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Area of action "Intercultural interpreting and communication"

Analysis of cantonal reports for 2014

Intercultural interpreting was already supported in the priority programme before cantonal integration programmes were introduced. In the start-up phase of the first CIP period, the aim was to establish or expand intercultural interpreting and communication services and to raise awareness among government officials and migrants. In the first year, the Confederation and the cantons spent a total of around CHF 3.3 million in support for intercultural interpreting and communication.

In many day-to-day scenarios, migrants with limited language skills depend on intercultural interpreting, particularly in health care, social care and education. According to figures provided by the Swiss Association for Intercultural Interpreting (Interpret), intercultural interpreters and communicators worked a total of 215,459 hours in 2014. These figures include data from 16 intercultural interpreting and communication agencies. This amounts to a 14% increase over the figures reported for 2013. (Additional information: Interpret, http://www.interpret.ch/de/service/infothek/statistiken_0-77.html).

Awareness raising among target groups

In addition to providing communication support, emphasis was also placed on providing information about intercultural interpreting and communication services to government officials and migrants. Flyers and brochures were produced making reference to Interpret information materials; websites were created and targeted information events organised. Within the framework of Information and awareness activities, various cantons distributed discount vouchers to established frameworks for intercultural interpreting and communication.

Quality control

In 2014, steps were also taken to ensure the quality of intercultural interpreting and communication services. Individual service agencies worked on their own quality concepts that differ somewhat from the quality criteria established by Interpret. Initial and continuing training is also essential for high-quality service. Examples include Interpret certification or the Federal Diploma of Higher Education in Intercultural Interpreting and Communication. While in some cantons, initial and continuing training modules are offered directly by service agencies themselves, other cantons work with a special institution.

Linguadukt: HEKS interpreting services

How does one interpret responses to the question "will you marry me?" Depending on the cultural origin of the person, the reactions (e.g. silence or walking away) can have very different meanings. Run by Swiss Church Aid (HEKS) in the half-cantons of Basel-Landschaft and Basel-Stadt, the "Linguadukt" interpreting service nicely illustrates intercultural interpreting and communication. When there is a lack of a common language, intercultural interpreting helps people to communicate in complex matters. HEKS' "Linguadukt" interpreting service receives funding from both the half-canton of Basel-Stadt, the Canton of Aargau and the Canton of Solothurn.

Additional information: Swiss Church Aid (HEKS) Linguadukt, <http://linguadukt-basel.heks.ch/>, <http://linguadukt-agso.heks.ch/>