

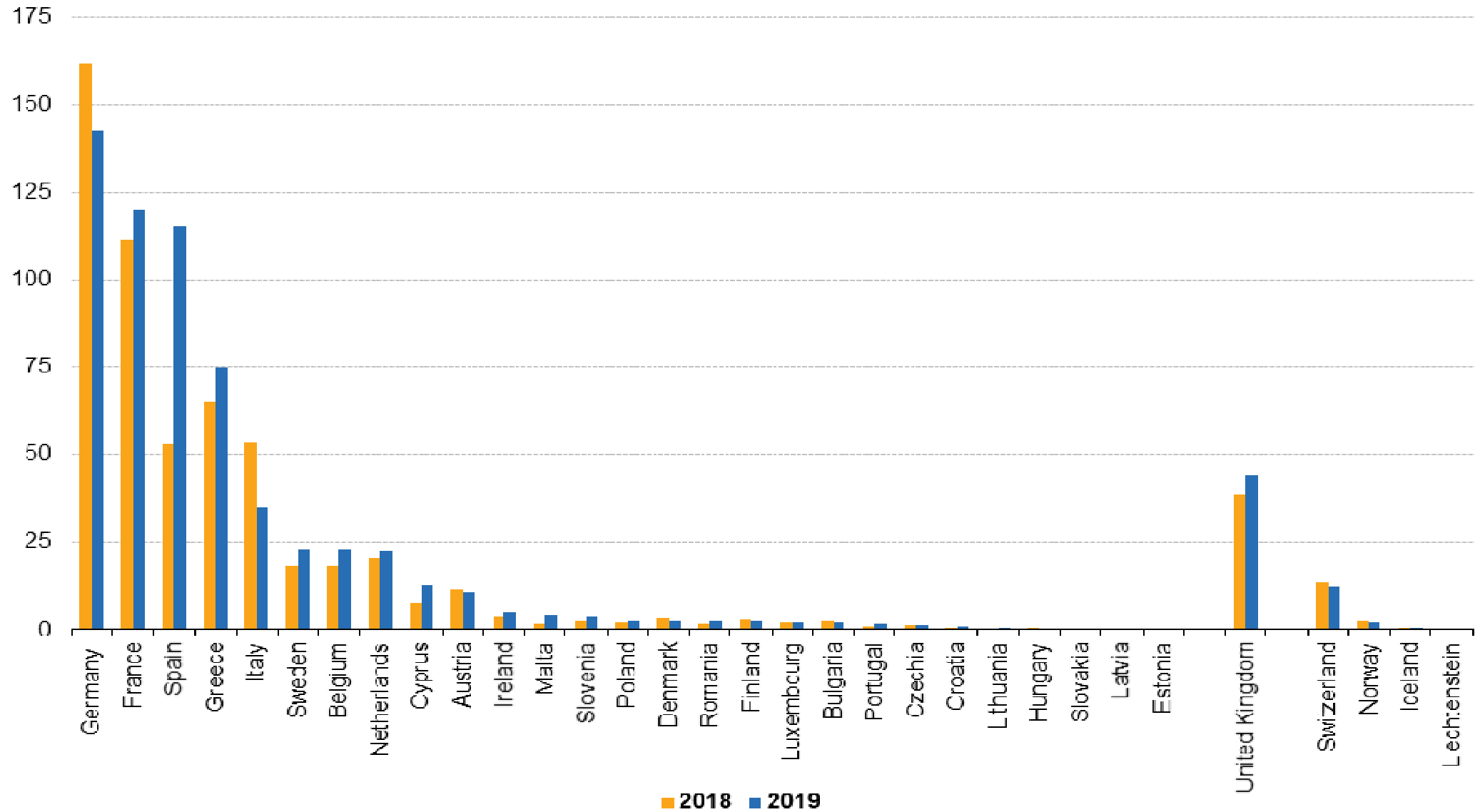
REFUGEES + HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: *SELECTED THEMES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS*

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Number of first-time asylum applicants (non-EU-27 citizens), 2018 and 2019

(thousands)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_asyappctza)

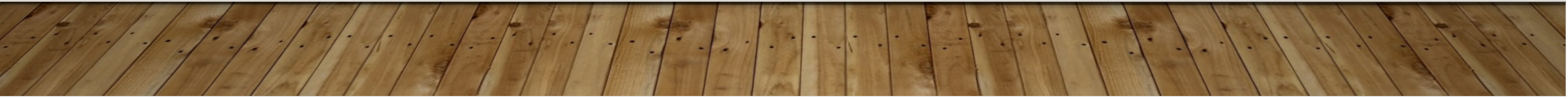
BACKGROUND: A TALE OF TWO RHETORICAL POLES

The rhetoric of many European political leaders in response to the refugee crisis exhibited racialized and xenophobic undertones ...

British Prime Minister David Cameron invoked insects when he warned of a 'swarm' of 'illegal migrants' invading Europe...former Polish Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski warned that Muslim refugees would bring parasites and diseases to the local population (Greenhill, p. 318, 2016)

And yet a welcome culture was simultaneously touted...

Angela Merkel, "Wir Schaffen Das"



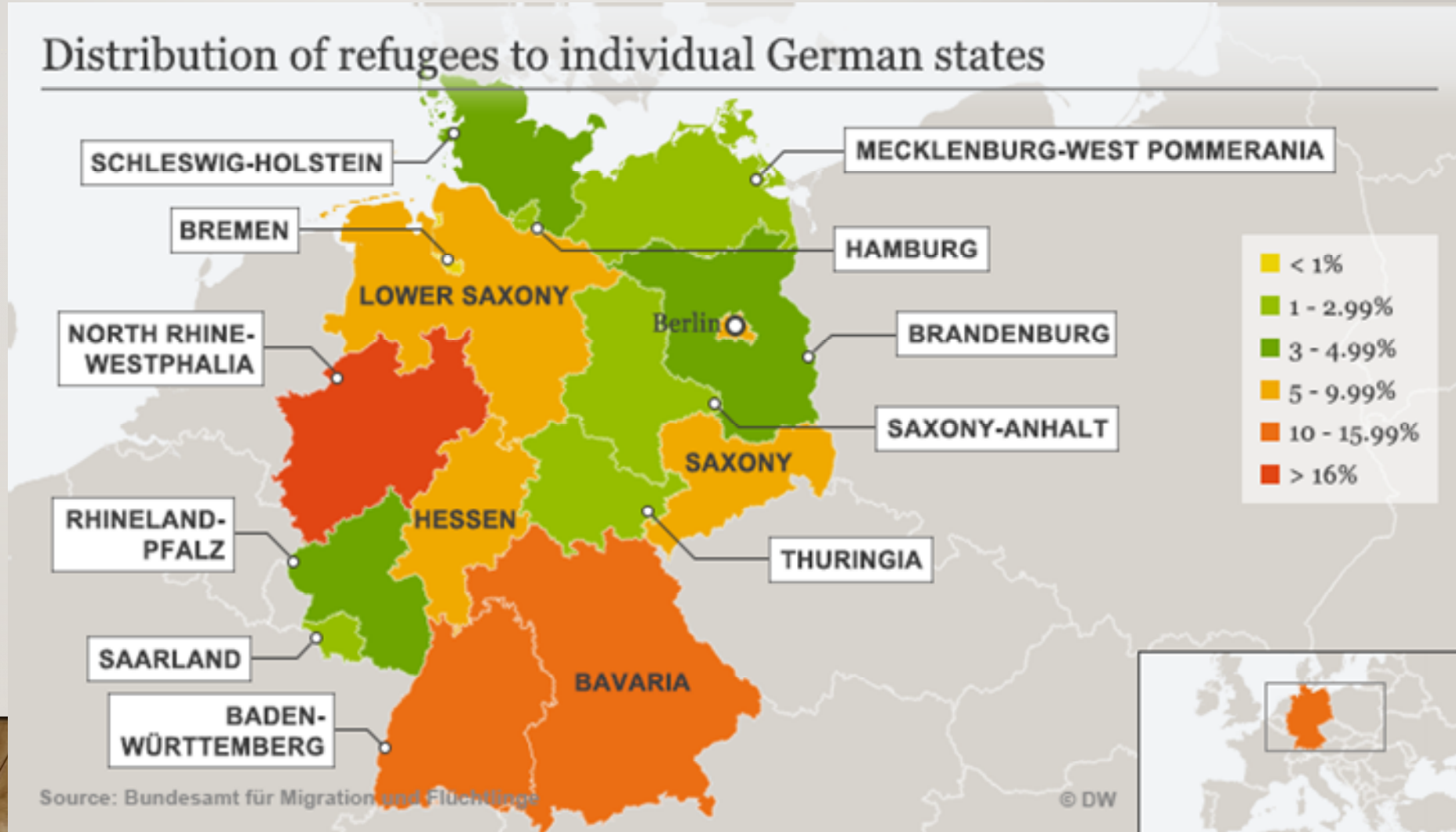
Background: Uneven distribution in each country case

Example:

Asylum seekers + refugees are unevenly distributed around Germany and have tended to settle in the former West; Unis are therefore unevenly impacted

Source:

Deutsche Welle



THE AUTHORS

- *Higher Education Innovations in Response to the Needs of Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Germany and Elsewhere* - Natalie Borg
- *Refugees' Access to Higher Education in Ireland* - Mike Cronin, Clíodhna Murphy, David M. Doyle, Delma Byrne, and Muiread Murphy
- *Vocational Training, "Upskilling," and Paths to Higher Education for Refugees: Insights from Germany and Sweden* - Narintohn Luangrath

THE EUROPEAN STUDENT UNION AND “TOGETHER, MOVING FORWARD” (BORG)

Since 2016, the ESU has run an annual small grants program called “Together, Moving Forward: Students and refugees uniting for integration in society and education.” Applicants are encouraged to “get the system ‘unstuck’” in the face of government inaction in support of refugees. Includes **direct service and advocacy projects**:

Czech Republic: Online Encyclopedia of Migration project aims to provide objective information, supported by academic institutions, offering explanations of the situation of migration in some Middle Eastern countries (Syria, Iraq and Iran) to the general public, as well as, journalists and high school students in Central Europe. The project aims to combat “fallacious information provided by the media tend to lead to populism” -

www.encyclopediaofmigration.org/en/

Denmark: Foreningen Studenterhuset/Student Refugees: “working to further the access and success in higher education for refugees in Denmark” (“Foreningen,” n.d.). The organization operates two programs that serve to enhance the inclusion of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Danish higher education: the Application Café and BUDDIES program, both of which are student-driven (“Application Café,” n.d.)

- <https://www.esu-online.org/?project=together-moving-forward>

WHO TENDS TO BE ADVANTAGED BY EXISTING REFUGEE SUPPORT PROGRAMS? (LUANGRATH)

- May tend to facilitate education/labor market entry of relatively advantaged groups of refugees, including those who are young, tech literate, or English proficient, as well as those already possessing skills or degrees “in-demand”
 - Ex. Sweden’s Fast Track program, which supports refugees **already holding relevant skills** in entering industries facing chronic labor shortages
 - Is a **program “successful” because the refugee participant gains employment** and earns enough money after their program to **no longer qualify for public benefits**? After all, there are countless examples in Europe and elsewhere of refugees earning just enough to be deemed economically “self-reliant,” but still struggling to cover rent, food, and other household expenses.

CONSIDERING THE INTERSECTION OF DIFFERENT “DISPLACEMENTS” (CRONIN, ET AL.)

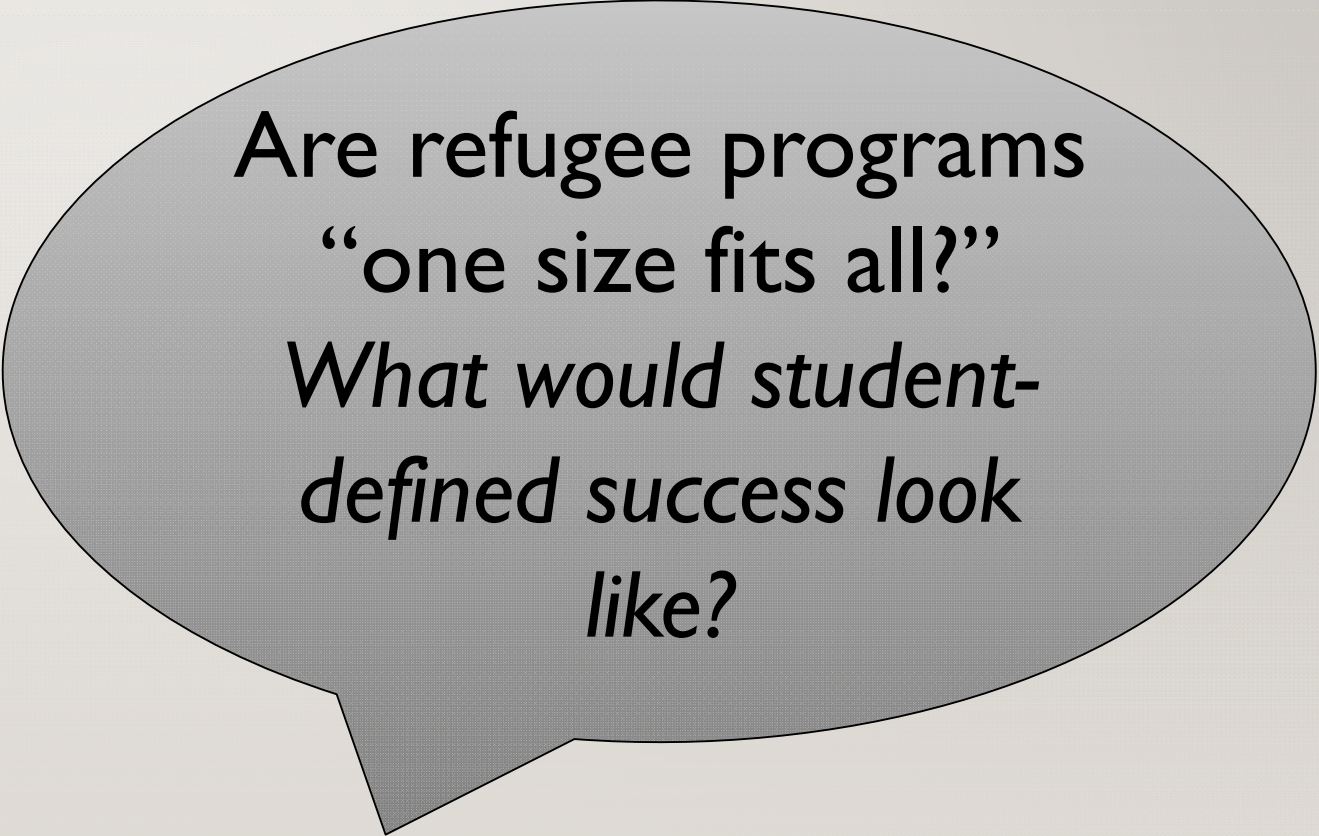
- “Research conducted in schools in 2007 found that one-third of schools with migrant students also had some refugee children in attendance and approximately one-fifth had children who were seeking asylum (Smyth, Darmody, McGinnity & Byrne, 2009). In the study, principals in these schools had a heightened awareness of the inadequacies of the education system in meeting the needs of a diverse body of students. When compared to principals of schools that did not have refugee or asylum seeking students, they expressed greater concern regarding limited access to language services, to pre-service education for teachers, the suitability of the curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials, and they were less likely to consider the Irish education system as sufficient preparation...” (Cronin, et al., 2020, p. 164)

DISCUSSION: WRAP AROUND SERVICES REQUIRE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY, CROSS-SECTOR WORK

- The menu of programs supporting refugee populations span national/state/local government, the non-profit and religious sectors, etc. + involve social workers, career civil servants, private counselors...
 - Food Banks
 - Transportation Services
 - Child Care
 - Job Boards/Advising
 - Mental Health Services
 - Tutoring, in a range from more (1:1) to less (peer group) intensive
 - Emergency funds for small, unexpected expenses
 - Athletics/Recreation programsand more...

DISCUSSION: DATA AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

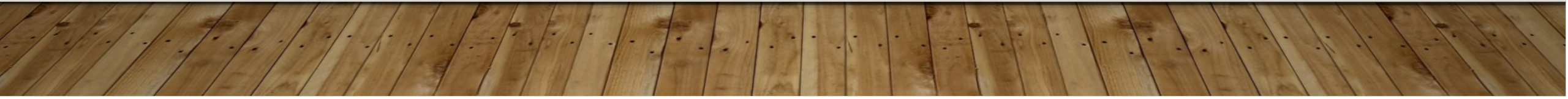
- Lack of data on refugee student enrollment and experience inhibits iterative program development
- However, an exclusive focus on the reporting of student numbers also obscures emphasis on power + hierarchy
- Supporting hybrid student identities through participatory approaches?



Are refugee programs
“one size fits all?”
*What would student-
defined success look
like?*

THANK YOU!

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GERMANY:THE NUMBERS

In 2017, 10.000+ participants in university-prep programs but **50% of applicants rejected due to capacity constraints or insufficient language background** (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018; Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2019)

Estimates for enrollment in 2020 ranged from **32.000-110.000** (Stifterverband, 2017; Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018); gap attributed to German proficiency lower than the C1 level; health problems including depression and trauma; and financial hurdles to university study (Stifterverband 2017)

DAAD has reported that **17% of university applicants in 2017 were women**, and that additional measures should be taken to encourage their participation (Fourier, Kracht, Latsch, Heublein, & Schneider, 2017)