

# **Welcome Guide**

**From Refugees for Refugees**

# Contents

1. ARRIVAL.....	2
1.1 What to do when one lands in Germany to seek asylum.....	2
1.2 On your way to the registration center.....	2
1.3 Why it is important to go to the registration center.....	2
1.4 Consequences for not going to the registration center.....	2
1.5 What to do when you are at the registration center.....	3
<b>2 WHAT TO DO AFTER REGISTRATION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 If you want to go out of the reception center for a walk around or shopping.....	3
2.2 When you are going out.....	3
2.3 When shopping at the supermarket.....	4
<b>3 AT YOUR PERMANENT ACCOMODATION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Upon your arrival at the community that you are transferred to.....	4
3.2 What the living house comprises of and how to take care of them.....	4
i. Kitchen.....	5
ii. Bathrooms and Toilets.....	5
iii. Rooms.....	5
<b>4 WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SICK/ILL.....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 THE KRANKSCHEIN.....	6
4.2 THE AOK CARD.....	7
<b>5 HOW TO GET INTO THE INTEGRATION COURSES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1 The school system.....	7
5.2 School system for the ages from 6 to 15.....	8
<b>6 HOW TO GET INTEGRATED IN THE COMMUNITIES.....</b>	<b>8</b>
6.1 Transport system.....	9
6.2 Bicycle riders.....	9
6.3 Mobile phone contracts.....	10
6.4 Emergency numbers.....	11
<b>7 RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7.1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>7.2 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>8 WHEN YOU SHOULD/MUST WORK.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## WELCOME GUIDE

### 1. ARRIVALS

To all Asylum seekers coming to seek asylum in Germany, upon arrivals should do the following:

- 1.1 As soon as you step out of the train or any means of transport you use to come to the German state that you wish to seek asylum to, ask for the nearest Police station, the German people are very friendly people; regardless of where you are coming from or the way which you come, they will direct you to the Police. When you are at the police station tell them clearly that you intend to seek asylum. Don't be afraid, the German police are as friendly as the people; they will safely direct you to the nearest registration center for asylum seekers.
- 1.2 On your way to the registration center, please make sure that you have a valid ticket before you board into any local transport vehicles. Ask someone one also to help you, if you don't know how you can get ticket from the Ticket machines or simply how to buy ticket to get to your destination. Please when you are in the train or bus on your way to the registration center, make sure that you pay attention to the stops, or you tell someone by you that I want to drop off at this station, the person will definitely show you.
- 1.3 Why it is important to go to the registration center upon your arrivals; you will be registered and considered a legal immigrant in the country and also your asylum process begins from that point onwards. You will also get some benefits like shelter, clothing, free food, quick medical checkup which is free at the center.
- 1.4 Consequences for not going to the registration center upon your arrivals; if you are caught by the police, you will be automatically considered as an illegal immigrant and you will be sent to prison and also you being at risk of deportation. Never think of going to a friend to spend some time with and later go to the registration center, this is the worst because if you are caught both of you will face the authorities.

1.5 What to do when you are at the registration center; go directly to the officials in charge, declare all your belongings to them. This is very important because at this center so many people are there and you will not be placed in a room alone, so in a case whereby you don't declare your properties to the officials and anything get missing from your properties you will not be able to claim it. This includes certificates and traveling documents as well. Make photos of all your documents, this can serve as reference for you.

## 2. What to do after registration:

You will be assigned to a temporal hall or a room where different people also will be, so you have to be socially minded in the sense that you should be ready to mingle with people from different countries, cultural backgrounds, races and also different religions. You have to be tolerable as Germany is a tolerant country, all their principles based on respect and tolerance.

2.1 If you want to go out of the reception center for a walk around or shopping, make sure that it is known to the officials in charge so that if anything arises in your absence, they will be able to reserve your behalf or will be acknowledged of it. You should note that people are in this center on temporal basis, so transfer to permanent accommodations can be at any time. If you are called and it happens to be that you are not around and the officials in charge too do not know your way about, your name will be omitted from that list. Once you missed that first opportunity to be transferred, it will take you long at the center because there are so many people there waiting to be transferred.

2.2 When you are going out, if you are going to use any of the public transportations please make sure that you have a valid travel ticket. In many German cities there are buses, trams and trains but all go to a particular place and have numbers assigned to them. First ask yourself this, am I going to use bus or train? If it is bus, which number of bus. The same thing as it is in bus applies to tram. If it is train, then which form of train networks... underground train (U-Bahn) or the Sub regional trains (S-Bahn) which run on the surface. After knowing the type of train you want to take, try to find out the right number of train as well that goes to your destination. Always ask people

whenever you are in doubt of something concerning the place you are going to or how to walk through the city. Don't ever go anywhere away from the reception center without having your identification document with; this document is the paper given to you by officials at the registration center. Take a photo of it, but do not use it as a valid document, only as a security back up.

2.3 When shopping at the supermarket, please be very careful because there are lots of things that tend to be opened to public in there but in other sense they are secured, so each and every step you take in there is being monitored. Never follow your mind as you are in there, your mind will be telling you to choose items as you see them but this is not the way, think about the money you have at hand, simple way to do this is that; you should look at the shelves in there as price tags are being pasted on them for each and every items in there. Please no matter how hungry you are; never open any food item in the supermarket to eat, as some people may think as long as they do not go outside with the food. It is all the same; eating the food in there to satisfy your hunger or going out with any other thing without paying for it. If anyone is caught doing this act will be considered as a thief or any form of criminology.

### **3 The following are useful to you when you are transferred to your permanent accommodation:**

3.1 Upon your arrival at the community that you are transferred to, you will find community helpers there called "Helferkreis" Or social workers will be assigned to you. All these people will tell you what to do. Your first task to carry there will be to go to the Municipal building (Rathaus) to register, please do this as soon as possible as it is very important to both the community and you as well. If you did this registration process by yourself, please be kind to the new incoming people by helping them to do their own; regardless of where the person comes from.

3.2 The facilities in the living house must be used wisely and properly. It comprises of the following; a single kitchen, shared bathrooms and toilets, rooms which are meant to be shared by two or more but this varies anyway.

- I. **The Kitchen**, this is normally shared by all the people living in the apartment. That means a care is needed for it uses, Please make sure that you clean the Electric cooker properly after used and also the table(s) you use during the process. The sinks in the kitchen have taps connected through, they contain tiny holes, do not force any solid or hard particle into it as this may cause it blockage. In the process of washing dishes, fill the sink with the amount of water you need by blocking the holes of it with the stopper provided; each and every sink has a lid tied on it, use that lid to do so. When you do so, you have helped to save some energy and wastage of water is also avoided. In disposing waste materials in the Kitchen, you have to be very careful and try to abide by the rules or the directives giving to you. In Germany, all the waste bins are labelled with different colors assigned to them. Put all bio wastes in the right container with label and also applies for the following; Packaging, Rubbish or house dust, Papers, and bottles. Please be careful with bottles, do not try to take any chance to mix a piece of bottle to the other wastes as this can cause serious damage to the sanitary workers during separation of wastes. Kitchen can be a place of social contacts, try to make use of it. May be cooking and sharing food together, commonly taking care for keeping it a cozy place.
- II. **Bathrooms and Toilets**, these are mostly shared, please take good care of them, clean them properly after every use; this is very important for your health and comfort as well. Do not leave taps open; close them tightly as to prevent the leakage of water. Do not leave the heaters in the toilets on, and also switch off the lights before leaving the bathrooms or toilets. Please for smokers avoid smoking in the shared bathrooms and toilets as this may disturb the next person using the facility the same time with you.
- III. **Rooms**, the rooms contain electric heaters for heating purposes, please use the heaters wisely and properly as it may useful to your health. You can switch your heater on for some time and allow your room to be heated, after that switch it off or regulate it to lower medium. The best act is, to put off the heater completely when your required temperature is attained. Never leave your heater switched on and go out for a day long; this could be either going to work, school,

or visiting a friend at another place where you can stay for more than one hour. The same thing applies to the lights in the rooms; please switch all your lights off before leaving your rooms to save energy. The rooms also contain fire alarms which are mostly smoke detectors, please do not remove these alarms as they are very important to you. The act of removing alarms is mostly common to smokers, you should know that those alarms are not only there to detect the smokes coming from your burning cigarettes but also detect fire outbreak from anywhere of the building. As a smoker, you should always use the designated smoking area in your apartment. Abstain from smoking in both the rooms and the kitchen as this may be discomfort for others. Again do all form of cooking in the kitchen, do not put an electric cooker in your rooms; this could be very dangerous to you.

#### 4 What to do if you are ill/sick

All asylum seekers have basic right to medication in Germany. The health system is a very organized one, though it might be complicating for new comers. At the reception centers, there are always doctors who are waiting upon your arrival in Germany to cross examine your health condition. These doctors are normally available three times a week at the reception centers to provide basic medical help and if there are any serious issues relating to your health, they can quickly refer you to a bigger hospital wherein you will receive full treatment until you regain full recovery. You won't pay any charge!

There are also medical facilities provided for asylum seekers at their permanent residents. They can always visit the home doctor for primary first aid treatments for minor illnesses, and in case there is a major issue relating to your health, they will refer you to the bigger hospital in your region or any other hospital that will be able to treat you well.

When visiting the doctor, you must have one of two things that will be used to pay the bills at the hospital. These are the 'krankschein' and the 'AOK card'.

**4.1 THE KRANKSCHEIN:** you will first be using the krankschein at your residential place. You will always need to collect it from the Ladratsamt (Immigration office) in your region for a particular doctor that you need to visit, be it your home or any other doctor.

**Note** that, one must collect the krankschein always from the Ladratsamt before visiting the doctor; although sometimes, in case of emergency or severe illness, you can visit the doctor and collect the krankschein from the Ladratsamt when you are able to do so.

**4.2 THE AOK CARD:** you will get the AOK card after your asylum has been accepted, or when you are one and a half year in the asylum process, or if you start doing a job that will make you earn enough to pay your taxes. With the AOK card, you don't need to visit the Landratsamt all the time before seeing the doctor. You just need to go with your AOK card to the hospital and give it to the reception desk for registration and then you are ready to go see the doctor for treatment.

## 5 How to get into the integration courses

Normally there are volunteers from the community members that will be going to each and every accommodation of Asylum seekers, teaching them basic German language, telling people about the community and also the culture of the people. Please take these classes serious because your integration course starts from this point, attend every classes offered to you. These people (the volunteers) sacrifice their rest time from works to help you; so grab the advantage and speed up your integration purpose. Take note: the more German you learned the better your stands in the community.

**5.1 The school system;** varies in Germany, this depends to the particular German state you are, but the only thing I can tell you is that, Germany is country of hospitality and education for all is their top most priority. So whosoever you are or wherever you are in Germany, you will have a space to fit in their system of career buildings. For example in Bayern, they have an educational program called "professional integration year" (German: Berufsintegrationsjahr", short BIJ) for the ages from 16 to 24. This is the first step to the vocational training processes. The BIJ programs aim at teaching students' basic knowledge and competence and also to improve their German language skills. The BIJ is a two year planned program; the first year is the preparatory class (Vorklasse) in the first year; intensive German and Mathematics are taught including subjects such as Integration, Physical education, Social studies and Basic computer skills .And the 2<sup>nd</sup> year is called BAF Klasse (Berufsschulpflicht Asylbewerber und Flüchtlinge). In this year,



students spend one week in the Vocational school and one week in Internship where they get work experience. The duration of the internship varies and it depends to the company's rule and also the choice of the student. The subjects offered in the first year also continue in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year including general education in subjects such as religion/ethics, and vocational training in a specific profession. A social worker is assigned to the BAF Klasse or the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, which will be responsible for looking for an internship places, sending students' applications and CVs to the relevant companies. With a successful graduation from the BAF-BIJ class, the students get their main school (Hauptschule) Certificate.

**5.2 School system for the ages from 6 to 15:** In Germany, all children aged 6 to 15 have to go to school (compulsory education). If you have children aged 6 - 15, please report your domicile to the local immigration office. The guardians of your accommodation will register your children at the public education authority. You will then receive an invitation for a consulting appointment with the migration advisor at the public education authority by mail. There will usually be a translator to help you.

**6 How to get integrated in the communities:** This mostly depends on the individual's attitudes, there are lots of challenges one faces as a newcomer of a particular place but also the inhabitants of the community you are face the same thing. It is not easy for someone to get use to you just within a short time, you (the foreigner) have to show them that you can be loved and you can also give love in return. Try to break the barrier of fear between you and the community people. Show love, respect, be a good friend, be humble and polite to the community people. The following pieces of advice can be useful to you:

- Learn to always say "Hello" to the people with smile
- Do not grope women, beat their children, or harass homosexual couples
- Do not disturb the peace of the people; disturbing public peace is a crime in Germany.
- Always ask for someone's permission before doing anything to or for the person
- Take care of the goods you got presented, (bicycles...) donators feel disappointed when they see you misusing the property given to you.

- If others do mistake, try to be responsible to correct and improve their mistakes.
- Don't make your friends feel guilty of their mistakes; it is better to help them to improve.
- People who are not agreeing to the politics of granting asylum to refugees are looking for possibilities to expose your mistakes to other people. Do not discuss with them, stay friendly and try not to give reasons for them to put you in guiltiness.
- These people tend to be aggressive, do not react in the same way, they are in a minority so don't fear them.

6.1 Transport system: In Germany there are bus, tram and train networks made available by the public utility company. You have to buy a ticket at ticket vendors either at the stops or inside the busses/trams, tickets are not sold inside trains, that means you have to get your ticket before board into a train and must be validated. The ticket has to be punched. Those who are caught without any valid ticket have to pay a € 60.00 fine. The second time you have to expect a criminal complaint and much higher sentences.

6.2 Bicycle riders: It is important to have a bicycle if you can because it minimizes transportation costs and helps to save your time. But before riding bicycles, please observe the following

important traffic rules for cyclist:

- Always ride on the right side of the road
- Don't ride next to each other, ride one after another
- If available, bicycle paths must be used (also on the right side of the road in direction of the traffic)
- Only children up to the age of 11 are allowed to use footpaths
- Take care of not to get into tram tracks with your wheel

When purchasing a bike or if you are given a bike make sure that the bicycle is equipped with the following items in order to be roadworthy, otherwise you could be fined by police during traffic control:

- Front and rear lights
- Front and rear reflector
- Reflectors in the spokes (2 per wheel)
- Reflectors on the pedals
- Bicycle bell
- Two separate brakes

6.3 Mobile phone contracts: In Germany, there are basically two different kinds of mobile phone contracts:

- Prepaid contract and term contract.

Prepaid contracts do not have a fixed period of agreement, and it is the best form of contract for any beginner in Germany, while in a term contract, there is minimum contract duration (often 24 months). If you do not cancel it, it will automatically extend (often for one more year). If you don't want your contract to extend automatically, you have to denounce, by letter. Mind the deadline! Avoid this form of contract in your first year of stay in Germany because due to your lack of understanding over the contract's rule can involve you into huge losses.

Important points for you to look at when signing a contract:

- How much is the basic fee? Does it increase after a certain period?
- Is there a monthly minimum turnover?
- What is the duration of the contract (e.g. 12 or 24 months)?
- If you don't denounce the contract, it will extend automatically. What is the deadline for denouncing, if you do not want it to extend?
- Is there a fee for setting up the new contract, changing and deactivating an old one?
- What is the time interval for calls and data use (60/1, 10/10)?
- What is the cost per the minute (foreign / same network)?
- What are the costs for a mobile phone with or without contract?
- How much does a data plan cost?
- What are the costs when calling abroad?

If you understand all these points and agreed to them, then you can go ahead to sign the contract.

Note that many Germans think that showing up with the newest model of communication tools, is a sign that you are not really poor. For some of the unwilling people, it is a sign that you are misusing the money you get. So do not show up all the time with your phones, don't speak loudly in public transportation.

6.4 Emergency numbers: Only in the event of an emergency (acute health threat outside of opening hours), you may go to a hospital without a certificate of medical treatment. There, with your BÜMA (the certificate about seeking asylum) or your ID card, you must demonstrate that you are an asylum seeker. Then the cost for the treatment will be billed over to the German Social Welfare Department. Please do not call these numbers without encountering a serious problem. Free emergency phone numbers from all fixed and mobile networks (without any prefix or area code):

-Police 110

-Fire Brigade, rescue service, ambulance

112

the emergency numbers of the phones will also work with an uncharged prepaid card.

Important information to know during an emergency call to 112:

-Who's calling?

-Where did something happen?

-What happened?

-Are there any injured or sick people? If yes, how many? Are they children or adults?

-What kind of injury or disease do they have?

-Always keep calm and speak clearly, so that you can be understood better. Do not end the call. Emergency services / police will end the call when they have all the required information.

## **7 RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION**

Religious and moral education is a big and diverse topic and also very important for anyone moving to a new country. Religious and moral education teaches honorable behavior that is

accepted within society. In Germany, there are so many standards of behaviors in all facets of life. This is very important for every asylum seeker to be aware of in order not to get yourself into trouble or been misled by friends or other people.

### **7.1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

Germany sees the need for moral behavior very important as that is what is believed leads to a peaceful and respectful society. For this reason, German schools do offer religious and moral subjects. Most states in Germany do offer only Christianity related subjects as religious subjects; whilst few of them do offer Islamic subjects and Jewish subjects are sometimes also available in some states upon demand. The Christian religious subjects are not compulsory in German schools; parents can decide whether or not their children should do them. For children that choose not to do Christian related subjects, have ethic subjects to choose from. This is more so important to the knowledge of asylum seekers arriving in Germany every day, because most of them are Muslims and may have the fear of sending their children to schools because of that. As a parent, you have the right to decide which subject(s) your kid can offer in school and it's a must in Germany for all parents to send their children to school.

### **7.2 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE**

The absolute most important topic is tolerance and respect, everybody has the right to live his/her own life, as long as he/she is not hurting the other one with his/her behavior. Most German people are not very religious, you will not see them praying in public or during work day. Religion and public affairs are segregated; the state is not allowed to be in preference to any religion. Law is neutral against religious rules.

#### **EQUALITY OF PEOPLE IN GERMANY**

In Germany, everyone is equal before the law no matter the color, race, religion, sex etc. this means that the same rights you have to say out your opinion or do whatever you feel like doing, the other person has the those same rights. In Germany, you are not allowed to discriminate anyone neither should anyone discriminate you. If you feel discriminated by anyone, you can easily call the police and report the matter instead of taking the law into your hands; that is also not allowed in Germany.

Equality in Germany also means, women just like men are allowed to work and they can do whatever work they wish and are capable of doing. This is particularly important for asylum seekers in Germany, as most of them; this opportunity is not available in their country of

origin. So it is an obligation for men to allow their wives, sisters and daughters to go in search of job. The wives do not even have to ask for allowance, neither do the men.

Equality in Germany also goes with social interactions between men and women. Sometimes women feel uncomfortable when you try talk with them in the trains, pubs, or other relaxation centers. If they ask you to stop, you must stop immediately and if possible distant yourself. In Germany, the niceness of a woman, her dress code or other cute features of her doesn't mean she is looking for a sex partner, so you should not be carried away to keep on pursuing a lady or forcing her to sex. Sexual harassment is something that the whole society in Germany frowned at and something that asylum seekers must highly be careful of.

#### 8 When you should/ must work:

As long as you live in the initial recording Setup, you may not even work. After that, the foreigner's authority decides whether you are allowed to work. So, you must submit an application for a work permit at the Immigration Office. There are certain rules that you need to consider.

-Three months after your message as asylum seekers in Germany (see BüMA) have a "subordinated" access to the labour market. This means that the German Federal employment agency checks, whether it's a / e gives preferential / r worker for the job. In addition, the working conditions are tested. As long as the priority examination takes place, no temporary work is possible.

-No priority check will be made after 15 months. The working conditions are tested but temporary work is possible.

-Only the foreigner's authority decides on the work permit for an in-company training. There is no precedence and no inspection of working conditions by the federal employment agency.

At a tolerance, always the foreigner's authority decides on the work permit. The immigration authorities may impose you an ausländerechtliches work ban.

Consulted Apps:

- ANKOMMEN App
- Integreat App

Authors:

- Ansumane Famah
- Mohamed Allieu Jalloh