

IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION, AND A
NEW TRANSATLANTIC GENERATION:
SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM
YOUNG MINORITIES IN THE U.S. AND
GERMANY

AICGS GERMAN-AMERICAN ISSUES

19

Alex Alvarado
Canan-Cansu Selte





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for Contemporary
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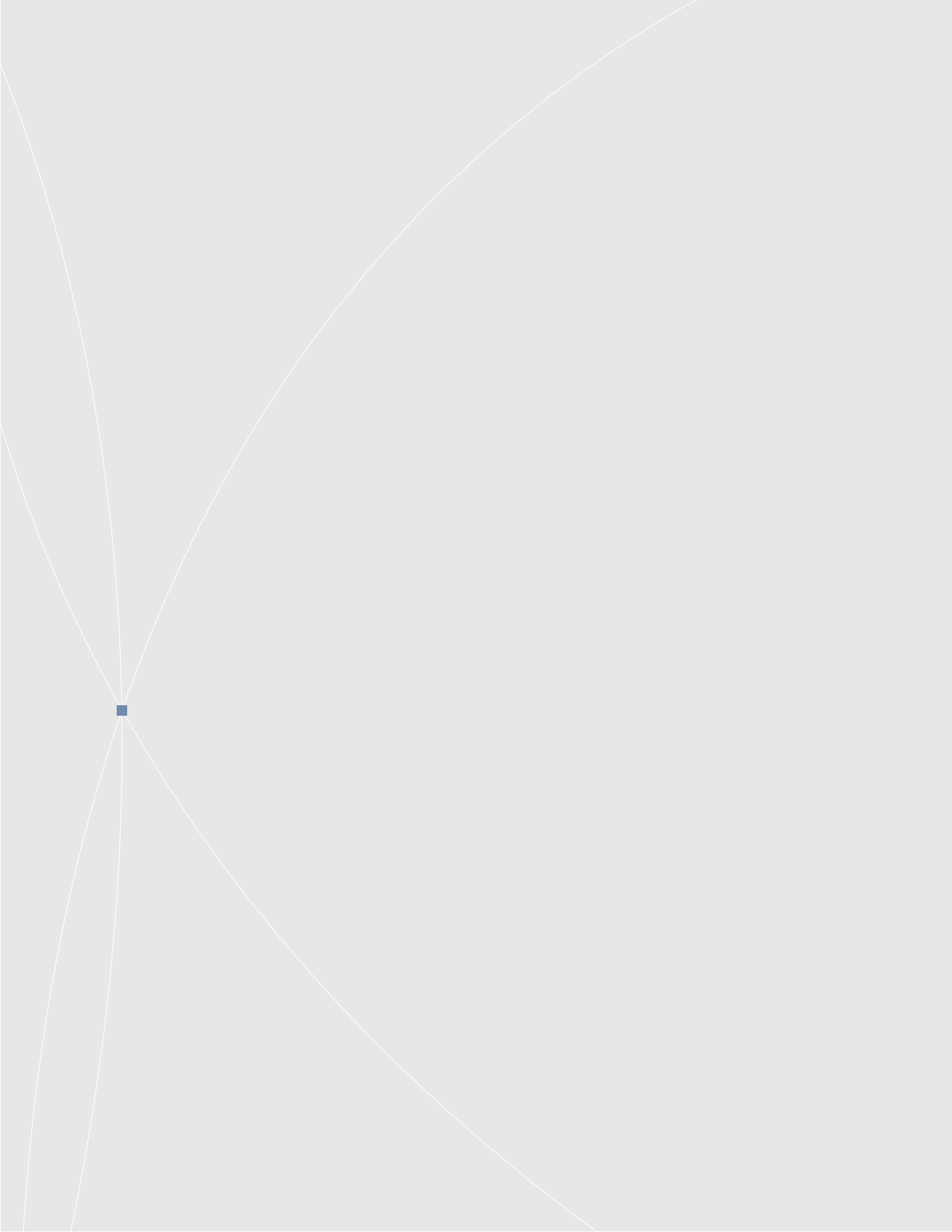
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
About the Authors	5
On Immigration and Integration: The Perspective of a U.S. Participant of the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities ALEX ALVARADO	7
Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation CANAN-CANSU SELTE	23
Appendix	33

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FOREWORD

AICGS is pleased to present two essays from the inaugural round of the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program: *Giving Voice to Diversity*. This innovative program establishes new connections between communities in Germany and the United States that have grown principally from an immigration background, and addresses common challenges of immigration and integration, such as discrimination, employment, political and societal leadership, education, and international engagement. The purpose of the Program is two-fold: 1) to deepen public understanding of the issues and concerns of the largest populations in Germany and the United States that have an immigration background; and (2) to build and sustain a network of young leaders committed to transatlantic relations.

Project participants included a core group of young leaders (ten from Germany and ten from the United States) for engagement in intensive discussions during seminars and site visits in Washington, DC (October 2015) and Berlin (May 2016), and a broader community of experts and advocates focused on issues of immigration, integration, and cross-cultural understanding. The authors of the two essays, Alex Alvarado and Canan-Cansu Selte, were part of the inaugural program. Their essays reflect the personal impact of the program, details of program activities, and the richness of the program's networking experience. For more information about the program, please visit the AICGS website at <http://www.aicgs.org/12657-2/>.

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ON IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF A U.S. PARTICIPANT OF THE AICGS NEW TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR YOUNG MINORITIES

ALEX ALVARADO

The room is quiet, but my mind races through all of the scenarios that could happen now that I am in secondary inspection at Denver International Airport. All of my mental preparation, the 80+ pages submitted to the United States Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS), and the life-changing pursuit of traveling to learn and discuss one of my passions, were reaching the moment of truth. Would I be allowed to re-enter the United States? Or would I be detained and placed in an immigrant detention facility? All the while, I couldn't help but reminisce about my life and what brought me to this point. My palms start sweating; thinking of my first memory as a child, bathing in the local park because we had no home. My leg is shaking; reminiscing on the marches and chants alongside my brothers and sisters in support of the DREAM Act and Immigration Reform. The cold A/C is hitting my forehead; remembering the day I walked across the stage and received my collegiate degree. It was the defining moment, and suddenly, an inner peace told me that everything would be all right.

Just half a day earlier, I was finding my way through Frankfurt International Airport, getting ready to leave the experiences that brought me so many memories, lessons, and friendships that will forever impact my life. It was through the AICGS program that my worldview completely changed. Issues of immigration and integration at first seemed like topics that would easily fit in a box. At first glance, immigration is when people travel through different parts of the world, and integration deals with how newcomers join the standing society. However, these issues are much deeper and more complex. What of the stories of

mothers sacrificing their lives, and the lives of their children, as they travel through border after border to reach a better life? What of the confusion that results from language barriers? What of the smiles, the laughter, and love that is exchanged upon realizing that the native, and the foreigner, share similarities? Immigration and integration are much more about these moments than they are about policy and demographics. But how do we balance good intent with the demands of society? This is where push comes to shove, and where immigration and integration become much more than a conversation in a conference room.

The priorities of the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities are (1) to deepen public understanding of the issues and concerns of the largest minority populations in Germany and the United States; and (2) to build and sustain a network of young leaders committed to transatlantic relations. Therefore, our program consisted of panels and conferences with elected officials, government entities, organizations, and researchers that worked on the issues of immigration and integration. Furthermore, the participants represented a wide range of populations with migration backgrounds in Syria, Kurdish nations, Turkey, Tunisia, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Laos, Pakistan, Venezuela, Cuba, and Mexico. In addition to the different migration backgrounds, each of us had a different socio-economic background and political background, which added to our conversations and discussions. It is my pleasure to share my personal background, in an effort to create a full-circle report of my experience as a participant of the inaugural

AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities.

My Story

I was born in Delicias, Chihuahua, Mexico in 1993. My parents were both bankers in Chihuahua in the early 1990s, however, Mexico's economy declined and we migrated north to Delta, Colorado, with a childhood friend of my father's. Our entry to the United States was on 8 August 1995 on B-2 visitor visas. Even though my family's initial plan was not to overstay, my parents found that my older brother and I would have more opportunities if we stayed in the United States.

As the construction industry boomed in Aspen, Colorado, in the mid-1990s, my father's commute was to travel through a treacherous mountain pass (McClure Pass, Colorado) and the harsh Colorado winters. In 1997, my family decided to move to Carbondale, Colorado, a small mountain town just 45 minutes from Aspen. In fact, one of my earliest memories comes from Carbondale, my adoptive hometown. I remember bathing in the creek that passed through Sopris Park in the heart of Carbondale. Our family had no place to live, so we stayed in our '85 baby-blue Ford Tempo for the first few months. Eventually, a woman who lived a block away from the park noticed that our family was living in our car. She lived in a small apartment, and was only able to rent a limited portion of her space to our family. We then rented the space underneath her dining table. It was not much, but it was more than what the park could offer. Eventually, my parents were able to save their money and rented out the entire apartment as soon as it became available. Today, my parents own a mobile home in Carbondale, and we all still have a dream of owning a house.

As I grew older, my parents always told me that I was undocumented. There was, and still is, fear in our family and the undocumented community regarding immigration status. However, we have been able to overcome enough of that fear to become active members of our community. In high school I was always involved in sports and student government, eventually playing varsity soccer as well as track, and elected Student Body Co-President of Roaring Fork

High School. The idea of attending college seemed to be a daunting feat, as the idea of dropping out tempted me every year of high school. There was always the risk of earning my degree, yet never having the proper documentation to practice what I would eventually study for. Fortunately, I was surrounded by people who genuinely cared for my future: my parents, my older brother, academic mentors, and an immigrant community that motivated me to continue.

In 2010, a group of friends and I shared our stories of being undocumented in a school assembly, and later joined other students and community members to form AJUA: Asociación de Jóvenes Unidos en Acción (Association of Youth United in Action). Together we fought for the release of two community members detained by ICE, the passing of ASSET (which provided in-state tuition in Colorado for undocumented students), ran Know Your Rights workshops with our community, and organized the largest immigrant rally in Glenwood Springs, CO, history in support of the DREAM Act.¹ In 2012, AJUA organized a DACA² Application Drive and managed to have trusted attorneys provide legal review of each application. Being undocumented and DACA eligible, I also went through our own drive. I remember being one of the last applicants, just before closing. It was then that my application was reviewed, and during the review, the attorney leaned in and said, "Come and ask me for a job when you get your work permit." My emotions were all over the place! I was excited, nervous, and in shock. I never imagined myself working for an immigration attorney, because of the fact that I was undocumented. Three months later, I received my employment authorization document (EAD) and ran to the attorney's office. My career as an immigration paralegal began a couple weeks later!

Since that moment, my life has completely changed. AJUA received the ACLU³ Civil Rights in Action Youth Award from the ACLU Colorado Chapter; I was honored to receive the AILA Immigrant Liberty Award from the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) Colorado Chapter; I have lobbied Colorado's elected officials in support of immigration reform; and I continued to work as an immigration paralegal. I also completed my Associate of Arts degree in Spanish from Colorado Mountain College and earned

my Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Chicana/o Studies from Metropolitan State University of Denver. Since moving to Denver in 2013, I have volunteered with the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) as a document translator. It was through RMIAN that I applied for the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program, and because of this program, I have been given the opportunity to travel to Germany and discuss what has become my everyday life and passion: immigration.

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

After meeting my colleagues in Washington, DC, and sharing a portion of my experience of being undocumented in the United States, many of them asked about my legal status, how I could become a citizen, and what were some of the causes and effects of not having immigration status in the United States. These questions usually came from the German participants, and my U.S. colleagues also added to the conversation based on their experiences of working with undocumented immigrants, and the U.S. immigration system. As a result, I was able to create relationships with all of the participants as they shared their experiences, and their family's migration story whether it be in Germany or the United States.

One of the issues that arose was the use of the term "undocumented" instead of the term "illegal." Similar to life in the U.S., not everyone uses or understands the term "undocumented." In one instance, one of the German participants wanted to clarify if I was "illegal" when I first shared that I was undocumented. Quickly, another German participant stepped in and explained that "undocumented" was the correct term to describe my situation.

In the United States, the term undocumented is used to describe an immigrant lacking lawful status, or the proper documentation that proves his/her status. Throughout the immigrant rights movement, undocumented is used to represent dignity and value for the undocumented individual, despite not having lawful status. No human being is illegal. Thus, using the term undocumented makes it easier for mainstream media and the general population to remember that undocumented immigrants are human too, despite

not fulfilling the legal obligations in regard to maintaining lawful immigration status.

Hearing my German colleagues speak of the term undocumented was the first time I realized that we shared similarities despite living in different countries and having never met before. At first, I had no specific expectations as to how we would all relate. This moment also created a sense of unity and camaraderie as we all began to share personal background information while engaging in dialogue that grew our understanding of each other's present situation. This also brought confusion as to what deferred action is. In an effort to better explain what deferred action and being undocumented means, I decided to include a brief overview of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program:

The immigration process in the United States is extremely complex. Someone can attain and maintain lawful status in the U.S. in three principal ways. First, through a family petition. Family petitions are divided into several types of petitions based on the relationship between the intending immigrant and the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. The country of origin also influences the waiting line for an immigrant visa to become available and allow a foreign national to permanently immigrate to the United States. Second, a person can immigrate to the U.S. through an employment-based petition. These types of visas are limited and divided into skill level depending on the foreign national's education within the United States or the U.S. equivalent of his or her foreign degree. Employment-based visas also go through a process of vetting the application to ensure that the employee is not hired for a job that may be done by a U.S. citizen. Third, a person has a pathway to permanent residence and/or citizenship as a refugee or asylee. Outside of these three principal forms of immigration, there are immigrants who have either entered the United States unlawfully, or entered with a valid visa or lawful status, but failed to maintain it once in the United States. These individuals form the undocumented population of the United States, estimated at over 11 million people.

For several groups of undocumented individuals, there is no path to lawful status, or U.S. citizenship. One of the main reasons for this is because without

having some sort of immigration status in the U.S. to begin with, they are usually ineligible to apply for lawful status. Simultaneously, however, physical presence in the United States for at least six months without status creates a three year bar for the undocumented individual. After twelve months of having no status, the individual will receive a ten year bar once he/she steps outside of the United States. And if a serious crime is committed by the undocumented individual, or if the individual has been deported and is found back inside the United States without fulfilling the corresponding bar of re-entry, then that individual may receive a permanent bar. A bar dictates the amount of time an individual must “pay” outside of the United States without being eligible for any sort of visa or form of lawfully immigrating to the U.S. until the bar has been fulfilled. These bars are key to the creation of the undocumented population because those who do not have lawful status choose to stay in the United States where they have raised their children, found employment, created community, and established their lives, instead of leaving the United States and risking never returning or waiting at least three or ten years to return lawfully. The effect is the creation of a second class group within the United States that constantly runs the risk of deportation and the separation of their families.

Amid the 11 million undocumented immigrant population in the United States are those whose families migrated to the U.S. when they were children. These individuals are called “childhood arrivals” and also commonly known as DREAMers.⁴ I am a part of this group. For many of us, we have grown up in the United States since infancy. Others migrated in adolescence or their teen years. Whichever the case, living in the United States from an early age has had an impact on all persons in this group. I cannot speak for all, but in my situation, I consider myself to be between first-generation immigrants to the U.S. and the first generation to be born in the U.S. We are foreign born, but raised in the United States. We may not know the forefathers of our native countries, but we know very well of American leaders such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, and Abraham Lincoln. Furthermore, several childhood arrivals have gone on to attend higher education, earn degrees, and now there is even an undocumented attorney out of the state of

New York, Cesar Vargas; the first to do so. Being undocumented and immigrating with your family at an early age creates a living irony. Vargas, for example, is undocumented, yet understands United States law above the level of an average U.S. citizen, evidenced by the fact that he is a licensed attorney. Similarly, I am an immigration law paralegal. I am constantly living the irony of helping hundreds of our clients on their paths to citizenship, without there being a path for myself or my family.

In 2012, President Obama announced the creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program by way of an executive order. The DACA program is designed for undocumented immigrants that arrived in the U.S. as minors. An individual is eligible to apply for this program if they:

1. Were under the age of 31 as of 15 June 2012;
2. Came to the United States before reaching their 16th birthday;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since 15 June 2007, up to the present time;
4. Were physically present in the United States on 15 June 2012, and at the time of making their request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
5. Had no lawful status on 15 June 2012;
6. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and
7. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

In addition to meeting these requirements, each individual must pay the filing fee of \$465 for processing the applications, paperwork, employment authorization document, and biometrics services. If the DACA application is approved, the beneficiary will receive

two years of relief from deportation, as well as two years of employment authorization. Essentially, the U.S. government's goal is to remove all undocumented individuals; however, as DACA recipients have little to no criminal record, the pursuit of their deportation is deferred (thus, the name deferred action) and they are considered to be low priority cases for deportation.

Furthermore, the benefit of an employment authorization document (EAD) not only allows the DACA recipient the legal authority to be employed in the United States, but also opens doors to attaining a Social Security number and a driver's license. It is still unclear as to whether DACA recipients will be able to receive Social Security benefits when they retire for the time they worked lawfully in the United States, or if they will be forced to leave it all behind like some of their parents will do after paying taxes while working under the table. Furthermore, in some states, driver's licenses are not issued to undocumented individuals, therefore, an EAD and Social Security number will ensure that more drivers will have the opportunity to apply for and receive a driver's license, car insurance, and the adequate driver education. Overall, DACA creates an opportunity for undocumented individuals to apply for the simplest day-to-day necessities such as a valid government-issued ID.

I was able to explain some of the DACA program to my German colleagues, but it never quite seemed to be clear. The truth is, DACA itself is uncertain and unclear. Because it is a result of an executive order, it runs the risk of being removed by another U.S. president. By providing confidential personal information such as place of birth, date of birth, U.S. entry (or entries), current address, and all prior addresses since arriving in the U.S. (be it five years or twenty years), DACA recipients have risked giving more information to the U.S. government than the average American would even feel comfortable providing, despite knowing that the program can be removed at any moment by the president. It is evidence of a good-faith effort to establish lawful status, without having the opportunity to do so. Traveling outside of the United States is an even cloudier scenario. After meeting each other in Washington, DC, everyone was curious (including myself) as to how I would

travel to Berlin and be allowed to re-enter the United States. Fortunately, there is Advance Parole.

ADVANCE PAROLE

As a DACA recipient, my trip to Berlin required permission from the U.S. government. More specifically, it required the permission to lawfully re-enter the U.S., despite not having lawful status. In order to receive this permission, an application for Advance Parole needed to be submitted. Advance Parole is a government-issued re-entry permit that is used by individuals with pending applications for permanent residence, refugees that intend to travel internationally, and for other reasons. In my case, deferred action through the DACA program allowed me to apply for advance parole based on educational, business, or humanitarian reasons. Consequently, my advance parole application was based on the educational reason of attending the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities.

The first step in applying for advance parole is submitting Form I-131 with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) along with the corresponding supporting documents—in my case, an application of over eighty pages in total. With Form I-131 and the supporting documents, USCIS was made aware of my DACA approval and validity period, the purpose of the AICGS program, my travel itinerary abroad, and my biographical information. These types of applications can last approximately ninety days until being adjudicated by USCIS. Fortunately, my application was approved before a month's time of waiting. On 22 December 2015, I received the gift of an approved I-131 application for my advance parole travel document!

With my advance parole travel document in hand, nothing was in my way of completing the AICGS program in Berlin. Despite having no further obstacles, the last piece of the puzzle was returning to and entering the U.S. Even though USCIS granted my advance parole travel document, it was ultimately up to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agent at the U.S. port of entry whether I was to be lawfully re-admitted into the U.S. In short, it was in the agent's discretion to allow me to re-enter the United States, or be detained by Immigration and Customs

Enforcement at the nearest detention center. Fortunately, my re-entry to the United States was unhindered, and my time in secondary inspection (which is common for advance parole entries) was relatively short.

Washington, DC, October 2015

Integration and immigration were at the forefront of the conversation throughout the entire program, which led to questioning the true definition of these very important words. That is to say, integration appears to be more widely used in Germany in comparison to the U.S. because of the United States' history with racial segregation up until the 1960s. Integration has become a term to use in regard to racial injustice in the workplace, education, and everyday living. In contrast, because of Germany's history of foreign workers, who are able to reach some type of permanent resident status in Germany, integration has focused on educating immigrants on what it is like to be German.

These issues are very complex. What does it mean to be American? What does it mean to be German? How is life different for immigrants in the United States and in Germany? These questions were constantly the source of conversations between participants during panels and other program events. As a history junkie, one of my first questions to my German counterparts was whether they considered themselves to be German. Is their identity that of Turkish-German, Syrian-German, Kurdish-German, or simply German? Does German society allow for and accept hyphenated Germans, and how does this compare to hyphenated Americans in the United States?

For some of my German peers, it was perfectly fine and normal to identify as German. Most were German-born; others identified according to their bicultural or poly-cultural identities. I was able to relate to most of my colleagues who identify themselves as having a multi-cultural background. In my case, I have lived in the U.S. for over twenty years, and having come of age with the realization that I am part of a hyphenated minority, it was easy to relate to my German peers that referred to themselves as hyphenated Germans. As a Mexican-born immigrant to the

U.S., my personal identity is a cross between several groups of people. I consider myself to be Mexican, primarily due to my birth and culture, but I also consider myself to be American due to my experiences, influence of U.S. culture, and political views. On the other hand, terms such as Mexican-American or Chicano do not quite align with my personal identity. I would argue that these terms are usually used by individuals born in the U.S., with Mexican roots. Furthermore, because my family migrated to the U.S. as a family unit, we can all very well be considered to be first-generation immigrants to the U.S., even though we are two generations. Does that make my future children first-generation Americans and non-immigrants, if born in the U.S.? Or because of their ethnicity, will they truly never be accepted as Americans? Overall, this is only a short example of how complicated self-identity can be as a young undocumented immigrant in the U.S.

When talking to my German and U.S. peers about self-identity, I was able to find similar views in regard to their migration background. For example, a lot of them introduced themselves as Turkish-German, prior to going into detail as to how their family migrated to Germany. Other participants also had a German parent and an immigrant parent. Similar to the United States, someone who is Mexican-American may have a U.S.-born, non-Mexican parent, and a Mexican-born immigrant parent. I found it similar in the way that we all spoke of our parents. We all included our ancestry, but I feel that it could be different if the participants were white Americans or white Germans, mainly because the United States and Germany seem to accept the response of "I'm American," or "I'm German," if the person is white. However, if someone does not appear to be white, then there is most often a follow-up question as to what the migration background is of that person. Nonetheless, we were all raised or have lived in the United States or Germany for a long period of time, so wouldn't our values and birthplace make us unquestionably German or American? In a sense, this is an example of the flaws of integration. Although there is a lot of integration work in both countries, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to create a society that is okay with "I'm American" or "I'm German" as a response for when a person of color is asked about his or her past.

During our panel discussions, the issue of Islamophobia and its consequences came up time after time. The conversation continued throughout the day as we spoke in between panel discussions, during the site visits, and on our way to and from the hotel. One realization that I came away with is that Islamophobia is a psychological problem. A phobia is psychological, therefore, Islamophobia must be recognized as a psychological issue. This issue came up throughout our program in Berlin as well. Islamophobia is one of the most important topics of our time. This issue is present in both the United States and Germany, and the question is how to respond to and defeat the misconceptions that come out of it. In my humble opinion, it begins with safe spaces where different people can come together and learn from one another. AICGS provided this space for the participants of this program. In fact, before AICGS, my group of friends that were Muslim was very limited, and I had never had an in-depth conversation with anyone of the Muslim faith. Even though I have never had negative views toward Islam, there are members of my community as a Latino that are very closed-minded in regard to accepting Muslim people for their religious beliefs. It has been my experience that most of it stems from fear due to media coverage of terror attacks, along with preconceived notions of the differences between Muslims, Christians, and other religions.

One of the consequences of Islamophobia is that it has singled out a group of people in the United States and Germany. After coming home from Washington, DC, and again after Berlin, I would constantly share the experience of learning about Islam with my Christian and non-religious friends and family in the United States. The responses varied. Some were very intrigued, as much as I was, with the purpose of debunking the stereotypes associated with Muslim people in the United States. Others responded with an attempt to change the conversation quickly, and a smaller group of people were upset by the topic of conversation. It is unfortunate that these feelings were expressed, especially because several of the people that have these negative reactions have never met anyone of the Muslim faith. Having a negative opinion of a certain group of people does not allow for an individual to truly express who they are. If someone is constantly bombarded with negative

stereotypes about a group of people, it is challenging to change the perspective on that group of people. The feelings toward Muslims in Germany reminded me of the feelings toward undocumented immigrants in the United States. Whereas Muslims are stereotyped as terrorists, radicals, and other incorrect notions, undocumented immigrants are also stereotyped negatively as people who are non-citizens on welfare programs, do not want to learn English or integrate in the United States, and as people who "take" jobs of hardworking Americans. All of which are untrue for Muslims and undocumented immigrants. At the end of the day, many of the people who believe in these negative stereotypes have never met someone who is undocumented, or they never knew that a friend of theirs is undocumented.

Because Islamophobia was relatively new to me, I found the panel with Mr. Sayyid Syeed of the Islamic Society of North America to be one of the most interesting panels throughout the entire program. One of my initial questions was as to how immigration reform, which would create a path to lawful status and citizenship for undocumented immigrants, impacts the Muslim community in the United States. My follow-up question was as to how Latino immigrant advocacy organizations can work to be more inclusive toward Muslim immigrants. Mr. Syeed responded by explaining that out of the large Muslim community throughout the United States, a relatively small number of them were undocumented. He explained the reason being that Muslims have been in the United States in large numbers since the 1950s and 1960s. This generation of Muslim immigrants for the most part travelled to the United States on student visas. Furthermore, Mr. Syeed added that Colorado was home to ten Islamic Centers, and that these centers would be the best place to start for an immigrant advocacy organization in Colorado to include Muslim immigrants. He added that the best way to be more inclusive as a society, however, was to create personal relationships with people of different faiths and backgrounds. An example of these relationships was the Shoulder To Shoulder campaign that united American Muslims with non-Muslim communities in order to overcome Islamophobia. This campaign helped create personal bonds between Muslims and non-Muslims.

As the panel continued, our questions kept coming. Others in the group asked about forced marriage and about whether women are recognized as good leaders in Islam. Another question asked about the role of homosexuality in Islamic society. All very difficult topics to cover. However, Mr. Syeed responded to our questions with his own personal insight. He responded by informing us that Muslim women also have the right to express their interest to enter their relationship, and that nothing in Islam deters women from becoming good leaders. In regard to homosexuality among Muslims, he added that there is no interpretation of Islam that legitimizes homosexual relationships. After the panel, some of my colleagues were upset that these questions were asked, mainly because they were concerned that the U.S. participants would gather the wrong interpretation of Islam or for that we would believe the negative stereotypes about gender roles in Islam. However, I found these conversations to be insightful and important to the conversation. I now have tools to communicate with people in my community about the myths and untruthful stereotypes of Muslim people.

Finally, one of the most important questions to be asked was regarding the involvement of Muslims in politics. One of our participants asked if Mr. Syeed could share his experience with the younger generation of Muslims and the difference between them and previous generations in regard to politics. Mr. Syeed's response was that second-generation Muslim Americans were more prone to seeking careers in politics, in comparison to their parents. He also expressed the need for more Muslim representation in politics and the need to internalize the ability to have Islamic political spheres. Furthermore, he added that one of the issues is the belief that Muslims would not be accepting of other faiths, groups of people, and Western society; however, the clearest way to delegitimize these beliefs are by simply recognizing that the fact that Muslims have been living in the United States for decades demonstrates their ability to adapt and be accepting of others—much like any other group of people living in the United States.

As the panels continued, we were able to speak about the intersections of healthcare and immigration, and about the economic power of minorities in the

United States, among several other topics. For example, we spoke about opportunities to obtain a healthcare plan for undocumented individuals in the United States. In response, our panelist explained that undocumented immigrants cannot obtain healthcare coverage through the market that was established under the Affordable Care Act, and that DACA recipients were also ineligible. Even though DACA recipients have valid Social Security numbers, which is required to qualify for healthcare insurance, they are not considered eligible for this benefit. Furthermore, it was explained that in order to allow these populations to apply for a healthcare plan, the law would need to be amended. However, the Affordable Care Act does allow certain lawful immigrants the right to search for a healthcare plan.

We also had a panel focusing on the importance of bilingual education. The conversation was directly connected to creating a more integrated society. Everyone at the table agreed that bilingual education was important for students in the United States and in Germany, however, it was interesting to hear a different perspective from some of the German participants. A few of them argued that while learning different languages was strongly encouraged in Germany, the options of which language to learn were extremely limited. Furthermore, many of the participants felt discriminated against for knowing languages that were non-Western, for example, Arabic or Turkish, as opposed to Spanish or French. In fact, one of the German participants gave an example of her LinkedIn account not allowing her to enter Arabic as a language skill until she personally called the company and managed to change this barrier. Similarly, other participants expressed their concerns and frustration with applying for jobs and feeling as though their knowledge of a foreign language was undervalued simply because it was not a European language. I found this dialogue to be incredibly insightful and intriguing. Before then, I had never thought about how much privilege a language can carry. I believe that the reason for this type of discrimination is a result of Islamophobia, racism, and fear of what is foreign. Also, I was able to experience a part of this during my time in Berlin. Whenever I would order a meal or ask for directions in a public space, I would begin with greeting people in German, then quickly let them know that I didn't speak German

once I couldn't understand their response. Shortly after, people would usually ask me where I was from and as soon as I mentioned that I am Mexican, I would receive a tremendous smile and the words, "Hola amigo!" I quickly witnessed the privilege of the Spanish language, which I imagine would differ if I were to say I was from a different region of the world and spoke Arabic.

Berlin, Germany, May 2016

Traveling to Berlin for the second portion of the exchange program was a completely new learning experience. This was my first international trip and the first time that I would risk leaving my family and community in the United States on advance parole. The experience of traveling from airport to airport, and walking through Tegel Airport in Berlin, were the first times that I was in a country where I didn't speak the language. All signs, maps, and directions were written in German, and everyone around me was speaking a language that I didn't understand. It reminded me of what it must have been like for my parents, and for many immigrants when they first arrive in the United States. I imagine that the general sense of nervousness, fear of going to the wrong place, or running into the wrong group of people was very similar between my experience in Germany and my parents' experience in the U.S. The exception, however, was that I traveled to Germany expecting to eventually meet someone that I knew and was a native of Germany. Unfortunately, many immigrants in the U.S. arrive without any relatives or a manner in which they could contact someone that they may know.

One of our meetings was with Bundestag member Dr. Andreas Nick of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party. He began our meeting by giving us a general overview of the history of Germany. He then shared a portion of his personal story, explaining that his grandparents worked in a shoe retailer in Frankfurt for many years. As the conversation continued, he mentioned something that has stuck with me ever since. Dr. Nick mentioned that "there is a split between belief and reality in regard to immigration" in Germany. Today, Germany is seen as a country that is new to immigration. He referred to Germany as a new immigration country. However, he also criticized this belief, and said that Germany has always been a

country of immigration. For example, he referred to the expulsion of Germans in the late 1940s from Poland and Czechoslovakia. He added that even up to the 1960s, religious questions separating Catholics and Protestants were still an issue, an important context to the divide today between Muslim immigrants and those who follow other faiths. Furthermore, he added that Germany tends to forget, and sometimes even ignores, its immigration history, arguably because Germany has been recognized as a country of emigration instead of immigration in recent history.

Similarly, Dr. Nick reminded me of the current immigration situation in the United States. Several political figures and activists have depicted the United States holding two different signs at its borders: one that reads "Help Wanted" and another, "Keep Out." This metaphor refers to several issues that are currently present in U.S. immigration: the shortage of employment visas for highly-skilled workers and the hurdles that foreign students must go through in order remain in the United States lawfully, as well as the shortage in "low-skilled" employees, whose roles are currently being filled by undocumented laborers. In immigration, highly-skilled workers refers to employees that hold a university degree or some other form of higher education. Low-skilled workers refers to employees whose tasks include minimum education or do not require specific training through higher education. However, there is a shortage in both types of workers, and the visas that are available to those that are able to supply these needs for the United States. For example, H-1B visas are designed for foreign workers that have earned at least a bachelor's degree. The H-1B visa category has a cap of 65,000 per year, and an additional 20,000 visas for those that have earned a master's degree or above. The issue is that there are more than double the amount of applicants than there are visas available. The result is a lottery process that determines which highly-skilled workers stay in the United States. This also results in the United States rejecting highly-skilled workers, who then decide to migrate to another country where they have higher chances of practicing their careers. On a symbolic level, the Statue of Liberty adds to the convoluted message that is sent to immigrants across the world. She still welcomes the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free," yet the United States has

only committed to admitting 10,000 Syrian refugees in 2016, less than 1 percent of the entire U.S. population. Overall, the panel with Dr. Nick was insightful and thought provoking in regard to the international message that is sent by Germany and the United States.

As we continued our panels throughout the program, a few of the most interesting and unique organizations that we met with were Project Re:Start, the JUMA Project, and the City Council of Neukölln. Project Re:Start is a startup incubator for refugees that plan to start their own business. I found this organization to be extremely unique because entrepreneurial spirit is not the first word that is linked to refugees—at least that may be the case for those of us with very limited experience in working with refugees. Furthermore, the media shows us images of refugees fleeing their native countries in search of a better life, insinuating that there may be no time to be entrepreneurial because they must first survive. However, Project Re:Start completely changed my mind on this perspective, and I believe more of these ideas need to be shared with nonprofit organizations in the United States. Our panelist shared that many refugees tend to begin their own businesses with cooking. Cooking created several opportunities for refugee women in Berlin, as they were given the chance to share their food and culture, while also making a profit. I found this to be extremely powerful. Not only were these women creating their own businesses despite their refugee status, they were also sharing and introducing a part of their culture with the Germans that visited their restaurants or ordered their food. In my experience, undocumented immigrants in the United States have been plagued with fear about opening a businesses because they believe it is not possible. Similarly, I never imagined refugees would be able to open up their own businesses, especially after a relatively short time of living in a new country. I admit my ignorance, and I am thankful for Project Re:Start and the work that they are doing to motivate new immigrants to create their own businesses. When refugees establish new businesses it creates employment opportunities throughout their communities and also advances the goal of integration by sharing their culture.

I was very excited to have met with the JUMA Project

during our time in Berlin. The JUMA Project is an organization that focuses on changing the negative narrative that is currently affecting Muslim youth in Germany. Instead of linking Muslim youth to crime, terrorism, and other negative aspects of society, the JUMA Project works on connecting them to politics, education, and community collaboration. The group reminded me of the youth of the immigrant rights movement today in the United States. Immigrant youth in the United States face similar obstacles as Muslim youth in Germany, with respect to the public perception of them. In high school, I became a founding member of AJUA (Asociación de Jóvenes Unidos en Acción; Association of Youth United in Action). AJUA was a youth-led group that worked toward ending the deportation of our community members, opening the doors to in-state tuition for undocumented students in Colorado, supporting a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and educating our teachers and community members about undocumented immigrants and the complicated immigration system. We also worked with older undocumented immigrants and organized Know Your Rights workshops that guided them through basic interactions with law enforcement in an effort to build community trust. As such, I was able to connect with the JUMA Project in that their efforts were also youth-led. Furthermore, they also spoke to their elected officials about the issues that face Muslim youth. Overall, it was rejuvenating to learn about the JUMA Project and their commitment to improving the lives of Muslim youth in Germany. Their work is incredibly important, and necessary to co-integrate Muslim youth and German society.

Neukölln, a pilot city of the Council of Europe and the European Commission Intercultural Cities program, has a very interesting situation. From my understanding, it is the most diverse area of Berlin, possibly even all of Germany. During the panel, it was difficult to comprehend what was going on, but there were a lot of passionate questions and responses discussed regarding the integration of Neukölln's population with the rest of German society. Because Neukölln encompasses individuals from over 160 nations, and has one of the highest percentages of immigrants in Berlin, it is easy to see how integration is such a sensitive issue. There was a very passionate conversation during this panel.

Some of the German participants have worked with the Neukölln community in the past, and there were several recommendations made. For example, one of the participants volunteers with the refugee community in Neukölln. He expressed his concerns over the materials provided to refugees—materials that could be changed in order to not further perpetuate negative stereotypes of Muslims. I was unclear as to whether the City Council of Neukölln issued the material that stereotyped Muslims in a negative way, however, I would assume that changes could be made to better support new refugees in the community. I am still very much intrigued by Neukölln and I look forward to following up to see how the area has worked to improve the lives of everyone in the community.

Beyond the panels, a lot of the learning experience happened in between the scheduled program and during our time off. On the second day of the Berlin trip, a group of us decided to buy chocolate and souvenirs at the Berlin Hauptbahnhof (central train station). As we began to pay the cashier, we received a text message from another participant, telling us to return to the hotel as soon as possible because the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) was organizing a protest. In my limited knowledge, I understood that the AfD carries an image of being an anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political party. Several of us were concerned and worried about what would happen at the demonstration, and I worried that we would be unwillingly involved. We gathered ourselves, regrouped, and made our way toward the exit. The sun was setting, and darkness began to cover the area. As we were approaching the automatic doors, we heard a loud whistle. I immediately froze. Not knowing what would happen next, I stood in shock and stopped. Milliseconds after the whistle, all I heard was the sound of hundreds of men chanting in unison, and in German. Not knowing German, I still don't know what they were shouting. What I vividly remember afterward was the sound of marching that immediately followed the men's shouts. As we heard the march come closer and closer, we snapped back to reality and exited the Hauptbahnhof. To my surprise, we saw hundreds of police officers standing outside the exit, dressed in riot gear, and fencing in the area outside the station. Our group headed toward our hotel and stopped to ask one of the offi-

cers if it was safe to walk in the direction of our hotel. One of the German participants spoke to the officer, and all I remember is the officer making signs toward the hotel and what appeared to be instructing us to hurry to make it safely.

Before traveling to Germany, I had no intention of involving myself in protests or demonstrations while abroad. This moment confirmed my original notion of not involving myself, despite my personal political beliefs. In truth, it was a nerve-rattling moment to hurry out of the train station, listen to the chants and marches, and have an unexpected interaction with a police officer.

Additionally, during our trip to Berlin, I learned that one of the participant's parents had been separated by the Berlin Wall. I learned of her mother's experience of having to travel outside of East Berlin, in order to fly into West Berlin and live in a refugee camp. It was an incredible story that I never would have imagined. Not only was the story romantic, but also very eye-opening. I realized that I was only one generation away from someone who experienced and lived during the separation of East and West Berlin/Germany. Furthermore, this story reminded me of home. In my experience, the U.S.-Mexican border represents the separation of loved ones, of couples, of families. Through my involvement in the immigrant rights movement for the past six years, I have witnessed the effects of deportation and family separation. In several instances, people in my community were pulled over by a police officer for a minor infraction, then arrested and processed through Immigration and Customs Enforcement simply for not having a valid driver's license. These people are fathers and mothers that, in many cases, are the sole bread-winners for their households—households that include U.S. citizen children. Many have a minimal to non-existent criminal record. Seeing the Berlin Wall in the East Side Gallery and where the Wall once stood, all throughout Berlin, was very emotional for me. I couldn't help but think of the families that have been separated because of deportation. In many ways, it symbolized how far society has come on integration and acceptance of others, but is also a reminder that there is much more work to be done.

After the program ended in Berlin, I travelled with

another program participant to Baden-Württemberg, a state in southwestern Germany. There we stayed with one of the German program participants. During my visit I was invited to have breakfast with her mother, who is Turkish-German. I was reminded of Cesar Chavez's belief that in order to really get to know someone, you should invite them into your home. We spoke of her children, her family, sports, food, and we had fun speaking to one another in a mix of English, German, Turkish, and Spanish. In reality, the credit goes to the German participant who did all of the work; making sure we would understand one another as she translated for us. The participant's mother reminded me of my own mother and of other Mexican mothers. When I arrived, she offered me a place to sit on the couch as she pulled out a tray of fresh bread, coffee, and candy. Of course, the introductions could not be complete without her showing me the family photo albums. I couldn't help but smile as I remembered my own mother and how she would have done exactly the same to any of my guests. From there we had breakfast and we taught each other words and short phrases in all four of the languages.

One of my favorite conversations, however, was before I left her house. I asked whether she and her daughter spoke in German or Turkish to one another in their home. The mother expressed that she loved speaking Turkish, however, her children were more comfortable speaking German. Although they were fluent in both languages, she admitted that her children spoke better German than they did Turkish. I mentioned that in the United States, it was a very similar situation for Mexican-American families. It is very common to hear parents groan or complain that their children don't want to speak Spanish, and that they prefer English. In many cases, the household is made up of non-English speaking parents and non-Spanish speaking children—a generational divide within a family that may not always work in another setting. Having the experience of visiting the participant's home and family gave me insight into how similar immigrant families can be in Germany and the United States. Our mothers greeted their children's guests in similar manners, and the struggles of having children raised in a different country were also very similar. The result is the confirmation that integration takes a long time to manifest itself within a society. In

several circumstances, integration can take decades and generations to blossom.

Furthermore, integration takes a lot of work. The participant's mother was also taking English classes at the time of my visit. She was excited to share her English with me, and I was excited to share my extremely limited German. She also reminded me of my parents when they started learning English. Shortly after we moved to Carbondale, Colorado, my parents made the effort to integrate into their community, beginning with knowledge of the English language. At first, I remember translating for my parents during visits to the doctor, or to register vehicles, even though I wasn't even ten years old. However, since then, they were able to complete their English courses, and although they are still shy about their English skills, they have managed to work and live their day-to-day routine for twenty years without needing the interpretation skills of their children.

My experiences in Berlin and Germany will become memories that I will never forget, and they have created friendships that will last a lifetime. Upon completion of the Berlin portion of the program, we all connected with one another in various forms. Several of the participants have graduated since first meeting one another in October 2015, others have since married, and we all continue to live our lives as before—with the exception of the new relationships that were formed throughout our home countries and across the Atlantic. We befriended one another in person, and on social media. We follow one another on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and some of us still communicate via WhatsApp. We continue to keep our WhatsApp group chat open and several of us share our experiences back home, and show the similarities between our cultures. Moreover, I was able to connect with two of the U.S. participants, and managed to gather their reflections of the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities.

One of the most educational experiences was the day-to-day conversations with our German colleagues. Carlos Gonzalez-Tostado opined, "What impacted me were the dialogues that we had among participants as well as representatives of various organizations and institutions about the topic of immi-

gration. Most importantly, the fact that we found parallels among Latino and Asian communities in the U.S. and the Turkish-German experience. This unification brought us a great sense of solidarity and allowed us to educate and empower one another on the challenges that we face as immigrants to the U.S. and Germany.” Similarly, Angela Velarde added, “Before being part of the program, I had little knowledge about Germany’s immigration and integration process. I found it very valuable hearing more about these issues from scholars, nonprofits, politicians, and fellow German participants as I was able to receive a well-rounded perspective.”

Additionally, both Carlos and Angela stated that the most memorable and impactful portion of the program was the visit to the refugee center in Berlin. Angela commented, “By far the most unforgettable part from this program was visiting the refugee camp. I had varied emotions going into this camp because I wanted to see them and their living conditions. However, I was not comfortable simply walking in and out of the refugee camp without making any sort of impact in their lives. I believe [that interacting with some of the refugees] would have allowed us to have a greater understanding of the issues that are affecting them.” Carlos stated, “[Visiting the refugee center] was eye opening in so many different ways. I never thought that I would witness that in person and seeing how they live really put things into perspective. It also reminded me that despite the petty challenges that we face, we are truly blessed and fortunate to be where we are. Nonetheless, I believe that the more resourced and privileged we are, the more we should be required to contribute to our people. That experience fortified my belief in the importance of always being aware that somewhere in the world, a group of people are suffering, and that they rely on our support. It awakened in me the spirit of service...”

Visiting the center was a very raw experience that exposed us to a reality that can never be replaced. The refugee center was in the Tempelhof Airport Hangar, which is a very special place for refugees today, and for Berliners in the past. As we walked through security and toward the entrance of the hangar, we walked beside a group of men and boys playing soccer. It was a surreal moment for me. I couldn’t even imagine what these men and children

had experienced in their home countries and on their paths to Germany, but somehow, they were able to share a smile with us as we passed by. This is an image that I will always carry with me upon my return to the United States.

Conclusion: Denver, Colorado

The moment has come, and I am called to the desk by the Customs and Border Protection officer. My heart races, my legs feel numb, and my breath catches. I stand quietly for the longest seconds of my life, blankly staring at the officer, waiting for what he will say next. Then suddenly, he calmly instructs me to place my fingerprints on the scanner. We wait. Next, he simply stamps my passport and grants my advance parole re-entry into the United States! What happens next is all a blur, but I remember the smile that spread across my face. I did it! My parents did it! We did it! The feeling of accomplishment is incomparable to anything else. It was the culmination of the past twenty years as an undocumented immigrant in the United States. It felt as if it was a lifetime of experiences, character, perseverance, and the tenacious pursuit of the American dream had confronted the risk of denial, and we prevailed. I was lawfully admitted into the United States, and the first thing I could do was call my parents and loved ones as I was making my way toward the exit.

Reflecting on my life, the little boy who bathed in the park in the small mountain town of Carbondale, Colorado, never imagined himself traveling to Germany on his own, risking his freedom in pursuit of a new experience and knowledge about people in another hemisphere. It is with my most sincere gratitude that I thank the American Institute for German Contemporary Studies for organizing such a program that has brought so many changes to my life, the life of each participant, and those with whom we will share our experiences. Finding myself blessed with the opportunity to travel, grow, and flourish personally, academically, and emotionally, with my newly-formed family, has been one of life’s greatest gifts.

Notes

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was first presented to the U.S. Congress in 2001, but never passed. The bill would provide a multi-step process toward permanent residence and citizenship for undocumented immigrants that migrated to the United States as children, and met other requirements such as attended higher education or served in the U.S. military.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

An undocumented immigrant that would qualify for the DREAM Act.

IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION, AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC GENERATION

CANAN-CANSU SELTE

Germany and the United States are linked by a long-standing friendship, shaped by shared goals, values, and interests. Their partnership is influenced by common experiences in the postwar era, and a commitment to upholding and protecting democratic ideals.

This essay looks at the issues surrounding immigration and integration in the U.S. and Germany today, and how the two countries' values and perceptions impact their response to these twenty-first century challenges. The essay is representative of the view of a new transatlantic generation, as discussed by a group of twenty participants with a migration background from the U.S. and Germany. In the course of AICGS' New Transatlantic Exchange Program in Washington, DC, and Berlin, Germany, the group participated in intense discussions with experts on policy, employment, education, and religion. Based on these results, the essay points out similarities, challenges, and especially the benefits that both countries can learn from one another when it comes to immigration and integration issues.

National Identity

Every country has its own criteria and its own process for becoming a naturalized citizen. Looking closely at a country's naturalization procedures reveals a society's core elements and how they shape our sense of national cohesion and identity. We must pause and ask: what does it mean to be an American or a German?

Our program in Washington, DC, provided an interesting discussion with an expert from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) (in the Department of Homeland Security), which supervises

immigration in the U.S. Within USCIS, the Office of Citizenship promotes English language learning and encourages citizenship by providing immigrants with opportunities and tools needed in the process of becoming a citizen. It offers different web-based resources designed to help immigrants prepare for the naturalization process and citizenship test. The Office also supports dialogue and collaboration on civic integration and citizenship and encourages partners to welcome immigrants. Around 8.8 million people are waiting for their naturalization to be completed, and the number of applications increases by 10 percent each year. As approximately 800,000 people are naturalized annually, it can be many years until one's application process is completed.

In the U.S., there are two main paths to citizenship: through naturalization or through birthright (either born on U.S. soil or to at least one American parent). At the time of applying for naturalization, the applicant must have been a permanent resident for at least five years; must demonstrate English-language writing, speaking, and comprehension skills (with the exception of applicants older than 50); and must pass a civics test. The U.S. Constitution requires an applicant to show willingness to support and defend the principles of the Constitution and the laws of the United States. He or she must declare his or her "attachment" and loyalty to the U.S. and its Constitution by taking the Oath of Allegiance at an oath ceremony. Additionally, applicants are required to be of good moral character, demonstrated throughout the statutory period and up through the time of naturalization. This includes no criminal history or having committed other unlawful acts.

During the Berlin portion of the program, we learned how the naturalization procedures differ in Germany

from the Department for Integration in the Federal Ministry of the Interior. The ministry's agencies include a comprehensive range of tasks such as civil protection, security, and integration. Until 2000, Germany followed the law of origin, meaning that a child acquired German citizenship at birth if at least one of his or her parents was a native German. The Citizenship Law (Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht, StAG), amended in 2000, changed citizenship requirements to be similar to those in the U.S., and allows immigrants to become naturalized citizens. As such, nationality is no longer connected to the origin of parents. It requires that an immigrant's parents must have lived in Germany for at least eight years and must have obtained permanent residency during that time. As in the U.S., German naturalization requires a civics test, testing familiarity with the legal system, society, and customs in the Federal Republic of Germany, but it is not as involved as in the United States. Being of good moral character and taking an oath are two requirements for naturalization that occur only in the U.S. By updating its naturalization laws, Germany is encouraging immigrants to become citizens, recognizing that citizenship plays a key role when it comes to successful integration by giving immigrants the opportunity to participate actively in society and politics and by granting them equal status under the law.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN OR A GERMAN?

The U.S. and Germany have different starting points when it comes to naturalization, which plays a key role in terms of integration. The American naturalization requirements show the importance of the founding principles of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. More specifically, this awareness of national identity is a common thread connecting all Americans. Americans, no matter by birth or by choice, have the right to free expression, to choose religious beliefs as they wish, and to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Americans are part of a community with common rights and responsibilities, which must be respected, exercised, and honored. This is why many immigrants come to the country and apply for citizenship: the hope for increased liberty, equal rights, and better prospects for their futures. In exchange, there are

legal responsibilities for every U.S. citizen: supporting the U.S. Constitution, defending the country, and paying taxes. American citizenship is closely linked to American identity, as I saw on my first visit to the U.S. I sensed a certain amount of pride in the people I met during my stay in Washington, DC. Regardless of the position one holds in society, he holds it in high regard and take his work seriously, be it the airport security officer, the supermarket employee, or the bank teller.

Germany's old law of origin meant that being German was not a learning or assimilation process and, as such, "Germanness" could not be attained by foreigners. Despite the 2000 change in the law, this notion that one is German when one's parents are native Germans by blood and history is solidly anchored in peoples' minds. This became one of the issues in our debates during the program: How could a woman wearing a hijab, despite speaking German fluently and being born and raised in Germany, be considered a German?

In comparison with Germany, the United States is more open-minded when talking about integration, largely due to its past experiences with immigrants and minorities. Speakers during our Washington meetings discussed how integration and immigration is documented in the U.S., which differs greatly from Germany. The U.S. is more transparent and precise, with data on race, religion, and residency status; Germany does not gather the same data. The U.S. census asks residents to choose the race or the races with which they most closely identify and, beyond that, indicate whether they are of Hispanic or Latino origin. Since 2000, respondents can choose two or more races, allowing residents to select every ethnic group with which they identify. Most of the AICGS program participants identify as members of two or more races.

Integration takes place differently for native-born Americans and for immigrants without American citizenship—a fact that draws parallels with Germany. Coming from a migration background and being born in Germany, I notice when it comes to integration that I automatically adopted "German" values and cultural customs because I was raised in an open-minded community. This impression of feeling a national identity with their country of residence was also confirmed

by the other members of the AICGS group, regardless of whether they are naturalized. I think you feel successfully integrated when you feel part of a certain group of society, when you behave and act like a common inhabitant in your place of residence. Unfortunately, there is a big discrepancy between self-perception and the perception of others, which can differ widely.

Importance of Education for Economic Opportunity

Hispanics are the largest minority in the United States, making up approximately 17 percent of the population. Their buying power is nearly \$1.3 trillion. This powerful group has a big impact on the population and demographic changes underway in the U.S. Although Hispanics are more educated nowadays, there are still many difficulties to overcome.

In my experience, I am a student from a non-academic background (i.e., my parents did not achieve higher education), and I fully understand the importance of encouraging young people to aim for an academic degree. Many immigrant students are still academically behind and less likely to graduate from high school compared to non-immigrants. In order to succeed, we found we must reach minorities at an earlier age. In many cases, young people do not have the courage to aim higher. Our discussions noted that waiting until university to reach out to minority populations is much too late; few immigrants are able to reach university due to common barriers such as economic limitations. Encouraging higher education would help them to raise their standard of living. The government has to take responsibility for young Hispanics and acknowledge their potential for the U.S. economy. In this way, not only Hispanics, but also the country as a whole would benefit from this effort of investment and support.

When it comes to integration, it is important that Hispanics gain more confidence in the business world. Our discussions underlined the importance of altering the corporate structure, which could produce a change in the way Hispanics are treated. A change in mentality is essential: Hispanics are often associated with blue collar, uneducated, or menial jobs. Many Hispanics are still working on the bottom rungs

of the economy in low-paying service jobs. It is often the children of first-generation immigrants who have to overcome these prejudices in order to be accepted in a company. Their career paths are often limited by color or cultural background. It is important that positive role models can show the possibilities available to them, including emphasizing that education is still one of the most important linchpins of success.

Looking at Germany, we can see effort and support of education for immigrants, and the recognition that economic success and education are deeply intertwined. Today, there are around 3 million people of Turkish descent living in Germany. They often run their own businesses, totaling roughly 400,000 employees and adding to the economy by paying approximately €40 billion in taxes. Like Hispanic immigrants in the U.S., this group offers potential for strong economic growth.

The Neukölln neighborhood of Berlin is an area with the highest percentage of immigrants in the city, representing more than 160 nations. Many immigrants are from Turkey, but there are also Roma families from Romania and Bulgaria. The area must deal with a number of intercultural challenges and imbalances between administration and a diverse society.

One of the projects offered in Neukölln is called "Neighborhood Mothers," which tries to approach integration through education. As in the U.S., children with a migrant background face many difficulties in school, and it is essential to provide children with the tools and skills they need to overcome diverse barriers from an early age.

Neighborhood Mothers helps immigrant mothers to integrate into their new communities. The main objectives are to promote access to information and services that help families and to encourage them to make use of local childcare facilities. Many parents have had negative experiences with school counseling and administration, which the district mother tries to defuse. The mothers share their experiences (which are often quite similar) and talk about challenges in their everyday lives, particularly those relating to their children and families, their education and needs. The Neighborhood Mothers explain to newcomers how the school system works and emphasize the impor-

tance of education. Our discussions noted that the seed of a successful educational path is planted in primary school; it is very important to convince both parents and students of the importance of regular school attendance. Still, it can be difficult to reach traditional families.

Another project that helps immigrants become part of the economic system in Germany is “Migrant Hub,” a network community offering shared spaces for people working on immigration and integration issues. In this way, actors from non-governmental organizations, research institutes, social initiatives, start-ups, and politics are connected and have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences. Thus, they can learn from each other and achieve more through community. They are an open-minded network system that tries to be flexible in offering new workshops, gatherings, or meet-ups in order to focus on supporting the growth of innovative solutions for challenges in society.

These education and network projects were founded in order to raise awareness of and a sense of responsibility to the diverse society found in both countries. By attaining higher education, immigrants can improve their individual career paths, thereby enriching the local economy in their home cities. In the U.S., there are still a lot of young people—especially Hispanics or Latinos—growing up in low-income households, with parents who have not attended college. More programs are needed to engage in better outreach in order to help them prepare to succeed in college. As our discussions in Washington noted, such support is necessary for young immigrants’ road to success in the future. Often the lack of information about college opportunities and how to access them, cultural differences, citizenship issues, language barriers, or discrimination prevent immigrants from attaining their full educational and economic potential in both Germany and the United States.

Addressing these issues would benefit not only young immigrants, but also society as a whole. Educated immigrants pay higher taxes and are less likely to depend on public support than those who lack an academic background. Educated immigrants increase productivity in their workplaces, which is

reflected in more economic growth and higher earnings. Education also contributes to more active civic engagement, for example voting or volunteering.

The Key Role of Language

Language is one of the key drivers of active participation in society in terms of integration and immigration, as we discussed in Washington.

English classes in the U.S. are mainly geared toward documented immigrants to help students prepare for the TOEFL test or other English language tests. In many instances, attendees need a Social Security number to register for and benefit from educational opportunities, making it difficult for undocumented immigrants to access these classes. The courses are classified according to difficulty. Some courses focus on practical skills or other soft skills to gain the ability to interact in society.

The U.S. has probably more bilingual speakers than any other country in the world; as one speaker pointed out, nearly half of the people living in California speak Spanish. While the U.S. has no national official language, some states do recognize Spanish as an official language (in addition to English). The federal government must provide vital documents in every language. Indeed, English has always been the de facto national language, and at times has been aggressively promoted by the “English-Only” movement. The lack of any official language policy allowed different organizations purporting to defend their country and language from outside influences. In some states, English is still the only language allowed in public schools. Although many politicians have taken part in heated debates about English-only over the years, it has yet to be established.

This issue demonstrates the need to talk about language in connection with racism and discrimination. Although there are many regional dialects of English, it is often Spanish-speaking immigrants who are targets of violence and racism. Those speaking “Migrant English” are at a disadvantage in society, and are not accepted or seen as real Americans, regardless of their citizenship status.

Generational differences can be seen in language ability. While many first-generation Latino immigrants are unable to speak English, their U.S.-born children speak English very well. We see that English language skills increase from one immigrant generation to the next. Parents are no longer refusing to learn English or to otherwise assimilate in society. As noted by one of our speakers, organizations like the Washington English Center offer programs to interested learners of all ages. The organization supports families and encourages them to make more use of programs, to be involved in their children's education, and to meet native-speakers in order to improve their English language skills. In this way, the Center tries to promote social and regional cohesion.

However, immigrants' native language must also be valued. Speaking another language can help with learning English; it is a continuous process of developing vocabulary. In the best scenarios, individuals switch between both languages and benefit from the resulting cultural interactions.

On a broader level, there are a lot of benefits connected to a pool of diverse languages in a country. Languages help to achieve cultural diversity: immigrants bring their own culture, values, and languages to their new country. Multilingual diversity contributes to social development.

The Influence of Religion

One of the most interesting topics in our discussions, which led to a heated debate among our program participants, was the role of religion in the process of integration.

One organization in Berlin, a project called JUMA, works to enable young Muslims to speak with representatives of policy, economics, and academia, thereby providing participants an opportunity to contribute to all areas of social life.

Running a religious—especially Muslim—organization is often associated with radicalization. The JUMA Project distances itself from radical ideas and wants to be a positive platform in terms of integration, to empower immigrants and help them gain access in society. They offer different workshops for young

participants to help them learn new skills, and work to motivate Muslims at various levels, such as voting, talking about policy, and actively participating in a democratic order. JUMA wants to ensure that young Muslims appear in and are recognized by society. Muslims are often cast in a negative light, especially after this year's acts of terrorism in Europe. Thus, it is all the more important to give young Muslims the chance to express their point of view.

JUMA works in cooperation with mosques and other Muslim organizations, allowing young people to interact with other Muslim youth and discuss their faith. It also works with other religious groups, including the Jewish community, to promote intercultural exchange. Our group felt that this was an important point for how movement in society works: if many young people with different starting points engage in dialogue, it helps to enrich each view on common issues. We need to maintain an open dialogue in society to prevent discrimination and social marginalization. The news in Germany often shows government agencies or other academic institutes talking about a "parallel society" in terms of Turkish immigrants in the country. Projects like JUMA can help minorities to be an active part of their new home country and facilitate their entry to different fields. Indeed, preventing minorities from retiring from social life is one of the main issues of immigration and integration.

"ISLAMOPHOBIA" IN GERMANY

German society often perceives religion as a threat or a dangerous ideology, not differentiating between Islam as a religion and Islamic terrorism as a form of terrorism committed by militant Muslims. Although Germany has not experienced the same kind of terrorist attacks as in other European countries, Germans are most afraid of terrorism by radical Islamists. Islam is not seen as enriching society; it has a negative image, categorized as violent, intolerant, and repressive. These stereotypes are difficult to overcome in our everyday social lives. Although Muslims in Germany are one of the biggest minority groups living in Europe, the perception is that Islam is inconsistent with Western Europe and many native-born citizens share the opinion that Islam does not fit with the view of European life.

The anti-Islam Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) Party has emerged as a result of increased Islamophobia, but the program's speaker did not see this political movement as a potential threat because its platform not a strong competitor in the Bundestag. Rather, it is a noisy voice of society and should be taken seriously, even though it speaks for a minority of the population.

Other political parties are working assuage the fears of this group in society, believing that a fight against anti-Islam parties should not be the status quo. The CDU, the party of the first Muslim member of the Bundestag, Cemile Giousouf, is working to strengthen its Islam discourse and to continue working on issues related to religion in society. We should bring dialogue to the fore, rather than fighting against radical parties. As our society becomes more colorful and diverse, we should start to see that as an opportunity and not as a threat.

MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. is home to the most diverse and colorful group of Muslims worldwide, coming from many different ethnic backgrounds. American Muslims work in almost every occupational field, from manual labor to academia, and are active in all aspects of American civic life.

Despite their diversity and involvement in society, Muslim Americans are confronted with the effects of Islamic terrorism. As in Germany, American society feels threatened by terrorism and the potential for it to occur in the U.S., but the rights of every citizen in the U.S. are still highly valued in comparison to Germany. My impression of America as the land of liberty and diversity has been proven to be true, at least during my participation in our program. The United States seems to be more open than Germany to change and diversity in society in the matter of integration.

The U.S. does not impose religious beliefs and values, and minorities' religious rights are not limited. All Americans are assured of the freedom of religion, a point that is handled quite differently in Germany. German society fears Islamic projects, such as building a mosque or founding new Muslim associa-

tions. Germans feel their culture and values are being restricted, and as a result, we have seen the growth of far-right movements, such as the AfD and Pegida.

Building a Culture of Acceptance

REFUGEE POLICY IN GERMANY

Today, Germany is facing a crisis in refugee policy after more than 1 million refugees arrived in the country in a short time. It is a stress test, not only for society, but also for political leaders of every party. German society still struggles with accepting the country as a country of immigration. Rather than blaming refugees for social problems, Germany needs to look at how migration successfully worked in the past. One positive example is the post-1945 migration of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and Russia back to Germany.

Berlin's former Tempelhof Airport has served as a refugee center since September 2015, when the huge waves of refugees started to arrive. Our program group was given a guided tour by Tamaja, a service provider in the public sector working with different organizations relating to social infrastructure.

The airport is divided into seven hangars, of which four are currently inhabited by approximately 1,500 refugees. Our tour took us through the hangars in order to experience the facilities offered to the refugees. We started in Hangar 2, which was the first to be occupied by refugees, where they lived in tents with small bunk beds. The hangars are almost 100m long and 20m high, with huge sliding doors originally designed for airplanes. Refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Republic of Moldova live together in the cramped space, and the living conditions feel very temporary.

Although the hangars have been adapted for refugees' use, there is little privacy in the camp. Due to strict fire regulations, there are no doors on the sleeping boxes. Families must share their space with other families. Overall, the conditions in the refugee camp are challenging for each individual working and living there.

The refugee camp offers several services, including a medical office, which provides primary healthcare; a “Medi-Point” open 24 hours a day in case of medical urgency; a food counter; and a social services office. Here, social workers help refugees with the application process for asylum and other requests. Refugees often have to wait months for their asylum requests to be reviewed, which can have major impacts on their everyday lives. Social workers are the face of this delay, which leads to distrust and frustration for both the refugees (at the lack of progress) and for the social workers (because they are stymied by the bureaucracy). Refugees can lose hope in a better life and the hopes that brought them to Germany.

There are, however, innovative solutions to the challenges facing refugees. One initiative is called Re:start, a volunteer project for refugees who want to start their own business. Refugees are more willing to take risks than any other immigrant group because of the fact that they have left everything behind. Thus, they are more likely to open their own businesses and are highly motivated compared to Germans. Many already have experience running their own business in their home country. The Re:start Project organizes community meetings for those interested in order to inform refugees on how to get along in the German economy. They give tax advice, offer strategy help on design and marketing, and provide an overview of German requirements for going into business oneself. Re:start is financed by crowd funding and uses social media platforms to gain publicity.

If we give refugees the opportunity to participate in society, they will contribute to the country’s prosperity. One of the main problems for refugees is the long waiting period for their asylum procedures, which can take many months. During this time, they cannot do anything, ranging from language courses to working in any industry. This lost time holds them back from becoming integrated, because we actively exclude refugees from society—even though many are eager and motivated to start a new chapter of their lives.

Chancellor Angela Merkel’s welcoming stance toward all refugees has been attacked from many sides. We still have a lot of challenges to face in terms of integrating refugees into our society, and integrating immigrants in general. However, it seems that

this new political track will lead us to new insights into the importance of immigration in society. These experiences will be beneficial to our civic life—if we can overcome the barriers of prejudices and fear.

IMMIGRATION VERSUS EMIGRATION

What is the difference between immigration and emigration? By definition, to emigrate means to leave your country of origin and settle in another. To immigrate means to arrive in that new country. So the difference depends on the point of view from which you observe a certain situation. This small difference between meanings has a great impact on our understanding of the context of integration in society.

Every fifth individual in German society has an immigration background. Around 45 percent of this group are European immigrants from other countries in the European Union. There is a huge mobility in Europe due to European integration, the Schengen agreement, and labor mobility.

Germany is second behind the United States in the world ranking of top immigration countries. Typically, more than 400,000 immigrants arrive in Germany per year, in comparison to the 1 million in the U.S. Germany has received immigrants from nearly 190 different nations, and society as a whole is gaining a wide range of diversity. The good conditions found in Germany’s labor market make the country attractive to immigrants who want to stay permanently. The number of immigrants arriving over the years leaves no doubt that Germany is a country of immigration, despite policymakers’ reluctance to acknowledge it as such. Chancellor Helmut Kohl once commented that “Germany is not and can never be an immigration country.” Many in politics and in society have willfully ignored reality.

Germany has recorded peaks in immigration throughout its history, starting from the seventeenth century when French Huguenots immigrated to Germany because of religious issues, to the 1960s when many guest workers arrived from Turkey. It is still a hard-fought acceptance that Germany had become a country of immigration. Since 2000, Germany has been working to adapt its immigration policy—although this is much too late. Along with the

updated citizenship law in 2000, Germany passed a new immigration law in 2005, which set a new course in terms of immigration and integration. This politically-delayed response to the integration issue gives a further look at how our society is organized.

Integration issues from a sociological perspective describe how social systems are related to each other; this perspective does not actually focus on individuals itself. Moreover, integration can be understood as a process of cohesion of common groups in society finding similarities, determining differences, and approaching values. There are some requirements for contribution to the dialogue in society on integration issues: in a way, immigrants have to reorganize their own personalities by learning the language of their new home country, becoming familiar with their new surroundings, and bringing a lot of commitment and willingness toward society. It is a two-way street, in that the receiving society has to meet the demands of integration in order for it to be successful for both. Unfortunately, integration is often shaped by prejudices, xenophobia, and racism, and is not a black-and-white scenario.

New Transatlantic Connection: Improving Understanding of Immigration and Integration

Germany and the United States share a lot of the same challenges and successes of integrating minorities into society. Both countries are the most important destinations for migration all over the world. Economic development, good living standards, and social progress are just some of the main reasons people leave their countries of origin and immigrate to their receiving country of choice.

Immigrants enter with great hopes for a better life and new homes in our societies, which poses new challenges on different levels. Regardless of immigration background, the personal and specific requirements and responsibilities for a well-integrated resident are all the same. Our discussions during the exchange program yielded four central points on immigration and integration issues:

1. Education and Economic Opportunity. In order for immigrants to contribute fully to the labor market and economic prosperity, they must have the opportunity to achieve higher levels of education. We should continue to work on the issue of delivering higher educational standards to immigrants, and overcoming the barriers to education that still exist.

2. Language. Language is undoubtedly a key factor of one's ability to contribute to society. There are several organizations and programs supporting immigrants on this issue, but neither Germany nor the United States fully values multilingualism. Immigrants who speak in their native language—especially Turkish and Arabic in Germany and Spanish in the U.S.—are still discriminated against and negatively perceived.

3. Freedom of Religion. The United States is far ahead of Germany in granting all people the freedom to practice their religion. Whereas German society tends to fear certain religions and blames the country's problems on refugees or Islam, in the U.S., liberty is highly valued. Americans have a greater tolerance for different religions.

4. Acceptance. The number of immigrants in relation to the whole population of Germany is very small; even so, people are afraid of foreign infiltration in terms of losing their cultural standards or values in any way. This leads us to a core difference between the U.S. and Germany: how immigrants should be integrated in our society.

Integration from an American prospective means learning English, becoming educated in order to contribute on an economic level, and being a self-supported and responsible citizen.

Conversely, integration from a German point of view is more cultural—as we called it in our discussions during the program, “becoming a white person.” German society expects immigrants to assimilate in all areas of life, including religion and identity.

Establishing a New Transatlantic Community dedicated to immigration and integration issues is a great benefit for both societies. When it comes to integration of minorities in our countries, we face almost the

same problems, and we should keep working on overcoming racism and discrimination. Debating the issues discussed in this essay is a step in the right direction to help both immigrants and society. We must not forget that integration is a two-way process.

Integration should be valued as an opportunity. Diversity according to religion, ethnic background, cultural differences, and language are all components of a healthy community. If we prevent any new influence on our communities, there will be no progress at all. As George Bernard Shaw once said, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

APPENDIX

Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation: German-American Youth Exchange Program

AGENDA: WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 11, 2015 – OCTOBER 15, 2015

Day One: Arrival

Date: Sunday, October 11

Day Two: Arrival and Welcome Reception

Date: Monday, October 12

Location: AICGS, 1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700

This will be a free day for exploring sites and monuments in Washington, DC

5:00 – 6:00pm	Orientation
6:00 – 8:00pm	Welcome Reception and Light Dinner
	Speakers: Dr. Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS Dr. Jackson Janes, AICGS

Day Three: Conference

Date: Tuesday, October 13

Location: Johns Hopkins University, SAIS Rome Building 806, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW

9:00 – 10:30am	Leadership Training and Breakfast 1744 R Street NW Facilitator: Lora Berg, The German Marshall Fund (GMF)
10:30 – 10:45am	Walk to SAIS Rome Building 806, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW
10:45 – 12:15pm	Panel I: Integration and Immigration Issues Speakers: Adam Hunter, Director, Immigration and the States, Pew Charitable Trust Sayyid Syeed, National Director, Islamic Society of North America
12:15 – 1:00pm	Luncheon
1:00 – 2:30pm	Panel 2: Public Health and Law Speakers: Liliana Rañón, Associate Director, AAPI & Latino Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Kelly Richter, National Immigration Law Centre
2:30 – 3:00pm	Coffee Break

- 3:00 – 4:00pm Panel 3: Teaching English and Bilingual Education
Speakers: Mary Spanarkel, Director of Curriculum and Instruction,
Washington English Center
Victor Reinoso, Senior Advisor to Bellwether and Former DC
Deputy Mayor of Education
- 4:00 – 5:00pm Panel 4: Integration in Business: Corporate Responsibility
Speaker: Lisette Garcia, Senior Director, HACR Research Institute,
Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR)
- 5:00 – 6:30pm Free Time
6:30 – 8:30pm Dinner
Café Dupont, 1500 New Hampshire Avenue NW

Day Four: Site Visits

Date: Wednesday, October 14

Location: Meet at the Hotel

- 8:00am Bus Pick-Up: Meet in front of hotel by 7:45am
- 8:45 – 9:45am 1st Site Visit: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Address: 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Host: Nathaniel Stiefel, Deputy Direct, Office of Citizenship,
Department of Homeland Security
- 10:15 – 12:00pm 2nd Site Visit: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
Address: 4645 Reservoir Road NW
Host: Dominik Mutter, Minister Counselor
- 12:30 – 2:00pm 3rd Site Visit: Congress
Address: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room SD-G11, First Street
NE and C Street NE
Host: Mischa Thompson, Policy Advisor, U.S. Commission on
Security and Cooperation in Europe
Erika Schlager, Counsel for International Law, U.S.
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
Maria Meier, Senior Advisor/Director, Senate Democratic
Diversity Initiative, Office of U.S. Senate Majority Leader
Harry Reid
- 2:30 – 4:00pm 4th Site Visit: Migration Policy Institute
Address: 1400 16th Street NW #300
Hosts: Victoria Rietig, Policy Analyst
Susan Fratzke, Associate Policy Analyst
Julie Sugarman, National Center on Immigrant Integration
Policy
- 4:35 – 5:30pm Meeting with Council Member Raquel Castañeda-López, Detroit, Michigan -
District 6
Address: AICGS, 1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700
- 5:45 – 7:00pm 5th Site Visit: The National Mall, the Martin Luther King Memorial and the
Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial
- 7:30 – 9:00pm Reception at AICGS

Overview of Organizations

The German Marshall Fund of the United States

is a non-profit organization created through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance. The objective of GMF is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this through contributing research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues deemed relevant to policymakers.

The Islamic Society of North America is a nonprofit organization that has served Muslims on the North American continent for over 40 years. Their goal is to be an exemplary and unifying Islamic organization and contribute to the well-being of the Muslim community and overall society. This is done through the development of the Muslim community, interfaith relations, civic engagement, and better understanding of Islam.

The Pew Charitable Trust is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization founded in 1948 that focuses on global research and public policy. Their mission is to improve public policy by conducting research and educating the public with useful data that illuminate the issues and trends that shape the world. Public policy issues that the Trust focuses on include the environment, state policy, economic policy, and health and human services.

League of United Latin American Citizens is an advocacy organization that provides and serves all Hispanic nationality groups. It is considered the largest and oldest organization in the United States that focuses on advancing the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs nationwide.

The National Immigration Law Center, founded in 1979, is the primary advocacy organization that focuses exclusively on defending and advancing the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their families in the United States. They firmly believe in a U.S. society in which people are treated equally regardless of their gender, race, or income and in which they also have equal access to educa-

tion, government resources, and economic opportunities. The staff at the National Immigration Law Center has expertise on a wide range of issues that affect the lives of U.S. immigrants.

Washington English Center is a community-based program that has offered English and literacy training to low-income adult immigrants since 1993. The Center believes in providing education to immigrants so they can have the tools necessary to establish a better life for themselves and their families. Regardless of ability to pay, the Washington English Center makes it their goal to provide high quality educational services, access to technology, and life-skill programs using volunteer teachers.

Bellwether Education Partners is a nonprofit organization that focuses on helping education organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors become more effective in their work and achieve dramatic results, especially for high-needs students. They provide a unique combination of talent, exceptional thinking, and hands-on strategic support to achieve their goals. They believe in the importance of ensuring that children have access to high quality education and schooling.

Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR), founded in 1986, is one of the most influential advocacy organizations, representing over 16 national Hispanic organizations in the United States and Puerto Rico. The goal of HACR is to advance the inclusion of Hispanics in Corporate America at a level corresponding to their economic contributions. Specifically, there are four areas of corporate social responsibility and market reciprocity that that HACR focuses on: employment, procurement, philanthropy, and governance.

SITE VISITS

The U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service is the government agency that oversees the lawful immigration to the United States. Their mission is to provide accurate and useful information to their customers, grant immigration and citizenship benefits, promote an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensure the integrity of the U.S. immigration system. The Office of Citizenship seeks to engage

and support partners to welcome immigrants, promote English language learning and education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and encourage U.S. citizenship.

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, located in Washington, DC, is the official representation of the Federal Government of Germany in the United States. Like other embassies, services provided include numerous consular and legal services for German citizens and U.S. residents.

U.S. Congress is the bicameral legislature of the federal government of the United States. It consists of two Houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Congress meets in the Capitol building located in Washington, DC.

Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe, also known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission, is an independent agency of the U.S. federal government. It focuses on monitoring compliance with the Helsinki Accords and advances comprehensive security through the promotion of human rights; democracy; and economic, environmental, and military cooperation in the OSCE region.

Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank that focuses on analyzing the movement of people worldwide. Founded in 2001, they aim to provide local, national, and international levels of analysis of the development and evaluation of migration and refugee policies. They firmly believe that international migration must be actively and intelligently managed.

National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy is focused on educating society and others who seek to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities today's high rates of immigration create in local communities. Services that the Center provides include policy-focused research, policy design, leadership development, technical assistance and training for government officials and community leaders, and an electronic resource center on immigrant and integration issues with a special focus on state and local policies and data.

Established in 1991, the **National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA)** is a nonpartisan asso-

ciation of major Hispanic national organizations and distinguished Hispanic leaders. The organization's goal is to strengthen unity among Latinos around the country in order of providing the Hispanic community with greater visibility and a clearer stronger influence in the country's affairs. NHLA does this through bringing together Hispanic leaders to establish policy priorities to raise awareness of the major issues affecting the Latino community.

The **National Mall** is a national park in Washington, DC. Situated on the banks of the Potomac River, the National Mall is a two-mile swath of land bound by the U.S. Capitol to the east and the Lincoln Memorial to the west. Visitors to "the Mall" will find a wide, pedestrian-friendly, tree-lined boulevard with moving monuments and memorials, world-famous museums, and impressive federal buildings along Constitution Avenue. The National Mall welcomes millions of visitors every year, but it has also played host to many history-making events. This is where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech to hundreds of thousands who marched on Washington. This is where protestors make their voices heard.

The **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial** is a monument that represents the dedication of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his leadership in the civil rights movement. The monument, built out of solid granite, was established to further cement his legacy in the tapestry of the American experience. His leadership in the drive for realization of the freedoms and liberties laid down in the foundation of the United States of America for all of its citizens, without regard to race, color, or creed, is what introduced this young southern clergyman to the nation.

The **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial** is a presidential memorial in Washington, DC, dedicated to the memory of one of the most beloved U.S. presidents, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Dedicated by President Bill Clinton in 1997, the memorial is a testament to President Franklin Roosevelt's four terms in office that included events that shaped the history of the U.S. such as the Great Depression and World War II. The structure is made out of red South Dakota granite and was the first memorial built to be wheelchair accessible.

Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation:
German-American Youth Exchange Program

AGENDA: BERLIN, MAY 1, 2016 – MAY 4, 2016

Day One: Arrival

Date: Sunday, May 1

Day Two: Arrival and Welcome Reception

Date: Monday, May 2

This will be a free day for exploring sites and monuments in Berlin

4:00 – 5:30pm	Visit to a Migrant Welcome Center TAMAJA Notunterkunft Flughafen Tempelhof, Columbiadamm 10-11
6:00 – 8:00pm	Welcome Reception and Light Dinner Langenbeck-Virchow-Haus, Luisenstrasse 58/59 Speakers: Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS Necla Benzer, Project Re:Start

Day Three: Conference

Date: Tuesday, May 3

Location: Kaiserin-Friedrich-Stiftung, Robert-Koch-Platz 7

9:00 – 10:30am	Panel I: Immigration and Politics Speakers: Mekonnen Mesghena, Department Head Migration and Diversity, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Dietmar Molthagen, Forum Berlin, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Christina Krause, Coordinator for Refugees and Migration, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
10:30 – 12:00pm	Panel 2: The Challenges and Opportunities in Immigration and Integration Speakers: Ulrich Weinbrenner, Head of the Department for Integration, Federal Ministry of the Interior Serhat Karakayali, Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research
12:00 – 2:00pm	Luncheon and General Discussion
2:00 – 3:30pm	Panel 3: Integration and Communities Speakers: Cordula Simon, City Council of Neukölln, Berlin Astrid Ziebarth, German Marshall Fund
3:30 – 3:45pm	Coffee Break
3:45 – 5:30pm	Panel 4: Immigration and Society Speakers: Katharina Dermühl, Migration Hub Fatuma Musa Afrah, Sharehouse Refugio
5:30 – 6:30pm	Free Time
6:30 – 8:30pm	Working Dinner Participant Reflections

Day Four: Site Visits

Date: Wednesday, May 4

Location: Meet at the Hotel

8:00am	Bus Pick-Up: Meet in front of hotel by 7:45am
8:45 – 9:45am	1st Site Visit: Auswärtiges Amt Address: Werderscher Markt 1 Host: Petra Drexler, Deputy Head of Department for Cultural Relations with the Middle East and Intercultural Dialogue
10:15 – 12:00pm	2nd Site Visit: JUMA Project Address: Meet – Mitte, Chausseestrasse 86, Hofgebäude Host: Kofi Ohene-Dokyi, JUMA Project Lydia Nofal, JUMA Project
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch on the go
1:00 – 2:00pm	3rd Site Visit: U.S. Embassy Address: Pariser Platz 2 Host: Deputy Chief of Mission Kent Logsdon
2:30 – 4:00pm Sinti Straße	4th Site Visit: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Memorial to the and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime Address: Meet at the corner of Hannah-Arendt-Straße and Cora-Berliner- Straße
4:45 – 6:00pm	5th Site Visit: German Bundestag Reception with interested MdBs and their staff Address: Platz der Republik 1 Host: Andreas Nick (MdB CDU) Henriette Rytz, Foreign Policy Advisor to Cem Özdemir Julian Voje, Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter to Andreas Nick
6:30 – 8:00pm	Tour of German Bundestag Address: Platz der Republik 1 Host: Andreas Nick
8:00 – 9:30 pm	Dinner Final Reflections on Exchange Program Guests: Andreas Nick, Julian Voje

Overview of Organizations

Project Re:Start is a startup incubator for refugees. They help refugees set up their own businesses in Germany and serve as a platform where refugees (and residents) can come together, create new ideas, and kickstart. Project Re:Start organizes innovative workshops and events, helping refugees build a network of like-minded newcomers. They help refugees to test and implement business ideas and support them with legal issues, help compile business plans, and search for potential investors. They offer a wide network of mentors and supporters who are able to support entrepreneurs in the long term with specific concerns and questions.

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung, affiliated with the German Green Party, is a catalyst for Green visions and projects, a think-tank for policy reform, and an international network. It promotes the development of democratic civil society at home and abroad, and defends equal rights and equal opportunities regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or nationality. The primary objectives guiding the Heinrich Böll Stiftung's work are establishing democracy and human rights, fighting against environmental degradation, safeguarding everyone's rights of social participation, supporting non-violent conflict resolution, and defending the rights of individuals.

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) is the oldest political foundation in Germany, named after Friedrich Ebert, the first democratically-elected president. As a party-affiliated foundation, FES bases their work on the basic values of social democracy: freedom, justice, and solidarity. As a nonprofit institution, FES acts independently and wants to promote the pluralistic society dialogue on the policy challenges of the present.

Forum Berlin is an initiative seeking to organize civic education and communication as well as policy advice to the state by partnering with government, parliaments, academia, political parties, interest groups, and the economy. Forum Berlin desires to establish democratic discourse between citizens, policy, science, and practice, for the joint development of solutions for policy in terms of a social and democratic society.

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) is a foundation that operates as a think-tank and consulting agency, its soundly researched scientific fundamental concepts and current analyses are meant to offer a basis for possible political action. At home as well as abroad, KAS' civic education programs aim at promoting freedom and liberty, peace, and justice. KAS focuses on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

The Department for Integration of Germany's Federal Ministry of the Interior aims to integrate all people permanently and lawfully living in Germany into society and to grant them the related rights and duties. Along with asylum, refugees, the labor market, and the EU's internal market, migration is one of the key issues of home affairs policy. Integration means living together as one society, not in separate worlds. German society should be characterized by respect, mutual trust, shared responsibility, and a sense of community.

The Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (BIM) develops basic scholarly principles and empirical data aimed at providing a factual basis for debate on integration issues in Europe, and investigates how integration and migration processes in Germany and Europe have taken place so far and will develop in the future. The BIM is designed for cooperative research and aims at building a broad base for establishing integration and migration research in Berlin. Through its research, the BIM transfers information and findings into the worlds of politics, civil society, and the media.

The City Council of Neukölln governs the eighth borough of Berlin, located in the southeastern part of the city. Neukölln has over 323,000 residents from more than 160 nations, as well as one of the highest percentages of immigrants in Berlin. Neukölln has been selected as pilot city of the Council of Europe and the European Commission Intercultural Cities program.

The German Marshall Fund of the United States is a non-profit organization created through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan

assistance. The objective of GMF is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this through contributing research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues deemed relevant to policymakers.

The Migration Hub sees collaboration between volunteers and activists, social entrepreneurs, migrants, and other stakeholders. It connects initiatives; promotes mutual exchange; stimulates to build new, creative solutions; and should help to ensure that each project can realize its full potential. Its aim is to create multiple synergies, and by civic engagement use opportunities of migration. Here, Migration Hub Berlin is particularly dedicated to the task of establishing national and international links between initiatives, initiators, and volunteers, so that working solutions spread quickly and can also be built elsewhere. Scalable solutions—such as currently being built in Germany and throughout Europe—have a very high value in such a ubiquitous crisis.

Sharehouse Refugio provides refuge, community, and renewal of wanderers of different cultures. At the Sharehaus Refugio, residents encourage each other to develop unique skills and talents. The Refugio began a vocational German language learning program to help people start a good career or education as soon as possible. Refugio residents also operate a café, neighborhood market, and workshops, and thrive on shared experiences and communal wealth.

The Junge Islam Konferenz (JIK) is a forum for dialogue and a multipliers network of young people between the ages of 17 and 25 years old. As a nationwide forum, JIK provides religious and non-religious youth with and without a migration background a platform for knowledge, exchanges, and participation in social debates about the role of Islam in Germany.

SITE VISITS

TAMAJA provides people suffering from war, famine, or persecution with protection and accommodation in Germany. These people in emergency situations

require and need holistic care. The accommodation, care, and integration of fugitives is a task that can only be done with the involvement of all social forces. For this purpose, they see themselves as an interface between displaced people and actors from politics, the administration, welfare, and civil society's responsibility. TAMAJA works with representatives inside all areas in the development and organization of a people-centered infrastructure.

The Auswärtiges Amt (German Federal Foreign Office) represents the interests of Germany in the world, promotes international exchange, and provides Germans abroad with protection and assistance.

The Department for Cultural Relations with the Middle East and Intercultural Dialogue seeks to stimulate discussion within the society of Islamic countries, provide impetus, and soften stereotypes through differentiated perceptions. The main focus stems from themes that interest a young audience. It is important that partners are involved that are not already Westernized. The exchange of values, views, and opinions may not omit controversy.

The JUMA Project seeks to give Muslim youth a voice. The JUMA Project makes accessible encounters with politics and other areas of society. In cooperation with mosques and Muslim organizations, an interest in participation and democratic experience will be strengthened among Muslim youth, and they will be given an opportunity to participate in all areas of social life. Through this these youth can give other young Muslims in Germany a similar perspective.

The U.S. Embassy, located in Berlin, is the official representation of the U.S. federal government in Germany. Like other embassies, services provided include numerous consular and legal services for American citizens and residents of Germany.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the center of Berlin is the German Holocaust Memorial honoring and remembering the up to six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Located between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz, the Memorial consists of the Field of Stelae designed by Peter Eisenman and the subterranean Information Center.

The Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime was erected in 1992 to memorialize the murdered European Sinti and Roma who were persecuted as “gypsies.” The Memorial by artist Dani Karavan consists of a well with a retractable stone on which a fresh flower is placed daily. Panels present information on the persecution and mass murder of this minority under the National Socialist regime of terror.

The **German Bundestag** is the national Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its seat is the Reichstag Building in Berlin. In the current electoral term, Parliament is composed of 630 Members. This is the 18th electoral term since the establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949. The German Bundestag is elected by the German people and is the forum where differing opinions about the policies the country should be pursuing are formulated and discussed. The most important tasks performed by the Bundestag are the legislative process and the parliamentary scrutiny of the government and its work.

The **Christian Democratic Party (CDU)**, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, is founded on the Christian understanding between people and their accountability before God. The CDU is open to anyone who supports the dignity and freedom of all people and their basic convictions. The CDU Germany stands for a free and constitutional democracy, a social and ecological market economy, Germany’s inclusion in the Western values and defense community, and the unification of the nation, as well as a unified Europe.

Alliance ‘90/The Greens is a Green political party that has been working in the Bundestag for nearly 30 years for environmental protection and sustainable development, democracy and human rights, social justice, peace, and multilateral international policies. Since the elections to the Bundestag in 2013, the Green parliamentary group consists of 63 members. Katrin Göring-Eckardt and Anton Hofreiter were voted co-leaders, succeeding Renate Künast and Jürgen Trittin who led the parliamentary group from 2005 to 2013 and 2009 to 2013, respectively.

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