make sure to enable audio sharing in the settings.

Video: Does Germany have a gender equality problem? | DW News **www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac1Oj1ykZnM**

Questions

➜   What are the reasons for the gender pay gap in Germany? Do you know about a gender pay gap in your country? If so, do you know how big it is? What do you think can be done to reduce it?

5.3   Sex, gender and sexual orientation

The non-negotiable principles of equality and freedom apply to gender identity as well as sexual orientation. **Sex** refers to biological differences, while **gender** refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women, men, girls and boys. These include the norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy as well as the relationships among them. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and evolves over time. In 2018, German law introduced a third gender option on birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses and other legal documents; instead of just 'male' and 'female', people can choose 'diverse'. This third category forms an integral part of gender attribution in job offers and is indicated in the same way as the other two gender options: 'd' for diverse, 'f' for female, 'm' for male.

Sexual orientation refers to a pattern of romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination thereof) to a certain sex or gender. Individuals can be attracted to the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender or to both sexes or more than one gender. In Germany, the above topics are a private matter, and all individuals are protected by law with regard to their sex, gender identity and sexual orientation. Therefore, discrimination on these grounds constitutes a violation of fundamental rights. Germany recognised same-sex relationships in 2001, granting same-sex couples greater rights in terms of inheritance, taxation and other benefits. Germany legalised same-sex marriage in 2017 despite stiff opposition from conservative politicians and the Catholic Church. However, same-sex couples who want to start a family still face legal and cultural barriers.

5.4   Conflicting fundamental rights

How does a society deal with the fundamental rights of its citizens when they conflict with one another? History has long featured discussions about **fundamental rights**. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought to light another important subject: the balancing of conflicting fundamental rights, such as the right to freedom and the right to life. At a fundamental level, these fundamental rights must be weighed against one another. Of course, we must keep in mind that these **balancing processes** have always taken place. The following phrase is cited often: 'My freedom ends where the freedom of others begins.'

Amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government implemented rules to combat the pandemic: mandatory mask-wearing, a curfew and the prohibition of social gatherings. These measures were taken in an effort to **protect the population** from the virus. However, the compulsory character of these measures led to significant resistance among parts of the population. Freedom of assembly is anchored in the Basic Law (Article 9): 'All Germans shall have the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed without prior notification or permission.' Given Germany's history with totalitarian rule, Germans are extremely sensitive when it comes to the **limitation of their rights**. Therefore, mass protests against the COVID-19 measures took place across the country. Once the COVID-19 vaccine was made available, most public places began to only allow vaccinated visitors. As a result, there was an exclusion of unvaccinated citizens from public life. Unvaccinated citizens felt pressured and resisted these dynamics by referring to the following excerpt:

Article 2 (2) Basic Law:

'Every person shall have the right to life and physical integrity. Freedom of the person shall be inviolable. These rights may be interfered with only pursuant to a law.'

At the same time, vulnerable and vaccinated people felt threatened by unvaccinated people, viewing them as potential virus carriers and judging their behaviour as 'asocial'. In their opinion, the decisions of unvaccinated people endangered their lives and prolonged the pandemic for all of society.

Another example of conflicting rights is the question of whether female Muslim teachers can wear a headscarf at their workplace. Here, the regulation that civil servants *(Beamte)* must maintain **neutrality** conflicts with their **freedom of belief**. As legislation pertaining to education is handled at the state level, each federal state has implemented different solutions to this problem. While Baden-Württemberg prohibits teachers from wearing headscarves, North Rhine-Westphalia permits them to do so.

Optional group exercise: Current socio-political debates   ESSENTIAL   Duration: 30 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand that, while the Basic Law has a clear position on civil rights, it does not assert that these rights are fully and universally granted. They should know that people in Germany have the freedom to stand up for their rights, that sometimes there are situations in which rights collide with other laws and a solution is not obvious.

Method: Divide the participants into two groups, giving each group one of the two cases below. Give them about **20 minutes** to read the articles and answer the questions. Next, give the groups **10 minutes** to present their findings to each other.

Case 1: COVID-19 protests:

1.   **www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/25/peace-freedom-no-dictatorship-germans-protest-against-covid-restrictions**

Questions

➔   Why do people in Germany protest against the COVID-19 measures taken by the government?
    How did your government respond to the pandemic, and how did the citizens react to its response?

Case 2: Muslim headscarves in schools:

1.   **www.dw.com/en/experts-urge-dialogue-in-germanys-school-headscarf-ban-debate/a-43383624**

2.   **www.europeanacademyofreligionandsociety.com/news/headscarf-debate-in-germany**

Questions

➔   What are the different arguments for and against wearing a headscarf?
    Is there a neutrality regulation for teachers in your country?

Caution! Participants may express conflicting individual opinions on these topics. If the discussion becomes heated or even personal, bring their attention back to the goal of the exercise: to learn about the different positions and understand why the debates exist. Democracy is characterised by the simultaneous presence of contradictory positions and the facilitation of negotiation between them.

5.5   East-West inequality

From 1961 to 1989, **East Germany** and **West Germany** were divided. The effects of this division still linger today. While the country is united, East and West still differ economically, culturally and politically. The reasons behind these differences stem from the post-reunification period. Following reunification, East Germany needed to shift from a planned economy to a free-market economy. This was a difficult step for East Germany and led to severe unemployment. Since reunification, the government has sought to **equalise living conditions** across all of Germany. While this equalisation remains incomplete, great strides have been made.

The following video provides a more detailed understanding of the differences shaping modern East-West debates: **www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOiFayVX-tg**. Show this to the participants.

5.6   Special responsibility for Israel

This topic is sensitive, as the relationship between Germany and Israel is highly unique. It will always be marked by the Shoah (Hebrew word for 'catastrophe', used as a synonym for the Holocaust), Nazi Germany's systemic extermination of six million Jews. However, the relationship has developed into a strong one since 1965, the year in which **full diplomatic relations** were established between the two countries. Solidarity between them has been developed through joint commemoration days and regular visits by representatives of the German government. The German Federal Foreign Office states the following:

'The unique nature of German-Israeli relations is a cornerstone of German foreign policy. Germany is an advocate of the State of Israel's right to exist. As an active partner in the EU, Germany supports peace efforts in the Middle East. In the United Nations, Germany is an advocate for fair treatment of the parties to the Middle East conflict.'

The Chancellor and the German governments always - and with no ambiguity – emphasise Israel's right to exist. Still, they consistently advocate for a **two-state solution** to the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Recognition of the **Holocaust** is non-negotiable and is anchored in the UN Resolution on Holocaust Denial and Distortion. Holocaust denial is an **anti-Semitic conspiracy theory** and, therefore, violates Basic Law Article 3 (see Section 5.1 on group-based enmity).

5.7   Immigration and integration

On the one hand, Germany is fundamentally an immigration country, relying on migrant workers and serving as a host for refugees. On the other hand, controversial debates remain over **asylum**, Germany's policy on *'Aussiedler'* (German repatriates), and the **integration of foreigners**. Germany is a popular country for migrants, who significantly contribute to the country's socioeconomic development. Germany's new coalition government (2022) hopes to attract **400,000 qualified foreign workers** each year to tackle demographic imbalance and labour shortages in key sectors, both of which risk undermining the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. After decades of low birth rates and net emigration, a shrinking labour force constitutes a demographic time bomb for Germany's public pension system; fewer employees will soon be burdened by the task of financing the pensions of a growing mass of retirees (who are enjoying longer life expectancies). Despite this push for economically motivated migration, socio-political debates remain, with many still hesitant to encourage further immigration.

Debates in Germany over migration, asylum and integration have been reignited since the outbreak of the Syrian war, which led about 820,000 asylum seekers to Germany. This special effort at integration became known as Germany's **'welcome culture'**. However, many Germans did not agree with this attitude and did not want to take in refugees or other migrants. Such sentiments gave rise to xenophobic protest movements, which ultimately led to the rise of the far-right populist 'Alternative for Germany' party (AfD). One of the main reasons for this scepticism is the anticipation of **cultural and religious differences**, which could cause conflicts between native Germans and immigrants.

Recent studies, however, indicate that Germans are more optimistic about immigration than they were a few years ago. Many Germans see immigration as a way to help solve Germany's demographic and economic problems.

5.8   Deepening exercise

ESSENTIAL

Variant I: Research exercise, 'basic rights'

BASIC T   Duration: 35 minutes

Goal: The participants should gain a deeper understanding of the basic rights in Germany by connecting practical examples to the articles below.

Materials / methods

➜   Device connected to the Internet for research

➜   PPT with instructions

➜   Breakout rooms

Online

➜   Device connected to the Internet for research

➜   PPT with instructions

➜   Space for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Make sure that participants have either a smartphone or a computer to conduct online research. Prepare space in the room for the tandems to work in.

w   **Online:** Prepare a breakout room for each tandem.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Provide the participants with the following link to the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany:
www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/index.html

2.   Group the participants into pairs (if there is an odd number of participants, one group can contain three participants). Give them **20 minutes** to research and reflect on the following questions:

➜   Which of the basic rights (articles 1–19) are especially important to you and why?

➜   Give an example of an event from any country in which that right was violated.

➜   **Bonus question:** Can you think of an event in which applicable basic laws conflicted, and the resolution was not obvious (e.g., COVID-19 measures, Muslim Headscarves in school)?

3.   Bring the participants back from their work areas/breakout rooms to the plenary. Have them present their thoughts and highlights to the group. During their presentations, you can comment as you see fit (to confirm or correct their thoughts). Allow about **15 minutes** for this portion of the exercise.

Variant II

ADVANCED .6.   **Duration: 40 minutes**

Goal: The participants should review the topics from the module by diving deeper into the opinions, values, principles and tensions caused by various topics. They can link the topics to their own experiences and value system; in turn, they can reflect on the differences between Germany and their country of origin and become aware of potential irritations.

Materials / methods

➜   PPT with instructions

➜   Breakout rooms

➜   Digital whiteboard with one frame and 5 post-its

Online

➜   Pinboard, pins, cards

➜   Separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Write each topic below on a card and pin them on the pinboard.

w   **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with one frame. Write each topic below on a post-it and place them in the frame.

➜   Equal pay for men and women

➜   Same-sex marriage/adoption

➜   Teachers wearing religious symbols in school

➜   Mandatory vaccination

➜   Limitation on the number of asylum seekers

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants in groups of three (if necessary, some of the groups can have four participants). The group members must decide on who gets the following three roles:

➜   One reporter

➜   Two debaters (in groups with four participants, there can be one more debater or one more reporter)

2.   Let the groups pick a topic by selecting a card. If more than one group would like to work on a single topic, you can allow them to do so.

3.   Present the following instructions to the participants via PowerPoint: 'Present a 5-minute-long debate on your chosen topic, representing the different perspectives/contrasting opinions. The reporter should introduce the debate as though they are reporting live on a news channel; effectively, they should serve as a moderator, while the debaters should explain their positions.

4. Once the participants understand the task, send them to do their group work in spots at the training facility (for face-to-face settings) or breakout rooms (for online settings) for **15 minutes**. Urge the participants to be creative and write down their planned questions and arguments.

5. Bring the participants back to the plenary to present their role-playing scenarios. Each group should get **5 minutes** to perform, meaning that this portion of the exercise could vary in duration. Still, try to keep it to roughly **20 minutes**.

6. Once all of the groups have performed, pose the following reflection question: 'Which of these scenarios could have happened in your country? Which of them could not have happened in your country? Explain your reasoning'. Allow about **5 minutes** for this portion of the exercise.

5.9   Conclusion

<div style="text-align:right">**ESSENTIAL** Duration: 5 minutes</div>

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➔   Is anything still unclear?

➔   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➔   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module? (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

5.10 Links for inspiration and further reading

1. **Group-based enmity**

    ➔ Sexism: **www.dw.com/en/germany-bild-newspaper-chief-editor-removed-from-post/a-59542859**

    ➔ Extremism/hate speech: **www.euronews.com/2022/01/26/germany-considers-banning-telegram-app-accused-of-facilitating-hate-speech**

    ➔ Inequality and COVID-19: **www.dw.com/en/social-inequality-in-germany-is-on-the-rise/a-57509743**

2. **Sex and Gender**

    ➔ LGBTQ+ commissioner: **www.dw.com/en/lgbtq-rights-germany-appoints-first-commissioner-for-queer-affairs/a-60351173**

    ➔ Debate on gender-neutral words: **www.npr.org/2021/10/30/1049603171/germany-gender-neutral**

3. **East-West inequality**

    ➔ Wage gap: **www.iamexpat.de/career/employment-news/statistics-still-show-significant-wage-gap-between-east-west-germany**

    ➔ Differences between East Germany and West Germany: **www.thelocal.de/20181002/the-east-west-divide**

4. **Basic Law**

    ➔ Protection of future generations: **www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/29/historic-german-ruling-says-climate-goals-not-tough-enough**

    ➔ Protests against COVID-19 measures: **www.dw.com/en/covid-protests-in-germany-orchestrated-anger/a-60389179**

    ➔ Mandatory vaccination: **www.dw.com/en/covid-germany-sputters-on-vaccine-mandate/a-60450938**

5. **Germany and Israel**

    ➔ Resolution against Holocaust denial: **www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/-/2507566**

    ➔ Holocaust Remembrance Day: **www.dw.com/en/german-bundestag-commemorates-holocaust-memorial-day/a-60570634**

6. **Immigration and integration**

    ➔ Germany as country of destination: **www.infomigrants.net/en**

    ➔ Why Germany needs migration: **www.infomigrants.net/en**

6 Political and Social Systems

Duration

➔ Essential: 80 minutes

➔ In-Depth: 170 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

➔ The federal structure of Germany

➔ The separation of responsibilities

➔ The civil protection/security structures

Material

Face-to-face Training

➔ Presentation with input/ questions

➔ Flipchart, post-its, markers

Online Training

➔ Presentation with input/ questions

➔ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

The Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social federal state. Democracy, federalism and the welfare state are its most important structural principles. Federalism is related to the principle of subsidiarity, and the Basic Law regulates the division of responsibilities between the federal government and the states. Government powers are divided between the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The security system consists mainly of the public order offices, the police, emergency services and the fire brigade. The concept of solidarity is the bedrock of the fundamental principle of social insurance.

Further Sources

German Federal Government	➔ **www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en**
Police in Germany	➔ **www.handbookgermany.de/en/rights-laws/police.html**
Criminal Proceedings	➔ **www.infovictims.de/de_en/criminal-proceedings/overview**
Social Security System	➔ **www.iamexpat.de/expat-info/social-security**

6.1 The federal structure of Germany and the separation of responsibilities

The Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social federal state. Democracy means that the people of Germany constitute its sovereign. Federalism, the rule of law and the welfare state are Germany's most important structural principles. In the representative democracy of the Federal Republic, the citizens' interests are represented by elected officials in parliament, who make decisions according to the majority principle (under which the result preferred by a majority of representatives is implemented).

Federalism

The Federal Republic of Germany is composed of 16 **federal states** *(Bundesländer)*,[1] which, in principle, participate in the development of federal legislation. Federalism is closely related to the principle of subsidiarity, which asserts that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level (**Note:** The principle of **subsidiarity** is detailed in Module 7). Thus, the exercise of state powers and the fulfilment of state tasks are the responsibility of the federal states, unless the Basic Law provides an exception. The Basic Law precisely regulates the **division of responsibilities** between the federal government and the states. For example, the states are responsible for education, culture and policing, while the federal government is responsible for foreign policy and defence.

This institutional structure was established to prevent power from being concentrated in the hands of one power or institution, in no small part due to Germany's totalitarian history under Nazi rule.

---

[1] **www.derweg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/deutschlandkarte_big.png**

Reflection/role-playing exercise: The federal principle

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 30 minutes**

Goal: The participants should develop a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by a federal system as well as the difference between federal and centralised systems.

Method: You can either have a discussion in the plenary during which everyone can share their thoughts, or you can use role playing to hold a debate between candidates. Use the COVID-19 pandemic as an example or have the group come up with another one. Ask some participants to step forward and assign them roles: Minister President(s) of a German state (maybe differently affected by the crisis, having different needs and strategies), the chancellor, shop owners, citizens, owners of a travel agency or other roles that you think might be useful. Have them come up with realistic arguments with regard to federal solutions and discuss. Allow questions and remarks from others in the group. You can serve as a moderator of the discussion, or you can select one of the participants to be the moderator. Choosing the topic and roles should take no longer than **5 minutes**; the exercise should not exceed **25 minutes**.

Notes on the roles using the example of COVID-19:

Minister Presidents want to be able to flexibly react to the situation on the ground, meaning they would likely reject national measures. However, those of states that are most affected by COVID-19 may ask for centralised assistance and decisions to ensure that they are not disadvantaged relative to other states (more restrictive regulations than those of their neighbour state, for example).

The chancellor wants to maintain predictability and security, opting for cohesion and potentially uniform strategies.

Shop owners feel insecure and want to be able to plan ahead. If they live near a border, they do not want to be at a disadvantage relative to shops in neighbouring states.

Citizens want to be able to understand the rules and want effective and appropriate measures. They are caught up in tension between security and freedom, meaning that tempers can boil. Some support uniform regulations, while others would prefer a flexible response to the situation on the ground. They cannot always understand why a city just a few kilometres away would have different regulations in place. Some are happy to have less stringent measures in a nearby area and use this to their advantage (e.g., by spending their leisure time there). Their opinions depend a lot on their own sense of security.

Travel agencies are in a very difficult economic situation. Business has declined sharply. The various measures in the individual federal states mean a lot of extra work, as they need to stay informed to keep up with their customers' problems and questions. They want financial support and the ability to plan.

Question

➔ What are some advantages and disadvantages of the federal principle in times of crisis? Cite a current example (e.g., climate crises, pandemics, domestic threats). Are there different types of crises for which different answers might apply?

6.2   The division of powers

The division of powers, anchored in the Basic Law, is a core principle of Germany's democracy. The powers of the state are divided between several branches: the **legislative** branch, the **executive** branch and the **judiciary**. These branches are intended to monitor one another and, in turn, limit the power of the state. This dynamic is referred to as 'checks and balances'.

The legislative branch is responsible for making laws. The executive branch is responsible for implementing and administering public policy. Finally, the judiciary interprets the constitution and laws. The Parliament *(Bundestag)* is the highest organ of Germany's legislative branch. The **Federal Government** represents the executive branch. **The Federal Constitutional Court and Land courts** represent the judiciary.

Institutions at both the federal and state levels work within the checks-and-balances system, but they also cooperate and consider one another's concerns. There is one important difference between German federalism and that of other countries: in Germany, the governments of individual states participate directly in the decisions made by the Federal Government. This is done through a 'parliament of the governments in the federal states' *(Bundesrat)*.

6.3   Elections

Elections - representing a core element of democracy - are conducted at the municipal, state *(Bundesland)* and federal levels as well as at the EU level to elect members of the European Parliament. They are required by law to be **general, direct, free, equal**, and **anonymous**.

General
All citizens are entitled to vote so long as they are 18 years old or older. No group is excluded from voting for social, political or economic reasons.

Direct
Votes must be used directly for the allocation of seats in parliament. There is no intermediary (e.g., the United States Electoral College).

Free
Votes must be cast free of state coercion or other undue influence. No one may be discriminated against based on their vote.

Equal
All eligible voters must have an equal number of votes, which must be of equal weight.

Anonymous
It must not be possible to determine how someone voted.

Generally, citizens are entitled to vote from the **age of 18**. However, there are discussions about lowering the voting age and thus giving young people more influence.

Optional group activity

Goal: This activity serves to briefly activate and involve the participants; they should reflect on the election principles.

Method: Pose the questions below to the participants. While the participants share their thoughts, collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise their collected answers at the end and add any necessary information. This activity should take no longer than **5 minutes**.

Question

➜   What are the principles for elections in Germany, and why do you think they were introduced? Give an example of what could happen if one or several of them did not exist.

6.4   Governing and opposition parties

IN-DEPTH   **Duration: 15 minutes**

Parties represent the interests of individuals and groups. They are a link between the state and society. In the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany, parties serve as the most important instrument for bundling and communicating citizens' political goals. This role is reflected in the fact that they are financed, to a certain extent, by tax revenue.

Around 110 parties have filed party documents with the Federal Election Commissioner. However, only a few of these are electorally successful enough to participate in the **Bundestag,** the **European Parliament** or one of the 16 **state parliaments**.

For instance, to get into the *Bundestag*, a party needs at least five per cent of the second votes nationwide. This rule is called a 'blocking clause', though it is commonly known as the **'five-per-cent hurdle'**. This hurdle exists because the difficulty with which decisions can be made rises alongside the number of parties in the Parliament. An abundance of small parties makes it more difficult to reach agreement. Moreover, the Parliament is meant to represent all voters. The parties in Parliament should not only represent the special interests of very small groups of voters.

The main parties currently represented in the Bundestag (March 2022) are as follows: *SPD, GRÜNE, FDP* as the governing parties; *CDU, CSU, AfD* and *DIE LINKE* as the opposition. A **coalition government** is an alliance of parties brought together to form a government and provide support on the basis of content and personnel agreements. These agreements, which are formalised in a coalition agreement following negotiations, are normally valid for one legislative period.

The governing parties

Social Democratic Party *(SPD)*

In 1959, the SPD shifted away from Marxist references in its program. Since then, it has adhered to the core values of freedom, justice and solidarity. The SPD has traditionally been the party of the working class and the trade unions. Like the CDU, it has an ageing voter base.

ALLIANCE 90/THE GREENS *(Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)*

Founded in West Germany in 1980, the Greens were originally conceived as an anti-establishment party: an amalgam of pacifist, pro-environment, and anti-nuclear movements. In 1993, the Greens formed an alliance with the Bündnis-90 party, which was founded in the GDR and sought to reconcile ecological, economic, and social sustainability.

Free Democratic Party *(FDP)*

The core elements of the FDP's programme are free-market liberalism, civil rights and protection against state intervention. The party is sceptical of further European integration pertaining to fiscal and economic policy.

Opposition parties

Christian Democratic Union of Germany *(CDU)*

Measured by its electoral success and the length of time it has been in government at the federal and state levels, the CDU is the most successful party in the Federal Republic. Not until 1978 did the CDU adopt its first basic programme, which combined conservative, liberal and Christian-social positions. Despite an ongoing process of modernisation, its current basic program continues to enshrine numerous conservative positions.

Christian Social Union in Bavaria *(CSU)*

The CSU is an exceptional phenomenon in the German political landscape. It is a regional party that only contests elections in Bavaria. The CSU sees itself as a Christian conservative rallying movement of the middle class. It combines conservative positions in social policy with a self-image as a party of the welfare state despite demanding more personal responsibility on the part of citizens.

Alternative for Germany *(AfD)*

While the AfD was still categorised on the liberal-conservative spectrum upon its founding, it now fits seamlessly into the family of right-wing populist parties. The party's image is characterised by restrictive migration policies, which impact nearly all areas of politics.

THE LEFT *(DIE LINKE)*

The basic programme of DIE LINKE reflects the party's history: the anti-capitalist positions of its predecessor, PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism [the Marxist–Leninist ruling party of East Germany]), stand alongside the social and fiscal policy demands of the party's union-affiliated segments. In foreign and security policy, the party consistently speaks out against military operations and militarisation.

Optional reflection exercise: The German parties

Duration: 10 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand the main ideologies of the most important political parties in Germany. They should be able to know some similarities and differences between them. They should understand the reason behind the 'five-per-cent hurdle'. Finally, they must learn about the difficulties and opportunities stemming from compromise in a coalition.

Method: Pose the questions below to the participants and have them share their thoughts. Alternatively, you can rehash the main differences between the German parties to avoid sensitive issues (depending on the political context of their country of origin [e.g., if the country has a one-party system or is very repressive in general]). Allow **10 minutes** for this exercise.

Questions

➜ Which parties from other countries (your country of origin) do you know? What similarities do they have to the German parties? Why do you think the five-per-cent hurdle was introduced? What are some of its advantages and disadvantages?

Caution! Be aware that the participants may discuss their personal political opinions during this exchange. Depending on how far apart the personal opinions on this topic are among the participants, this may lead to conflict. Please keep this in mind and, if necessary, refer to the tips in this handbook's introduction regarding how to handle heated debates.

6.5   Security structures

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 10 minutes**

Unlike in many other countries, Germany's civil protection and disaster-management systems are deeply rooted in municipal structures.

The **Public Order Office** *(Ordnungsamt)* is responsible for various aspects of public order in Germany, though its responsibilities vary greatly by state. Its responsibilities may include the monitoring of stationary traffic, resident registration, vehicle registration, homeless services and animal welfare, among many others.

The main responsibility of the **police** is to protect people from danger and fight crime as 'your friend and helper'. Police in Germany are independent of intelligence agencies and politics. During emergencies, you can reach the police at any time by dialling **110** at no cost. The police are organised under federal regulations. Officers of the criminal police do not wear uniforms. All other police officers in charge of protection can be recognised by their blue (sometimes green) uniforms. They can readily be seen patrolling and can be directly approached when needed. You should call the police if someone nearby is in danger or if you observe a crime. In non-urgent situations (e.g., theft, property damage, filing a complaint, questions about ongoing investigations), do not call 110. Instead, call a **local police station** directly.

Emergency services can be reached at any time by dialling **112** at no cost. Only call this number in instances of acute, potentially life-threatening emergencies (e.g., heart attacks, strokes, severe injuries). If you are not sure whether the condition is or could become life-threatening, dial 112. The expert on the phone will decide whether an ambulance is necessary and whether a doctor should go to the scene of the emergency. Note that an ambulance is sent to the scene of almost every emergency. In cases that do not constitute emergencies, you can take advantage of the **medical on-call service** by dialling **116117**.

You can reach the **fire brigade** by dialling **112**. Around 95 per cent of firefighters in Germany are volunteers and do not receive any money for their service. The remaining five per cent are professional firefighters. State laws require employers to give their employees time off for firefighting missions. Their tasks include rescuing individuals from fires, storm damage and traffic accidents, among many others.

Important emergency numbers in Germany

Police: **110**

Rescue service and fire department: **112**

Medical on-call service: **116 117**

The following information ("**5 W**") is necessary for the police during emergency situations:

➜ **W**ho is calling? (Name and address)

➜ **W**hat happened?

➜ **W**ere people injured? If so, how many? What kind of injuries?

➜ **W**here did it happen?

➜ **W**AIT!

Wait for further questions. Do not put down the phone until you are asked to do so.
The police/fire brigade/rescue service will be at the scene promptly, depending on the severity of the situation.

Optional group activity: Emergency numbers

Duration: 5 minutes

Goal: The participants should know the emergency numbers and when to call them, understanding the different responsibilities of the police and the fire brigade. Additionally, they must know that emergency numbers should not be misused and that the police can be contacted directly without having to dial 110 (for example, in cases of theft or property damage).

Method: Include some examples (see below) in the PowerPoint to present to the participants. Let them discuss the question below after seeing them. Allow about 5 minutes for this activity.

Examples: You observe a small traffic accident, but no one seems to be injured (police) / a person on the bus suddenly collapses and is unresponsive (112) / you see a group of people pushing a person; the situation seems threatening, and they may be armed (110) / a rubbish bin in the backyard is on fire (112) / you feel sick, but it is Saturday and you cannot reach your doctor; it does not seem to be an emergency, but you need treatment (116117)

Question

➜ Which number should you call in each of the following situations?

6.6 The solidarity system

The **principle of solidarity** underlies German **social insurance**. In Germany, citizens are not solely responsible for themselves; members of a defined solidarity community provide one another with help and support.

Everyone who earns money while living or working in Germany is required by law to pay taxes. Tax revenue is distributed between the federal government, states and municipalities.

Taxes

Income tax

The German tax system uses a progressive tax rate, meaning that the tax rate increases alongside taxable income. Employed people pay income tax through payroll deductions handled by their employer.

Withholding tax

Withholding tax (or payroll tax) consists of income tax and other contributions that an employer withholds from their employee's salary. This means that the employees receive their salary already after the income tax rate has already been worked out and paid. Withholding tax comprises a tax on employees' salary, national insurance contributions, and church tax (if they are a church member).

Social security payments

Any employment income earned in Germany is subject to compulsory social security contributions to cover the following areas: health insurance, pension insurance, long-term care insurance and unemployment insurance. These payments are generally shared between employees and employers.

Church tax

When registering in Germany, employees are asked to declare a religion. It is possible to declare any religion or no religion. When declaring themselves as Protestant, Catholic or Jewish, they are liable to pay a church tax, which the tax office collects on behalf of religious organisations in Germany.

Other taxes in Germany

Other forms of direct and indirect taxation in Germany are as follows: VAT, licence fee *(Rundfunkbeitrag)* for TV and radio - regardless of TV or radio ownership - motor vehicle tax, dog tax, property sales tax, capital tax, capital gains tax, inheritance tax, gift tax and real property tax.

Health insurance

Health insurance in Germany is **obligatory** for all German citizens, international tourists and expats. Germany's healthcare system is recognized as one of the best in the world. The majority of German citizens are enrolled in the statutory public health insurance scheme. In turn, everyone has access to high-quality and affordable healthcare, regardless of income or status (see Module 11).

All parents in Germany are legally entitled to take time off work if their child falls ill and requires care at home. This applies even if you are drawing unemployment benefits. Additionally, employers must pay sick employees their full salary for up to six weeks. Sickness benefits are paid if an insured person is unable to work as a result of an illness lasting for more than six weeks or is treated as an inpatient at the expense of the health insurance fund.

Furthermore, **unemployment insurance** covers people while they look for a new job. Unemployment benefits are only available to workers who have already paid into the insurance scheme for 12 months. Apprentices are usually unable to receive unemployment benefits.

Note: The tax system in Germany is quite complex. You should focus on explaining the core principles of the solidarity system. For further information, you and the participants can find more detailed information at **www.iamexpat.de/expat-info/social-security**.

Optional group exercise: The solidarity system

Duration: 35 minutes

Goal: The participants should gain a deeper understanding of the solidarity system's benefits despite its seemingly high costs. They understand the difference between the solidarity system and the equivalence principle (according to which a contribution from a citizen must correspond to a benefit they receive from the state - everyone gets back what they give). They should see how people who have a comparative disadvantage (e.g., bad health, low income) benefit from the solidarity principle, while those with a comparative advantage (e.g., good health, high income) who pay relatively high taxes may feel at a disadvantage.

Method: Divide the participants into smaller groups of 3–5 and either provide them with the following link (**second.wiki/wiki/solidaritc3a4tsprinzip#Solidaritätsprinzip_vs._Äquivalenzprinzip**) or give them a summary of its contents. Not everything needs to be read in depth - chapters 4–6 are the most important. The reading part should take about **10 minutes**. Have the participants come up with different scenarios in which they discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the solidarity system with regard to health insurance for about **5 minutes**. They can cite their personal experiences here. Make sure the groups are using different scenarios (ask them within the first few minutes of the exercise about their choice); you can also provide interesting examples, pointing out how life situations can change quickly.

Question

➜ What are the differences between the solidarity system and the equivalence principle (according to which a contribution from a citizen must correspond to a benefit they receive from the state - everyone gets back what they give)? Discuss their advantages and disadvantages.

Implementation of the exercise:

g **Face-to-face:** Present the question via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Divide the participants or let them decide their own groups. Assign workspaces for each group and instruct them to write down their thoughts. Once **10 minutes** have passed, let them return to the plenary and share the highlights of their discussions for another **10 minutes**.

w **Online:** Present the question via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Make sure the participants have written the question down. Create the necessary number of breakout rooms and prompt the participants to discuss the question for **10 minutes**. Once 10 minutes have passed, let them return to the plenary and share the highlights of their discussions for another **10 minutes**.

Optional: You can use the digital whiteboard to document the highlights. Note that this would require you to prepare the whiteboard in advance and share the link with the whole group before starting the breakout rooms.

6.7   Deepening exercise

Reflective group exercise after input

BASIC T   **Duration: 30 minutes**

Goal: The participants should review all of the topics discussed so far by diving deeper into specific aspects that have remained in their memory. They should describe the political structure of Germany and its specific features, such as federalism, the division of power, the party system and its security structures. They should reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of the German institutional structure and ponder the reasons behind its emergence. They should consider Germany's historical experience when pondering this, drawing connections to current debates and phenomena that they could encounter while in Germany.

Materials / methods

➜   PPT with instructions

➜   Two separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

➜   Two breakout rooms

Online

➜   Flipchart

➜   Markers

➜   Two separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare two flipcharts, writing one of the two topics' questions below on each. Prepare markers for the two groups.

w   **Online:** Prepare a whiteboard, writing one of the two topics' questions below on each. Prepare digital post-its in two different colours, placing them in the frame of each group.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants into two groups and give each one of the two topics below. The groups should discuss the topic and work on the questions for **20 minutes**. They should summarise their discussion and detail their thoughts by writing down key points. The two topics are as follows:

Topic 1: What are the main principles of Germany's polity? Why do you think Germany implemented them? What external factors/actors and historical reasons may have been essential to the polity's development?

Topic 2: What is special about the German solidarity system? What are the most important values that they convey? What external factors/actors and historical reasons may have been essential to the system's development?

2.   Bring the participants back to the plenary to present the highlights of their discussion for **10 minutes**. You can add necessary information or let other participants offer input as you see fit.

6.8 Conclusion

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜ Is anything still unclear?

➜ Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜ Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
(If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

7

Germany and the European Union

Duration

➜ Essential: 85 minutes

➜ In-Depth: 175 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

➜ The founding and historical development of the EU

➜ The most important EU institutions

➜ The composition of EU institutions

➜ EU rights and values

Material

Face-to-face Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Flipchart, post-its, markers

➜ Printed pictures and timeline

➜ Printed articles

Online Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

   If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
   employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

The European Union (EU) was founded as the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, shortly after World War II. The first six EU member states' main objective was securing peace and economic cooperation. Over time, the institution developed into the modern EU with 27 member states: a union that covers numerous policy areas, from climate change to environmental protection, from healthcare to external relations, and from security to migration. The EU shares common rights, core values and fundamental freedoms.

Further Sources

German Federal Government	➜ **www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en**
Federal Office for Migration and Refugees	➜ **www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite_node.html**
European Parliament	➜ **www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en**
EU treaties	➜ **european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/founding-agreements_en**
European Commission	➜ **ec.europa.eu/info/index_en**

7.1 The beginning of cooperation for a peaceful Europe

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

To put an end to the frequent bloody conflicts in Europe and accelerate market growth, European leaders began to build the community that we know today as the **European Union** or **EU**.

The **European Coal and Steel Community** (ECSC), founded on 18 April 1951, was the first step towards securing lasting peace. Six countries - Belgium, West Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands - signed a treaty to place coal and steel production under joint management, meaning none of them could individually produce weapons of war. These six countries are Belgium, West Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

In 1957, the **Treaty of Rome** established the **European Economic Community** (EEC), ushering in a new era of European cooperation. Given the success of the ECSC Treaty, the six countries extended their cooperation to other sectors through two treaties, establishing the EEC and the **European Atomic Energy Community** (Euratom). These treaties were signed alongside the onset of the **Cold War**, which would divide the continent for more than 40 years (see Module 3).

The first meeting of the European Parliamentary Assembly, which replaced the Joint Assembly of the ECSC, took place in 1958. On 30 March 1962, it was renamed the **European Parliament**.

Group activity

ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand the reasons for the foundation of the EU. They understand its advantages for the member states.

Method: Pose the questions below to the participants. Have them independently write down their answers for **5 minutes**. Next, for **5 minutes**, have them raise their hands and share their answers with the group.

Questions

➔ What were the main motivations behind founding the EU?

➔ How were these reasons connected to historical events?

7.2 What is the EU? The institutions

ESSENTIAL | Duration: 20 minutes

What began as a purely economic community became a political union that covers numerous policy areas. This change was reflected in 1993, when the political union has been established and the European Economic Community was subsumed under the **European Union** (EU). This should be considered within the context of **EU enlargement** over time. The EU has expanded on several different occasions over the course of its history through the accession of new Member States. To join the EU, a state needs to fulfil a set of economic and political conditions called the **Copenhagen criteria**, which require a stable democratic government that respects the rule of law.

The European Union is not a state; it is a unique partnership between its constitutive Member States. The EU spans nearly the entire European continent. It houses around 446 million people - about six per cent of the world's population. Citizens of EU Member States are also citizens of the European Union.

Currently (as of March 2022), the EU comprises 27 Member States. In June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU, formally exiting in 2020 ('Brexit'). The unique selling point of the EU is that all of its Member States remain **sovereign and independent**; they simply pool some of their 'sovereign powers' in areas where **cooperation** is advantageous. This partial delegation of powers to common institutions means that decisions on certain issues can be made democratically at the European level.

The internal **aims** of the European Union are as follows:

➜ To promote peace, European values, and the well-being of EU citizens

➜ To preserve freedom, security and justice without internal borders while regulating its external borders to control immigration and crime

➜ To establish an internal market

➜ To pursue sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability while maintaining a highly competitive market economy with full employment that facilitates social progress

➜ To protect and improve the quality of the environment

➜ To promote scientific and technological progress

➜ Io combat social exclusion and discrimination

➜ To promote social justice, equality, and the rights of children

➜ To enhance economic, social, and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU Member States

➜ To respect Europe's rich cultural and linguistic diversity

➜ To establish an economic and monetary union with the euro as its currency
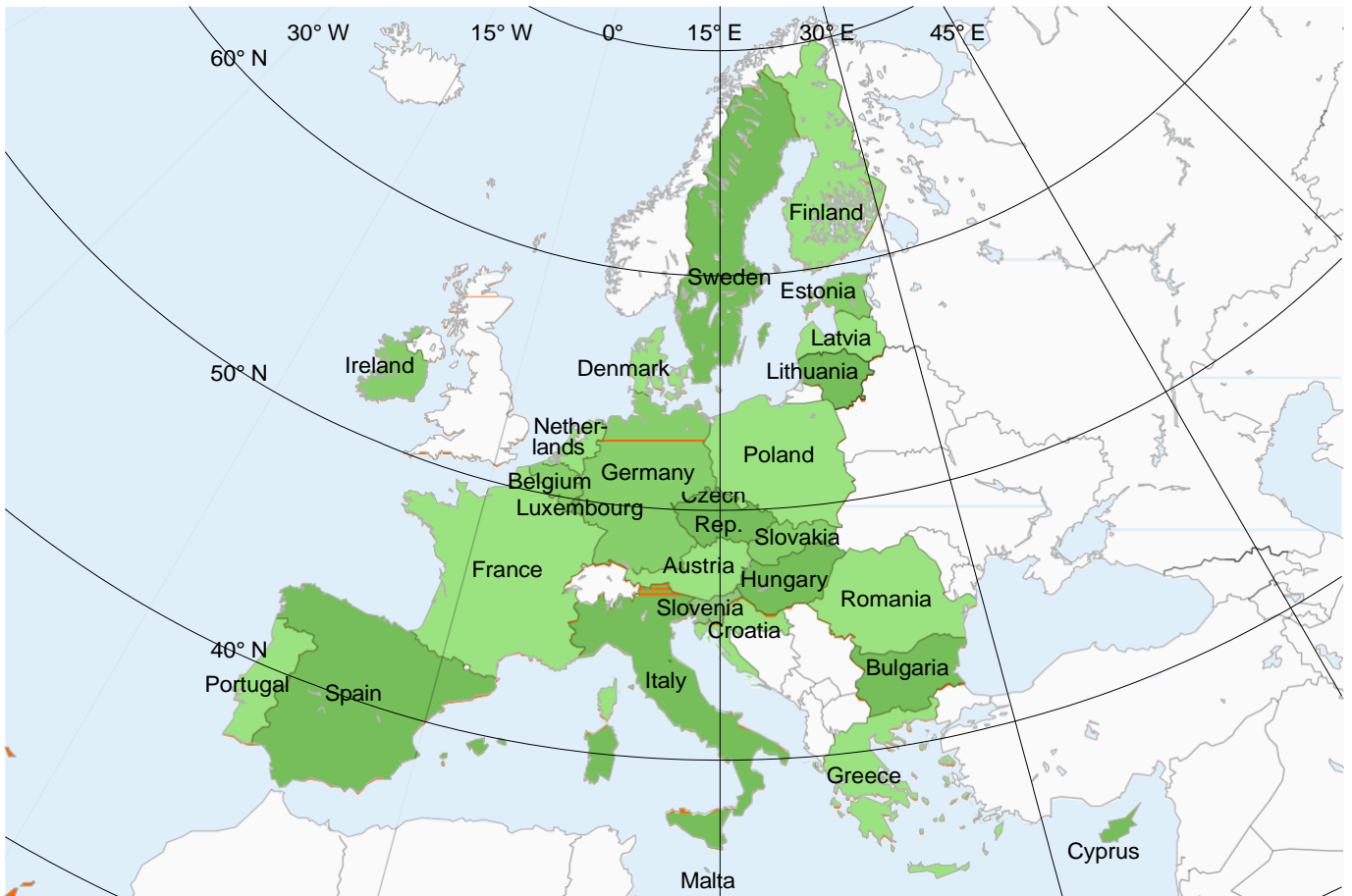
Figure No. 10: EU member states, 2022 (after Brexit)
➔ Source: **commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2020_EU_MAP.svg** [accessed on 11.05.2022]

Optional Group activity

<div style="background:#333;color:#fff">Duration: 10 minutes</div>

Goal: The participants should understand the shift from economics and security as the EU's primary purposes to a broader policy scope.

Method: Have the participants discuss the question below with their neighbour for **5 minutes**. If online, create breakout rooms for each pair. Let them share their thoughts in the plenary for another **5 minutes** afterwards.

Question

➔   How have the EU's objectives and policy areas changed over time?

Several **institutions** are involved in EU decision-making:

➔ The **European Parliament**, which represents and is directly elected by European citizens. Its primary task is to represent citizens and defend their interests at the EU level.

➔ The **European Council**, which comprises the heads of state and government of the EU Member States. It sets the political orientation and priorities of the EU's work.

➔ The **Council of the European Union** (often referred to simply as 'the Council'), which represents the governments of the EU Member States. It comprises Member State representatives and focuses on the examination, negotiation, and adoption of EU policies.

➔ The **European Commission**, which looks after the interests of the EU as a whole by representing and defending the common interests of all EU citizens. It functions as the executive body of the European Union.

Generally, the European Commission proposes new legislation, which the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union then adopt.

Optional Group activity

Duration: 5 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand the different EU institutions and how they represent the interests of various actors and states (e.g., the Parliament representing EU citizens' interests, the European Council representing nation-states' interests).

Method: Have the participants answer the questions below and express their thoughts in the plenary for **5 minutes**.

Questions

➔ What are the main institutions of the EU and whom do they represent? Whose interests do they pursue?

7.3 EU treaties and the principle of subsidiarity

IN-DEPTH **Duration: 5 minutes**

Every EU action is based on treaties that all EU Member States have voluntarily and democratically approved. These treaties regulate the objectives of the EU, the functioning of EU institutions, the EU's decision-making process and the relationship between the EU and its Member States.

In certain cases, not all Member States participate in EU policy. For example, 22 Member States belong to the **Schengen Area**[2], which allows for free internal movement of persons without passport controls; five Member States continue to apply their own border controls.

Subsidiarity means that public tasks should be regulated as close to citizens as possible (e.g., at the municipality level, at the federal state level). Only when problems cannot be solved should they be institutionally elevated. Under the principle of subsidiarity, the EU should only handle matters that it can regulate more effectively than its Member States.

[2] The area is named after the 1985 'Schengen Agreement' signed in Schengen, Luxembourg.

For EU actions to be justified, they must meet two conditions:

1. The objectives of the measure cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States.

2. The objectives of the measure can be achieved more effectively by collective action at the EU level.

The European Commission must ensure that these conditions are met while leaving as much room as possible for individual implementation of the measures to the Member States.

7.4   Rights and values

ESSENTIAL   **Duration: 20 minutes**

The fundamental **values** on which the EU is founded - enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union - are as follows:

➔   Respect for human dignity

➔   Freedom

➔   Democracy

➔   Equality

➔   The rule of law

➔   Respect for human rights, including those of minorities

The EU is founded on the **rule of law**. All of its activities are based on treaties that all EU Member States have voluntarily and democratically approved. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary - the **European Court of Justice** - which possesses the power of last instance to rule on matters of EU law. Its judgments must be respected by all.

Human rights are protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The EU, its institutions and its Member States must respect these rights when implementing policies. These include the right to protection against discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of personal data and the right to access justice.

Non-EU citizens

The freedom to move to another EU country and work there without a work permit is one of the fundamental rights of EU citizens. Under certain circumstances, non-EU nationals also have the right to work in an EU country and the right to equal treatment in the workplace. This depends on their status as family members of an EU citizen and on their own nationality. Persons who have a work permit for an EU country enjoy freedom of movement within the EU (see Section 7.6).

Human dignity

Title I of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees human dignity, the right to life, the right to the integrity of the person and the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, slavery, and forced labour.

Freedoms

Title II of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees liberty, security, the protection of personal data, the right to marry, freedom of thought, free expression and assembly, the right to get an education, property, asylum and protection in the event of removal, expulsion or extradition.

Equality

Title III of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees equality before the law, non-discrimination, gender equality and the rights of children, older persons and persons with disabilities as well as supports diversity.

Solidarity

Title IV of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees, for workers, the right to information and consultation, the right to collective bargaining and action, access to placement services, protection against unfair dismissal, fair working conditions, the prohibition of child labour, a balance between their professional and private lives, social security, healthcare, services of general interest, environmental protection and consumer protection.

Citizens' rights

Title V of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees the right to vote, the right to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament and local elections, effective administration, access to official documents, the European Ombudsman, the right to petition, freedom of movement and residence and diplomatic and consular protection.

Judicial rights

Judicial rights include the right to an effective remedy and an impartial tribunal, the presumption of innocence, rights of defence, principles of legality and proportionality in criminal offences and penalties and the right to not be prosecuted or punished twice for the same offence.

7.5 Fundamental freedoms and the internal market

IN-DEPTH **Duration: 15 minutes**

The four fundamental freedoms of the European Union form the basis of the **internal market** - a single market in which the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons is guaranteed and in which citizens are free to live, work, study and do business. The fundamental freedoms include:

Free movement of services

The free movement of services enables EU citizens to freely provide services across borders in the internal market without national restrictions. Before the internal market was completely established, transport operators could only offer services out of their country. Now, companies are free to offer their services wherever they are in demand.

Free movement of capital

The free movement of capital means that everyone can invest or put their money where it seems to be most worthwhile. To facilitate European payment transactions, the **Single European Payment Area** (SEPA) was established. Traditional account numbers have been replaced by the **International Bank Account Number** (IBAN).

The European Internal Market is the largest internal market in the world by volume. It includes not only the 27 Member States of the European Union, but also the three additional countries linked to the EU in the European Economic Area (EEA): Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

Free movement of persons

Since most border controls between EU countries have been abolished, people generally enjoy freedom of travel across most of the continent. Additionally, living and working in other European countries has become much easier. All EU citizens have the right to choose the EU country in which they want to work, study or retire. EU countries must treat all EU citizens equally - the same as their own citizens - when it comes to employment, social benefits, and taxes. Of the 27 EU member states, 22 participate in the **Schengen Area**: an area comprising 26 European countries that have officially abolished all border controls on their mutual borders. The area mostly functions as a single jurisdiction for the purposes of international travel, sharing a single visa policy.

The Europe-wide **recognition of educational qualifications** is also an important step towards the completion of the internal market. Most qualifications have already been recognised, but there are still problems that need to be resolved through negotiation. In order to make nationwide recognition of educational qualifications possible, the EU is trying to ensure acceptance in two ways. Directives are issued for individual areas, stipulating that certain professional qualifications are automatically recognised across all EU states without a separate examination. Examples of this are doctors or nurses. This is possible because of harmonised training requirements.

However, this cannot be assumed for all professional fields. To close gaps in the recognition of training qualifications, the EU issues directives intended to cover as many occupational fields as possible. The recognition of equivalence is not always a condition for being allowed to practise the profession. In such cases, it is up to the employer to decide whether to hire a foreign worker.

Free movement of goods

An important basic rule is that a product that has been legally marketed in one Member State may also be sold in all other Member States. The free movement of goods is very important to companies, as they do not need to fulfil unique requirements for each country, substantially reducing costs. Of course, this presupposes agreement on **safety and quality** standards. Some of the things that are blamed on the EU as stemming from bureaucratisation and regimentation are, in fact, symptoms of the establishment of common criteria.

Optional reflection exercise: European integration

Duration: 10 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand the arguments for and against European Integration.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants discuss them in the plenary. Collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise their collected answers at the end and add any necessary information. This exercise should take no longer than **10 minutes**.

Question

➔ European integration is the term for ever-closer cooperation among European states. While some countries promote further European Integration, some are against it. What are some of their arguments for and against European integration?

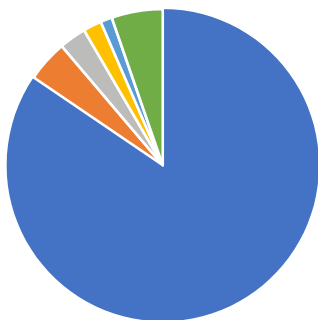## 7.6   EU Blue Card

`IN-DEPTH` `Duration: 10 minutes`

(**Note:** This section primarily targets a training group comprising university graduates. The EU Blue Card is only available under very specific conditions for highly qualified persons. Emphasise this to manage the participants' expectations; they should be aware of these restrictions.)

An EU Blue Card gives **highly qualified workers** from outside the EU the right to live and work in an EU country so long as they have sufficient qualifications, such as a **university degree**, an **employment contract** or a **binding job offer** with a **high salary** (relative to the average in the EU country where the job is located). Additionally, the workers must have worked for at least five years in Germany to be able to meet the preconditions. The EU Blue Card applies in all EU countries except for Denmark and Ireland.

Highly qualified workers must meet the following conditions:

➔   They have 'higher professional qualifications', meaning a higher education qualification (such as a university degree). Some Member States may also accept at least five years of relevant professional experience.

➔   They have work as a paid employee (the EU Blue Card does not apply to self-employed workers or entrepreneurs).

➔   Their annual gross salary is at least 1.5 times the average national salary - except when the lower salary threshold applies.

➔   They present a work contract or binding job offer in an EU country for at least one year.

➔   They have the necessary travel documents (e.g., health insurance documents) for themselves and any relatives who come to the EU with them.

➔   They fulfil the legal requirements to practice their profession.

EU Blue Cards issued in an EU comparison for 2017

Germany (84,5) ■ France (4,3) ■ Luxembourg (2,8) ■ Poland (1,9) ■ Italy (1,2) ■ Others (5,3)

Figure No. 11: EU Blue Cards

Top 5 Nationalities receiving EU Blue Cards in 2018
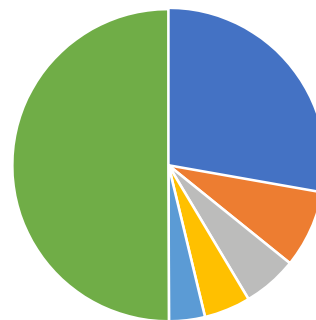
India (27,7) ■ China (8,0) ■ Russian Federation (5,6) ■ Turkey (4,8) ■ Brazil (3,7) ■ Others (49,9)

Figure No. 12: Top five nationalities receiving EU Blue Cards, 2018

➔   Fig. No. 11, Fig. No. 12 Source: **www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/Statistik/BlaueKarteEU** [accessed on 29.03.2022]

Optional group exercise: Blue Card

Duration: 25-30 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand the chances and obstacles of labour migration and the Blue Card. They should understand why the Blue Card was introduced and its intended targets.

Method: Divide the participants into smaller groups of 3–4 and pose the questions below. Give them **10 minutes** to research or read the provided material and **10 minutes** to discuss the questions among themselves. Next, bring everyone back to the plenary and have each group present two or three highlights of their discussion. This portion should not exceed **5–10 minutes**. If they do not have the means to do the research, print and distribute the following articles or similar ones:

1. **www.dw.com/en/germanys-workforce-in-desperate-need-of-skilled-immigrants-warns-labor-agency/a-58974377**

2. **www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/germany-lowers-salary-requirements-for-eu-blue-card-for-2022**

Questions

➜   What opportunities does the Blue Card offer? What are some of the challenges and obstacles for EU member states and applicants?

Implementation of the exercise:

g   **Face-to-face:** Present the question via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Divide the participants or let them decide their own groups. Assign workspaces for each group and instruct them to write down their thoughts. Once **20 minutes** have passed, bring the participants back to the plenary and share the highlights of their discussions.

  Optional: You can use a flipchart to document the highlights while they are being presented.

w   **Online:** Present the questions via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Make sure that the participants have written the question down. Have them do quick research (**10 minutes**) into the shortage of skilled workers in Germany. Create the necessary number of breakout rooms and allow for **10 minutes** of small-group discussions. Once **20 minutes** have passed, bring the participants back to the plenary and share the highlights of their discussions.

  Optional: You can use the digital whiteboard to document the highlights. Note that this would require you to prepare the whiteboard in advance and share the link with the whole group before starting the breakout rooms.

7.7   Deepening exercise

Reflective group exercise

BASIC T   **Duration: 35 minutes**

Goal: The participants should review all of the topics discussed so far by diving deeper into specific aspects that have remained in their memory. They should summarise the reasons for the founding of the EU, linking its development to European historical events, including World War I, World War II and the Cold War. Furthermore, they should be able to reflect on the development of the institution and its core values. They should understand the Member States' incentives for joining the EU and the problems that may stem from coordination and compromise among them. This should help them to draw connections to modern debates and phenomena that they may encounter while in Germany.

Materials / methods

→   PPT with instructions

→   Two separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

→   Two breakout rooms

Online

→   Flipchart sheets

→   Markers

→   Two separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare two flipcharts, writing one of the tree topics' questions below on each. Prepare markers for the two groups.

w   **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with a frame for each group. Write one of the three topics' questions below in each. Prepare digital post-its in three different colours for the participants, placing them in each group's frame.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants into three groups and give each one of the three topics below for them to discuss and reflect on. The groups should summarise their discussion and reflective thoughts by writing down key points. The topics are as follows:

→   **Topic 1:** Why was the EU founded? How is its founding linked to historical events in Europe?

→   **Topic 2:** How has the EU changed over time? What does it stand for today?

→   **Topic 3:** What are the incentives for joining/leaving the EU?

g **Face-to-face:** Give each of the three groups a prepared flipchart and send them to a designated work area to discuss the questions for **20 minutes**.

w **Online:** Create three breakout rooms for the three groups to discuss the questions. Set the duration of the breakout sessions to **20 minutes**.

2.   Bring the participants back to the plenary to present highlights of their discussion.

3.   The group members should present their highlights in the plenary for **15 minutes**. You can add information to their presentations if you deem it to be necessary, or you can allow other participants to contribute to others' presentations.

7.8   Conclusion

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➔   Is anything still unclear?

➔   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➔   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
     (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

8

Rights and Duties as an Employee in Germany

Duration

➜ Essential: 90 minutes

➜ In-Depth: 120 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

➜ The rights and duties of employees

➜ Tax and social contributions

➜ Data protection and confidentiality

➜ Workers' representation and other work-related bodies

Material

Face-to-face Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Printed checklist sheet

Online Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1.   Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2.   **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3.   Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4.   Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

This module details the regulations and obligations surrounding German employees and employers. In addition to the mutual interest of data security, this module also covers employee representation, which has a major impact on Germany's social labour system. Tax and social contribution serve to guarantee a well-regulated German welfare system.

Further Sources

Federal Office of Justice   ➜   **www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_betrvg/englisch_betrvg.html**
Federal Labour office   ➜   **www.bmas.de/EN/Home/home.html**
European Union   ➜   **european-union.europa.eu/index_en**
Federal Government   ➜   **www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en**

8.1   Fundamental rights based on labour law

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 20 minutes

German labour law - which includes all laws, ordinances and other binding provisions pertaining to employment - serves to protect employees and regulate the legal relationships between employers and their employees.

In general, labour law applies to dependent employees, or those who work on behalf of another person (employer) and is integrated into their business structure. Importantly, labour law not only applies to full-time employees but also to part-time employees, mini-jobbers, seasonal workers and temporary workers. The only decisive factor is whether the employee is integrated into the business structure of their employer.

Wages and bonuses

The statutory **minimum wage** for employees is €9.35 per hour.[1] Contracts or work agreements that set the wage below this amount are generally invalid. However, note that the minimum wage does not apply to apprentices, young people undergoing an introductory qualification or people doing compulsory work as part of an apprenticeship or university course. If the minimum wage is not paid, workers can claim the difference between their actual wage and the minimum wage from their employer. Another part of the wage package is **bonuses**. In Germany, there are many different types of bonuses, such as profit-sharing bonuses and employee bonuses. Additional wages may be granted on top of employees' basic salary for a wide variety of reasons, including compensation for holidays, working a night shift, or particularly difficult work.

Holiday entitlement

Every employee in Germany has the right to holiday. Full **holiday entitlements** are in place after employees have been with their company for six months. If an employee is dismissed before six months have passed, they are only entitled to a twelfth of the annual leave entitlement for each month of employment. The employee must make a written request when they intend to take their leave, and their employer must approve the request. The employer has the right to refuse a request due to urgent operational reasons.

Pregnancy time and parental leave

Pregnant women are not obligated to work at all during the six weeks leading up to the expected date of birth (though they may work if they explicitly declare a willingness to do so). The same applies to the eight weeks following the birth, though the mother is absolutely forbidden to work during this period. Both parents of a new-born child are entitled to **parental leave** for up to three years (until the child has reached the age of three). To qualify for this level of parental leave, you must be an employee and with a German employment contract. This also applies to employees with time-limited contracts, part-time contracts, and marginal employment as well as to apprentices.

Equal treatment

According to German law, all human beings are equal and must not be discriminated against on account of age, religion, nationality, race, gender, sexuality or disability. This right extends to the protection of employees in working environments; there are special rules prohibiting discrimination in the employment relationship based on specific characteristics.

---

[1] Adjustments planned for July 2022 (€10.45) and October 2022 (€12)

Breaks and rest periods

An average workday in Germany lasts eight hours. Generally, work may not go on for more than six hours without a **rest break**. Working time of 6–9 hours requires a break of at least 30 minutes at some point during the shift - not before or after. Working time exceeding 9 hours requires a break of at least 45 minutes. Employees must have a minimum daily **rest period** of 11 consecutive hours after the end of their shift. This is lower by one hour in certain industries, including hospitals, catering and transportation, provided that compensatory rest is given within one month or four weeks by extending the rest period to at least 12 hours. This mandatory rest time serves to regenerate workers, ensuring the safety and health of workers and preventing accidents caused by fatigue or a lack of concentration.

Occupational health and safety measures

Employers are obligated to take certain **occupational health and safety measures** (e.g., special clothes, first-aid-kids, marked evacuation routes) that consider hazardous circumstances at their workplace. They must verify the effectiveness of these measures and adapt them whenever necessary to ensure the safety and health of workers. If employees are unable to perform their contractual duties due to a physical or mental impairment, they have the right to take time off work.

Optional group exercise: My labour rights

ESSENTIAL Duration: 20 minutes

Goal: The rights of employees in German labour law should be reviewed by the group members. They can also compare personal work experiences from their country of origin with German practices. Participants should know their most important rights as employees.

Method: Pose the question below and let the participants discuss their thoughts, experiences and impressions in the plenary. Prompt them to reference general aspects of the Basic Law, which they learned about in previous modules. Collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise their collected answers at the end and add any necessary information. This exercise should take no more than **20 minutes**.

Question

➜   Reflect on the importance of a well-regulated work environment. Which potential dangers are tackled by regulation? Feel free to compare German labour law with your own work experiences.

Implementation of the exercise:

g   **Face-to-face:** Present the question via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Divide the participants or let them decide their own groups. Assign workspaces for each group and instruct them to write down their thoughts. Once **15 minutes** have passed, bring the participants back to the plenary and share the highlights of their discussions.

w   **Online:** Present the question via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Make sure that the participants have written the question down. Create the necessary number of breakout rooms and allow for **15 minutes** of small-group discussions. Once **15 minutes** have passed, bring the participants back to the plenary and share the highlights of their discussions for another **5 minutes**.

Optional: You can use the digital whiteboard to document the highlights. Note that this would require you to prepare the whiteboard in advance and share the link with the whole group before starting the breakout rooms.

8.2   Duties of employees

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 10 minutes

Social insurance contributions and taxes

Germany has a well-developed system to provide people with **financial security** in the event of illness or unemployment. Therefore, all employees who earn a sum of money in Germany that exceeds a certain limit are subject to **social insurance contributions**, meaning that they have to take part in and contribute to certain insurance schemes. They pay a fixed percentage of their salary for social security membership. Their employer also pays a corresponding fixed percentage. The money is paid directly from employees' **gross income**, meaning they do not need to actively transfer any contributions. All employees are automatically members of the pension, long-term care, accident and unemployment insurance schemes.

In addition, these employees must also pay a certain amount in taxes. Compulsory taxation requires all people who work in Germany to pay taxes to enable the state to maintain the country's social, economic and functional infrastructure. This tax money goes toward state facilities like schools, streets and libraries. Through taxation, people who earn more money support those who are less privileged. This system is called the 'social state', built on the **principle of solidarity** (see Module 6).

Behaviour in the event of illness: Sick leave

In the event that an employee falls ill, they must inform their employer as soon as possible (by phone, email or text message) and tell them how long the **inability to work** is expected to last. If the employee is unable to provide this information due to illness, they must instruct a third party to do so. If this is not possible either, the notification must be made as soon as possible. Submitting a **certificate of incapacity** *(Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung, AU)* - medical proof that an employee is unfit for work - is obligatory. This certificate must be received by the employer no later than the working day following the third day of illness. For example, if the employee falls ill on Friday, the certificate must reach the employer by Monday.

Punctuality

Employers are entitled to expect their employees to arrive at work **on time**. If they are late, the employer can give them an official warning. Punctuality is crucial in the workplace, so arriving late is a valid reason for dismissal. In particularly serious cases, termination without notice is permissible.

Dealing with property and data

Employees have direct access to their employer's **equipment, products and facilities**. They must not damage these. If they do so inadvertently, they must inform their employer immediately. Another essential duty of an employee is to **remain confidential**. Employers can require their employees to keep trade and business secrets to themselves. The **protection of data** plays a major role in good working relationships.

8.3   Importance of mutual data protection

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

The **protection of data** is extremely important, as it prevents **data misuse. Personal data** includes all information that can be used to identify an individual (e.g., phone number, address). Some personal data - **special categories of personal data** - is particularly sensitive and requires a higher level of protection. Such categories include ethnicity, political ideology, religious beliefs, health data and sexual orientation. Data protection is increasingly important in the context of digitalisation. Data is highly valuable, as it provides important information about consumers. If a company has a representative pool of user data, its chance of market success increases. As **personal data** is worth hard cash to many companies, **cyber-attacks** on companies have risen in prominence in recent years.

Optional group activity

Goal: Participants should understand that confidentiality and data protection, as lived values, play a major role in the working relationship. They may also discuss their prior knowledge of data protection and technical know-how.

Method: Divide the participants into pairs and pose the question below; let them discuss their thoughts together for **10 minutes**. The results do not need to be presented in the plenary; this activity merely serves to activate and involve the participants by sharing their impressions with one another.

Question

➔ Explain the importance of data protection for both sides: the employer and the employee. What risks are there in cases of a lack of confidentiality?

8.4 Employee representation and protection

ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

As mentioned earlier, labour law addresses the individual interests of employees as well as the collective interests of the workforce. **Trade unions** (*Gewerkschaften*) and **work councils** (*Betriebsräte*) work to advance the interests of employees, campaigning for workers to be paid in line with collective agreements.

Work councils are generally elected by the employees of individual companies or parts of companies. Additionally, workers have the right to organise to advance their interests and, potentially, make use of their right to demonstrate and strike. Trade unions must be independent of their opponents (e.g., companies). Their members come from the same industry but, oftentimes, different companies.

Youth and apprentice representation looks after the unique interests of young people and apprentices, who can present their needs in the meetings of working councils. However, the council does not need to agree with the presented claims or advance their interests. Not all working councils include youth and apprentice representation. Generally, such representation is prominent in particular sectors and larger companies.

Based on the fundamental right of equality and the right to work, there are also institutions that ensure the rights of **people with disabilities** in the workplace. However, such institutions do not exist across all working domains. They are particularly well developed in the social work sector.

In summary, it's important to recall that the above types of organisations are not present in every firm or sector. The larger a company is - and the more employees it has - the more likely it is to feature these representative organs.

8.5   Secondary employment opportunities

IN-DEPTH Duration: 10 minutes

In principle, it is possible to work **two or more jobs** in Germany. However, certain rules must be followed to avoid problems with social insurance contributions or taxes.

First, if required in an employee's employment contract with their existing employer, the employee must inform and ask the permission of the employer before starting a second job. The employer assesses whether the second job would endanger the quality of the employee's existing work. If they permit it, the employee can take on the second job. Transparency and honesty play significant roles here.

Next, the employee must not exceed the **total working hours** of 48 per week. The scope of the second job must accommodate the working hours of the existing job. If the employee is already working 40 hours in a full-time job, they may only work a maximum of 8 hours in the second job. By law, they are not allowed to work around the clock. The aforementioned **rest period** of 11 hours must still be observed.

If a worker is employed by several employers at the same time, there are special social security features that must be considered. Regular secondary employment with an income above 450 euros is subject to social security contributions, just like the existing job. However, if the employee takes on another job, where the income does not exceed 450 euros, this income is added to that of the main job to form the basis for taxation.

The only exception is if the job is limited to less than 70 working days within three months. Such **short-term employment** is not considered as an additional job. Thus, on top of a full-time job and a mini-job, employees are also permitted to engage in a single case of short-term employment.

Note: Regulations pertaining to secondary employment are quite complex. Trainers should try to give an overview of the opportunities and limits presented by German labour law, offering surface-level information instead of going into heavy detail. We recommend advising the participants to receive professional consultations on taxation before starting a second job.

8.6   Overview of salaries and taxes

IN-DEPTH Duration: 10 minutes

As already established, the German social system is based on the principle of **subsidiarity** and the concept of a **social state**. Therefore, all employees who earn enough money to make a living must pay a certain amount in taxes to provide for those who are more vulnerable. Of course, taxation scales with salary.

Apprentices, for example, pay very little in taxes. The training allowance stated in the training contract is the **gross amount,** based on which the apprentice may need to pay taxes and social security contributions. What ends up in the apprentice's bank account is the **net salary** that remains after taxes and social security contributions. Importantly, however, apprentices only need to pay taxes if they earn more than about 1,081 euros per month.

In summary, it is important to maintain a good balance between individual privilege and the pursuit of professional training or higher education. Therefore, the socioeconomic infrastructure provided by the German state must align with the level of taxes and social security contributions. A common sense of solidarity constitutes the foundation of a well-functioning **labour and social system** regulated by **rights** and **duties.**

Figure No. 13: Earnings in Germany
➜ Source: **www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/working-in-germany/working-environment/ salary-taxes-social-security** [accessed on 28.02.2022]

8.7 Deepening exercise

ESSENTIAL

BASIC ❖ Duration: 30 minutes

Goal: The participants should have an understanding of their rights and duties as an employee in Germany. They should reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of German labour law to prepare for work in Germany.

Materials / methods

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ Three separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

➜ Three breakout rooms

Online

➜ Three Flipchart sheets

➜ Markers

➜ Three separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare three flipcharts. Write one of the three questions below on each. Prepare markers for each of the three groups.

w **Online:** Prepare a whiteboard with three frames. Write one of the three questions below on each. Prepare digital post-its for the participants, placing them in the frames of each group.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants into three smaller groups either. You can determine the groups or let the participants make them on their own. Give one of the following questions to each group:

➔   How are you protected by German labour law?

➔   What do German employers expect from their employees in terms of trust? What could you do that would result in a warning or dismissal from your employer?

➔   If your gross salary were 2,500 euros, approximately, how much money would you receive in your bank account? Where would the rest go? What do you receive by paying the deductions?

Note: If you skipped Section 8.6., the group could research the necessary information at the following link: **www.simplegermany.com/german-payslip-explained**

2.   Let the groups discuss the questions and write their key thoughts on flipchart sheets (in face-to-face settings)/post-its (in online settings) for **15 minutes**.

3.   Next, bring the participants back to the plenary and let each present their ideas for **15 minutes**. Add any important missing information to the presentations.

8.8   Conclusion

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 5 minutes**

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➔   Is anything still unclear?

➔   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➔   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
(If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

Chapter III

Everyday Life in Germany

9 Arriving in Germany

Duration

→ Essential: 35 minutes

→ In-Depth: 40 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

→ How to officially register

→ How to register for radio licence fees

→ How to get a residence permit

→ How to open a bank account

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Printed checklist

Online Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

Procedure

Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth, employ the **in-depth** content sections

Summary

There are some things that need to be taken care of following the arrival of the participants in Germany. Being informed about the necessary steps will help them with these. This module provides the most important information regarding the necessary dealings with authorities when applying for a residence permit, opening a bank account or other crucial activities.

Further Sources

Opening a bank account	➜	www.movingto-germany.com/how-to-open-a-german-bank-account-from-abroad
Help line	➜	www.hilfetelefon.de/en.html
Labour market	➜	www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/german-labour-market
Health insurance	➜	www.germany-visa.org/insurances-germany/health-insurance

9.1   Flat registration

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

It is fairly difficult to find a flat in Germany. Rent has risen considerably and living space has declined in recent years in both small and large cities. As a result, many young people in Germany do not live alone; instead, they live in **halls of residence** or **shared flats** (see Module 10). When moving into a new flat in Germany, you need to **officially register** with the city or municipality at a registration office (*Einwohnermeldeamt* or *Bürgeramt*). In smaller towns and villages, the registration office is often located in the town hall. Every time you move, you must register within the first two weeks. A failure to register may result in penalty fees. It may take some time to make an appointment at the registration office, so you should make one as soon as possible. You can find out how to make an appointment on the website of your local registration office; oftentimes, you can make an appointment online.

By entering your postcode here – **www.meldebox.de/einwohnermeldeamt** – you will find your local registration office. Make sure you go to the right office; in large cities, there are different authorities for different parts of the city.

You generally need the following documents to register your flat

➜   Valid passport and visa

➜   Registration form (sometimes available online to fill out in advance)

➜   Tenancy agreement *(Mietvertrag)*

➜   Landlord's confirmation *(Wohnungsgeberbestätigung)*

9.2   Registration for radio licence fees

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

After registering your new address, you must also register to pay the **licence fee** for television and radio (see Module 10). Within a few weeks of registering, you will receive a letter regarding your licence fee. You can either register your flat directly and pay the fee on the enclosed transfer slip, or you can do it online at the following link: **https://bit.ly/3mQhPRS**.

If you live in a shared flat, the fee only needs to be paid once. One person needs to officially register to pay the fee, but family members or flatmates need to register under the contribution number of the person paying the fee. This can be done online at the following link: **https://bit.ly/3cqw0Z5**.

9.3   Applying for a residence permit

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

As a new immigrant, you will remain in contact with the **Foreigners' Registration Office** (*Ausländerbehörde*) for several years. A **temporary visa** is normally valid for 3–6 months. You can find the exact visa expiration date in your passport. Upon entering Germany, you must apply for a **residence permit** for the period of your apprenticeship or work contract at the Foreigners' Registration Office. The initial period of validity for your residence permit varies based on the office that processes your application. It is possible that your colleagues in other regions of Germany will receive a longer or shorter residence permit than you.

If you want to stay in Germany after your residence permit expires, you must **extend** it. You should apply for an extension several weeks before your residence permit expires. You can apply for a residence permit and an extension at the Foreigners' Registration Office responsible for you, which you can find by entering your address at the following link: **https://bit.ly/309q1mn**.

Caution! Do not forget to extend your residence permit. Deadlines are consistently enforced in Germany. Only after several years can you apply for a **settlement permit**, which gives you a stronger legal status.

The **electronic residence permit** comes in the form of a cheque card. The fees for this permit are set by law. The issuing of the residence card can take a long time – usually four to six weeks – and it costs about **100 euros**. It is best to check the Foreigners' Registration Office website to determine which documents you need to present alongside the payment. Gene-rally, you will need the following documents, among others:

➜ Valid passport

➜ Current biometric photo

➜ Tenancy agreement or proof of a sufficiently large living space

➜ Proof of health insurance

➜ Apprenticeship or employment contract

9.4 Opening a bank account

ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

Although many payments in Germany are still made in cash, a **bank account** is required for most large payments. Many things cannot be paid for in cash, such as rent, electricity and telecommunication services. Therefore, you must open a bank account and should always carry your card or account details with you. In Germany, there are many different banks with va-rying conditions. Fundamentally, however, there are two different types of banks: branch banks and direct banks. The table provides an overview of their characteristics.

	Banks	On-site banking	Fees	ATMs
Branch bank	Sparkasse Volksbank/ Raiffeisenbank **Cash Group:** Deutsche Bank Commerzbank Postbank	Yes, you can make financial transactions and ask questions at the bank.	Yes, both debit cards and credit cards ge-nerally entail fees.	Yes, these banks have their own ATMs. In rural areas, *Sparkasse* ATMs are widespread; ATMs of commercial banks are common only large cities.
Direct bank	DKB N26 IngDiBa Comdirect Targo bank	No, these banks do not have in-person branches. All trans-actions must be done online.	No, accounts at these banks usually do not entail fees.	No, these banks do not have their own ATMs. When with-drawing money from ATMs, you may have to pay a fee or have regular monthly in-coming payments of several hundred euros (e.g., a salary).

Figure No. 14: Bank types and their characteristics (Table)

➜ Source: **GIZ, THAMM – Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa, 2020**

Different banks also have different **types of bank accounts**. For you, a **current account** with a **debit card** (*EC-Karte*) is most suitable, possibly alongside a **credit card**. With the debit card, you can pay in shops and withdraw money from cash machines using a **PIN number**, which you receive automatically with your new card. Payment via credit card is less common in Germany and is often not accepted. However, note that many banks require you to pay monthly **account maintenance fees** to keep a current account. If you have less than 0 euros in your account, you need to pay fees in the form of **overdraft interest** – usually around 4–14% per year, though the rate varies by bank. Before opening an account, you should compare the offers at different banks using comparison websites on the Internet (e.g., **allaboutberlin.com/guides/first-bank-account-in-germany**).

You can only open your account once you have registered your place of residence and have applied for your residence permit at the Foreigners' Registration Office – and without an account, your employer cannot pay you. You will usually need the following documents to open an account:

➔ Confirmation of registration from the Residents' Registration Office

➔ Apprenticeship or employment contract

➔ Valid passport and visa (or residence permit, if already available)

9.5   Taking out health insurance

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

You should register with a **health insurance** company immediately after registering your residence. You can register online or at a company branch. Your health insurance covers the costs in the event of illness or injury, including treatment, hospital stay, medication and sick pay. There are **statutory health insurance plans** and **private health insurance plans**. As an apprentice, you should register with a statutory health insurance company. Most statutory health insurers offer the same benefits but simply differ in a few ways. As an insured person in the statutory health insurance system, you are entitled to (largely) **free medical, dental and psychotherapeutic treatment**. Depending on the details of your treatment, you may still need to pay a co-payment. You can take advantage of rehabilitation measures, go to preventive check-ups and get vaccinated against diseases (see Module 11). Often, health insurance funds also contribute to special sports courses that serve to maintain your health. You can decide for which insurance fund or insurance company you would like to join.

Find a list of all **statutory health insurance** funds in Germany at the following link: **www.gkv-spitzenverband.de/service/krankenkassenliste/krankenkassen.jsp**.

To find the right health insurance fund, you should compare different plans using online comparison platforms. It is best to check the specific health insurance company's website to determine what documents you need. In most cases, however, you will need to provide following information:

➔ Place of birth

➔ Name at birth

➔ Country of origin/citizenship

➔ Address in Germany

➔ Name and address of employer

When you get health insurance, you are automatically covered by **long-term care insurance**, which covers support services for persons who are no longer able to look after themselves for any valid reason.

9.6   Taking out liability insurance

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 5 minutes

Personal **liability insurance** is not obligatory. However, there are many reasons to get it. For example, many landlords require you to have liability insurance before you can **rent a flat**. If you have liability insurance, you are also covered in cases of **property damage**, **personal injury** and **financial loss**. This means that you would be covered if, for example, you damage your friend's laptop, you injure someone in an accident, or your washing machine causes water damage. Depending on your specific insurance policy, in the event of a claim, you pay nothing or only a small fraction of the actual cost of the damage. The annual premium of liability insurance generally falls between 50 and 100 euros. If you want to take out a private liability insurance policy, we recommend comparing the benefits of several plans online using a comparison portal. Remember to cancel the insurance policy if/when you return to your country of origin.

9.7   Mobile telephone

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 5 minutes

In Germany, you have various options for making **mobile phone calls**. Depending on how often you use your mobile phone, you may prefer a **prepaid card**, a **prepaid tariff**, or a **mobile phone contract**. The advantages and disadvantages of prepaid cards and contracts are summarised in the table below (for further information on mobile telephones, see Module 10).

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Prepaid card	➔ You have control over your spending and can only spend as much money as you have on your SIM card. By dialling *100#, you can check your balance. ➔ There is no cancellation period. You are free to decide whether you want to top off the money on your card or not. ➔ There is no basic fee. You only pay for what you actually use.	➔ Without an additional prepaid tariff, calls are usually very expensive. ➔ If you have not topped off any money, you cannot make calls (aside from those to emergency numbers).
Mobile phone contract	➔ There are cheap tariffs and flat rates (phone calls / SMS / Internet). ➔ You get a bill with documentation of every phone call. ➔ The cost of your mobile phone is often cheaper.	➔ Fixed terms: You usually sign a contract for 24 months. You cannot terminate it before the end of the contract. ➔ You only receive the bill at the end of the month; it is not possible to check costs in between. ➔ There is a monthly basic charge, even if no calls are made.

Figure No. 15: Options for mobile phone calls (Table)
➔ Source: **GIZ, THAMM - Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa, 2020**

115

Prepaid cards also often have **contract-like tariffs**. If you have a prepaid tariff, you pay a certain amount per month and get free minutes and data volume. This amount is only deducted if there is enough money on the card. The prepaid tariff is not tied to a contract and usually has no basic fee. We recommend that you first buy a prepaid card for your mobile phone, giving you a German mobile phone number. You should get a SIM card from a cheap provider that you can load with prepaid credit. Prepaid cards can be ordered online, in electronics shops and, oftentimes, in supermarkets, petrol stations and drug-stores. In order to call abroad more cheaply, you should consider choosing a provider with low international tariffs, such as the following:

➜ **Lycamobile:** **www.lycamobile.de/en/rates-and-bundles-changes-notifications**

➜ **Ortelmobile: www.ortelmobile.de/en/options.html**

➜ **Mobile Lebara: www.lebara.de/en/home.html**

9.8   Conclusion   ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜ Is anything still unclear?

➜ Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜ Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
(If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

10 Finding My Way Around in Germany

Duration

→ Essential: 95 minutes

→ In-Depth: 185 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

→ Different means of transportation in Germany

→ How to find a flat

→ Organisation of telecommunication; how to find a suitable provider

→ Postal traffic in Germany

→ Procurement of goods for daily needs

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Flipchart, post-its, markers

→ Printed pictures and timeline

Online Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. Optional: Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth, employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

Everyday life in Germany entails a variety of different aspects; depending on existing knowledge, many of these aspects will be new for migrants. Finding their way around can be difficult – especially at the beginning – and they may feel overwhelmed. This module provides solid orientation and basic knowledge about life in Germany. It focuses on means of transportation, finding accommodation, communication and shopping. It features many sources to facilitate more in-depth study.

Further Sources

Mobile and internet connections, financial tips and more	➔ **www.germanymore.de**
General information for expats	➔ **liveworkgermany.com**
	➔ **www.expatica.com/de**
	➔ **www.iamexpat.de**
Sending letters in Germany	➔ **www.simplegermany.com/ how-to-send-a-letter-in-germany**

Optional group activity

<div style="text-align: right">Duration: 10 minutes</div>

Goal: The participants should understand when to use certain means of transportation over others based on availability, affordability, comfort and environmental aspects.

Method: Pose the questions below and let the participants discuss them in the plenary. Collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise their collected answers at the end and add any necessary information. This activity should take no more than **10 minutes**.

Questions

➔ What means of transportation do you mainly use on a regular basis and why? Are there alternatives? What are their advantages and disadvantages? Would you like to use another means of transportation?

10.1 Mobility

<div style="text-align: right">ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes</div>

Cars are the most important means of transportation in Germany by a significant margin. However, the differences between urban and rural areas in Germany are considerable in this regard. While four out of ten households in cities do not own a car, cars are effectively necessary to meet basic needs in rural areas. There are 43 million cars in Germany – more than one for every household. However, there are some notable trends: while older people are increasingly commuting by car, fewer and fewer people under 30 use cars or even have a driver's licence. There are several reasons for this development: cars are expensive to maintain and parking in cities is both expensive and difficult to find. The desire for more environmentally sustainable alternatives also plays a role in the shift away from cars. Furthermore, it is fairly expensive to acquire a driver's licence.

Other popular means of transportation in Germany are **cycling** and **public transport**; in many cases, people simply **walk**. Walking and cycling are cheap and healthy, and, in addition to being practical in urban environments, both serve to protect the environment. Urban public transport options are collectively referred to as **local public transport** (*Öffentlicher Personennahverkehr, ÖPNV*), which includes buses, trains and trams. All public transport stops display timetables. Note that riding public transport requires the purchase of a ticket. This can be done digitally via a local app, at a ticket machine before boarding or on the vehicle. In some cases, ticket machines may only accept cash. If you use public transport regularly, it may be worthwhile to purchase **weekly** or **monthly tickets**, which are generally valid around the clock. Note that most cities provide special offers for students, apprentices and employees.

There are many **bus lines** connecting German cities to one another as well as many that connect to cities in other European countries. Buses constitute a cheap alternative to trains. Information about these connections can be found online, where you can also usually buy tickets. The most popular company for affordable bus routes in Germany and Europe at large is Flixbus.

Additionally, *Deutsche Bahn* offers **long-distance trains** that connect many European regions. Tickets can be bought online in advance via the Deutsche Bahn website and app. Alternatively, you can purchase tickets at the counter of any main station. Keep in mind, however, that tickets become more expensive as you approach the time of departure; it is smart to purchase them in advance whenever you are able.

Taking a **taxi** in Germany is relatively expensive. However, at certain times, that may be your only option. **Carpooling** is very popular among students. The principle is simple: someone driving a pre-determined route offers seats in the car; the passengers then share the cost of fuel. Carpooling is not only cheap, but it also represents a chance to meet interesting people. Carpooling offers can be found online at **www.blablacar.de**.

Optional reflection exercise: Mobility in Germany

Duration: 20 minutes

Goal: The participants should reflect on the various means of transportation available in Germany. They should understand that, depending on availability, public transportation and bicycles constitute relatively cheap and practical means of transportation, especially in cities.

Method: Divide the participants into up to seven groups: cars, public transportation, bicycles, walking, taxis, bus lines and carpooling. Pose the question below and give them **10 minutes** to discuss their thoughts and write their findings on a flip-chart or digital whiteboard. You can prepare the flipchart or digital whiteboard in advance to structure the input by category:

Means of transportation	Pros	Cons
e. g. Cars	Comfortable	Expensive

Have each group present their findings within about **1 minute** each. Add critical information, if necessary, once they have all finished presenting.
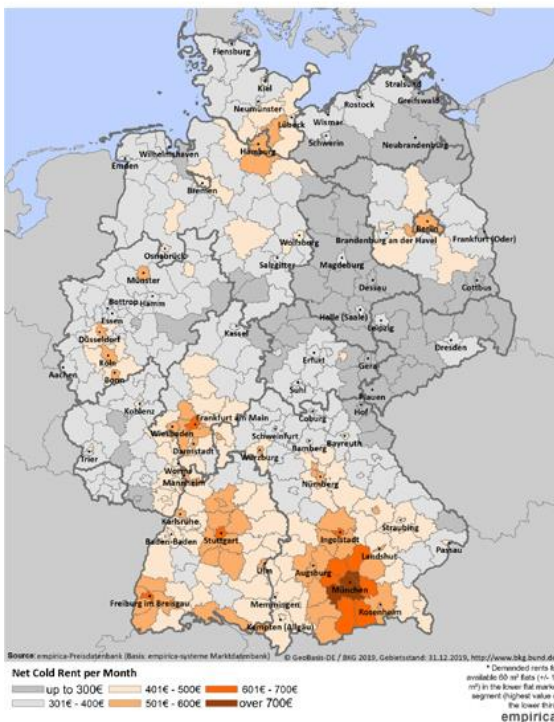
Question

➜ In which situations would people in Germany use this means of transportation?
Name as many advantages and disadvantages as you can and list them on the flipchart/digital whiteboard.

10.2 Flat hunting

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 10 minutes**

Rent Index for Basic Security 2020 (empirica):
Rental costs of a 60 m² flat in the lower price segments*

Germany is often referred to as the 'land of renters'. In no other European country do more people live in **rented accommodation**. Only about 50 per cent of all Germans own their place of residence. While there is a large supply of high-quality rental flats in Germany, there is also high demand – especially in big cities. Flat and house rental offers can be found on real-estate platforms online as well as in daily regional newspapers. Housing supply and demand vary widely by region. While people searching for housing in rural areas can often make and cement an offer quickly, owners in large cities can typically choose from several interested parties. The search for a flat or house in urban areas can be a time-consuming and cost-intensive process (see Module 9).

A **shared flat** (*Wohngemeinschaft, WG*) is an alternative for people who appreciate living together and want to save money on rent. There are many such flat-sharing communities, especially in larger cities. In a shared flat, each tenant typically has their own bedroom, but they share a common kitchen and bathroom.

As there are many applicants, flat sharers typically invite several applicants at the same time. This saves time and allows for the direct comparison of applicants in a **'casting'**.

Figure No. 16: Rental prices in Germany

➜ Source: **www.empirica-institut.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen_Referenzen/PDFs/Mietspiegel_2020_60qm.png** [accessed on 09.03.2022]

The applicants must introduce themselves in a sort of competitive manner. However, **first contact** between a tenant and potential landlords or flatmates is usually established in written form online. An online search for the application template *'Muster Wohnungsbewerbung'* will provide you with useful sample cover letters.

The **rental price** of a property depends on living space, location, property age, condition, building facilities and local facilities. Rent is particularly high in large cities, such as Munich, Frankfurt and Stuttgart. **Rental contracts** in Germany are in written format. Usually, tenancy agreements feature the **cold rent** (i.e., the rent for the use of the room). The **warm rent** includes ancillary costs, including those of water, heating and waste disposal.

Electricity and **gas** are generally registered separately in Germany, meaning they are typically not included in the warm rent. Rent is paid on a monthly basis. In addition, a deposit of up to three months' rent is often required at the time of signing. The sum is returned when the tenant moves out, unless there is damage to the flat or they have failed to pay rent.

Popular **online sources** for finding available flats:

➔ **www.immowelt.de**

➔ **www.immobilienscout24.de**

➔ **www.mcmakler.de**

➔ **www.immonet.de**

➔ **www.wohnungsboerse.net**

➔ **www.immobilo.de**

Popular **online sources** for finding shared flats:

➔ **www.wg-gesucht.de**

➔ **www.wg-suche.de**

Optional group exercise: Shared flat-casting role play

Duration: 20 minutes

Goal: The participants should understand what landlords and tenants of shared flats look for in a tenant/flatmate, knowing that requirements vary by type of living arrangement. They should get a better idea of what form of living is most appropriate for them, what their own qualities as a tenant/flatmate are and where potential difficulties or conflict may arise.

Method: Have the participants work with a partner and send them to breakout rooms, if necessary. One of them should role play as a landlord or a potential flatmate, and the other should role play as the applicant. Give them **5 minutes** to answer the questions below before swapping roles and going for another **5 minutes**. Afterwards, pick two pairs and ask them to share what they've learned with the plenary for **5 minutes** each.

Question

➔ Why should we take you as a flatmate? What can you contribute to flat-sharing life? How do you imagine living together optimally?

10.3   Mobile phones, the Internet and television   `ESSENTIAL` `Duration: 10 minutes`

In most cases, the use of **telephone**, **internet** and **television** requires a contract with the corresponding provider. In a first step, it makes sense to know your own needs to find a suitable provider and offer.

To find a suitable **internet provider**, an online rate calculator can help finding the right tariff and check the **availability** for your place of residence: **www.germanymore.de/internet-providers-germany**.

You can also ask the providers directly. Every provider offers an availability check on its website. Most internet offers today automatically include a telephone connection. If you already use a mobile flat rate, you do not have to book an additional telephone flat rate and thus save additional money on the internet contract.

In order to buy a **SIM card** for your mobile phone, you must be able to give a valid address in Germany. You can either take out a **contract** or purchase a **prepaid** SIM card. Depending on the length of your stay, a mobile flat rate is useful. It is not common in Germany to get data plans with unlimited mobile internet, you will usually have a high-speed allowance of a couple of gigabytes, depending on your plan. A German mobile phone can be used anywhere in the **EU** without incurring additional **roaming charges**. Although there are only three mobile network operators in Germany, competition is not limited to three providers. In fact, there are dozens of mobile providers to choose from (for more information see Module 9).

There are various ways to watch **TV** in Germany. The vast majority of German households receive their TV through either **cable** or **satellite**. This is often bundled together with home phone and the internet, with providers offering additional TV subscriptions alongside the free-to-air channels. Generally speaking, satellite connections offer a better and broader choice when it comes to international shows and channels. However, installing satellite receiving equipment can be expensive if your building doesn't have an existing dish. Many apartment blocks have a 'house connection' (*Hausanschluss*) to the cable network system. Depending on the region in Germany some English free-to-air channels can be received.

More detailed information about mobile telephones and providers in Germany:

➔   **www.mygermanphone.de/best-german-internet-data-plans**

➔   **www.liveworkgermany.com/german-mobile-phone-sim**

➔   **www.iamexpat.de/expat-info/communication/mobile-telephony-germany**

More detailed information about television in Germany:

➔   **www.expatica.com/de/living/household**

10.4 Post and parcel shipping

In many cases, formalities such as concluding a contract can be done by e-mail nowadays. In some cases, however, an original signature is required, and the **postal route** is necessary. Usually, the communication channel to be chosen is indicated, for example by administrative offices, employers, etc.

The number of dedicated **post offices** is declining rapidly in Germany; far more common nowadays are outlets, DHL Packet Shops and sale points in kiosks that offer postal services. Consequently, opening hours vary enormously, depending on their location. **Post boxes** in Germany are bright yellow, and often bear the Deutsche Post logo. They are usually emptied several times per day. The collection times will be printed on the front of the post box. Standardly, letters are delivered inside Germany within 24 hours; in particularly busy times like around Christmas or Easter, however, running times can be also longer.

In Germany, individual apartments and their respective **letter boxes** rarely have numbers. Instead, they are signified by the occupant's name. The name on a letter must match the name on the doorbell and letter box, otherwise it might not be delivered.

Stamps can be bought in the traditional way from a post office or a kiosk displaying the Deutsche Post logo. It is also possible to buy stamps online directly from the Deutsche Post website. Alternatively, you can use #PORTO, an on-the-go service which allows you to pay for postage using the Post & DHL app. Letters can be send by putting them in a post box or handing them in at a post office.

The cost of **sending a package** varies according to its size, weight, and destination. It is normally cheaper to pay for postage online than at a local shop (*Paketshop*). The most popular services are *DHL, Hermes, DPD, GLS* and *UPS*.

Name of sender
Street name, number
Post code, city

Name of recipient
Street name, number
Post code, city
Country
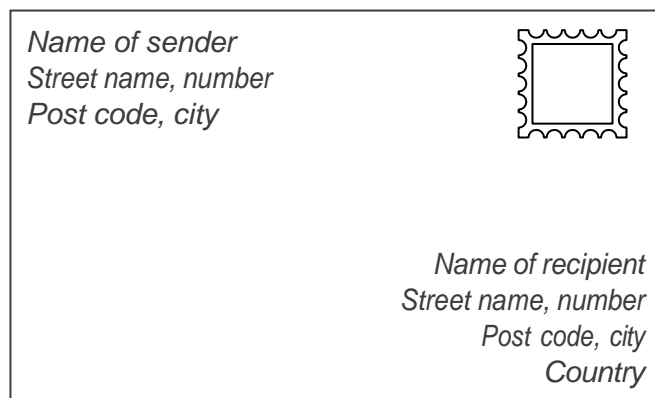
Figure No. 17: Common adressing of a letter

Optional group exercise: Sending packages

Goal: The participants should understand how to use different postal services and how to compare prices.

Method: Randomly assign a parcel service to the participants (e.g., DHL, Hermes, DPD, GLS, UPS) and have them search for the prices of the following parcel sizes for **5 minutes: 27 x 5 x 18 cm (weight: 60 g)** and **50 x 66 x 31 cm (weight: 4 kg)**. Have the participants compare their findings and determine the cheapest service in the plenary. This exercise should take no longer than 5 minutes.

Question

➔   Which parcel service has the best prices for these parcels?

10.5   Shopping for goods

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 10 minutes

Beyond grocery stores, drug stores and pharmacies, markets are a popular place to go to meet every day needs in Germany. Not only are there particular markets that only sell beverages, but Germany also features a unique deposit system. When buying bottles and cans, you pay a **deposit** (*Pfand*) on top of the product price. Once you return the empty bottle, you are refunded this deposit, and the bottles get recycled or reused. All beverage markets – and often supermarkets – have **deposit machines** that take the empty bottles and cans.

To reduce plastic waste, you must pay for **shopping bags** in Germany; you are advised to simply bring your own reusable bags whenever you go shopping. Note that to use a **shopping cart**, you need to pay a deposit of one or two euros into the handle; once you return the cart, you may retrieve your deposit. Most shops in Germany are **closed on Sundays and public holidays**, so you must plan accordingly. In cases of emergency, however, note that filling stations – most of which are open on Sundays and public holidays – usually sell some food and hygiene supplies.

Groceries can be bought from several places. **Discounters** (e.g., *Lidl, Netto, Aldi*) offer the lowest prices and are very popular. **Supermarkets** (e.g., *Real, Rewe, Edeka, Kaufland*) are usually larger and boast a wide variety of products. Some chains sell everything from groceries to drugs and clothes to electrical appliances. The presence of **Turkish, Asian and African markets** varies, though they are generally accessible in large cities. Such markets offer a wide range of products not always found at discounters or supermarkets. While there are **weekly** and **organic markets** in most cities, in many places in the countryside 'farm shops' (*Hofläden*) offer regional products.

Drugstores (e.g., *dm, Rossmann, Müller, Budnikowsky*) sell hygiene supplies, cosmetics and products to treat illnesses, such as tea and plaster strips (prescription medicine can only be bought at **pharmacies**). Drugstores also often sell gardening and cleaning supplies.

Depending on where in Germany you live, you will likely find **clothing and shoe stores** in your local shopping area. In larger towns and cities, these include well-known international fashion retailers (e.g., *H&M, Zara, Bershka*). Other regional clothing retailers offer lower prices (e.g., *New Yorker, C&A, Reserved, Deichmann*). Furthermore, discount clothing retailers (e.g., *Primark, Kik*) are available throughout the country. Designer wear (e.g., *Louis Vuitton, Hugo Boss*) can be found mostly in large cities.

Electrical appliances – as well as mobile phones and cellular accessories – can be found in **electronics shops** (e.g., *Saturn, Conrad, MediaMarkt*). Additionally, many German mobile operators have their own stores in most towns and cities. Smaller electronics are often available at supermarkets and **department stores**.

In order to shop **online**, you need a German bank account, a German credit card or a PayPal account. Furthermore, you need a German address where your order can be shipped. Most stores have their own website. The most popular online stores are as follows: *amazon.de, otto.de, zalando.de, mediamarkt.de* and *lidl.de*.

Group activity

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

Goal: The participants should get an idea of how and where to procure items to meet their daily needs in Germany.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants raise their hands to answer them in the plenary for **5 minutes**. Collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard.

Questions

➜   How and where do you buy items to meet your daily needs in your home country? What differences are there between shopping in your home country and, based on what you just learned, shopping in Germany?

10.6   Consumer rights

Not all stores and restaurants accept **credit cards**, as Germans often prefer cash. However, there is almost always an ATM (*Geldautomat*) in larger stores and shopping centres. The prices on goods and menu items in Germany are final and non-negotiable. The **value-added tax** (*Mehrwertsteuer*) is included in the price, but you can see the tax amount on your receipt. The current standard rate of this tax – which applies to both services and goods – is 19 per cent. A reduced rate of seven per cent applies to certain products, including food and printed press as well as books. Numerous items, including gasoline, alcohol, tobacco, tea and coffee carry a sales tax in addition to the value-added tax.

The **legal guarantee** is mandatory and applies across the EU for two years from the date on which you receive the goods. For used goods, warranty claims may not be less than one year. In addition, there is often an additional commercial warranty. However, this is a service that dealers or manufacturers can offer voluntarily.

German **consumer advice centres** (*Verbraucherzentralen*) are associations that work to protect consumers by offering advice and legal support to citizens in matters of private consumption. These centres can be found in most large towns and cities.

Consumers do not have a **legal right** to **exchange** or **return** a product, even if it is not damaged. Willingness to accept returns or exchanges is entirely at the trader's discretion. In most cases, however, traders accommodate such requests. It is important to keep purchase receipts in case you later decide to return or exchange a product. You can often get a refund or a voucher. However, if you have already opened or used a product, exchanges and returns are usually no longer possible.

10.7   Media

Almost all residents of Germany above the age of 18 are obligated to pay the **radio licence fees** (*Rundfunkgebühren*) of 18.36 euros per month. After registering in Germany, you will be contacted within the next few weeks regarding your contribution obligations. It is important to note that the licence fee is charged per household. It is a legally prescribed contribution to finance the news and entertainment programming produced by public broadcasters regardless of household media use (see Module 9).

There are many options to choose from on German **television**, especially if you receive channels through cable or satellite. Channels are categorized as either free-to-air or pay-TV programming, so availability depends on how much you are willing to pay. However, be aware that most programs – even foreign shows – will be dubbed into German. The most popular TV channels are *ARD, ZDF, RTL, Sat.1, Vox, ProSieben, kabel eins*, and *RTLzwei*.

Germany has more than 500 national and regional **radio stations**. These stations are divided into public and commercial broadcasters, and most are only available in certain states. German radio is available both digitally and through analogue services. Stations can also be accessed via radios, smartphones and some digital TV services. The largest public broadcaster is *Deutschlandradio*, which operates four national radio stations. Other public radio stations operate on a regional level, so research what's available in your state if you are interested in listening to the radio.

The first **newspapers** emerged about 400 years ago in Germany. Despite an evolving landscape, the periodical press still plays a major role in disseminating political news and local information. High levels of press circulation are ensured by regional and local subscription papers, which are complemented by national newspapers (e.g., *Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Tageszeitung (Taz), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) and yellow-press titles (e.g., *Bild*).

The **Internet** offers endless possibilities and countless sources of information. Of course, some are more reliable than others. Always verify credibility by ensuring that assertions are backed up by evidence or checking that the information is written by a trustworthy author or organisation. *Deutsche Welle* (**www.dw.de**) is a trustworthy source in English. The box to the right lists some of the most important online news portals.

A list of **popular German TV** series can be found on Wikipedia. These programs can help you to study German and learn more about the local culture.

Germany's most popular streaming services are as follows: Netflix, Amazon Prime, Sky Ticket, Magenta TV, Maxdome and Apple TV.

Caution! Streaming content that does not abide by copyright rules is illegal in Germany; watching or downloading such content will result in a fine.

Online news portals in German:

➜ **www.zeit.de**

➜ **www.faz.net**

➜ **www.heute.de**

➜ **www.spiegel.de**

➜ **www.stern.de**

➜ **www.tagesschau.de**

➜ **www.taz.de**

10.8 Deepening exercise

ESSENTIAL

Reflective group exercise after input:

BASIC T | Duration: 40 minutes

Goal: The participants should reflect on their newly acquired knowledge, deepening and classifying it further. They should understand that individual life circumstances can strongly influence the aspects being discussed and that the different aspects cannot be generalised for the entire country. Differences between regions – particularly between urban and rural areas – play into this. They should feel prepared to live in Germany and know where to acquire necessary information.

Materials / methods

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ Six separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

➜ Six breakout rooms

Online

➜ Flipchart

➜ Markers

➜ separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare three flipcharts. Write one of the three questions below on each. Prepare markers for each of the three groups.

w **Online:** Prepare a whiteboard with three frames. Write one of the three questions below on each. Prepare digital post-its for the participants, placing them in the frames of each group.

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare six flipcharts – one for each of the 'areas' below – with the following two columns: 'different forms' and 'influential factors'. Prepare markers for each group.

w **Online:** Prepare a whiteboard with six areas – one for each of the 'areas' below – each bearing the following two columns: 'different forms' and 'influential factors'.

AREA	DIFFERENT FORMS	INFLUENTIAL FACTORS
MOBILITY	Bicycle	Infrastructure
FLAT HUNTING	Shared Flat	Price
MOBILE PHONE	Prepaid Phone	Duration of contract
INTERNET	High-Speed	Availability
TELEVISION	Satellite	Television habits
SHOPPING	Online Shopping	Greater choice

Implementation of the exercise

1. Divide the participants into six groups – one for each of the areas shown in the table above. Make the group for 'mobility' larger than the others. Assign an area to each group and prompt them to discuss and reflect on the questions below with regard to that area. Allow them to conduct research online, if necessary. The groups should summarise the highlights of their discussion by writing down key points.

    g **Face-to-face:** Give each group a prepared flipchart and send them to a designated area to work on the questions for **20 minutes**.

    w **Online:** Create six breakout rooms with a duration of **20 minutes**, in which the participants should work on the questions.

    Questions:

    a. What are the different aspects/forms/types of this area? See examples from the provided column if you need some help to get you started. Name all forms that come to mind.

    b. What factors influence the feasibility of or preference for different forms of this area? Explain them in detail.

2. Bring the participants back to the plenary to present the highlights of their discussion for a total of **15 minutes**. You can add any necessary information, or prompt other participants to offer their input, as you see fit.

10.9 Conclusion

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜   Is anything still unclear?

➜   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module?
     (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

11 Living Securely and Healthily in Germany

Duration

➔ Essential: 95 minutes

➔ In-Depth: 160 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about

➔ Statutory and private health insurance

➔ How to access health care services

➔ Preventive health services in Germany

➔ How to take care of their mental health and where to turn to for professional help

➔ Gender and sexuality

Material

Face-to-face Training

➔ Presentation with input

➔ Flipchart, markers

Online Training

➔ Presentation with input

➔ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. **Optional:** Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises.

Summary

Physical and mental well-being is essential and should always be considered. Germany offers various ways to support its citizens in accessing healthcare, using preventive services and leading an overall healthy lifestyle. Mandatory health insurance is one way that the German government ensures that everyone gets the medical attention that they need.

Further Sources

Health insurance in Germany	➜ **www.germany-visa.org/insurances–germany**
List of Emergency and counselling services	➜ **www.expatica.com/de/healthcare**
Sports clubs in Germany	➜ **www.howtogermany.com**
Access to self-help groups and support for mental well-being	➜ **www.informedhealth.org**

Optional group activity

Duration: 5 minutes

Goal: The participants should recall what they have learned from the previous modules regarding the German healthcare system.

Method: Ask the question below and let the participants discuss their thoughts in the plenary. Collect their thoughts on a flipchart or digital whiteboard so you can summarise and discuss them.

Question

➡   What have you learned about the German healthcare system so far?

11.1   Basic insurance in Germany

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

As established in Module 9, health insurance is **compulsory** in Germany. You cannot switch between statutory and private health insurance at will. Most employees in Germany have statutory health insurance. The most common **statutory health insurance** plans in Germany are TK (Techniker Krankenkasse), AOK (Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse), BKK (Betriebskrankenkasse), and DAK (Deutsche Angestellten-Krankenkasse). Members of statutory health insurance schemes receive an **electronic health card,** which must be brought to all medical appointments (for more information on health insurance, see Module 9).

In some cases, **private health insurance** is the better option. Only those who are not subject to compulsory insurance-self-employed persons, civil servants and all employees with a salary above 62,550 euros per year-can take out private insurance. Anyone who exceeds the annual income limit may leave their statutory health insurance plan and take out private insurance.

Unemployed persons still need health insurance. Children, spouses and registered partners can usually get covered by someone with a statutory health insurance plan via family insurance. Trainees, students and interns normally need to take out statutory health insurance. EU citizens can use their European health card. People without the nationality of an EU or EEA (European Economic Area) country who are not employed must take out private insurance, which often offers special rates for expats.

11.2   European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 5 minutes

The **electronic health card** is valid across all EU countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. If you fall ill or get injured in these countries during a holiday or business trip, the **European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC) gives you access to local medical care. Importantly, you do not need to apply for the EHIC; it is automatically printed on the back of your insurance card. Everything that is necessary for the granting of medical benefits and the reimbursement of costs in other European countries in accordance with European Community law is **recorded as data** on the card.

If you forget your EHIC at home, you must quickly contact your health insurance provider in Germany and request a 'Provisional Replacement Certificate for the European Health Insurance Card (PEB)'. This replacement certificate can be sent on short notice by fax or e-mail if necessary.

The EHIC entitles you to medical benefits during your stay in the territory of another EU Member State. The costs incurred are reimbursed by the patient's statutory health insurance.

If insured persons **deliberately** decide to receive **treatment abroad** for certain reasons, they must clarify this with their health insurance provider beforehand to determine whether the costs will be covered. The EHIC applies only to immediately necessary medical care or ongoing care to treat chronic illnesses, such as diabetes.

11.3   Access to healthcare

ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

The initial contact for accessing healthcare is usually a **general practitioner** or **doctor** (Allgemeinarzt or Hausarzt), who can assess your condition, provide treatment and refer you to specialists when necessary. Usually, a referral from a general practitioner is necessary before you can see a **specialist** (Facharzt). Local doctors can be found through an online search via Google or the Jameda website. You can make medical appointments online, over the phone or in person. You may need to wait several days or even weeks for routine appointments. If you urgently need an **appointment**, you can take advantage of walk-in appointments during open hours (Sprechzeiten); simply turn up and wait to be seen, but keep in mind that this may take several hours. Any **prescription** that you receive from a doctor needs to be filled at a **pharmacy** (Apotheke). Drugs at pharmacies-even non-prescription drugs-are usually kept behind the counter. Worth noting is that drugstores also sell products to treat the symptoms of illnesses, such as tea and plaster strips (see Module 10).

The health insurance card must be presented at all medical appointments so that the doctor can bill the insurance company. If you have private health insurance, you may need to pay upfront and then be reimbursed by your provider.

If you fall ill, you are entitled to rest at home. However, your employer has the right to demand **proof of illness** (Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung), which you can obtain from a doctor. If you are on sick leave for less than six weeks, you will receive your regular salary. If the sick leave exceeds six weeks, you will receive sick pay (Krankengeld) from your health insurance provider rather than your salary. Sick pay amounts to approximately 70 per cent of your gross salary.

If you need medical help in an emergency, call the main **emergency** number: **112.** While you can visit your local hospital's emergency room (Notaufnahme), you should always call 112 if the situation is life-threatening (see Module 6). Unless there is an emergency, you can usually only access a **hospital** with a referral from a doctor, which you will receive if you require specialised care. You will need to bring your health insurance card; referral slip and passport to the hospital.

11.4   Preventive health services

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Preventive services reduce the risk of falling seriously ill by catching serious conditions at an early stage using, for example, scans, screenings and vaccinations. Members of statutory health insurance schemes are entitled to a wide range of preventive and early-detection examinations.

➜   Annual **dental check-ups** not only check teeth health but also look out for mouth and jaw diseases. If you go to the dentist regularly and have the results entered in the bonus booklet, your health insurance provider will pay more for dentures.

➜   The **gynaecologist** checks for cervical cancer on an annual basis. They take a smear from the cervix and examine both internal and external genital organs. From the age of 30, check-ups are supplemented by more extensive examinations.

➜   The **general practitioner** offers check-ups every two years. They look at the heart and circulation and check for diabetes and kidney disease. They also ask about family history to know what to focus on. Additionally, they check cholesterol and blood sugar levels, examine urine samples and offer general advice to patients.

➜   The **urologist** can annually check for prostate cancer. They will inquire about family history and examine external genital organs.

➜   **Vaccinations** are one of the safest and most effective preventive health measures. Vaccinations are useful for children, adolescents, adults, the chronically ill and immunocompromised persons to prevent serious and in some cases fatal infectious diseases. Vaccination against **COVID-19** including the booster shots is free. Vaccines are widely accessible, and the process is non-bureaucratic. In addition to doctors' offices and vaccination centres, you can get the vaccine in shopping centres and 'vaccination buses'.

11.5   Sport and leisure

<div style="text-align: right">

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 10 minutes

</div>

Good health depends not only on the quality of medical care, but also on individual behaviour. A **healthy lifestyle** is crucial for maintaining good health. Regular exercise, a healthy diet and a responsible approach to alcohol and nicotine are important elements of a healthy lifestyle.

Physical activity has a positive effect on health. Those who are physically active on a regular basis strengthen their general well-being, physical, mental and social health, cardiovascular system and musculoskeletal system. Regular physical activity can also prevent obesity, back pain, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

Walking and cycling are very common means of getting daily physical activity. Most cities are cycle-friendly, and there are special cycling routes across the country. Hiking is also a common form of recreation. Many people walk and cycle regardless of weather conditions. Of course, depending on preference, exercise and sport can also take place indoors.

There are numerous **sports clubs** in Germany. Football is by far the most popular form of exercise, but swimming and gyms are also very popular. Joining a club is not only a great way to stay fit, but they also constitute a place to meet new people and integrate into local communities. The challenge of being a member of a sport club is finding the time, which can be quite difficult in everyday life. **Individual sports** like running and inline skating, for example, can be done at any time with little equipment. There is a suitable sport for everyone that can be integrated into everyday life.

Beyond sport, there is a great variety of **musical** and **cultural** offers in Germany. For example, people can join a choir or an orchestra or simply get together with others to make music. Many universities have their own orchestra or choir. Opera, theatre, and ballet are also part of the cultural landscape in Germany. Additionally, Germany boasts a high number of art collections and museums. While entry rates vary, most museums have special offers for students and apprentices. **Local cultural centres** also provide many activities such as plays, concerts or film showings. **Cinemas** are a core cultural tenet in Germany and can be found across the country.

Optional group exercise: Sport and exercise

<div style="text-align: right">

Duration: 20 minutes

</div>

Goal: The participants should reflect on what they have just learned and assess themselves. They should know how to integrate sport and exercise into their everyday life.

Method: Let the participants answer question set (1) independently for **5 minutes**, writing their answers down. Then, have the participants take this test: **www.bbc.com/news/uk-28062001**.

Divide them into small groups of 2-4 and let them discuss their results using question set (2) for another **10 minutes**. There is no need for documentation here.

Questions

1. Are you an active person? How do you integrate exercise into your everyday life? Do you have plans or ideas for sport and exercise in the future?
2. Did you expect your results? Have you tried this or other sports before? What are the advantages or disadvantages of these sports?

11.6 Nutrition guidance and eating habits in Germany

IN-DEPTH | Duration: 15 minutes

The topic of a healthy diet is controversial; people hold varying beliefs regarding what is best for them. However, a healthy diet should follow certain rules and guidelines to maintain a balanced diet. A wholesome diet keeps you in good health and promotes vitality. There are many different ways of eating; these can vary widely, depending on people's personal preferences, religious beliefs, allergies, intolerances and cultural background.

Ordering food or **eating out** is an option for many. German eating habits are highly diverse, as are the choices. Larger cities feature cuisines from all over the world-there is something for every taste. Eating out and ordering food does not necessarily mean unhealthy food; there are many healthy options. Furthermore, more and more people in Germany are eating less or no meat at all; they often look for **vegetarian** or **vegan** alternatives. While vegetarians do not eat meat and often abstain from fish, vegans do not consume any animal products, including eggs, dairy products and honey. Vegetarianism and veganism often constitute ways of life; they influence more than just eating behaviour.

While it's difficult to generalise German cuisine since it varies by region, it can be summarised by the central role of meat. Sausages, roasts, dumplings and meatballs are particularly popular. However, it is important to remember that a very meat-heavy diet can worsen health conditions, increasing the likelihood of various health problems, such as heart attacks. The health risks that come from poor **animal welfare** should also be considered. The high demand for meat in Germany often drives undignified conditions to facilitate low prices. Therefore, it is important to decrease meat consumption, invest in animal welfare and look for organic (bio) labels on food. In order to boost sustainability, all animal products-including fish, milk and dairy products-should be viewed as supplementary to plant-based diet components.

Note: Many traditional German meals contain pork. In general, it is okay to inquire about ingredients if you are unsure whether you want to try a certain dish.

Fruits and vegetables are very healthy and should constitute a large part of daily food intake. The DGE (German Association for Nutrition) recommends three portions of vegetables and two portions of fruit. Pulses such as beans and lentils are also a solid addition to a diet, as they provide a long-lasting feeling of satiety with their dietary fibres. To avoid long transport routes, **regional products** should be preferable. Fruits that grow readily in Germany include apples, pears, and various types of berries. Asparagus, plums, and grapes are **seasonal** in spring respectively autumn; strawberries, blueberries and blackberries are seasonal in summer. Asparagus is a particularly popular food in Germany and is prepared in a wide variety of dishes.

Pasta, rice and even flour are rich in fibre and nutrients. **Whole grains** not only keep you satiated, but they also contain more important nutrients, including minerals and trace elements. Potatoes-one of Germany's most important basic ingredients-are a very good source of **carbohydrates.** They can be used in countless dishes, including fried potatoes, boiled potatoes, mashed potatoes, casseroles and gratins.

Sugar and salt should be consumed in moderation. Sugar is high in calories but provides no nutrients. Too much of it increases the risk of diabetes and obesity. Sugar alternatives, such as dried fruit and honey, are good alternatives. Salt increases blood pressure and draws water from the body.

Drinking enough **water** is an indispensable element of a healthy diet. The German government suggests drinking 1.5 to 2 litres of water per day. Water and unsweetened tea are recommended over sweet drinks with unnecessary calories. **Alcohol** should also be drunk in moderation. However, **wine and beer** are rooted in German culinary culture. Each state in Germany basically boasts its own unique type of beer. In the south, it is more common to drink pale or wheat beer; in the north, it is more common to drink pilsners. In West Palatinate (Pfalz), the largest wine-growing region in Germany, the wine culture is incredibly prominent.

Note: German tap water is safe. In fact, it is the most controlled beverage/food product in Germany. The tap water is so good that it matches or beats mineral water in terms of safety and, often, taste. Furthermore, it is cheaper, and there is no need to carry heavy bottles from the supermarket. It is common in restaurants to order sparkling water (Wasser mit Kohlensäure), which contains carbonic acid. Of course, bottled still water (Stilles Wasser) without carbonic acid can be purchased in any restaurant or supermarket.

Optional group activity

Goal: This question serves to briefly activate and involve the participants. They should reflect on the things that they just learned and articulate their thoughts.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants discuss their thoughts in the plenary. Collect their answers on a flipchart or have them directly write their answers on a digital whiteboard.

Questions

➜   What do you think are some differences between German cuisine and the food you are used to?

➜   What do you usually pay attention to when it comes to food?

11.7   Mental health

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 15 minutes

Mental health is essential to quality of life, high performance and engaged social participation. Mental health impairments are widespread, ranging from mild impairments of mental well- being to severe mental disorders. They are associated with significant individual and societal consequences and can even influence physical health.

One of the most effective strategies that Germany has ever employed is its campaign to **remove the stigma from mental illness** in German society. Seeking assistance for your mental health is nothing to be ashamed of; a tremendous number of people suffer from mental illnesses. Citizens are encouraged to assess their mental health and engage with state-provided mental health services whenever necessary.

Recommended **online** platforms:

➜   New-in-town Facebook Groups

➜   **nebenan.de**

➜   **spontacts.com**

➜   **meetup.com**

Migrating and encountering new surroundings come with emotional difficulties that may lead to **loneliness, depression, anxiety, anger, stress, alcoholism and sleep disorders,** among others. Beyond mental illness, you may also experience **self-development or career difficulties** (e.g., burnout), **relationship problems** and **trust issues.** Always keep in mind that thereare numerous institutions that can help with mental health problems.

To prevent loneliness, there are many ways to network with others-even in a new environment. A good way to get to know new people is to connect with them on **digital portals** or to join a sports club, orchestra or any group leisure activity.

In general, the following tips can help to maintain **psychological well-being**:

➜ **Physical activity** is an important determinant of mental health. Equally important is mental agility, which includes sport and other activities like playing music and gardening. Breaking your daily routine more often also promotes mental health.

➜ **Taking responsibility** refers to the fact that it is important to always remain aware of one's own possibilities and take responsibility for one's own thoughts and actions. Optimism and a positive attitude, personal values and principles, and taking care of your physical health are crucial.

➜ **Self-awareness** and **self-acceptance** are key. Mental disorders are often based on dysfunctional thinking patterns. In an everyday routine to address mental health, active confrontation with one's own psyche plays an important role. Having the courage to confront oneself and liking oneself are two important building blocks of mental health.

➜ Reduce physical and psychological **stress factors,** which can stem from pressure at work or in relationships.

➜ **Social relationships** are crucial in maintaining mental well-being. By interacting with other people, we constantly get new stimulation and recognition.

Statutory health insurance ensures access to psychiatrists, psychotherapists, inpatient care, outpatient care, emergency services and medication. Your general practitioner can refer you to a **psychiatrist** or **psychotherapist.** Alternatively, you can set up a consultation with a mental health professional directly. Note that whether you have public or private insurance can influence the type and availability of mental health services. For example, statutory insurance covers fewer practitioners, meaning that you may need to cover the cost of therapy and wait to be reimbursed. Additionally, statutory covered therapy options often have longer wait times.

Psychiatrists have a medical doctorate and specialise in the treatment of people with mental health problems. They can provide treatment to those who require **medication.** Following a consultation, psychiatrists can implement a treatment program in tandem with a psychotherapist, who provides **talk therapy.**

In Germany, there is comprehensive support for people struggling with **addiction.** This includes addiction counselling, prevention, and self-help. It also includes services that require approval from insurance providers, such as withdrawal treatment, weaning, and integration assistance. Service availability and wait times depend on the type of care that you need and the urgency of the situation. You can research service providers for more details. General practitioners can refer you to a specialist; alternatively, you can reach out to a clinic or rehabilitation centre directly.

Support groups are a good way to meet other people who know about the symptoms, feelings and practical problems associated with a particular medical issue. They help people to feel comfortable discussing topics that may be difficult to talk about with people who are not directly affected. Their basic goal is to enable people to share tips and experiences with others in a similar situation.

11.8 Gender and sexuality

ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

Discrimination based on gender and sexual identity is prohibited in Germany. The **General Equal Treatment Act** mandates protection in the workplace and in everyday life-for example, when shopping or going to the cinema.

Sex refers to biological differences between people (e.g., gonads, sexual organs, chromosomes, hormones). Germany officially recognises three genders: **female, male** and **diverse.** Sex is typically assigned at birth, though it is assigned later in some

cases in which the sex of the baby is unclear. Notably, sex can be changed. Transsexual people, for example, are born with the sex characteristics of one sex but identify with a different gender; in turn, these people can undergo sex-reassignment surgeries, which feature a change in sex organs and the administration of hormones.

Sexual and reproductive rights are highly contested around the world. Gender order lies at the core of sociocultural, religious and value systems, and sexual and reproductive regimes form the foundation of gender order. In Germany, everyone is free to make decisions pertaining to their own body without being discriminated against.

Caution! Not everyone may agree with the prevailing views and laws in Germany, but it is essential that they are respected, and that people **do not discriminate** against others on the basis of their sexual identity or preferences.

In turn, **abortion** is legal under certain circumstances. Sexual encounters require a clear **consensus** from all involved. This means that all participants must agree equally and at all times to everything that occurs between them. In this way, they consciously and actively consent. People have varying opinions about what constitutes sex. Touching and kissing are sexual acts for some people but not for others. As a result, people may make incorrect assumptions and become assaultive towards another person. Therefore, it is very important to **communicate openly** during sexual encounters and always be attentive by paying attention to physical signals and verifying consent in cases of doubt. For example, if someone flinches or suddenly becomes immobile during a sexual encounter, you should check to ensure that they are alright. **'No means No'**; if sexual acts are carried out despite a rejection, it constitutes rape-even if the victim does not fight back.

11.9   Contraceptive methods and reproduction

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 10 minutes

Contraceptives should be used when engaging in a sexual encounter. Taking appropriate precautions by using a **condom** or a **femidom** protects you and your sexual partner from unwanted pregnancy and contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections. **Safe sex** enables you to avoid the exchange of infectious body fluids. Always use condoms during penetrative sex. Use a condom when having oral sex with men. During oral sex with women, the absorption of vaginal fluid or menstrual blood can be avoided by using 'dental dams'.

Condoms (Kondome) are widely available in pharmacies, drugstores and supermarkets. **Female condoms** (Kondom für die Frau) are not usually available in stores. They can be ordered online or in pharmacies.

Note: Other contraceptives prevent pregnancies but do not protect from sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, it makes sense to **test yourself** for sexually transmitted diseases prior to a sexual encounter. These tests can be carried out by gynaecologists and urologists, for example. Such tests are routine for doctors, so there is no reason to be embarrassed. If you feel unsure, simply ask about the details of the procedure.

Diaphragms (Diaphragma) and **femcaps** (Femcap) can be ordered online or in pharmacies. They cost up to 50 euros but last for a year. **The morning-after pill** (die Pille danach) is available without a prescription in pharmacies. Pharmacists can advise you on how to take the morning- after pill and whether it is still viable. The cost of this pill is not covered by statutory insurance unless you are under 20, in which case you will need a prescription. The price varies, but it generally lies between 20 and 40 euros. To learn about other means of contraception and decide what is best for you, consult a doctor.

If you discover that you are **pregnant,** your first step should be to make an appointment with a gynaecologist. You can generally make an appointment directly with them, but you may require a referral from your general practitioner. If the pregnancy was unplanned, is not wanted or you just feel like you need support, you can turn to counselling centres, which provide anonymous support and advice free of charge: **www.schwanger-und-viele-fragen.de/en.html**.

11.10 Deepening exercise

Reflective group exercise after input

BASIC ❖   **Duration: 40 minutes**

Goal: The participants should reflect on what they have learned to deepen their knowledge. They should be able to summarise the main points of the module and know where to look for further information.

Materials / methods

➜   PPT with instructions

➜   Five separate areas on a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

➜   Five breakout rooms

Online

➜   Flipchart

➜   Markers

➜   separate areas for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g   **Face-to-face:** Prepare four flipcharts and markers.

w   **Online:** Prepare a whiteboard with four separate areas.

Implementation of the exercise

1.   Divide the participants into four groups. If there are not enough participants to have four people in each group, you can leave out one of the topics. Give each group one of the four topics below; have them discuss and reflect on the questions among themselves. They can use their laptops or phones to conduct additional research. They should summarise their discussion and thoughts by writing down key points.

g **Face-to-face:** Give the four groups the topics and send them to their designated work area to work on the questions for **15 minutes.**

w   **Online:** Create four breakout rooms and assign the participants to them automatically or manually. Set the duration of the breakout sessions to **15 minutes.**

2.   **Topics:**

a. What do you do in the event of sickness in Germany vs. in your country of origin?

➜   Who do you go to if it is not an emergency?

➜   When and how do you inform your employer? What can you expect from them?

➜   Where do you get your non-prescription and prescription medication from? Who pays for it?

b. What have you learned about preventive health care? What did you know beforehand regarding the differences between the German healthcare system and that in your country of origin?

c. What have you learned about mental health and how to maintain mental well-being? How are these topics discussed in your country of origin? How is this different in Germany?

d. What are your main takeaways from what you have learned about gender and sexuality?

3.   Bring the participants back to the plenary to present the highlights of their discussion for **5 minutes each.** You can add necessary information, or encourage other participants to contribute to others' presentations, as you see fit.

11.11 Conclusion

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

→   Is anything still unclear?

→   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module? (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

Chapter IV

Transcultural Competence

12 My Individual Culture and Transcultural Competence

Duration

➜ Essential: 130 minutes

➜ In-Depth: 195 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about:

➜ The concept of culture and related terminology

➜ The iceberg model and the culture navigator *(Kulturnavigator)*

➜ Transcultural irritations as opportunities

➜ Rising awareness about transcultural differences

➜ How to change perspectives through intercultural competence

Material

Face-to-face Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Green and red moderation cards

➜ Printed instruction sheets

Online Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1.   Give the input on the **essentia**l content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2.   Optional: Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3.   Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4.   Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

Amid intensifying globalisation and migration, transcultural competence is gaining importance. The characterisation of different dimensions across various cultural areas can be measured thanks to the culture navigator. Beyond detecting patterns, core competencies must be established to facilitate successful communication between cultures. The development of intercultural synergies and rising awareness both play major roles within transcultural interaction.

Further Sources

Deardorff, D. K. (2009). The Sage handbook of intercultural competence. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Geert Hofstede   ➔ **geerthofstede.com/landing-page**

12.1 Introduction

While the features of state constitutions can function as indicators of different positions and thought patterns, culture also plays an important role in the understanding of values and behaviours; thus, it can lead to misinterpretations and, in turn, conflicts. **'Culture'** denotes many features, including values, beliefs, attitudes, work practices and national, regional and local customs.

As established in the introduction, this handbook is based on the concept of **transculturality** rather than 'multiculturality' or 'interculturality'. The traditional discourse on culture dating back to the 19th century is outdated and insufficient, as it regards culture as a closed and uniform sphere encompassing all of the activities of a people, society or nation. As this view of culture looks through a national prism, it is characterised by ethnicity, social homogeny, and group demarcation. History shows us that ethnic definitions are largely fictitious despite the degree to which they can ignite conflict. The concept of **interculturality** aims to address this defect by highlighting the threat posed by segregated national understandings of culture. This concept also focuses on differences between cultures and how to overcome them, framing cultures as islands separated by bodies of water. This concept largely aligns with that of **multiculturality**, which addresses the challenges of coexistence among different cultures, identifying opportunities to overcome them in tolerance, understanding and acceptance.

The term **transculturality** was coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz Fernández in the 1940s to describe the reciprocity and creative potential of cultural contacts between Europe and Latin America. Ethnologists Clyde Kluckhohn and Frank L. Strodtbeck also worked on the early development of this concept. In the German-speaking world, the term was first used by philosopher Wolfgang Welsch in the early 1990s. The term overcomes the aforementioned defect by emphasising cultures as internally characterised by a plurality of potential identities and externally exhibiting transnational contours. It views them as having taken on a new form that passes through classic cultural boundaries. 'Transculturality' is the term given to this new understanding of cultures; it attempts to conceptualise the theoretical and normative consequences of this shift. The traditional concept of culture fails today on account of internal differentiation and the sheer complexity of modern cultures, which are characterised by a multitude of different lifestyles. Furthermore, the classical separatist conception of culture has been rendered obsolete by the interconnectedness of different cultures. Modern cultures are highly intertwined. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures – they transcend them. This interconnectedness stems from global migration, modern communication technology and economic interdependence.

The development of **transcultural competence** can enhance an individual's capacity for economic, sociocultural and political adaptation to host cultures, enabling a pleasant and purposeful life in society. Furthermore, it promotes voluntary **pluralism**, cosmopolitanism and ethnocultural integration. In the age of globalisation and diversity, daily life increasingly relies on **cross-border connections** and **multicultural coexistence**. Almost all countries are involved in migration to some degree. Modern transnational migratory flows demonstrate the importance of developing **transcultural competence** to guarantee the successful **integration** of migrants.

Transcultural competence can be defined as the **'body of knowledge and skills to successfully interact with people from other ethnic, religious, cultural, national, and geographic groups.'** Intercultural communication gives rise to new actions and interpretations that cannot be clearly assigned to a single culture; in a sense, they create a new synergetic 'in-between culture'.

12.2   Iceberg model

In 1976, Hall developed the **iceberg model** of culture. As with an iceberg, there are many aspects of a culture that are visible – but far more that linger below the surface. The visible or conscious part of culture is what we can observe, including **behaviours and expressed beliefs** (e.g., religion). The invisible or subconscious part of culture is what lies below the surface, including **values** and **thought patterns** that constitute the foundation of behavioural tendencies. When amid a different culture, the differences that you observe are largely those at the tip of the iceberg – those on the level of behaviours and beliefs. In order to truly understand and value these differences, you must take time to understand the culture's underlying values and thought patterns. Only in this manner will you be able to manage cultural differences in a productive way.

Behavior

Beliefs

Values & Thought Patterns
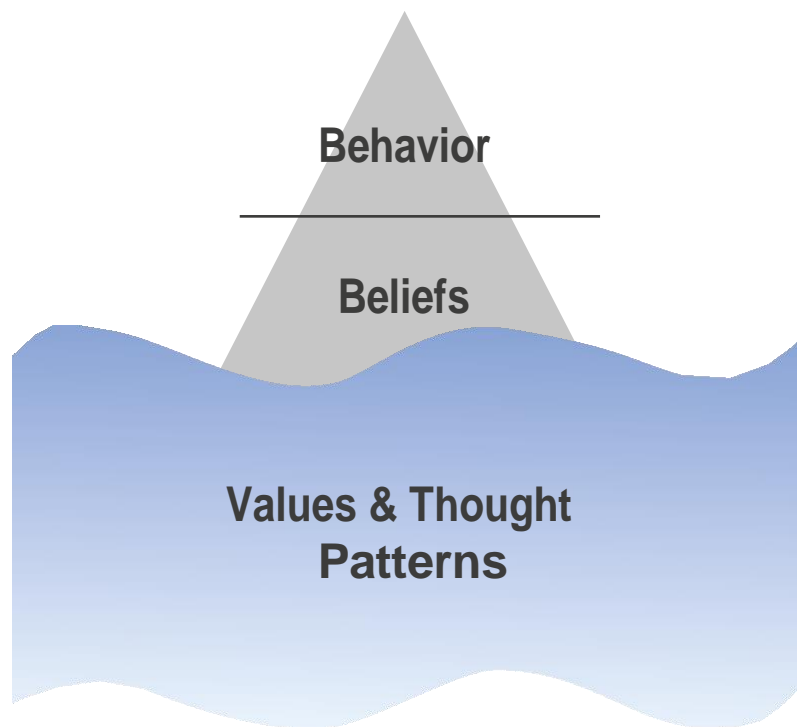
Figure No. 18: Edward T. Hall's Cultural Iceberg model
➡   Source: **www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/125/iceberg_model_3.pdf**
[accessed on 26.04.2022]

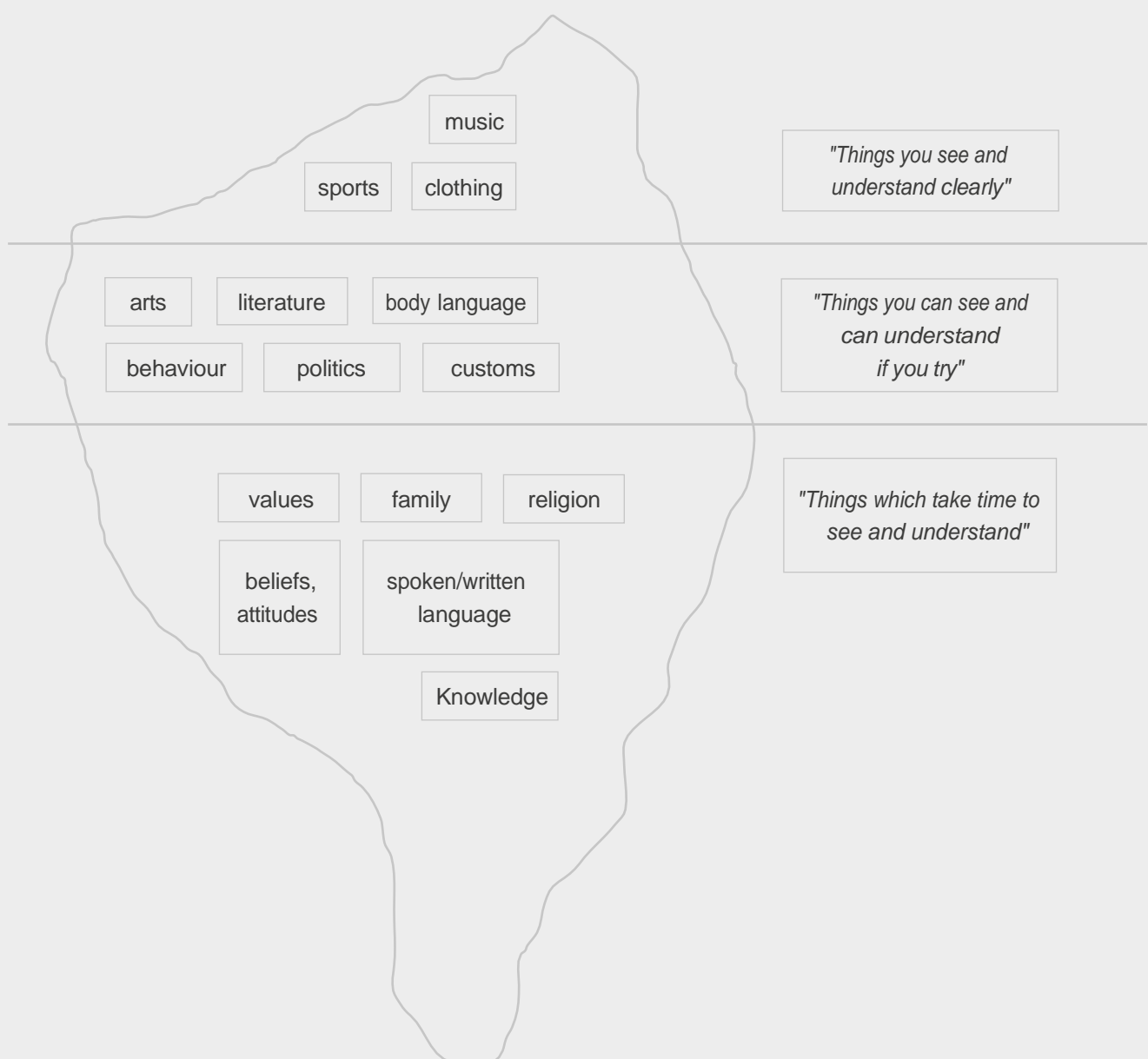## Optional reflection exercise: Iceberg culture

Duration: 20 minutes

Goal: This exercise serves to briefly activate and involve the participants, so not much prior knowledge is necessary. Individual values and assumptions should be made visible, enabling the participants to reflect on them.

Method: First, share the illustration below via PowerPoint. Give them 10 minutes to think about the illustration and the question below independently. Next, give them 10 minutes to discuss their thoughts in the plenary regarding each of the three levels of the cultural iceberg. Collect their thoughts, writing them on a blank image of an iceberg divided into three levels.

Questions

➔   How would your culture look in the model of an iceberg? Use the following illustration as an orientation guideline and fill out the category fields with examples of your own culture.

music

sports   clothing

"Things you see and understand clearly"

arts   literature   body language

behaviour   politics   customs

"Things you can see and can understand if you try"

values   family   religion

beliefs, attitudes   spoken/written language

Knowledge

"Things which take time to see and understand"

Figure No. 19: The Cultural Iceberg

➔   Source: **lehrerfortbildung-bw.de/u_berufsbezogen/wahl/fb1/kompcult/iceberg** [accessed on 28.02.2022]

12.3 Culture navigator

This model – from 'Basic Forms of Anxiety' by German psychoanalyst Fritz Riemann and Swiss psychologist Christoph Thomann – presents four different individual aspirations laid out on a plane of coordinates: one axis between **object** and **subject** and one axis between **flexibility** and **stability**. These basic orientations divide the cultural model into four quadrants. Their theory asserts that all individuals possess varying degrees of all four of the aforementioned aspirations.

Flexibility suggests that 'new' things are inherently better. Evolution and variety are in the foreground. Impulse, experimentation, fantasy, spontaneity and curiosity are the main characteristics of this dimension.

Stability, in contrast, suggests that what has already been established is superior. Security and continuity are two of its foremost aims. This orientation focuses on reliability, security and responsibility.

Subjectivity prioritises the needs of those around individuals (e.g., employees, customers, citizens). Its most important principles are affirmation, contact, harmony and care.

Objectivity, in contrast, is rooted in factual topics and strictly delineated, data-based aims. Freedom, individuality and rationality are key components of this dimension.

All four of these basic orientations are present in **individualist cultures** to some degree. Sociopsychologist Geert Hofstede developed a model to describe the basic structure of specific individualist cultures relative to these four dimensions.

Flexibility

Object/Matter — Subject/Person

Stability
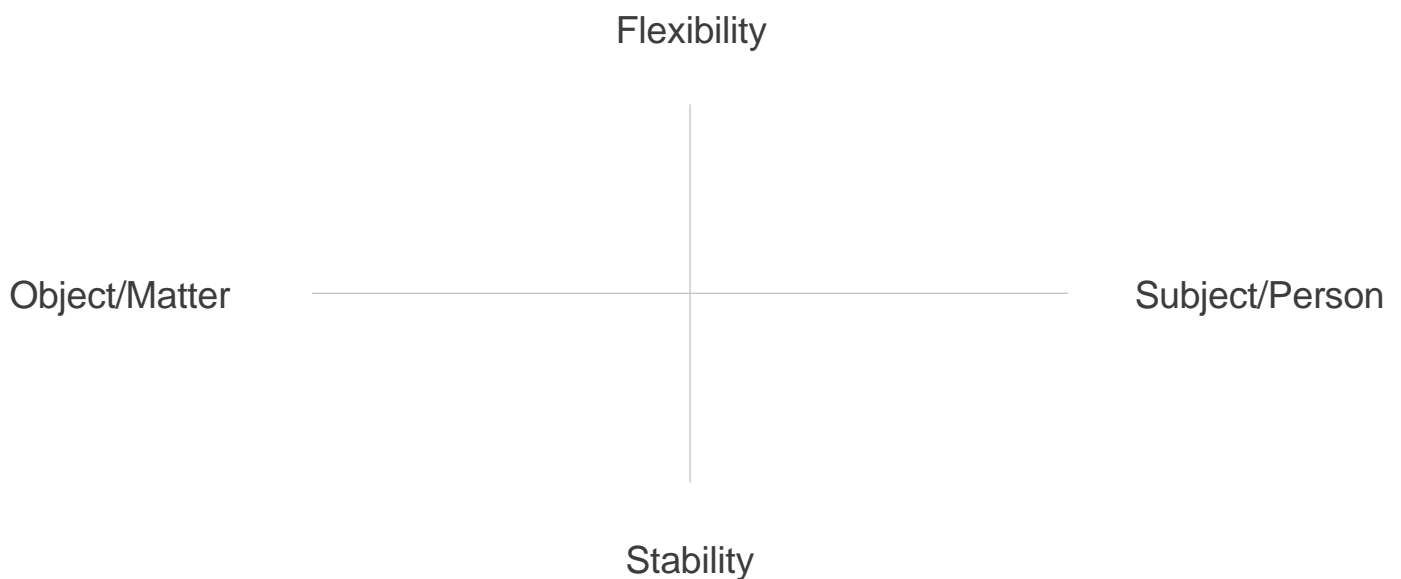
Figure No. 20: Four orientations of the Culture Navigator

Group exercise: Sunny and cloudy sides of orientations in the culture navigator

ESSENTIAL Duration: 30 minutes

Goal: The participants should realise that certain personality traits can be seen as positive or negative depending on perspective. They can learn to change their perspective to see positive intentions behind irritating behaviours.

Method: Divide the participants into two groups. Assign one group to work on the 'flexibility – stability' axis; assign the other to work on the 'object/matter – subject/person' axis. Pose the following questions:

Group 1:

➜ What are the sunny (positive) sides of the flexibility pole and what are its cloudy (negative) sides (which are mainly seen by stability-oriented personalities)?

➜ What are the sunny (good) sides of the stability pole and what are its cloudy (negative) sides (which are mainly seen by flexibility-oriented personalities)?

Group 2:

➜ What are the sunny (positive) sides of the subject/person pole and what are its cloudy (negative) sides (which are mainly seen by object/matter-oriented personalities)?

➜ What are the sunny (positive) sides of the object/matter pole and what are its cloudy (negative) sides (which are mainly seen by subject/person-oriented personalities)?

Implementation of the exercise

g **Face-to-face:** Present the questions via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Divide the participants into two groups or let them decide their own groups. Give them **15 minutes** to work on the assignment. Assign workspaces for each group and instruct them to write the sunny aspects on green moderation cards and the cloudy aspects on red moderation cards.

After the small-group discussions are done, bring the groups back together to discuss their results. This portion should not exceed **15 minutes**. You can add aspects from the list below and debrief the exercise.

w **Online:** Pose the questions and give instructions to the participants. Make sure that they understand the questions and write them down. If it seems like the participants do not understand the assignment, give a few examples from the list below. Open two breakout rooms and send the groups to do **15 minutes** of group work. Have them assign one participant to write down their answers.

After the small-group discussions are done, bring the groups back together to discuss their results. This portion should not exceed **15 minutes**. You can add aspects from the list below and debrief the exercise.

Optional: You can use the digital whiteboard to document their ideas. For this, you would need to prepare the whiteboard in advance with the Riemann-Thomann model ('the cross'). Participants can write down the sunny sides on green post-its and the cloudy sides on red post-its, putting them next to the poles of the cross. Share the link to the whiteboard with the whole group before the breakout rooms begin.

Flexibility	
➜ Creative ➜ Spontaneous ➜ Hazardous ➜ Improvising ➜ Innovative	➜ Erratic, moody ➜ Reckless ➜ Short-term ➜ Unsystematic ➜ Unreliable

Stability	
➜ Structured ➜ Diligent ➜ Accurate ➜ Reliable ➜ Anticipatory	➜ Rigid ➜ Passive ➜ Old-fashioned ➜ Inflexible ➜ Bad at dealing with crises

Subject/Person	
➜ Sensitive ➜ Empathetic ➜ Understanding ➜ Harmonious ➜ Open, sociable	➜ Dependent (on the opinions of others) ➜ Conflict-averse ➜ Overly personal ➜ Unassertive

Object/Matter	
➜ Goal-oriented ➜ Strategic ➜ Independent ➜ Achievement-oriented ➜ Determined	➜ Cold ➜ Unapproachable ➜ Distant ➜ Mechanical ➜ Repulsive

Figure No. 21: Sunny and cloudy sides of the four orientations of the Culture Navigator

Debriefing:

The judgement of a behaviour is never neutral; it inevitably occurs from a particular perspective. Every individual wears a unique pair of 'glasses' through which they see and make sense of the world. If a behaviour irritates us (if we see mainly the cloudy aspects), our own personal imprint is different from that of the person irritating us. Our personal imprint determines our needs and expectations; when a behaviour doesn't meet those, we become irritated. Transcultural competence begins with an understanding of one's own imprint-with becoming conscious of one's own needs and expectations. Those with transcultural competence, in moments of irritation, are able to withstand ambiguity and make the assumption that their interpretation may not be what was intended by the behaviour. The art lies in the ability to shift perspectives: when you are only able to see the cloudy side of a behaviour, assume that it bears a sunny side as well. There may be situations in which the behaviour you perceived as irritating is advantageous.

12.4   Individual culture

Optional reflection exercise: My individual culture

Goal: The participants should reflect on their own positions within the culture navigator, helping them to understand their needs, communication patterns and values. This will enable them to anticipate potential conflicts.

Method: Using the Riemann-Thomann model, let the participants find their place in one of the model quadrants. Ask some of the participants the following reflection questions:

➜   Why did you choose this spot? What kind of behaviours and beliefs can you observe in yourself that made you choose this spot?

➜   Which quadrant is diametrically opposed to this? In other words, what kind of behaviour might irritate you? How would you deal with such an irritation in the future?

The discussion should not exceed **15 minutes.**

12.5   General components of transcultural competence

Culture is a constant process of negotiation between actors native to the culture and those who gain access to it from the outside. Differing behaviours can lead to misunderstandings and even conflicts. Considering the previous exercise, cultural irritations can evidently be viewed as opportunities. However, certain attitudes, pieces of knowledge and soft skills are necessary to overcome cultural barriers.

Respect for otherness in foreign cultures has a significant influence on the success of cultural interactions. Appreciating cultural diversity and thinking comparatively without prejudice facilitates openness. Respect for others is also correlated with a high investment in collecting 'evidence' of cultural differences and the acceptance that certain assumptions are bound to be disproved. **Curiosity** is another important attitude in transcultural contexts; to achieve success, you must view differences as learning opportunities.

Cultural self-awareness entails understanding how your own culture has shaped your identity and worldview (the 'glasses' that we see the world through every day). **Culture-specific knowledge**, on the other hand, explains basic information about other cultures, such as their history, socio-political context, economic dynamics, values and beliefs.

Transcultural competence includes effectively listening, observing and evaluating. Patience and perceptiveness help to recognise and mitigate ethnocentrism – biased perceptions driven by one's own culture – towards groups that are foreign to him or her. Individuals who think critically tend to have less difficulty identifying the opinions and intentions of their interaction partners. Behavioural flexibility is another important aspect of high transcultural awareness. Therefore, it is not only important to have a broad behavioural repertoire, but also to be able to adapt one's behaviour to dynamic situations.

12.6   Development of transcultural competence   `ESSENTIAL`   Duration: 15 minutes

Based on the presence of the components discussed above, transcultural competence can be developed. People with a **high tolerance for ambiguity**, for example, accept uncertainty and can easily adapt to new cultural situations. They are interested in learning new values, and they view ambiguity as something positive. In contrast, people with a **low tolerance for ambiguity** find new intercultural situations deeply unpleasant and tend to misinterpret unclear behaviour, simplifying ambiguities by neglecting parts they do not understand. Low tolerance for ambiguity is correlated with an orientation towards stability.

Diverse cultures usually demand different behaviours. As a result, people capable of **rapid adaptation** to unfamiliar situations are more comfortable deciphering cultural signals and adapting as necessary. They can constantly reflect on their own behaviours and how they are influencing the interaction at hand. A **lack of behavioural flexibility** is correlated with an inability to reflect on the impact of one's own behaviour. Inflexible individuals are generally incapable of effectively assessing the impact of their behaviours.

To learn a foreign language, one must process new knowledge and also develop an **understanding** of how the language reflects the foreign culture that uses it. This helps learners to overcome cultural barriers and communicate effectively with foreigners. Thus, **intercultural communicative competence** plays a vital role in the cultivation of linguistic abilities.

Successful communication does not always require you to come to an agreement with your conversational partner. It is simply important for both sides to demonstrate respect for the other's boundaries and conventions. To establish an equal relationship, both sides must show interest in the other's experiences and preferences – not only those anchored within the dominant culture.

The ability to understand what others are thinking and feeling is also a crucial element of intercultural communication. **Considering and understanding emotions** helps you to take interactions to a deeper level. A lack of empathy results in unsuccessful communication. This is especially true in intercultural conversations, as considering the emotions of others helps you to overcome transcultural conflicts.

Finally, the **willingness to discover knowledge** while interacting with others is crucial to successful intercultural interactions. Whether the communication is direct or distant, **expectations** must be clearly understood to ensure smooth communication.

Evidently, a certain level of knowledge and skill is necessary to successfully engage in intercultural communication. In order to overcome boundaries and achieve open-minded dialogue, you must be willing to reflect on your **own cultural values and norms.** A constant process of negotiation is essential. Underlying cultural structures must be recognised. Successful transcultural interactions can only be achieved through reflective and conscious engagement with new cultural inputs. Through this engagement, you can learn and incorporate new transcultural competencies. Certain **personal attitudes, cultural imprints** and **environments** are more likely to give way to a shift in perspective.

Optional group exercise: Dealing with otherness   Duration: 30 minutes

Goal: The participants should discuss their personal observations to help them reflect on cultural differences and similarities by comparing behaviours and attitudes across different cultural contexts.

Method: Divide the participants into smaller groups of 3-4 participants. Pose the questions below and give the participants **15 minutes** to discuss. Next, bring everyone together and have each group present 2-3 highlights from their discussion. This portion should not exceed **10-15 minutes**.

Implementation of the exercise:

g **Face-to-face:** Present the questions via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Divide the participants into groups or let them decide their own groups. Assign workspaces for each group and instruct them to write down their thoughts.

w **Online:** Present the questions via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Make sure that the participants write the questions down and know what to do. Create the necessary number of breakout rooms, and set aside **15 minutes** for small-group discussions. Next, let the groups share the highlights of their discussion for another **15 minutes** in the plenary.

1. The groups should think about everyday situations and consider how people from their own culture normally behave in such situations. Propose some of the following examples to reflect on: receiving shocking/pleasant news, running late, eating, receiving/giving a present, getting an order from a superior, interacting socially, dancing, celebrating, following a sports event and telling a joke. The groups can also come up with their own situations.

2. In the next step, they should ask themselves whether they have observed a comparable situation in a different cultural context.

3. Everyone should think about whether the behaviour in these situations seemed unusual, different, new, surprising or even strange to them. If they want, they can also describe how they felt in these situations.

Caution! Be careful to steer the focus away from stereotypes. In no way is this exercise intended to serve stereotypes; it is intended to describe observations and experiences. Please keep this in mind and, if necessary, refer to the tips in this handbook's introduction regarding how to deal with heated debates and conflicts.

Questions

➔ How do you or other people of your culture behave in common everyday situations and interactions?

➔ What do you consider to be special or unique about behaviours or communication standards in your culture?

12.7 Deepening exercise
ESSENTIAL

Role-playing after input
ADVANCED .A. **Duration: 40 minutes**

Goal: To help them get acquainted with various cultural dimensions and see them in context, the participants should create an intercultural situation featuring a misunderstanding that could plausibly arise due to differing cultural habits. The participants should understand that cultural differences can lead to irritation, but that awareness of these differences can lead to a change in perspective. This exercise is an extension of this module's last reflection exercise, enabling the participants to build on what they have learned. Role-playing is a method of intercultural learning that focuses on exploring foreign cultural behaviour and closely analysing cultural situations. All of the participants should apply their newly acquired intercultural skills to solve the conflict. They should reflect on their attitudes and observe whether they changed during the exercise.

Materials / methods

➜ Digital instructions

➜ Two groups representing two fictional cultures

➜ Two breakout rooms

Online

➜ Printed instructions

➜ Two groups representing two fictional cultures

➜ Two separate rooms (optional)

Face-to-face

Preparation

Read the spreadsheet below carefully. It will help you understand the goals and method of the exercise. Prepare questions based on the instructions in the spreadsheet below. Afterwards, create two new spreadsheets: one for group A and one for group B. The spreadsheets should contain two columns: the first one containing the 'communication habits and social behaviours' listed below and a second one containing the appropriate behavioural prompts for Group A and Group B. The two groups should have no information about the other's behavioural prompts. Therefore, you should include a disclaimer in each spreadsheet: 'Read the instructions carefully. Do not discuss its contents with anyone yet. Wait for further instructions from your trainer.'

The role-playing portion should take no longer than **20 minutes**. Make sure that there is sufficient time for reflection afterwards.

Caution! Make sure to avoid sensitive topics, such as dramatic experiences of war and loss. The questions should be based on everyday situations or common standards; they must not be overly personal. Please keep this in mind and, if necessary, refer to the tips in this handbook's introduction regarding how to deal with heated debates and conflicts.

Implementation of the exercise:

1. First, divide the participants into two subgroups. Give each group diverging behavioural prompts corresponding to particular communication habits. Make sure that the groups do not discuss these behavioural prompts with each other.

   g **Face-to-face:** Explain the behavioural prompts – alongside a printout – first to group A, while group B waits in a different room is waiting outside or in a different room. Next, do the same thing with group B. Finally, bring both groups back to the plenary, positioning them on opposite sides of the room. Make sure that the two groups can see each other well.

   w **Online:** Send the two groups to different breakout rooms and provide the behavioural prompts digitally (e.g., as a document) alongside a verbal explanation. Explain the rules first to group A, while group B is waiting in another breakout room. Next, do the same thing with group B. Finally, bring both groups back to the plenary. All of the participants must have their camera and microphone turned on to effectively facilitate the role- playing exercise.

2. Ask the questions regarding communication habits and social behaviours and prompt group A to immediately react to them with their behavioural prompts. Urge group B to guess the social messages being conveyed. This should make them realise that group A's behaviours convey nearly the opposite meanings of their own. Make sure to have group A space out their behavioural prompts to avoid chaos and confusion, providing group B with some time to individually observe and think about each behaviour. Next, ask the same questions of group B, putting group A into the role of observer. This role- playing portion of the exercise should take about **20 minutes.**

3. This exercise tasks the participants with determining the meanings behind unfamiliar cultural norms and communication habits, which could, under normal circumstances, lead to intercultural misunderstandings and conflicts. The obstacles that they face in deciphering these unfamiliar behaviours must be explored.

4. Once all of the behavioural prompts have been acted out, have the groups discuss which of the other group's habits they were able to decipher. This exchange in the plenary should resolve and explain all cultural misunderstandings and points of confusion. This portion of the exercise should take no longer than **10 minutes.**

5. Following the participants' clarifying exchange, encourage a group discussion on their feelings and thoughts as well as the difficulties that they encountered during this simulation. This portion of the exercise should take another **10 minutes.**

Communication habits and social behaviours	Behavioural prompts: Group A	Behavioural prompts: Group B	Optional instructions for the trainer
Agreeing to something (saying yes)	Shaking your hands (gesture)	Vertical nodding with your head	Ask the groups very basic yes-or-no questions that are likely to be answered with 'yes' (e.g., do you like animals, cake, sunny weather, spending time in nature) **Note:** Make sure not to ask overly personal questions; adapt them to prevailing group dynamics
Disagreeing on something (saying no)	Vertical nodding with your head	Shaking your hands (gesture)	Ask the groups very basic yes- or-no questions that are likely to be answered with 'no' (e.g., do you like to take cold showers, noisy environments)
Being happy/receiving good news	Putting your hands up in the air	Clapping your hands	Make announcements that are likely to provoke a positive reaction (e.g., 'You won the lottery!', 'You get a cute dog!', 'You will meet your idol!')
Being shocked/receiving bad news	Clapping your hands	Putting your hands up in the air	Make announcements that are likely to provoke a negative reaction (e.g., 'it is going to rain for one whole year', 'You will only be allowed to drink water for the rest of your life', 'no more candy ever again')

12.8   Conclusion

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➔   Is anything still unclear?

➔   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➔   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module? (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

13

Culture Navigator; Cultural Characteristics (Part 1)

Duration

➜ Essential: 110 minutes

➜ In-Depth: 185 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about:

➜ Fact versus relationship orientation

➜ Individualism versus collectivism

➜ Hierarchy versus heterarchy

➜ One's own imprint

➜ Options for action in moments of irritation by enabling alternative interpretations

Material

Face-to-face Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Printed non-verbal communication checklist

➜ Cultural globe (link)

➜ Printed instructions for role playing

Online Training

➜ Presentation with input

➜ Virtual non-verbal communication checklist

➜ Cultural globe (link)

Table of contents

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1.   Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2.   Optional: Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3.   Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4.   Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

Culture, as a complex construct, can be divided into different dimensions of polarities. Depending on cultural affiliation, these dimensions are pronounced in varying ways. The distinction between factual and relationship-oriented expressions aligns with distinctions between cultural communication styles and habits. Collectively and individually shaped societies differ in their level of commitment to groups. The measure of power distance and hierarchy is the dimension that classifies cultures into different levels of independence and responsibility.
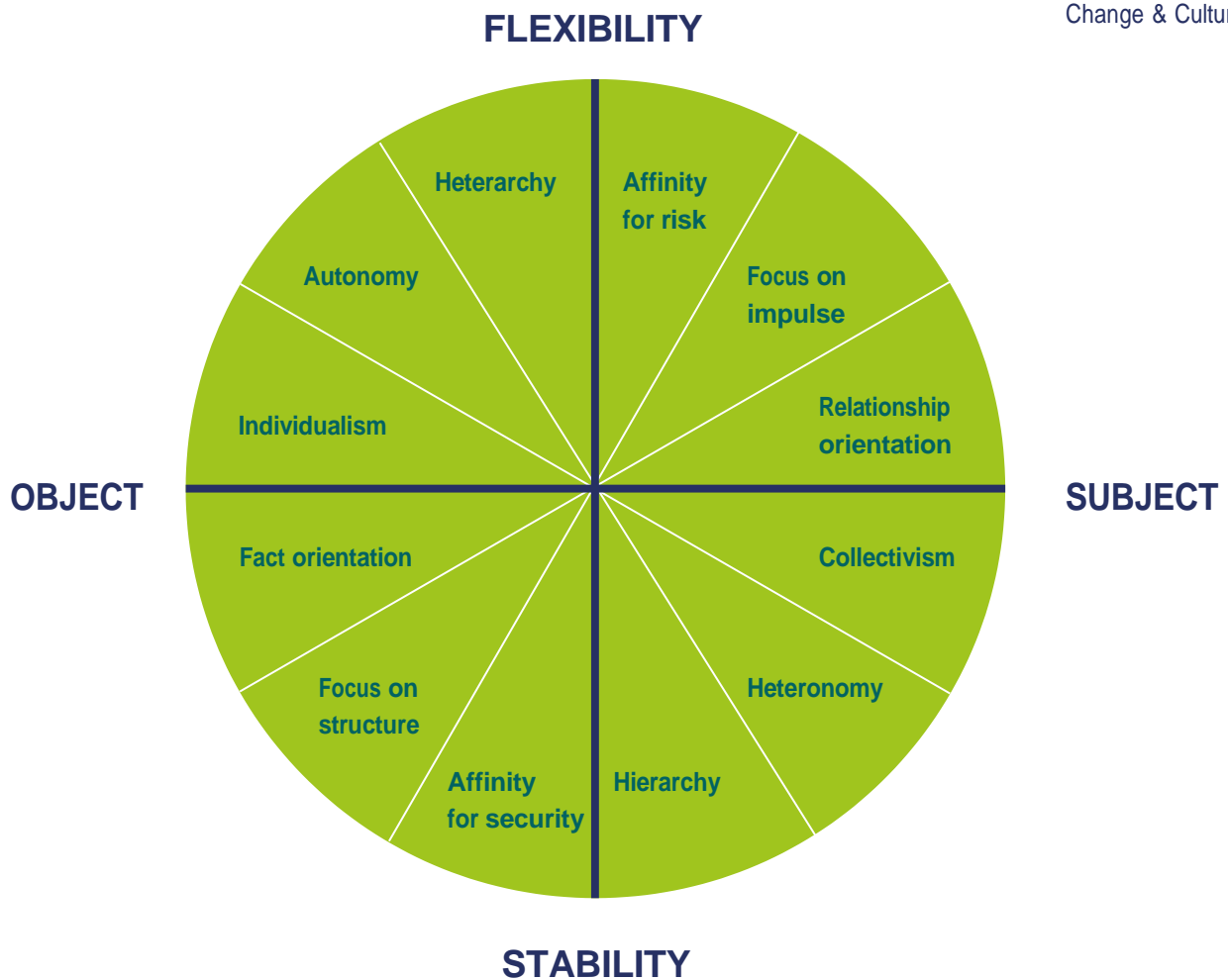
Further Sources

Intercultural training methods   ➔   www.netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/Fachstelle_IKA/
Publikationen/FS_IKA_Intercultural_Training_with_a_focus_on_migration_'
and_asylum_2020.pdf

Geert Hofstede   ➔   www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/

13.1 Introduction to the first three pairs of cultural traits

Change & Culture

FLEXIBILITY

- Heterarchy
- Affinity for risk
- Autonomy
- Focus on impulse
- Individualism
- Relationship orientation
- Fact orientation
- Collectivism
- Focus on structure
- Heteronomy
- Affinity for security
- Hierarchy

OBJECT

SUBJECT

STABILITY

Figure No. 22: Cultural traits in the Culture Navigator

Beliefs, rituals and sayings tell us a lot about traditions and their cultural roots. They provide insight into both observable and unobservable dimensions of a culture. The distinction between **visible** and **invisible** behaviours, practices and values is demonstrated by the iceberg model, which was introduced in the previous module. Of course, people are individuals, meaning that we can only describe tendencies and make general observations. There are always exceptions to trends, meaning that all individuals should be approached with open curiosity.

Cultural traits can generally be characterised on two scales: one between **object** and **subject** and one between **flexibility** and **stability**. These four poles form four quadrants (see illustration above), each of which is assigned three cultural characteristics. Overall, this arrangement forms six distinct sliding scales. This module details the first three of these scales. Of course, cultural traits are not absolute – most cultures are somewhere in the middle on every scale – and they can evolve over time.

In this sense, cultures should be understood as the result of a confluence of various transcultural networks within a certain context at a particular point of time.

13.2 Cultural traits: Fact orientation versus relationship orientation

A culture with a **relationship orientation** means that such societies are primarily interested in people, direct interaction, dialogue and interest alignment. People with a strong expression of this cultural characteristic usually see people as inherently valuable outside of their function or role. 'Truth' is **relative** to such individuals, depending on whose perspective is involved: in a culture that values seniority, more junior individuals would accept invalid arguments if they came from a more senior person; in a culture with a strong relationship orientation, people try to avoid offending one another and would rather say something false than something hurtful. Therefore, the truth in these cultures is often **'subjective'**, as people in such societies tend to prefer subjectivity to irritation. Trust plays a greater role in relationships than facts (e.g., buying something from a trusted vendor would be more common than buying from an unknown vendor with more transparent product descriptions).

Opposite of relationship-orientated cultures are **fact-oriented** cultures, which prioritise data, facts and technical knowledge. Individuals with a stronger fact orientation prefer rational arguments and competence to the position of any given individual. These individuals prefer the **'objective truth'**. In professional settings, they see people as largely interchangeable in their function; personal context plays a subordinate role (e.g., purchases would not be made based on personal connections to vendors; they would be made via informed decisions).

Reflection exercise

Goal: The participants should reflect on their own cultural imprint, enabling them to anticipate potential moments of irritation.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants discuss them in the plenary. Collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise their collected answers at the end and add any necessary information. This activity should take no more than **15 minutes.**

Questions

➜   How openly can you give negative feedback in your country?

➜   What are the unwritten rules that you follow during discussions with friends, family and seniors?

➜   What might be different in Germany?

Caution! Always be cautious when using examples from different countries to avoid stereotypical thinking (labelling). For example, not all Germans are fact-oriented. Everything comes down to individuals, specific situations and contexts.

Relationship orientation and fact orientation as a pair of cultural characteristics manifests itself in various ways. Consider the **peach-coconut model:**

➔ Soft shell	➔ Hard shell
➔ Hard core	➔ Soft core
➔ Easy to get through to the core	➔ Hard to crack the shell

Figure No. 23: Peach-coconut model

This model explains how people from different cultures are willing to reveal different amounts about themselves. Looking at the two fruits and their characteristics may help you to understand how **contacts** and friendships are developed in different cultures. It is very common to meet people who are similar to a peach in the way they communicate. While it is easy to penetrate a **'peach culture'** (and become acquainted with such people **quickly** and **easily**) you eventually meet the **'core'** a boundary that tends to keep relationships superficial and give way to wavering contacts. In contrast, it requires great effort to crack a **'coconut culture'** – but doing so reveals its inner core in totality. In German culture, people often resemble coconuts. While it is difficult to crack their exteriors – it can often take a long time to develop relationships and make friends – once you crack them, you are bound to obtain a fruitful, intimate relationship.

Optional group activity

Duration: 10 minutes

Goal: The participants should reflect on their own cultural imprint, enabling them to anticipate potential moments of irritation.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants discuss them in the plenary for 10 minutes.

Questions

➔ How easy is it to get to know people in your country? How easy is it to make real friends? In what ways might this be different in Germany?

Non-verbal communication through universal emotions

The ways in which people convey their emotions – which constitute a crucial element of their communication – vary greatly by person and **cultural context.** This makes intercultural communication difficult, as it gives way to misunderstandings. People express their emotions in different ways, even within individual societies. Despite this, there are **seven basic emotions** that are universally recognisable: anxiety (fear), happiness (joy), anger, sadness, curiosity (surprise), disgust and contempt. Basic emotions are considered to be **independent of culture** and are also expressed internationally through the same facial expressions and physical changes.
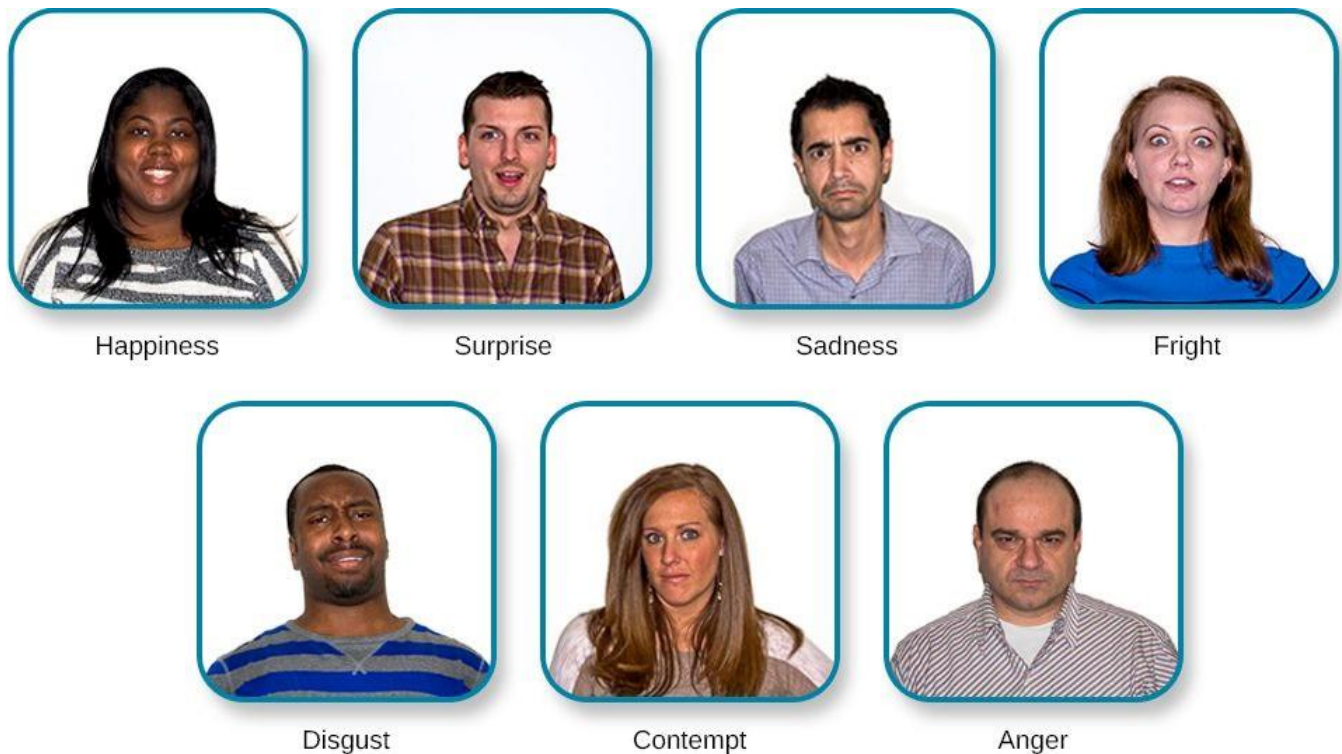
Figure No. 24: Universal emotions

➜ Source: commons.wikimedia.org**/**wiki**/**File:Universal_facial_expressions.jpg

Closely connected to the dichotomy of fact orientation and relationship orientation is that of **neutrality** and **emotionality.** Individuals with a strong neutrality imprint tend to not want to burden other people by expressing one's own emotions. For example, they may not want to cry in public because they don't want to burden others with their grief. In neutral cultures, emotions are kept controlled, rarely expressed publicly. Arguments are mainly made on a factual – rather than emotional – basis. In **affective** cultures, people boast strong emotionality imprints, and showing emotions is acceptable across many contexts. Emotions can be expressed through more extraverted behaviour, including through **voice volume, facial expressions** and pronounced **body language.**

Optional group activity

Goal: This activity serves to activate the participants, enable them to reflect on their own cultural imprint and anticipate potential moments of irritation.

Method: Group the participants into pairs (with one group of three if there is an odd number of participants). Pose the questions below and allow them to discuss among themselves for **10 minutes.**

Questions

➜ To what degree are public displays of emotion accepted in your country?

➜ Would you say that you, as an individual, show your emotions more or less in public?

➜ What might be different or similar in Germany?

High-context and low-context communication

According to anthropologist and cultural scientist Edward T. Hall, the ways in which people from different cultures communicate with one another depends on whether their exchange follows the rules of **high-context communication** or those of **low-context communication**. In cultures like that of Germany, where low-context communication is predominant, speakers need little contextual information about individuals before private – and particularly business – relationships can be established. Communication is mainly conveyed through **words;** meaning is **expressed explicitly.** Other means of conveying meaning (e.g., facial expressions, eye contact, body language) play only a minor role. Thus, communication is **more direct** and viewed strictly as a means of exchanging information. Business relationships start and end more quickly; they are based largely on factual considerations – the task at hand – and less on the level of trust between partners. Communication is goal-oriented, meaning **small talk** is kept to a minimum (in Germany, between 3 and 5 minutes).

Additionally, work can generally progress even amid conflict. In cultures in which high-context communication is predominant, speakers require a considerable amount of contextual information about the individuals with whom they are conversing before establishing private or business relationships. The prominence of **non-verbal signals** is high, and linguistic messages tend to be **implicit.**

Relationship-oriented cultures tend to communicate more indirectly, as it is sometimes considered to be impolite or even uneducated to simply 'get to the point'. Subjects and people are more fused during communication; separating the person from the subject can cause irritation. It is important to have a personal chat before getting to work or exchanging information. On a global scale, indirect communication is more common; in Germany, however, direct communication and the separation between people and subjects are far more common.

Optional group activity

Goal: This activity serves to activate the participants, enable them to reflect on their own cultural imprint and anticipate potential moments of irritation.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants discuss them in the plenary for **10 minutes.**

Questions

➔   Would you classify the communication style in your country of origin's cultural context as more direct or indirect and why?

➔   What could be different or similar in Germany?

Another distinguishing feature between relationship-oriented cultures and fact-oriented cultures is the **interaction distance** – the **physical distance** between participants in a conversation. Northern Europeans and the Japanese favour more 'intimate space' than Southern Europeans. In Germany, people usually keep about an arm's length away from others while conversing. Informal interactions between friends constitute an exception in this regard. Some people in Germany find it unpleasant if an appropriate distance is not maintained during conversation.

Fact-oriented cultures tend to value **written communication** more than **oral communication.** In such cultures, books, letters and other written forms of expression play an important role in the **transmission of information** and knowledge. Consequently, there are copious libraries and other institutions that store, organise and make this knowledge accessible. Individuals with a strong fact-oriented imprint tend to have stronger skills in research and organisation. In Germany, many things tend to be written down. For example, after a professional phone call or meeting, it is common for one party to send a written summary of the conversation. Documents often play a decisive role; as a result, job and internship references are generally requested in writing. **Verbal agreements,** on the other hand, are less valuable in Germany than in other cultures. Cultures that prefer the **oral transmission** of information place more value on the quality of the interaction between two interlocutors.

Fact-oriented cultures can also be recognised by the way in which **speaker change** and **discussion style** are exercised during conversation (para-verbal communication). Speaker change is a conversational phenomenon that shows how contributions to the conversation are distributed among the participants. In other words, it is the manner in which parties to a conversation speak, listen and respond. In some cultures (e.g., Arabic or Turkish), speaker change occurs very quickly, as interlocutors jump in and out. It is not uncommon for people to **interrupt** one another and emphasise communication through gestures and facial expressions. In Nordic and Asian countries, in contrast, people tend to wait for others to finish speaking before contributing their input. In Germany, it is considered to be impolite to interrupt others. While in Germany, you should let the other person finish, only offering input once you are sure that the other person is done with their thought. Another distinguishing para-verbal feature of communication is the volume with which people speak in public: in Germany, middle to low volume is expected in public spaces. Individuals speaking at a high volume (e.g., having a loud conversation on the phone) generally irritate most people.

161

Group exercise

Goal: This exercise should make the participants reflect on their own cultural imprint and enable them to anticipate potential moments of irritation.

Method: Divide the participants into three smaller groups and let them discuss the questions below for **10 minutes**, having assigned each group a topic. Next, bring the groups back together and have them share the highlights of their discussions for **5 minutes**. Write down the main points on a flipchart.

Questions

➜ Which tendencies in communication can you observe in your country in terms of the following characteristics?

➜ What might be different in Germany?

  ➜ Group 1: Value of written vs. oral communication

  ➜ Group 2: Interaction distance and physical touch

  ➜ Group 3: Speaker change and volume

Caution! Always be cautious when using examples from different countries to avoid stereotypical thinking (labelling). For example, not all Germans maintain an arm's- length distance while communicating. Everything comes down to individuals, specific situations and contexts. Please keep this in mind and, if necessary, refer to the tips in this handbook's introduction regarding how to deal with heated debates and conflicts.

13.3 Cultural traits: Individualism versus collectivism

Collectivism in a culture entails a strong orientation towards the expectations and needs of the group. **Tolerability** and **adaptability** are key components of collectivism. **Empathy**, **respect, humility** and **loyalty** are all elements of this cultural attribute. Collectivism is also characterised by a tendency towards indirect communication, as the 'I' defines itself through the 'we'. Individuals in collectivist societies are closely interconnected. Humans are integrated into a 'we' **group** from birth. The **'collective'** can be a family, a religious community or a neighbourhood. The group protects individual members and demands loyalty to the group at all times. Collective interests take priority over individual interests; members who deviate from the group norm can be collectively sanctioned.

Individualism in a culture entails a strong orientation towards individual **expectations, interests, desires** and ideas about life. **Internal harmony** is more important than group harmony. Emphasis is placed on **self-determination,** freedom, uniqueness and self-esteem. Direct communication is viewed as superior to indirect communication. The 'I' is in the foreground. In individualist societies, individuals are not committed to one another unless they want to be. People are only expected to take care of themselves and their immediate family.

People with stronger individualistic imprints value **autonomy** and **personal development.** Therefore, self-valorisation plays a greater role in individualist societies than absolute commitment to the collective. It is assumed in such societies that all people can achieve something substantial through individual effort. The pursuit of **self-realisation** is the guiding force in life. Thus, in contrast to collectivist cultures, in which people often sacrifice their own well-being for that of the group, people in individualist cultures are more likely to put their own well-being above that of the group. Individualist cultures expect **independence** rather than interdependence. Germany is generally considered to possess an individualist orientation.

The resultant focus on performance is evident not only in professional contexts but also in the German **education system.** Early on, at the age of 10, the school system separates children into different types of schools, which determine the career paths in the future. People from individualist cultures often 'live in order to work' and draw a lot of **self-esteem** from their tasks.

In strongly **collectivist** societies, individual behaviours are viewed as impacting the collective. For example, the disgraceful behaviour of a single family member can be seen as damaging to the **honour** of an entire family. This can result in all of the family members drawing back from the one with whom they had previously been close. The family member in question may lose the trust of the community and face social isolation.

Such a dynamic does not exist in **individualist** societies. 'Shameful' acts generally taint only the individual who committed said act – not the family of that individual. This also stems from the fact that public opinion is less important in individualist societies, as individuals are less reliant on others. They are generally **freer** and **more independent,** able to make their own decisions.

One study[1] on decision-making found that people with higher levels of collectivism tend to be more **dependent** on others and less likely to betray members of their group, while people with higher levels of individualism tend to be more **rational.** This dynamic can be also found in the process of **opinion formulation.** People in collectivist societies tend to align their opinions with that of the collective; they are less likely to express extreme views that deviate from the norm. Opinions in individualist societies are more **heterogeneous.**

Optional reflection exercise

Duration: 25 minutes

Goal: This exercise should make the participants reflect on their own cultural imprint and enable them to anticipate potential moments of irritation.

Method: Divide the participants into three smaller groups and let them discuss the questions below for **15 minutes.** Next, bring them back to the plenary to share their discussion highlights for **5 minutes.** Write down the main points on a flipchart.

Questions

➔ Where can you see collectivistic traits and where can you see individualistic traits in the cultural context of your country of origin?

➔ Is there a tendency towards one or the other?

➔ What are some sunny (positive) sides and cloudy (negative) sides of both collectivistic and individualistic tendencies?

Back in the plenary

Open the link below and select the 'individualism' dimension from the left-side drop-down menu. Compare the coloration of the globe relative to the individualistic imprint on the globe for another **5 minutes**.

➔ **www.geerthofstede.com/hofstedes-globe**

[1] www.researchgate.net/publication/276042888_Culture_Matters_Individualism_vs_Collectivism_in_Conflict_Decision-Making
[accessed on 10.03.2022]

13.4 Cultural traits: Hierarchy versus heterarchy   ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

Hierarchy is the dimension of order that delineates the relative importance of individuals. Hierarchy orders groups, regula-ting their **functions** and **responsibilities** in line with their status. It is also a measure with which to define work structures. Highly hierarchical societies are correlated with a higher degree of **interdependence.** That which dictates status varies by culture and context. In some societies, it is origin or inheritance; in others, it is knowledge, competence, wealth or power. Status is 'glued' to people, meaning it rarely changes and generally only does so over long periods of time.

Heterarchy describes a more equal group structure. Through heterarchy, functions and responsibilities are determined equally by **competence,** meaning that performance and outcome are what structure society. Status is **dynamic,** meaning it can change quickly. Thus, people in heterarchical cultures tend to be **ambitious** and **competitive.** It is important to note that, even in heterarchical and egalitarian systems, there may be hierarchical structures. However, these are usually not as pronounced as in strongly hierarchical societies. In hierarchically structured organisations in heterarchical societies, for example, responsibilities are **distributed** among employees instead of resting solely on the shoulders of the highest super-visor. In these societies, however, supervisors tend to interact with lower employees at eye level. Highly decentralised and supported by a strong middle class, Germany is generally classified as a heterarchical society. Direct and participative com-munication and meeting styles are common, control is unpopular, and **leadership** is best accepted when it is demonstrated through **competence.** This means that hierarchies that do exist in Germany tend to be relatively **flat.**

Closely related to the cultural characteristics of hierarchy and heterarchy are the concepts of **respect** and **care.** A hierar-chical orientation is evident, for example, in the very high respect held for older people. Older people in the Middle East, for example, are kissed on the hand during festivities as a sign of respect for their age and wisdom. This tends to result in greater distance from – but higher esteem for – the higher-ups. This is also evident in relationships between employers and employees and those between parents and children. To demonstrate respect and esteem, people in the Middle East or Asia for example tend to speak particularly politely to people of higher rank. This is because higher-ranking persons serve **role-model** and **caretaker** functions; in exchange for the respect they receive, they offer care to subordinate persons.

In the past, in Germany (as in most cultures), men were viewed as the caretaker of the family – the head of the household – but this dynamic has changed significantly. Gender no longer determines familial roles the way it once had. Women are **equal** and can decide for themselves how they want to contribute to their household. Children are now viewed as individuals with their own rights who, instead of being oppressed, should have their development supported. There should be **mutual respect** among all family members.

Notably, the concepts of respect and care tend to be less pronounced in Germany, potentially leading to **misinterpretations** of an overdone politeness towards elders and superiors. The extremely polite manner of communication could be interpre-ted as 'sucking up' rather than as a sign of respect. Nevertheless, respect and trust play an important role in Germany. The transparent exchange of information and direct communication between employees and employers are strongly valued.

Optional group exercise:
Dealing with a problem at the workplace

Goal: The participants should understand that trust and respect play a massive role at the workplace in Germany. These two factors help companies avoid failures stemming from not receiving critical information from below.

Method: Divide the participants into smaller groups of 3–4 participants. Give the participants **10 minutes** to discuss the questions below among themselves. Next, bring the groups back to the plenary to present 2–3 highlights from their discussion for **10 minutes.**

Questions

➔ Imagine you have a problem with your computer at work and, as a result, you won't be able to finish your task by the deadline. How do you deal with the problem? What is your next step?

Implementation of the exercise

Give the groups three different courses of action and let them discuss them.

➔ **Option A:** You don't say anything and hope that no one will notice that you were late on completing your task, meaning there will be no consequences.

➔ **Option B:** You go straight to your boss and tell them about the issue.

➔ **Option C:** You ask a colleague for advice and hope that they can help you.

g **Face-to-face:** Present the questions via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Divide the participants into groups or let them decide their own groups. Assign workspaces for each group and instruct them to write down their thoughts.

w **Online:** Present the questions via PowerPoint and give instructions to the participants. Make sure that the participants have written the question down. Create the necessary number of breakout rooms and allow for **10 minutes** of small-group discussions. Next, let them return to the plenary and share discussion highlights for **10 minutes**.

13.5 Deepening exercise

ESSENTIAL

Irritations at the workplace

BASIC T   Duration: 25 minutes

Goal: To help them get acquainted with various cultural dimensions and see them in context, the participants should create an intercultural situation featuring a misunderstanding that could plausibly arise due to differing cultural habits. The participants should understand that cultural differences can lead to irritation, but that awareness of these differences can lead to a change in perspective. Role-playing is a method of intercultural learning that focuses on exploring foreign cultural behaviour and closely analysing cultural situations. All of the participants should apply their newly acquired transcultural skills to solve the conflict.

Materials / methods

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ As many breakout rooms as necessary

Online

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ Printed dialogue

➜ Groups of two

➜ Enough space for group work

Face-to-face

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Give the groups the dialogue and questions below on printed sheets (make sure that there are enough copies for each participant).

w **Online:** Give the groups the dialogue and questions below in the online chat.

Note: Make sure to not include the answers alongside the questions.

Implementation of the exercise

1. First, divide the participants into pairs (if there is an odd number of participants, one of the groups can have three people). Give all of the groups the dialogue below to introduce the role-playing exercise. The participants can determine who gets which role (Mr Maier or Mr Wu) on their own.

   S **Face-to-face:** Send the pairs to different areas of the room to work on the exercise for **10 minutes.**

   w **Online:** Create the necessary number of breakout rooms with a duration of **10 minutes.**

2. Instruct the groups to engage in the following role-playing exchange:

   Mr Meier: 'Mr. Wu, can you come in on Saturday to check the machines?'

   Mr Wu: 'Yes ... did you know ... Saturday is a special day.'

   Mr Meier: 'How is that?'

   Mr Wu: 'My father will be turning 80.'

   Mr Meier: "Well then, do give him my congratulations.'

   Mr Wu: 'Thank you very much. Thank you very much for understanding.'

3. They should reflect on the cultural misunderstandings that may have occurred here by answering the following questions:

   ➜ What is Mr Meier assuming?

   Answer: Mr Wu will come in on Saturday

   ➜ What has Mr Wu understood?

   Answer: That Mr Maier shows empathy for his situation and doesn't expect him to come to work on Saturday

   ➜ Will Mr Wu come to work on Saturday?

   Answer: No

4. Bring the pairs back to the plenary to share the results of their discussion. The discussion that follows should take no longer than **15 minutes.**

13.6   Conclusion

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➔ Is anything still unclear?

➔ Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➔ Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module? (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

14 Culture Navigator; Cultural Characteristics (Part 2)

Duration

→ Essential: 105 minutes

→ In-Depth: 170 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about:

→ Structure versus impulse

→ Security versus risk

→ Heteronomy versus autonomy

→ One's own imprint

→ Potential moments of irritation

→ Options for action in moments of irritation through alternative interpretations

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Insurance overview

→ Printed list of Germa phrases

→ Flipcharts

Online Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Insurance overview

→ Digital whiteboard

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1. Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2. Optional: Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3. Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4. Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

This module presents the characteristics of structure and impulse orientations as well as the understanding of time, which may vary from culture to culture. Furthermore, it explores affinities for risk in contrast to those for security, exploring differences in how cultures address uncertainty. Finally, it looks at how individuals differ in their degree of heteronomy and autonomy, which has different impacts on self-determination and obedience across different cultures.

Further Sources

Intercultural training methods	➜	www.netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/Fachstelle_IKA/ Publikationen/FS_IKA_Intercultural_Training_with_a_focus_on_migration_' and_asylum_2020.pdf
Geert Hofstede	➜	www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/

Optional group activity

Goal: This introductory task serves to briefly activate and involve the participants, so not much prior knowledge is necessary. However, this acts as an energiser to raise awareness about varying perceptions of time.

Method: Ask the participants to hide any watches or other time-telling devices that they have. Prompt everyone to sit silently in their chairs. Then, tell them to stand up and close their eyes. On you saying 'Go!', each participant must count to **60 seconds** and sit down once they've finished. They can open their eyes once they have sat down. Tell the first and last participants the time they took to sit down, emphasising the variance in their interpretation of **60 seconds**. For online sessions, it is important for all participants to have their cameras turned on so they can observe the others who are still standing once they have sat down. Afterwards, reflect on the results with the group for **3-4 minutes**.

Debriefing

Everyone has different feelings about and understandings of time. Even individuals from the same country vary in this respect, though the differences can be more substantial between people from different countries and cultural groups.

14.1   Introduction

IN-DEPTH   Duration: 5 minutes

This module covers the three remaining cultural trait pairs of the cultural navigator. As shown in the optional warm-up exercise, it focuses on the understanding of time across different cultures, which can be traced back to the discussion on structure versus impulse. Additionally, the module explores the other two cultural dichotomies: risk versus security and heteronomy versus autonomy.
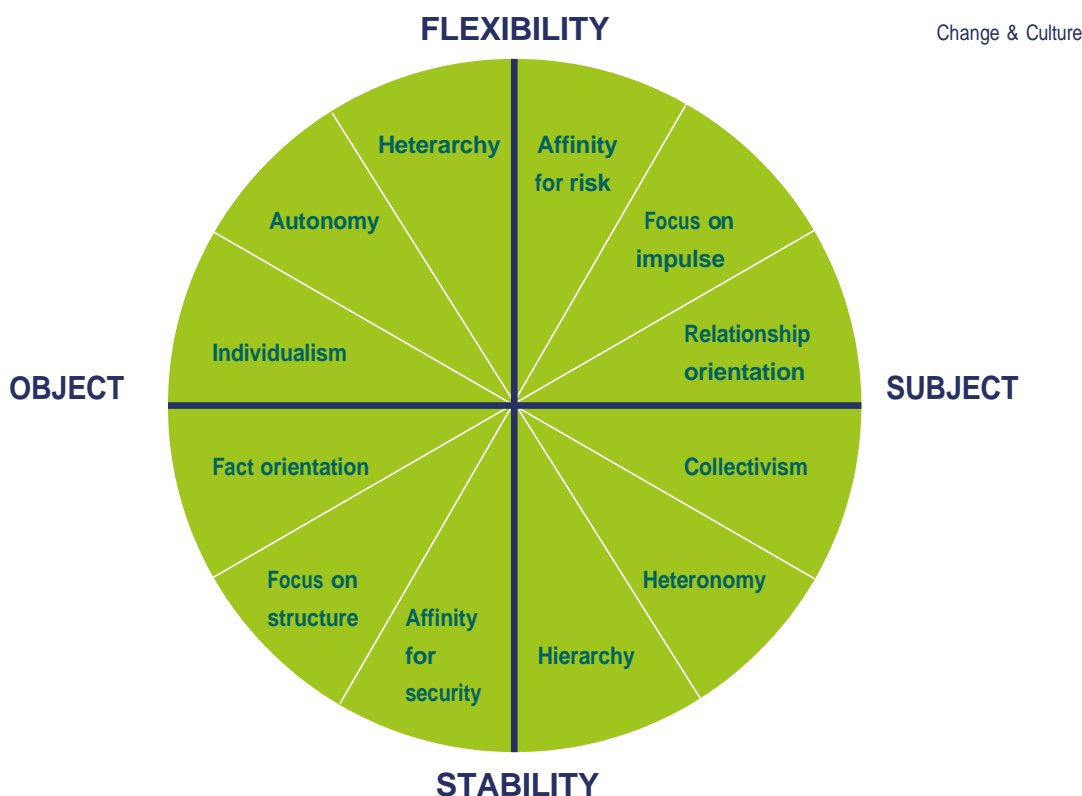

Figure No. 25: Cultural traits in the Culture Navigator

170

14.2   Cultural traits: Structure versus impulse   **ESSENTIAL** Duration: 15 minutes

The understanding of time is an important indicator of whether a culture is more **impulse-oriented** or **structure-oriented.** In cultures in which time plays an important role (e.g., post- industrial societies), the social significance of **punctuality** has risen considerably. **A lack of punctuality** is considered to be impolite; in fact, tardiness that exceeds a certain threshold is often perceived as insulting and disrespectful. Modern, Western societies generally have a **linear, horizontal** conception of time linked closely to the concept of progress. Societies with a horizontal conception of time tend to regiment their time, planning the minutiae of every action. Therefore, they attach great importance to punctuality. They also place a lot of value on 'doing' things; they value productivity and getting things done 'on time'. Structure-oriented cultures also tend to emphasise **long-term effects.** Northern Europe, German-speaking countries, Japan and the United States all possess a **mono-chronic** attitude towards time, meaning that things are done one after another rather than all at once. Time is understood as a finite resource on a linear timeline. Therefore, the expectation is that appointments planned with a specific date and time should be strictly followed. Time is tightly organised; the tardiness of a single component (e.g., a late train, a traffic jam) can jeopardise the success of a schedule.

In Eastern cultures, time tends to be perceived as **cyclical** and **vertical** (e.g., taking place across several simultaneously **coexisting** timelines). Planning in cultures with such an understanding of time is often relatively flexible, meaning that punctuality plays a subordinate role. Individuals in societies with a **polychronic** understanding of time tend to be more impulse-oriented. In interpersonal relationships and communication, effective completion is more important than adherence to a schedule. They perceive time as less tangible, and they value **multi-tasking** and **spontaneity.** Impulse-oriented cultures also tend to emphasise **short-term effects.**

Additionally, impulse-oriented societies tend to feature fewer appointments and plans. People in these societies are generally more open to the chances and challenges that each day may bring without a precise **daily routine.** Events generally do not end in line with an official schedule; they end when those involved would like the event to be over.

The distinction between impulse and structure orientations is also evident, for example, in parenting. In structure-oriented families, children have **fixed schedules.** In structure-oriented families, children have fixed bedtimes; those in impulse-oriented families generally go to bed when they are tired.

Cultures with an **absolute understanding of rules** tend to have fixed **structure** and **order.** In such societies, rules apply to all members regardless of context or status. State rules must be obeyed by all; exceptions to this dynamic constitute threats to the prevailing order and are not socially accepted. Rule violations generally result in the imposition of **sanctions.** Disregarding a red light, for example, is punished with a fine and strongly condemned on a societal level. This dynamic largely stems from the pursuit of **risk minimisation** and the aim to mitigate disruptions and errors.

In contrast, impulse-oriented cultures have a **relative understanding of rules** – one that varies from context to context and person to person. In such societies, rules are perceived as **relative rather than absolute;** rule-making governments are often met with **scepticism.** In these cultural circles, a strict distinction is made between one's own group and other groups. In turn, the protection of one's own group is valued more highly than the universality of general legal rules. For example, when the Covid-19 measures prohibited visiting patients in the hospital, people with a stronger impulse orientation were in conflict, as they felt socially obligated to visit the sick.

German society tends to have a more absolute understanding of rules: they apply to everyone regardless of context. Rules are not 'recommendations'; they should be universally followed.

Group exercise: Transcultural role play

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 25 minutes**

Goal: This role play aims to expand participants' options for action in moments of irritation by enabling alternative inter-pretations. Participants should understand the importance of transcultural competence. This exercise will also activate the participants by letting them reflect on the most recently learned input.

Method: Split the participants into groups of three. Let the group members decide who takes on which roles (one person from Germany, one person from another country, one observer). Each group can decide how the situation develops out of three possible scenarios:

➔   The communication is unsuccessful due to a mutual lack of ambiguity tolerance.

➔   Only one actor shows empathy and understands why the interaction partner reacts with a certain behaviour.

➔   Both parties have high intercultural competence and can resolve the conflict.

Implementation of the exercise:

Scenario: A person from a more impulse-oriented culture and a person from Germany meet in Germany. From the perspec-tive of the person from Germany, the foreigner arrives at the meeting 20 minutes late. In the culture of the foreign person, however, time is less important, and a 20-minute delay is not considered to be late. In Germany, it is considered disrespect-ful to make the person from Germany wait so long.

g   **Face-to-face:** Let the participants form groups of three and make them choose their role- play scenarios. Give them **10 minutes** to play out their scenarios.

w   **Online:** Create as many breakout rooms as necessary. Send a group of three into each room and let them enact their chosen role-play scenario. After **10 minutes**, bring everybody back together.

Once all of the participants are back together, ask for volunteers to perform their play in the plenary. Make sure that each of the three scenarios is performed at least once. Ask the observers about the hindering and success factors behind each inter-action? This part of the exercise should not exceed **15 minutes.**

14.3   Cultural traits: Risk versus security

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 10 minutes**

Risk-oriented individuals have a strong **tolerance for ambiguity** and a strong talent for improvisation. They view new things as positive and often demonstrate a high level of optimism for the future. They are open to searching for new solutions and adapt quickly to evolving situations. In contrast, security-oriented individuals generally perceive risks as **frightening.** They view established things as good, as they have proven themselves to be functional and reliable. They prefer existing solutions and generally lack strong adaptation skills. Accordingly, they tend to avoid change, spontaneity, and unpredictability.

This is evident in Germany, for example, in family planning. In contrast to many other countries, people in Germany typically plan exactly when they want to have children. This is largely due to a desire to avoid starting a family without sufficient fi-nancial resources. In addition, people often decide in advance how many children they want to have. This creates a satisfying sense of security for many people, who tend to live by the motto of 'better safe than sorry'.

The major dividing factor here is whether and to what extent individuals believe that the future can be **predicted and controlled.** This question is answered differently across different cultures and defines numerous patterns of behaviour. Due to Germany's strong affinity for security, there are copious types of insurance available in the country (see Module 9 and Module 11).

Optional group activity

Duration: 15 minutes

Goal: Participants should understand the tendency towards security in German culture, which is evident in the high demand for insurance offers. They should also reflect on the presence of this cultural trait in their culture.

Method: Create an overview of different insurance offers in Germany. You can either use links to different webpages as an illustration tool or create an independent document. After presenting this overview, prompt the participants to share their attitudes towards insurance and discuss which types of insurance they have.

Material

➜ **allaboutberlin.com/guides/insurance**

Questions

➜ Do you think insurance is important? List the most important ones.

➜ What types of insurance do you usually take out in your country?

14.4 Cultural traits: Heteronomy versus autonomy

ESSENTIAL **Duration: 10 minutes**

Heteronomy describes a dynamic in which individuals believe that the cause of certain developments is external. It asserts that more influence can be found outside of one's own control than within it. This dynamic can result in a low capacity for self-control, as there is always something bigger with more control over oneself. This dynamic is common in hierarchical structures, in which there is almost always someone above you with more power.

Autonomy, on the other hand, constitutes a **self-determined** approach to tasks and results. Individuals set and pursue their own goals. Its main approach can be boiled down to 'acting on one's own initiative'. Autonomous working relationships are characterised by a high degree of **self-direction. Self-initiative** drives thought processes and ensures success in the interaction between employees and other social actors.

Closely linked to the cultural dichotomy of heteronomy versus autonomy is that of **guilt** versus **shame.** Individuals feel shame when their behaviour is sanctioned by their own group. There exists a fear of being placed in an inferior position within the group or even exclusion from the group due to a transgression of the norm. Shame is always linked to a desire for **belonging.** In a sense, social groups constitute control mechanisms. Guilt is less important in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. While the mechanism of **social control** in collectivist cultures is that of shame, the feeling of guilt is more pronounced in individualist cultures, as it is less dependent on group membership therefore shame is less important. If an individual violates norms, they fear punishment more than they do being given a subordinate position within the group. German society is oriented towards **rules** and **laws,** meaning that people tend to feel guilt rather than shame.

Optional reflection exercise

Goal: The participants should understand that cultural traits are often deeply rooted and are not always obvious (iceberg model). Thus, proverb analysis helps to explore specific cultural characteristics in a more implicit way.

Method: Share the sayings below (left column) with the participants. Let them discuss the meanings of the saying ins groups of 3-4. The groups should reflect on the cultural traits that they can implicitly identify in the phrases. After **10 minutes**, share the true meanings of the phrases with each group. Next, prompt them to think about sayings in their own culture and discuss whether they can be associated with certain cultural characteristics. Give them **10 minutes** for this portion of the exercise.

Questions

➔   What might these German sayings mean?

➔   Can you think of any proverbs from your own country that might give some information regarding cultural tendencies in your own culture?

GERMAN SAYING	Meaning
Caution is the mother of a porcelain box.	One should be careful (security)
Hard shell; soft core.	Tough on the surface but, in truth, good- natured and kind (fact orientation)
Service is service, and schnapps is schnapps.	Separation between personal and professional lives (fact orientation)
Order is half of life.	Structure and organisation are important (structure orientation)
Too many cooks spoil the broth.	If too many people take care of one thing at the same time, nothing good comes out of it (structure orientation; one thing at a time)
Apprenticeship years are not master years.	During apprenticeship, one must obey and do menial work (structure orientation; hierarchy)
Those who want to become masters practise early.	One should start learning early to achieve success (discipline; performance orientation).
Brevity is the spice of life.	It is better to focus on what is important rather than dwell on every little detail (objectivity; directness).
Punctuality is the politeness of kings.	Punctuality is important
Age is no excuse for folly.	Age does not protect people from folly. Even old and experienced people can make mistakes (heterarchy; equality)
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.	It is better to take something that is tangible than to take something more valuable but uncertain (security).
Honesty is the best policy.	Honesty is important (direct communication; fact orientation)
Misfortune seldom comes alone.	Unwanted events often occur at the same time (uncertainty avoidance).

**Figure No. 26:** German sayings and their meaning (Table)

14.5   Summary

The culture navigator serves as a helpful tool with which to assess and consider individual cultural dimensions and standards. Of course, it remains a purely theoretical concept – an attempt to offer orientation based on cultural understanding. Therefore, it is very important to keep in mind that we are dealing with the description of concepts that may be valid for a particular group of people with similar individual imprints. We must recall that working with cultural concepts is dangerous, as it can give way to **'labelling'** people and cementing existing **stereotypes** and **biases.** At the same time, however, this method enables us to **identify** differences between peoples and discuss whether and in what form they should be taken into account in everyday life. Models such as the culture navigator can provide orientation. Still, we must always assess individuals with openness and curiosity, keeping in mind that they may not display the traits associated with the culture that surrounds them.

Optional group activity

Duration: 15 minutes

Goal: Since all dimensions of the culture navigator have been explained at this point, this activity serves to activate the participants and let them reflect on their new knowledge. It summarises most of the predominant German cultural characteristics.

Method: Ask the question below and let the participants discuss their thoughts in smaller groups. After **10 minutes,** collect the results in the plenary for about **5 minutes.** Most of the aspects from the circle below should be named.
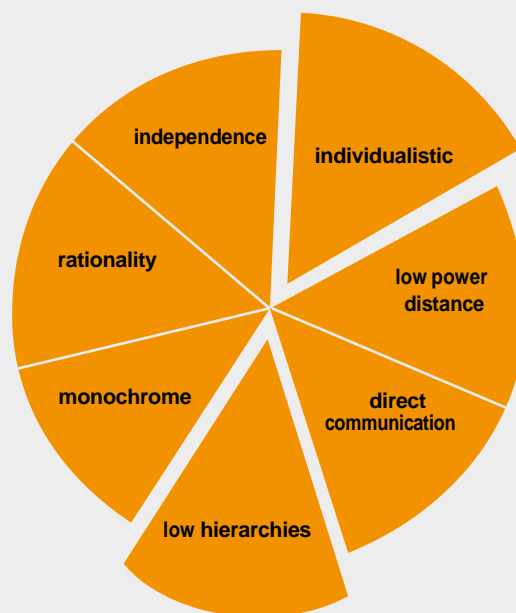
Figure No. 27: Predominant German cultural characteristics

Question

➔   What are some of the most predominant German cultural characteristics?

Caution: This exercise is not intended to paint a static picture of German society. Like all cultural concepts, it only depicts tendencies in German culture. Please keep this in mind; if necessary, refer to the tips in this handbook's introduction regarding how to deal with heated conflicts or debates.

14.6 Deepening exercise

Who am I?

ADVANCED A **Duration: 40 minutes**

Goal: This deepening reflection exercise serves to increase the participants' understanding of the concept of identity and enhance their self-awareness. By reflecting on their own cultural imprint, the participants should develop a deeper understanding of and respect for 'otherness'.

Materials / methods

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ Digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Mural)

Online

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ Coloured pens and markers

➜ One flipchart sheet per person

Face-to-face

Preparation

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare the necessary number of flipchart sheets – one for each person. Provide the group with enough pens, markers and paper sheets of different colours.

w **Online:** Prepare a whiteboard and digital post-its in different colours.

Implementation of the exercise

1. Ask the participants to reflect individually on what is interesting or important to know about their culture and the way in which they identify with it. Help them to brainstorm by offering up some general categories: family role, religion, work/study, relationships, workplace responsibilities, hobbies, passions, sport, festivals, general likes and dislikes and anything else that you can think of.

2. Explain to the participants that they are going to find out how much they have in common with one another. Explain that the first step is for each of them to draw a representation of their cultural identity. They should think of themselves like stars, with aspects of their identity radiating out into their society. Ask people to consider about 10 of the most important aspects of their identity when drawing their 'personal star'. This portion of the exercise should take about **15 minutes.**

   g **Face-to-face:** Distribute flipchart sheets and pens, with which the participants can illustrate their identity.

   w **Online:** Instruct the participants to make their illustration using the digital whiteboard.

3. Instruct the participants to compare their stars. When they find someone else with whom they share a ray of light, they should write that person's name near the ray. Allow **10 minutes** for this portion of the exercise

4. Bring the participants back to the plenary to discuss their experiences. Ask them to highlight identity traits that they shared with others in the group. Finally, ask them to discuss how some of their identity traits may relate to certain elements of German culture. This portion of the exercise should take about **15 minutes.**

14.7 Conclusion

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➜   Is anything still unclear?

➜   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➜   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module? (If

➜   participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

15 Interacting with People and Resolving Conflicts

Duration

→ Essential: 125 minutes

→ In-Depth: 190 minutes

Goals

Participants Learning about:

→ Ways to build a social environment in Germany

→ Ways to deal with conflicts; the potential productivity of conflicts and irritations

→ The feedback culture in Germany and non-violent communication

→ Stereotypes and prejudice and how to reduce them

Material

Face-to-face Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Flipchart

→ Role-playing video

Online Training

→ Presentation with input

→ Digital whiteboard

→ Role-playing video

Table of contents

. . . .

Procedure

Recommended structure for the essential content

1.   Give the input on the **essential** content sections in the given order (using a PowerPoint presentation)
2.   Optional: Implement the group activities or reflection exercises within the module
3.   Conduct the group exercise marked as **essential**
4.   Conduct the deepening exercise at the end to close the session

If you would like to work through this module in greater depth,
employ the **in-depth** content sections and optional exercises

Summary

This module covers ways to establish contacts in Germany and shows what to expect (both privately and professionally) in terms of general behaviour. Beyond direct communication and the German feedback culture, this module looks at how to deal with the direct style of communication. It focuses on conflicts and potential solutions to these conflicts. This module also covers how stereotypes and prejudice arise and how they can be mitigated.

Further Sources

Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency   ➔   www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/EN/homepage/homepage-node.html
Each one teach one   ➔   www.eoto-archiv.de/ueber-uns/#verein
Amadeu Antonio Foundation   ➔   www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/en
Non-violent communication   ➔   www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0

Optional group activity

Goal: The participants should reflect on the differences between socialising with Germans and socialising with people from their country of origin.

Method: Pose the questions below and let the participants discuss their thoughts in the plenary for **5 minutes**.

Questions

➔ What are the advantages of socialising with people from Germany?

➔ What are some advantages of socialising with people from your country of origin?

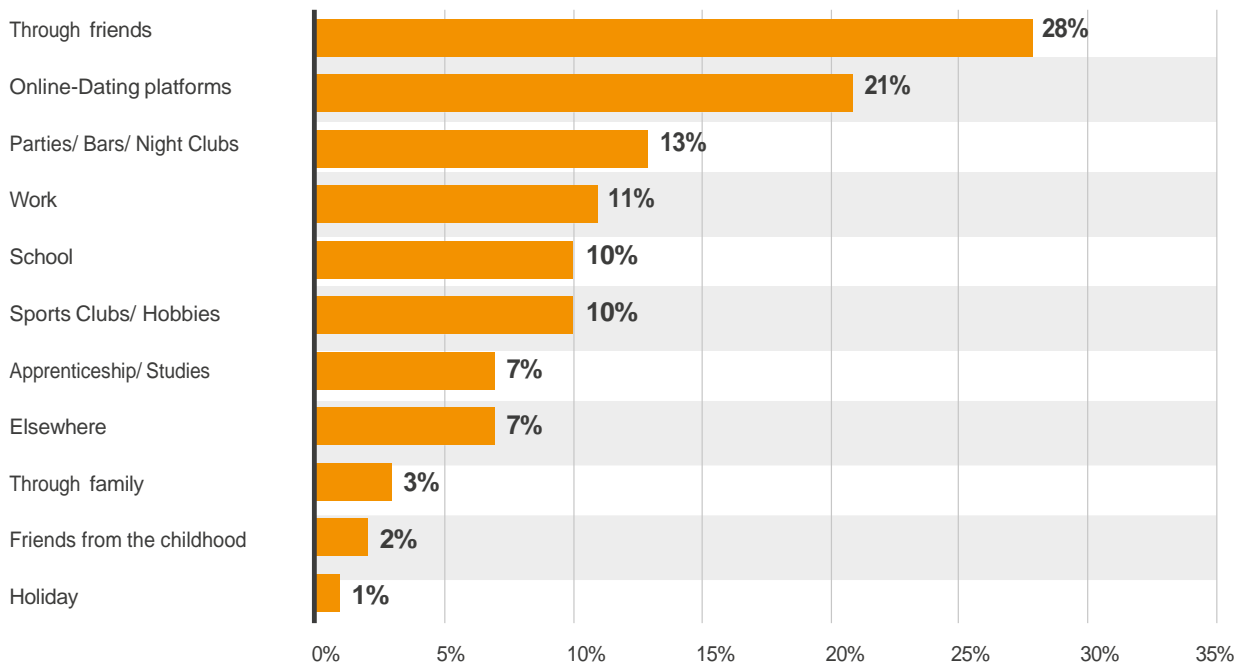## 15.1 Establishing contacts, friendships and romantic relationships

ESSENTIAL Duration: 10 minutes

As explained in Module 13, individualist societies like Germany are characterised by **looser, less binding** social ties. Since, in more individualist cultures, the focus is on taking care of oneself and **one's nuclear family**, German people tend to have fewer friendships; however, the friendships that they do have are often quite close. German individualism also means that a lot of value is placed on **performance and the achievement of goals** – especially in professional contexts – and they often take **priority over relationships**. As a result, shared tasks can be completed without individuals needing to know each other on a deep personal level. Worth noting is that, in professional contexts, German people rarely make friends with colleagues. While friendships can develop in the workplace, the order is usually as follows: first, you work together on a professional level; then, a close relationship develops.

New acquaintances usually maintain a degree of **formality early in the relationship.** Until the COVID-19 pandemic, it was common to shake hands when introducing yourself to others. Now Germans greet each other from a distance without physical contact, sometimes touching each other with their elbows. Once you become a little closer with acquaintances in Germany, it is common to **hug** them when greeting and saying goodbye (however, varies by age and personal preference). Being able to approach someone and actively engage in **'small talk'** is very important in 'breaking the ice' to make social contacts. In Germany, small talk generally centres around **leisure activities, work** or the **weather.** It is important to avoid diving into more intimate subjects, such as family life, as others may perceive this as overly personal. Topics like politics and finances are also to be avoided during small talk.

Friendships can emerge from countless environments and contexts. In addition to the **classic ways** through which friendships are formed (e.g., school, parties, sport [see Module 11]), **social media** and other **apps** that focus on finding new friendships are increasingly common in Germany. Through these apps, you can create a profile featuring your interests and hobbies, and the app searches for like-minded people in your area.

A survey in Germany on where people met their partner from 2021 shows that couples most often meet through **mutual friends.** Just behind mutual friends, however, is **'online dating platforms'.** Especially among younger people, dating apps are frequently used to get to know a partner. The third-most-common place to meet a partner was **'parties/bars/nightclubs.** Finally, worth noting is that it is culturally respected when women make the first move in romantic relationships.

Category	Percentage
Through friends	28%
Online-Dating platforms	21%
Parties/ Bars/ Night Clubs	13%
Work	11%
School	10%
Sports Clubs/ Hobbies	10%
Apprenticeship/ Studies	7%
Elsewhere	7%
Through family	3%
Friends from the childhood	2%
Holiday	1%

Figure No. 28: Survey among Germans on how they met their romantic partner, 2021

➜ Source: **de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1025036/umfrage/ umfrage-in-deutschland-zum-ort-des-kennenlernens-des-partners** [accessed on 09.03.2022]

Note: You should always be careful when using 'typical examples' of behaviour to avoid stereotypical thinking. For example, not all Germans behave in a formal way when they first meet. Everything comes down to individuals, specific situations and contexts.

Optional group activity

Duration: 5 minutes

Goal: The participants should know the most common places to meet new friends and understand relationships in the workplace.

Method: Ask the questions below and let the participants discuss them in the plenary. Collect their answers on a flipchart or digital whiteboard. You can summarise their collected answers at the end and add any necessary information.

Questions

➜ How do people usually make friends or find romantic relationship in your country of origin?

➜ How do these ways compare to those in Germany?

15.2   Feedback culture and non-violent communication
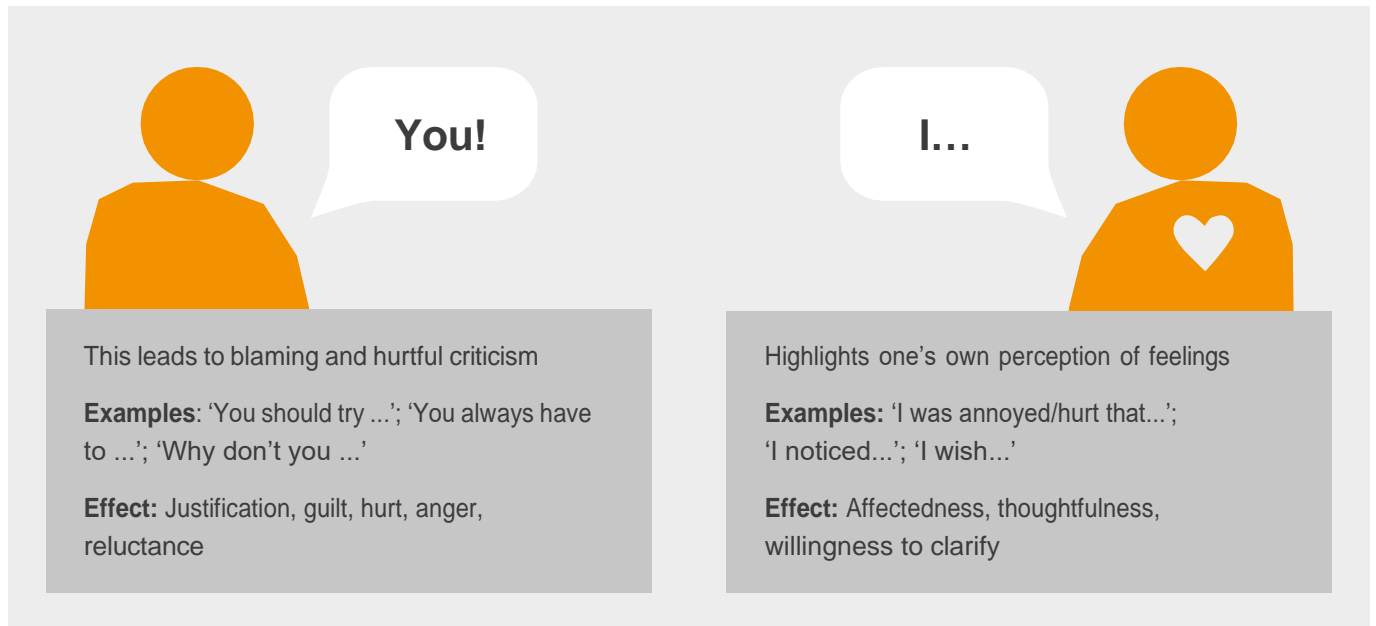
ESSENTIAL   Duration: 20 minutes

In line with the low-context communication theory (see Module 13), German people tend to have a more **straightforward communication style.** Language is often used in a transparent, quick and precise way; saying 'no' when offered food or a drink as well as saying 'no' to a social gathering, for example, is acceptable and usually not questioned.

This manner of direct communication is reflected in the German **feedback culture.** In general, giving feedback in Germany is viewed as positive – something that helps you develop on both personal and professional levels. Feedback is thought to help people discover their **'blind spots'** and gain knowledge about themselves, enabling them to more consciously perceive and influence their spheres of action. Ultimately, it functions as a way to compare your **self-perception** with **others' perception of you,** which promotes mutual understanding and enhances relationships.

Feedback rules to follow when it comes to *giving* feedback:

Note: Let the participants know that the following steps (as well as those later for '*taking* feedback' constitute a model solution. It is totally natural for real-world dialogue to not immediately play out in this manner. Therefore, the participants should view these steps as rough guidelines.

➔   **Positive feedback** promotes performance, creates openness and offers motivation. **Negative feedback** must not be avoided, as it serves to uncover mistakes or problems. However, negative feedback is more readily accepted if it is provided alongside – and usually after – positive feedback.

➔   Feedback should be based on **facts and concrete examples.** Statements must be verifiable. Do not incorporate assumptions, generalisations or rumours into feedback.

➔   Feedback should be **direct,** not communicated via third parties.

➔   Feedback should involve the **participation** of those involved (the people receiving feedback must be allowed to comment)

➔   Feedback should be at **eye level** (not condescending)

➔   Overall, the focus of feedback should be on your own perspective; this can be achieved through the use of **'I' messages.**

You!

This leads to blaming and hurtful criticism

Examples: 'You should try ...'; 'You always have to ...'; 'Why don't you ...'

Effect: Justification, guilt, hurt, anger, reluctance

I...

Highlights one's own perception of feelings

Examples: 'I was annoyed/hurt that...'; 'I noticed...'; 'I wish...'

Effect: Affectedness, thoughtfulness, willingness to clarify

Figure No. 29: 'You' versus 'I' messages

Expressing irritation can be difficult, especially if you are worried about offending someone or starting a conflict. American psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg developed a communication technique – **'non-violent communication'** – that can be used in instances of irritation or discontent.

The core of the technique lies in the realisation that each person is responsible for their own feelings – not those of others. Assuming that there is an unfulfilled need behind each negative emotion, you should understand the real cause of negative feelings and be able to express your needs. Through empathy, you can develop an understanding of other people's feelings and needs. Non-violent communication entails four steps:

1. Share an observation: 'I observed that you haven't greeted me in the last few weeks'

2. Express the feeling that arises within you in account of the behaviour: 'I am sad when you don't greet me'

3. Express the need behind your negative feeling: 'My need is to be seen by you and interact with you'

4. Express your wish – how you would like the situation to be different: 'Can I please ask that you greet me in the mornings when you see me?'

The following video (5:22 minutes) should provide you with a deeper understanding of non-violent communication:

➔   **www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0**

Group exercise: Non-violent communication

ESSENTIAL | **Duration: 30 minutes**

Goal: By prompting the participants to follow the instructions below, this exercise should prompt the participants to reflect on the advantages of 'I' messages. Ultimately, they should learn that 'I' messages allow the receiver to learn something about the needs and feelings of the sender; they have a de-escalating effect, as they avoid blame and hurtful criticism.

Instructions

1. Think of a specific situation and describe the disturbing/difficult behaviour from your own perspective without judging:

   ➜   I noticed that...

   ➜   I observed that...

2. Describe its effects on you or your behaviour:

   ➜   This made me feel...

   ➜   I perceive it as having led to...

3. Expressing one's own feelings/emotions:

   ➜   I feel...

   ➜   This makes me...

4. Expressing one's own wishes:

   ➜   I wish...

   ➜   In similar situations in the future, it would be helpful if...

Implementation of the exercise

1. Ask the participants to recall a specific situation in the past in which they have been unhappy with someone else. If the participants cannot think of anything, you can give them examples: Someone cancels a meeting several times in a row on short notice; someone keeps interrupting you; a colleague at work passes their tasks on to you several times.

   g **Face-to-face:** Prepare a printout of the instructions with sufficient space to complete the sentences. Distribute this printout to the participants and give them **10 minutes** to complete it.

   w **Online:** Present the instructions via PowerPoint and give everyone **10 minutes** to complete the sentences individually, either on paper or in a separate file.

2. Next, ask the participants how they felt about the task and whether they found it difficult. Ask one or two participants to present their sentences before having everybody discuss the advantages of 'I' messages and potential difficulties in implementing them. This part should take no longer than **20 minutes.**

Note: One completed example for the exercise above looks as follows: *I noticed that you were late for the last two team meetings. This upsets me because it causes delays and makes me need to rush to subsequent appointments. I wish for a bit more consideration of my working hours; I would be very happy if we could start the next meeting on time.*

Feedback rules to follow when taking feedback:

➜ Receive the feedback instead of denying it.

➜ Listen to the feedback instead of defending yourself.

➜ Answer with 'yes, and...' rather than 'yes, but...'.

➜ Reflect on the feedback.

➜ Thank whoever is giving you the feedback.

Remember that feedback does not equal objective truth. It is merely a description of how someone else perceives you and your behaviour. Therefore, there is no need to discuss whether the feedback is accurate or incorrect. Instead, try to understand why the person has this impression and whether there is something that you could do differently to improve it.

15.3   Dealing with conflicts and irritations

ESSENTIAL   Duration: 10 minutes

The word **'conflict'** means a clash, collision, fight or argument. According to the conflict researcher Friedrich Glasl, 'a social conflict is an interaction between persons in which at least one person experiences **incompatibilities** in thinking/imagining/ perceiving and/or in feeling and/or in wanting in relation to another person in such a way that he/she is impaired'. A conflict involves at least **two parties** as well as **negative feelings,** such as fear and anger, which drive the conflict.

The causes of conflicts are generally quite complex. In addition to taking place on the **factual level,** which is conscious and visible, they involve the **relational level,** which is largely unconscious and invisible. The factual level includes what we hear, see and say (e.g., words, concrete behaviour), while the relational level includes what we do not hear, do not see and do not say (e.g., experiences, biases, values, intuitions, dreams, attitudes). Conflicts comprise **factual and relational levels.** The separation between problems and people is important, as people tend to mix factual problems with personal elements, drawing incorrect conclusions. To separate these two levels, you must demonstrate an **unprejudiced and appreciative approach** to communication – one based on understanding and trust. Therefore, when discussing a conflict with someone else, you should listen attentively, try to be understanding and paraphrase. Maintain a consistent focus on the interests of both sides. Avoid moral judgement, stereotypical thinking, blaming and demanding.
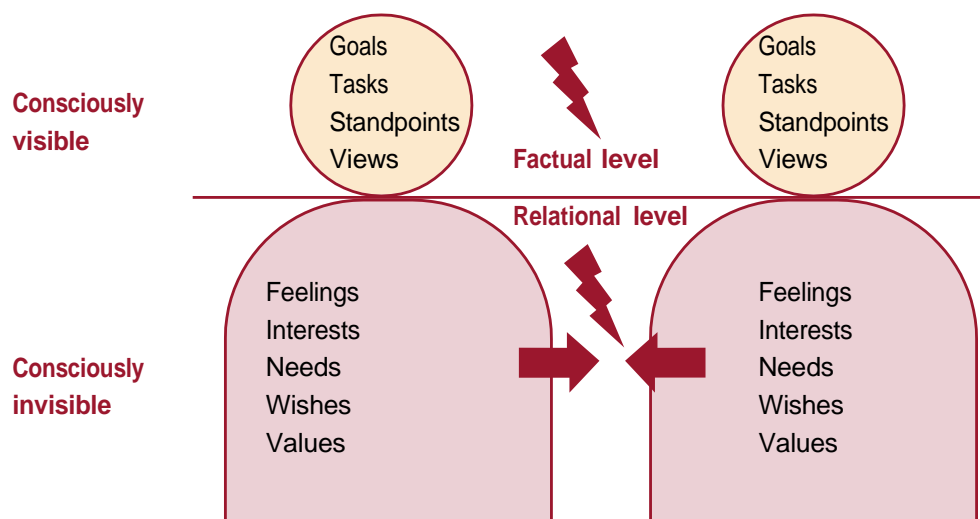
Consciously visible

Goals
Tasks
Standpoints
Views

Factual level

Goals
Tasks
Standpoints
Views

Relational level

Consciously invisible

Feelings
Interests
Needs
Wishes
Values

Feelings
Interests
Needs
Wishes
Values

Figure No. 30: Factual and relational level of conflicts

Optional group exercise: Dealing with conflicts

<div style="float:right">**Duration: 20 minutes**</div>

Goal: The participants should reflect on how they have dealt with conflicts in the past, what they have found difficult in doing so, and what worked well. They should recognise the productivity of conflicts and understand that irritations can constitute opportunities. This exercise serves as a transition to the five steps of conflict resolution mentioned further below.

Method: Divide the participants into pairs and let them interview each other for about **10 minutes** (5 minutes each). Present the questions below that they should use in their interviews. When the time is up, bring the pairs back to the plenary to each present one or two of their findings. This portion should take about **10 minutes**.

Questions

➔   How have you learned to deal with conflicts so far?

➔   What is helpful in dealing with conflicts?

➔   What is not?

➔   What kind of opportunities do conflicts or irritations offer?

In line with the **principle of non-violent communication,** you can solve conflicts or irritations using the following five steps:

1.   Describe your perspective or your **observations** as non-judgementally as possible.

2.   Name the **consequences:** what concrete, nameable consequences did the behaviour have on you?

3.   Name your feelings: what **feelings** are triggered within you by the observed behaviour?

4.   Ask how the other person sees the situation. What **alternative perceptions** are available?

5.   Draw conclusions: what are your **wishes** for the future? What **concrete steps** should be taken?

Note: Conflicts can also arise when people's fundamental rights are not respected. If the core of the conflict is discrimination based on any of the types of differences discussed in the next section, it is not a conflict in the classical sense – it is a violation of fundamental rights.

15.4   Discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice

<div style="float:right">**ESSENTIAL** **Duration: 15 minutes**</div>

Discrimination can occur in a wide variety of contexts. These can be based, for example, on racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism or age (see Module 5). Discrimination can be **direct** or **indirect, conscious** or **unconscious.** Instances of discrimination are based on social **categorisations** – people being assigned to specific groups. On the one hand, such categorisation can simplify complexity. On the other hand, it can create **stereotypes** and **prejudice.**

Stereotypes are used to characterise objects, people or groups. **Prejudice** is when judgements are made about something without prior knowledge or experience. Both serve the purpose of reducing complexity – of making the world seem more manageable. They relieve our everyday consciousness, lessening the burden of needing to evaluate and interpret every individual as an individual. Evidently, stereotypes and prejudice perform individual and social functions. However, they also result in people making **unconscious conclusions** about people whom they may not even know. Stereotypes about Germans usually include the following adjectives: orderly, strict, obedient and serious.

Stereotypes constitute generalised fixed ideas. If these simplistic ideas are not constantly revisited and reconsidered, prejudice arises. Unlike stereotypes, prejudice is **accompanied by emotion** and bears a **judgemental** component. In the case of prejudice, stereotypes are linked to judgements that control perception, behaviour and interpretation. Prejudice is **resistant to information** – the more entrenched that prejudice is, the more it is accompanied by emotion. Whom or what prejudice and stereotypes are directed at depends on **historical experience, socialisation, geographical location** and other factors. Evaluations of facts, people and groups can evolve alongside social conditions.

One might assume that exposure to different cultures and ethnic backgrounds would automatically result in a decrease in prejudice and stereotypes. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Social contact alone does not improve relations among different groups. Such improvement requires the will to learn about individuals with an open mind. Since it is impossible to prevent the emergence of stereotypes, it is crucial to learn how to deal with stereotypes to prevent them from reinforcing prejudice. Therefore, conscious confrontation is important in order to **relativise stereotypes** and **revise prejudice**.

Share the following link with information on how to deal with discrimination with the participants

➔ **www.handbookgermany.de/en/rights-laws/discrimination.html.**

Note: Make sure that the participants know that, while Germany is a tolerant and open society overall, discrimination can still occur. Tell them that if they experience discrimination while in Germany, they can turn to counselling centres (e.g., anti-discrimination centres), where they can seek professional assistance free of charge. Still, this module aims to make the participants aware of their own potential stereotypes and prejudice to ensure that they can avoid crossing any personal lines in interpersonal communication while in Germany.

15.5   Sensitive and controversial topics

IN-DEPTH   **Duration: 5 minutes**

In Germany, sensitive and controversial topics that are usually not discussed openly without a foundation of trust include the following:

➔   Salary and wealth

➔   Sexual orientation

➔   Political views

➔   What family members did during World War II

➔   Patriotism/national pride[1]

Make sure to avoid these topics during the early stages of new relationships. Once a degree of trust is established in the relationship, you can slowly begin to incorporate these topics into conversation.

---

[1] Due to German history, many Germans are reserved in this respect. It is quite uncommon for someone to have a German flag hanging in their home. However, some conservative individuals deliberately boast a nationalist attitude and demonstrate patriotism.

15.6 Deepening exercise

Cultural role-playing exercise

BASIC T Duration: 35 minutes

Goal: This exercise enables participants to practise their perception skills. They should reflect on the fact that observations always include interpretations stemming from cultural socialisation and an 'inner map'. They should also contemplate their own stereotypes and biases, expanding their ability to consider alternative interpretations. This exercise is designed to encourage the participants to question their held stereotypes and mitigate prejudice by offering a greater distinction between observation and evaluation. It encourages shifts in perspective, which are crucial to resolving conflicts.

Link to video (5:27): **www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuOhM4woG-U**

Materials / methods

➜ PPT with instructions

➜ YouTube video

➜ Digital whiteboard

Online

➜ YouTube video

➜ Flipchart

Face-to-face

Preparation

Incorporate the YouTube link into your PowerPoint presentation.

g **Face-to-face:** Prepare a flipchart with three empty columns.

w **Online:** Prepare a digital whiteboard with three empty columns.

Implementation of the exercise:

1. Show the participants the YouTube video (play from the 1:50 mark until the end), prompting them to observe the behaviour of the man and the woman portraying a fictional cultural group known as the 'Albatross'. Ask them to think about the feelings and images that these observations trigger for them. This portion of the exercise should take about **5 minutes.**

2. After the video, ask the participants to describe what they observed without evaluating it. This task is difficult, as people generally inadvertently include interpretations when describing their observations. Thus, the participants should think about neutral ways to describe the situation. Still, each answer is still valid; you should write down each response on the flipchart or digital whiteboard in one of the three columns – but without – 'observation', 'interpretation' and 'evaluation', which will follow in the end. This exercise is a good opportunity for you to practice dividing the answers, which becomes easier with time.) Allow **15 minutes** for this portion of the exercise.

3. After collecting all of the contributions, read out the following debrief on the Albatross culture: 'In the Albatross culture, the ground is considered holy. In the social hierarchy, women rank above men. Therefore, only women are allowed to touch the holy ground barefoot. The women are considered holy, too. The men must not touch what comes from the ground. Therefore, the men are fed by the women, as only the women may touch the food and the water. The woman kneels beside the leader because she is the only one allowed to be in contact with the holy ground The bending of the heads was a sign of gratitude – in this way, men can be closer to the holy ground by touching the women.'

4. The participants should take another look at the collected results and discuss what they notice about how they are divided. They should consider not only what they have observed, but also what they have assumed. At this point, you should reveal the three headings for the columns. Follow this up by encouraging the participants to reflect on the observations that led to the interpretations and evaluations. This portion of the exercise should take about **15 minutes**.

15.7 Conclusion

ESSENTIAL Duration: 5 minutes

Give a brief summary (see 'summary' section at the beginning of the module), emphasising the most important things that the participants have learned. Afterwards, give them the opportunity to ask questions with some of the following prompts:

➔   Is anything still unclear?

➔   Is there anything that you would like to point out?

➔   Is there anything else that you would like to know that pertains to this module? (If participants express further interest, you can prepare additional materials and share them with the group).

Imprint