



# Executive Summary of the Interim Report III of the Research Project "Evaluation of the Integration Courses (EvIk)"

Analyses and findings on course participants, course specifics, teachers, and integration course providers at the beginning of the course

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# 1 The project "Evaluation of the Integration Courses (EvIk)"

## Aim of the project

The project "Evaluation of the Integration Courses (EvIk)" of the BAMF Research Centre aims to provide reliable results and evidence-based findings on the effectiveness and long-term impact of the integration courses with a special focus on the group of participants who are refugees.

## Main research topics

The project objectives are reflected in the four main research areas:

1. Analysis of course success and identification of determinants
2. Analysis of course progression and dropout
3. Analysis of intersections with/transitions to other integration measures
4. Analysis of the sustainability of the knowledge acquired in the course.

### Infobox 1: Integration courses as a central integration measure

The German Integration Course was established in 2005 and, together with the Vocational Language Course as part of the Federal Programme for Language Acquisition (Gesamtprogramm Sprache, GPS), now forms the central integration measure in Germany. The objective of the language instruction component of the integration course is to provide German language skills at the B1 proficiency level, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The integrated Orientation Course provides knowledge about the legal system, history, culture, and values in Germany. The aim of the integration course is to familiarize the participants with life in Germany to such an extent that they are able to act independently in all matters of daily life without the assistance of third parties. The integration course system is subject to continuous development and adaptation, particularly with respect to child supervision and care, and digitalization.

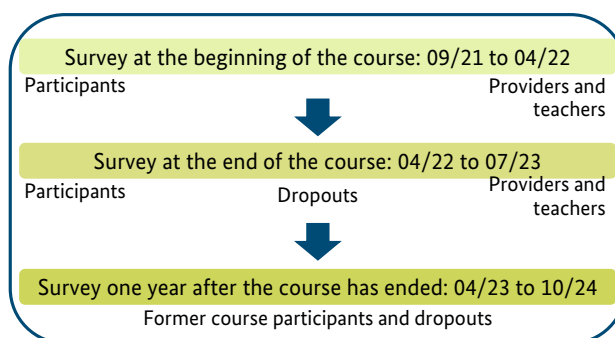
## Methodological design

To fully address the complexity of the research questions, the project adopts a comprehensive approach, incorporating insights from participants, integration

course providers, teachers, and various course specifics. The study focuses on the two most prevalent course types with the highest number of participants: the General Integration Courses and the Literacy Courses. The project makes use of existing data, such as the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey or special samples from the Integration Business File (Integrationsgeschäftsdatei, InGe).

In addition, the project collects and analyzes its own data from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, using a mixed-methods approach. The design of the quantitative survey includes multiple survey periods (Figure 1). From September 2021 to April 2022, participants were surveyed in the classroom at the beginning of the integration course. The migration of refugees from Ukraine starting in February 2022 is therefore not reflected in the data. At the same time, course providers and teachers were surveyed via an online platform. From 2022 to mid-2023, follow-up surveys were conducted at the end of the course. Participants who did not complete the course or who were not present on the day of the survey were contacted individually and interviewed to determine their reasons for dropping out of the course as well as their further integration progress. One year after the end of the integration course, the participants will be contacted again and interviewed individually (2023-2024).

**Figure 1: Methodological approach of the quantitative panel survey**



Source: Own representation

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions, the parallel surveys scheduled for the beginning of the course, the end of the course, and approximately one year after the course could not be conducted. As a result, the project had to be rescheduled.

## 2 Key findings

The Interim Report III presents descriptive analyses and findings from the surveys conducted at the beginning of the integration course with more than 3,000 participants, about 350 teachers and over 200 course providers from 318 courses. The report also covers the characteristics of surveyed General Integration Courses and Literacy Courses at the course level.

### Course participants

#### Literacy Course participants differ from General Integration Course participants in key socio-demographic characteristics

On average, Literacy Course participants are older, with a higher share of men over the age of 60. Literacy course participants are also more likely to be married. However, they are also more likely to live apart from their partner. On average, they live in larger households, which can be attributed to a higher number of children.

#### Significant differences in the use of childcare services by course type and gender

Women with children under the age of three are less commonly represented than men in both course types, particularly in Literacy Courses. Table 1 shows that

children of participants in Literacy Courses are more often supervised exclusively at home or during the course on site, while children of participants in the General Integration Course attend a regular childcare facility more frequently. A breakdown by gender also shows that male participants' children under the age of three are most frequently supervised exclusively at home, while female participants mostly report that their children attend a daycare facility or school. These distinct gender differences suggest that childcare is generally carried out by women and that women tend to enroll in integration courses (with a time lag) only when external childcare is available. Therefore, a temporary and easily accessible childcare service accompanying the integration course could be a valuable complement to regular childcare facilities.

#### Individuals with a refugee background are more likely to participate in Literacy Courses

Participants in the Literacy Course are twice as likely to have a refugee background as participants in the General Integration Course. This is also reflected in a relatively higher concentration of participants in Literacy Courses from countries traditionally associated with refugee migration, such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. It is worth noting that practically all course participants have

**Table 1: Childcare situation of children by age (in percent)**

Childcare situation	General Integration Course			Literacy Course		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Children 0–2 years:</b>						
Supervised exclusively at home	39.2	74.3	17.3	57.1	84.2	10.6
Supervised on site at the same time as the course	2.8	0.7	4.2	6.5	4.9	6.9
In daycare facility or school	58.0	25.1	78.5	36.3	11.0	82.5
<b>n</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Children 3–5 years:</b>						
Supervised exclusively at home	9.3	19.8	6.3	18.3	49.3	7.8
Supervised on site at the same time as the course	2.1	1.2	2.3	3.4	4.1	3.2
In daycare facility or school	88.6	79.0	91.4	78.4	46.6	89.0
<b>n</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>349</b>

Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own calculation

Sample: Participants with children in the household in the respective age group, unweighted number of cases

only recently arrived in Germany - mainly from 2015 onwards. As the majority of Literacy Course participants have a refugee background, which can be associated with specific difficulties (e.g. trauma), it is essential to have appropriately qualified teachers.

#### Low literacy levels with high proportions of primary and functional illiterates

More than 90 % of the Literacy Course participants are not literate in the Latin alphabet according to their self-assessment (Table 2). Roughly half of them can be classified as literacy learners and the other half as individuals learning an additional alphabet, with the latter actually belonging to the target group of the Course for Students Learning an Additional Alphabet introduced in 2017 but rarely conducted. There is also a high proportion of primary<sup>1</sup> and functional<sup>2</sup> illiterates. A more precise placement and a more target-group oriented and thus more tailored course offer on site could better meet the specific needs of this group of participants. As expected, there are comparatively few people in the General Integration Courses who, according to their self-assessment, belong to the group of literacy learners who would be eligible for special courses.

#### Literacy Course participants have poorer learning prerequisites

There are clear differences in the learning prerequisites for learning German by course type, as a significant

share of Literacy Course participants has not attended school and has limited experience with formal language learning. In addition, they are more likely to live in shared accommodation, resulting in fewer opportunities for undisturbed learning. They are also more likely to express concerns about their relatives living abroad, presumably due to their refugee background and increased instances of family separation.

#### More frequent use of opportunities to improve their own German language skills among participants in General Integration Courses

At the beginning of the course, participants in General Integration Courses rate their German language skills higher than participants in Literacy Courses. Moreover, the former have more often used additional learning opportunities in Germany to improve their German language skills prior to attending the integration course.

#### Less contact with Germans and less use of the German language among Literacy Course participants

Literacy Course participants have less interaction with Germans, with only one in five having daily contact with Germans. This is considerably lower than for General Integration Course participants, one in three of whom report daily contact. In addition, Literacy Course participants are less likely to use German in everyday matters, with friends and in their own households. Therefore, they should be given extra support in establishing contacts with Germans or individuals who speak the German language.

- 1 Individuals with limited or no writing skills. Primary illiteracy is characterized by a lack of primary education.
- 2 Individuals whose written language skills are below the level required to meet the demands of society.

**Table 2: Literacy level of course participants (in percent)**

Literacy level	General Integration Course	Literacy Course
Literate in the Latin alphabet	66.9	9.7
Individuals learning an additional alphabet	26.2	44.5
Literacy learners	7.0	45.8
of which:		
Primary illiterates	1.0	21.3
Functional or secondary illiterates	6.0	24.5
n	1,924	1,149

Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own calculation

Sample: Participants, unweighted number of cases

### High motivation to learn, strong attachment to Germany and positive attitude towards integration

The large majority of participants in General Integration Courses<sup>3</sup> express a desire to remain in Germany permanently and signal a strong attachment to the country. More than three quarters of participants in these courses agree with full inclusion in the German society and have positive attitudes towards integration.

### Composition of the integration courses

#### Integration courses are predominantly rather heterogeneous in their composition, with the exception of refugee background in Literacy Courses

The course composition in terms of gender, level of education, age, length of stay in Germany, and the number of countries of birth of the participants can be classified as rather heterogeneous in both General Integration Courses and Literacy Courses. However, the participants' refugee background stands out as an exception. In particular, the Literacy Courses are predominantly homoge-

<sup>3</sup> Due to time constraints for completing the questionnaire, the questionnaire for Literacy Course participants was designed to be less comprehensive. Thus, these characteristics were only collected in General Integration Courses as part of the EvIk survey at the beginning of the course.

neous in terms of the high share of participants with a refugee background. Participants in Literacy Courses are already disadvantaged with respect to their learning prerequisites. As a result, participants in courses with a high share of refugees may have lower chances of success in language acquisition due to the multiple problems faced by the participants.

#### Heterogeneous courses: beneficial, but challenging?

The diverse composition of the courses can foster an appreciation of diversity and other cultures, and emphasize German as the common language of understanding. However, heterogeneity in the courses also harbors potential for conflict among the participants and presents a challenge for teachers in addressing individual needs of each participant during German language acquisition.

### Integration course teachers

#### Female, ethnically diverse and with a high average age

Three quarters of integration course teachers are female (Table 3). Over 50 % of General Integration Course teachers were born in Germany, compared to less than half of Literacy Course teachers. In addition, more than half of the teachers are aged 50 or above.

**Table 3: Socio-demographic characteristics of teachers (in percent or mean)**

	General Integration Course	Literacy Course	Total	
	Percent			n
Female	75.9	77.4	76.2	357
Only German citizenship	64.7	55.5	62.8	351
Born in Germany	56.0	43.6	53.4	353
<b>Age groups:</b>				
Under 40 years	15.1	19.6	15.5	62
40 to under 50 years	29.6	29.7	29.6	105
50 to under 60 years	23.2	27.5	24.1	86
60 to under 70 years	22.7	19.4	22.0	74
70 years and older	9.5	3.8	8.3	20
<b>Mean</b>				
Age (years)	52.58	50.28	52.10	347

Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own calculation

Sample: Teachers, unweighted number of cases (see table)



### Completed qualification in the field of German as a foreign language/German as a second language, along with practical experience and additional qualifications, interest in further training opportunities

The teachers have a degree or an additional qualification recognized by the BAMF in the field of German as a foreign language/German as a second language. Most teachers were admitted to the integration course system through direct admission and did not require any additional qualification. However, other ways into the system are also available, including various further training courses, through which additional teachers have been admitted. Teachers typically have professional experience in the field of languages and almost all of them can demonstrate prior teaching experience in adult education before joining the integration course system. Many teachers would like to receive further training, especially in the area of teaching with digital media. There is interest among many teachers in further and advanced training courses (offered by the BAMF and other providers) and many would like to have the costs covered.

### Experience with virtual teaching and digital media

Teachers now have experience in online teaching and the use of digital media, much of it acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority try to integrate digi-

tal media into their teaching methods, but do not consider it feasible to teach language skills solely through digital means, without any face-to-face instruction.

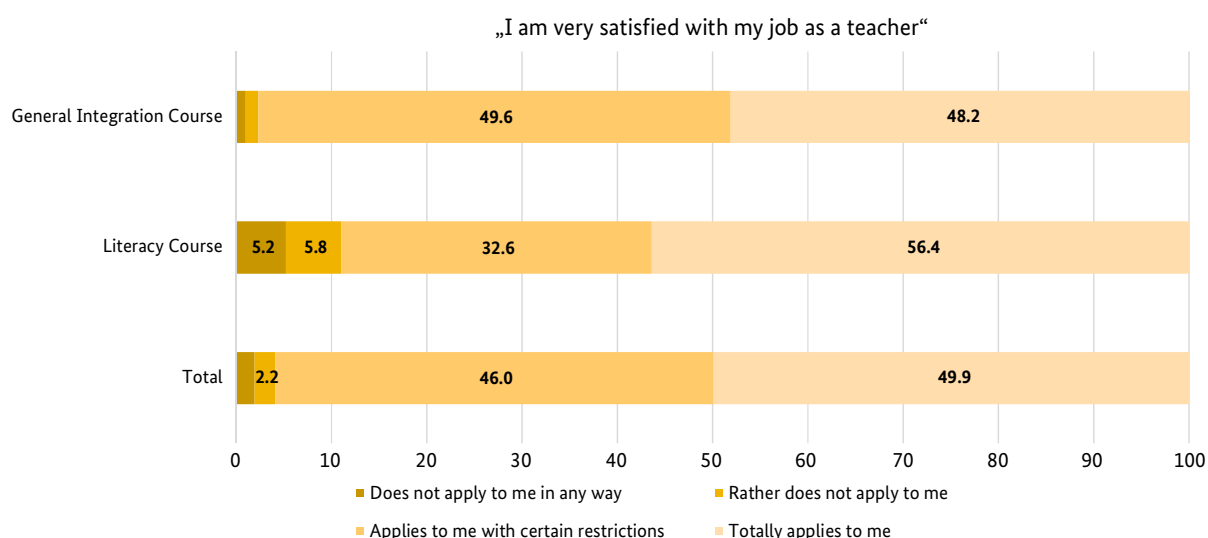
### Frequent employment as freelance staff, typically with the minimum required salary

Most teachers work for course providers on a fee basis. More than one in four teachers report a regular position with a fixed-term or permanent contract. Almost all teachers employed on a fee basis receive the remuneration of 41 euros or more per teaching unit, as required at the time of the survey. More than half of the teachers teach more than one course. The first section of the course is often taught by two teachers.

### High job satisfaction, but challenges due to multiple problems of participants

Teachers report a high level of job satisfaction (Figure 2). However, some of the teachers, especially in Literacy Courses, often encounter participants with numerous language acquisition difficulties and unique challenges (Table 4). To overcome such challenges, teachers should make greater use of existing training courses (e.g. on dealing with participants with special needs or traumatized individuals) and an expansion of these training opportunities should be explored.

Figure 2: Job satisfaction (in percent)



Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own representation

Sample: Teachers of General Integration Courses (n=216) and Literacy Courses (n=127), teachers in total (n=343), unweighted number of cases

Note: Values below 2 % are not shown

**Table 4: Indications of multiple problems in the course (in percent)**

Indication of traumatized people in the course	General Integration Course	Literacy Course	Total
Yes	24.6	40.6	28.0
No	23.0	10.1	20.2
I cannot judge	52.4	49.3	51.8
n	207	127	334

Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own calculation

Sample: Teachers, unweighted number of cases (see table)

### Positive course atmosphere, but some courses have a high number of participants and a composition that deviates from ideal expectations

In general, the course atmosphere is described as very positive, with few problems and insignificant disruptions to teaching. Although the course concept of the Literacy Course already foresees a significantly slower course progression, approximately a third of Literacy Course teachers report slower learning progress than expected. Some teachers also feel that their class size is too large for optimal teaching efficiency (Figure 3).

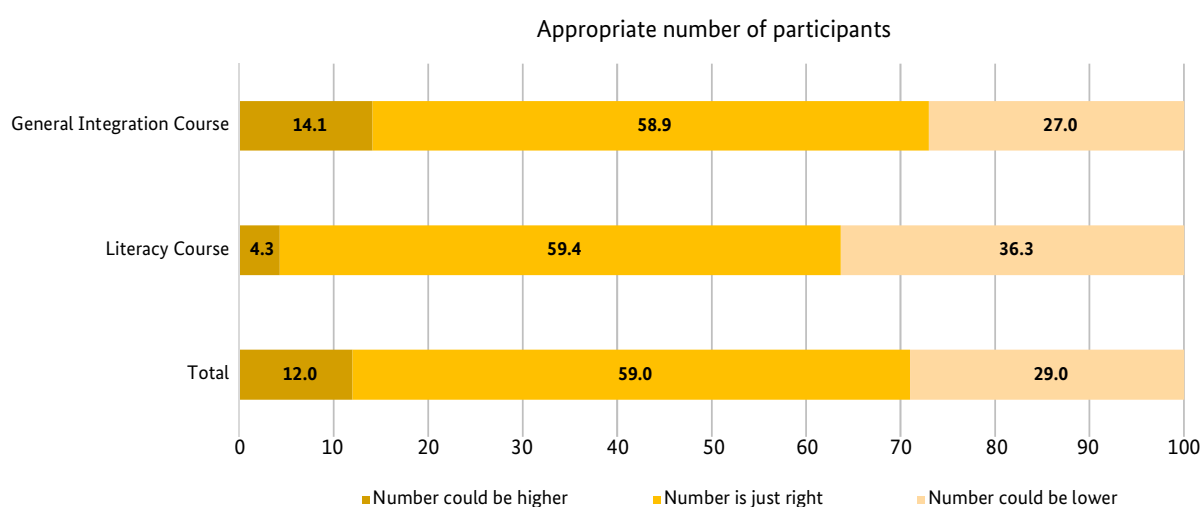
The actual composition of the courses in terms of first languages roughly corresponds to the teachers' preference for maximum heterogeneity. However, when it comes to learning prerequisites, the reality (heterogeneity) and the ideal (homogeneity) often diverge. In order to better meet the challenges that may arise in

this context even better, teachers could be supported with further qualifications in designing lessons for very heterogeneous classes.

### Integration course providers

#### Many course providers with years of experience and core additional services, but few with childcare or supervision options

More than half of the providers have been offering integration courses since their introduction in 2005. Most providers operate only in the (urban) counties where the survey was conducted. All providers possess a license for General Integration Courses and the vast majority also have a license for Literacy Courses. While many providers offer at least one additional service, such as (social) counselling for migrants in German or their first language, or rooms for self-study, and Migration Coun-

**Figure 3: Appropriateness of the number of course participants (in percent)**

Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own representation

Sample: Teachers of General Integration Courses (n=203) and Literacy Courses (n=126), teachers in total (n=329), unweighted number of cases

selling for Adult Immigrants (Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer, MBE) is often available either on-site or within walking distance, the majority of providers do not offer childcare or supervision services. Among the reasons given by providers, the most common are insufficient premises, high bureaucratic hurdles and a shortage of suitable staff.

#### Wide range of equipment at the course site and increased acquisition of digital media and tools

Course providers primarily have access to essential tools and media, including whiteboards and audio equipment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, new digital tools and media were purchased (utilizing the pandemic subsidy where possible). This included the implementation of learning management systems and the expansion of existing stocks, such as tablets for course participants. However, nearly half of the providers state that they would require further financial support to acquire sufficient tablets for an entire course. Supplementary digital material also plays a role in the selection of textbooks.

#### High number of freelance staff and significant challenges in recruiting suitable teaching staff

Compared to 2020, the providers surveyed in 2021 employ slightly more staff on permanent contracts (5.1 instead of 3.3 on average) and slightly fewer freelance staff (11.2 instead of 14.0) in the county of the surveyed courses. Nearly two thirds of the providers find it difficult to find teaching staff for the General Integration

Course. For the vast majority of providers, however, it is even more difficult to find teachers for the Literacy Course. However, most providers report that they are able to retain their teaching staff for General Integration Courses and Literacy Courses without difficulty.

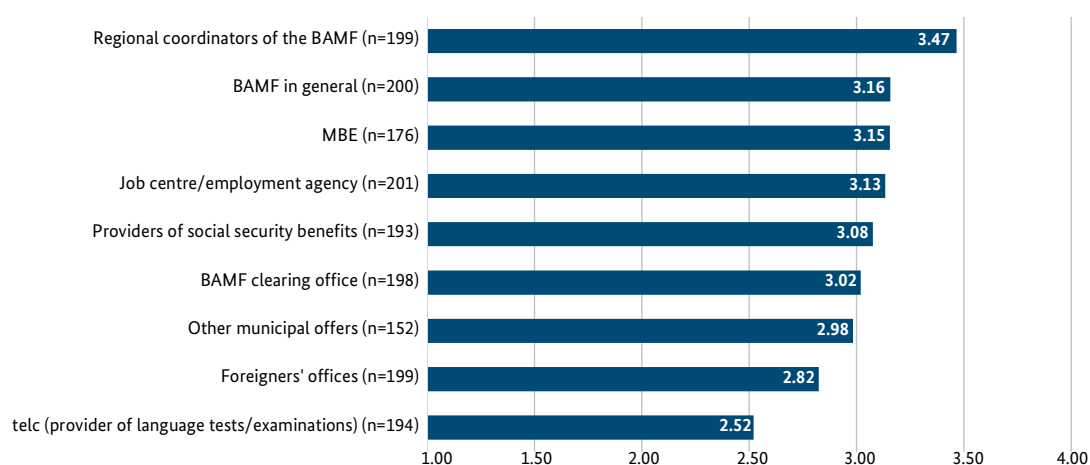
#### Providers handle the quality management of their integration courses

The providers themselves take an average of four different measures to ensure the quality of their integration courses, some of which are mandated by the BAMF. These measures include regular surveys of participants, classroom visits, and reviews of learning objectives. It would be beneficial to expand the range of supervision services for teachers who teach participants with multiple problems, including trauma.

#### Providers satisfied with cooperation with external organizations, but improvements in the integration course system desired

Overall, the providers are most satisfied with the cooperation with the regional coordinators of the BAMF, the BAMF in general, and the Migration Counselling for Adult Immigrants (Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer, MBE) (Figure 4). Despite the high level of satisfaction in principle, most course providers are in favor of an increase in remuneration rates and financial guarantees provided by the BAMF. The majority of course providers also support a simplification of travel cost accounting and a reduction in the administrative burden.

Figure 4: Overall satisfaction with cooperation with external organizations



Source: EvIk Survey Data at the beginning of the course, weighted, own representation

Sample: Providers, unweighted number of cases in brackets

Note: 1 = „very dissatisfied“ to 4 = „very satisfied“



### 3 Outlook

Interim Report III presents the results of the initial interviews conducted at the start of the courses and analyzes course participants, teachers, providers and the composition of the General Integration Courses and Literacy Courses. The following end-of-course surveys for each group are expected to be completed by mid-2023. The surveys of former integration course participants will begin approximately one year after the end of their respective integration course.

The upcoming Interim Report IV will present the results of both the end-of-course classroom survey and the survey of participants who dropped out of the course or were absent on the day of the survey. There are also plans to present findings of a qualitative sub-study on the transfer of values and knowledge during the Orientation Course.

## 4 List of previous publications of the EvIk project

### Interim Reporting I:

- Tissot, A., Croisier, J., Pietrantuono, G., Baier, A., Ninke, L., Rother, N., & Babka von Gostomski, C. (2019). Zwischenbericht I zum Forschungsprojekt „Evaluation der Integrationskurse (EvIk)“. Erste Analysen und Erkenntnisse (Forschungsbericht 33). Nürnberg. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Publication only available in German.  
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- Tissot, A., Croisier, J., Pietrantuono, G., Baier, A., Ninke, L., Rother, N., & Babka von Gostomski, C. (2019). Zwischenbericht I zum Forschungsprojekt „Evaluation der Integrationskurse (EvIk)“ – Zentrale Ergebnisse. Nürnberg. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Publication only available in German.  
<https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/Forschungsberichte/Kurzberichte/fb33-zwischenbericht-evik-I-kurzfassung>
- Baier, A., Tissot, A., & Rother, N. (2020): Impact of factors specific to forced migration on German language acquisition. Family constellation, health status and housing situation (Brief Analysis 4|2020). Nuremberg. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.  
<https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse4-2020-fluchtspezifische-faktoren-deutscherwerb>
- Tissot, A., & Croisier, J. (2020). Problems experienced by integration course participants. Requirement and usage of migration advice services (Brief Analysis 3|2020). Nuremberg. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.  
<https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse3-2020-problemlagen-integrationskursteilnehmende>

### Interim Reporting II:

- Homrighausen, P., & Saif, S. (2021). Course progress in the General Integration Course (Brief Analysis 7|2021). Nuremberg. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.  
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- Kay, R., Eckhard, J., & Tissot, A. (2021). Digitales Lehren und Lernen im Integrationskurs. Herausforderungen und Potenziale aus der Sicht der Lehrkräfte (Working Paper 91). Nürnberg. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Publication only available in German.  
<https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/WorkingPapers/wp91-digitalisierung-ik>
- Tissot, A. (2021). Obstacles to accessing Integration Courses. Everyday experiences of female refugees with small children (Brief Analysis 3|2021). Nuremberg. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.  
<https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Forschung/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse3-2021-zugang-integrationskurs-huerden>
- Tissot, A., Pietrantuono, G., Rother, N., Baier, A., & Croisier, J. (2021). Factors Affecting Language Acquisition in the Institutionalized Setting of the German Integration Course. In G. S. Levine & D. Mallows (Hrsg.), *Language Learning of Adult Migrants in Europe. Theoretical, Empirical, and Pedagogical Issues* (S. 119–147). Wiesbaden. Springer.
- Eckhard, J., & Kay, R. (2023). Digitaler Unterricht in den Integrationskursen: die Perspektive der Lehrkräfte. *Forum Arbeit – Das Magazin der Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Arbeit e.V.*, 3, 9–12. Publication only available in German.

### Interim Reporting III:

- Kay, R., Babka von Gostomski, C., Saif, S., Homrighausen, P., Eckhard, J., & Rother, N. (2023). Zwischenbericht III zum Forschungsprojekt „Evaluation der Integrationskurse (EvIk)“. Analysen und Erkenntnisse zu Kursteilnehmenden, Kursspezifika, Lehrkräften und Integrationskursträgern zu Kursbeginn (Forschungsbericht 46). Nürnberg. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Publication only available in German.  
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