

Children with migration background in the German educational system - an analysis of their problems and perspectives

In the period from 1992 to 2006, only 10-11% of migrant children, but 26-28% of German pupils, obtained the graduation certificate from Gymnasium (High or Grammar School), the highest certificate within the German school system.

The "Realschulabschluss", which is the second most desirable certificate in German schools, was obtained by 26-31% of the migrants, but 41-43% of the Germans. However, a high 40-44% of the migrants, but only 22-26% of the German kids finished secondary school with the lowest of all certificates.

The problems of the migrants can also be recognized from the fact that some of them have fallen behind two years in their abilities at the end of primary school (age 10). On the one hand, this can be due to the fact that they were born in other countries and that German is their second language. On the other hand, however, the children of migrants who were born in Germany have problems with the language, too, as many of them do not speak German at home. So they have no chance to learn it properly..

Parents cannot help them with their homework because they cannot read or speak German or they have too many children. Thus they do not have enough time to help them individually.

Some of the parents are not interested in the education of their kids, but some are simply not well enough informed about the education system in Germany.

The German government has developed some plans to help migrants. Mainly, they want to help them to improve their German. Language courses have been set up for children who do not yet attend school. Another help for the kids could be the visit of nursery schools. However, this is not compulsory in Germany and many migrant families refrain from sending their children to kindergartens, which they have to pay for.. There, they could learn the language by playing with other children. Another improvement for the children at school would be if the teachers had a special education. So they could be especially trained to teach the German language to children of foreign origin.

Another improvement would be the introduction of all-day schooling all over Germany. At all-day schools, the teachers could help the kids better with their homework. Thus, they would become better at school, and their German would improve. German politics has refrained from many of these measures, however, due to lack of money. So some schools are becoming more and more creative in improving the situations. For the parents' evenings at school, some schools have hired interpreters, so the parents get better informed about the school system and how they could help their children at home.

All in all, the situation of many young immigrants is still unsatisfactory. Because of the recent lack in apprenticeship places since 1990, many migrants had no chance to get a proper apprenticeship and a job training. For example, in 2005 42% of the 25-34 years old migrants had no occupational qualification. Consequently they have no chances to find work and many end up in financial difficulties. This has also the effect of a higher delinquency rate among young migrants.

To sum up, it is not easy for young people with a migrant background to do well at German schools. However, the recent introduction of measures to help immigrants might improve the situation in the future.