Abstract

We worked with Über den Tellerrand, an organization in Berlin, Germany, to improve their program by evaluating the impact that their community events have on both locals and immigrants. It is important to have methods that can evaluate the success of these events. Understanding the success of the events can help the organization determine if their goals are being met. After speaking with members of the Über den Tellerrand staff, our team has identified three areas that represent the goals for the integration of newcomers: creating a safe encounter space for locals and immigrants to meet, helping locals and immigrants create sustainable friendships, and reducing prejudices. Thus, our team was tasked with developing the necessary evaluation tools to help the organization measure the success in achieving these goals.

The evaluation tool we had developed for the Über den Tellerrand community events was a survey instrument. We tested our survey instrument at many of the community events held by Über den Tellerrand during our time in Berlin, and refined them to capture the most important information. We also supplied the organization with methods to analyze and understand the data. Our program evaluation demonstrated that Über den Tellerrand has reduced prejudices amongst its participants, created a safe space for immigrants and locals to interact, and expanded the participants’ support network. In doing so, Über den Tellerrand has brought Germany closer to a becoming a multicultural and inclusive nation.
A Look into Refugee Integration and Program Evaluation

As some developing nations across the world founder, migrant refugees from across Africa, Asia, and Europe flee to seek refuge in Europe’s increasingly xenophobic democracies. Specifically in Germany, the foreign-born population has increased during the last 10 years. Since 2009, the immigrant population in Germany has increased from 1.6 million in 2009 to 10.6 million by 2017. Delving deeper into the statistics, the number of refugees that have entered the country from 2009 to 2017 has increased in parallel from about 150,000 to about 1.7 million people [1]. Often when such large-scale immigration occurs in a country, racial prejudices and concerns about employment, housing, and other issues cause tension between the host population and refugee groups. In response to the rise in immigration, the German government developed programs to help refugees adjust to and integrate into their new community; however, these programs have not been adequate in meeting the needs of the immigrants. This gap left by the government has led to the rise of nonprofit organizations who try to promote the integration of immigrants into society by combatting the prejudices and fears of the local people.

Our sponsor, Über den Tellerrand, is a prime example of a non-profit organization trying to reduce racial prejudices through their projects (see Appendix B). Since 2015, the organization has been working to integrate refugees into the local German community. They have created spaces and events, intended to facilitate meetings on equal footing for both locals and refugees. The events are designed to encourage refugees and local Germans to understand each other’s life situations without the fear of historical stereotypes and prejudices. The interactions occur through free community events, which include cooking classes, hiking, and soccer games among others. At these events, refugees and locals learn more about the other side’s perspective, as opposed to seeing how the media portrays their cultures, which can be very misleading. The community events ultimately help to unify both sides and promote inclusivity, and the hope is that these interactions actually reduce racial prejudices in broader German society [2].

The main goal of our project is to evaluate the impact that Über den Tellerrand has on the participants of its Community Events program. In order to achieve this goal, we have designed four main objectives. First, we assessed the current practices for refugee integration programs and program evaluation. Second, we clarified the goals of the Community Events program and the purpose, scope, and protocols for our evaluation with our sponsor. Third, we developed, tested, and implemented our program evaluation tools for future use by Über den Tellerrand. In the end we also gave recommendations identifying ways for Über den Tellerrand to improve the community events program. The entirety of our project has left Über den Tellerrand with the necessary instrumentation to continue developing, improving, and successfully implementing their program.

History of German Immigration

Immigration in post-WWII Germany has grown significantly within the last decade. Figure 1 highlights the changes to both the immigration and refugee populations. After 2009, the number of immigrants increased by more than three times the previous size and the refugee population had increased by more than eight times the previous size since the beginning of the last decade (see Figure 1).

Germany’s ethnic landscape has been greatly influenced by different ethnic groups that have immigrated to the country. Since their arrival, Turks have made up the majority of immigrants to enter Germany for 48 years, as seen in Figure 2. Turkish immigrants have totaled about 33% of all immigrants in Germany until the year 2000. Today, they make up about 22% of the total immigrant population in Germany. The size of the Turkish minority and the Turkish integration process in Germany can help build a picture of the broader problems with migration in Germany. The next significant ethnic immigrant group was the Bosnians. Germany’s manner of treating the Bosnian refugees greatly influenced their future approach to handling asylum seekers (mentioned in the section on Bosnian immigration of our background).

Figure 1: Immigration Numbers in Post WWII Germany [3]
As of today, the majority of refugees entering Germany are Syrian. Figure 3 breaks down the distribution of asylum seekers coming to Germany. Syrians make up about 38% of the total refugees seeking asylum. Refugees from Afghanistan represent the second largest group at 14%. Iraqis make up 11% and asylum seekers coming from the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe make up the last 27% [3]. As a result of the increase in the number of refugees entering Germany and their increasing diversity in the last decade, it is important to overview the history of different ethnic groups’ stories. The stories directly relate to their experiences engaging with Germans and different German immigration policies as well as their ongoing struggles against Islamophobia and xenophobia present in German society.

**Turkish Immigration**

Understanding the Turkish story gives insight into the context of the larger challenge Muslims and migrant refugees face in becoming accepted by Islamophobic or xenophobic Germans. Since Turks arrived, the total population of people of Turkish descent living in Germany has grown to 2.4 million. Starting in 1961, hundreds of thousands of Turkish guest workers arrived in Germany with the understanding that they would be distributed to Germany’s industrial zones in order to help fuel Germany’s economic miracle. However, the guest workers were isolated. They were housed in newly built dormitories adjacent to the factories in which they worked. These guest workers were not expected to integrate into German society rather they were expected to return to their home countries after two years [4]. The family restriction clause was removed in 1964 at the request of German industries. German industrialists did not like paying the cost of training new laborers. Instead, they enjoyed the benefits of reliable and productive workers who demanded lower pay and fewer social services than their German counterparts [4]. The perception among German workers was that Turks increasingly took jobs away from Germans although they were originally recruited to meet Germany’s labor shortages. Along with these negative attitudes towards Turks, the Turks themselves were becoming more isolated from the nearby local German communities. As the number of Turkish workers increased, the local Germans began to move out of the nearby residences, likely driven out by a lack of factory jobs for Germans. Many Turkish guest workers did not want to leave at the end of the two-year stay because Turkey was plagued by a series of military coups and economic woes. Fearing that economic opportunities would be scarcer back in Turkey, many Turks stayed and some invited their families to come to stay with them in Germany [5]. The Turks began to move out of their factory dormitories into small cheap apartments near their workplaces, and over time formed new communities.

Turkey’s isolation from the larger German society was compounded by the fact that many did not learn the host country’s native language. Most Turks worked in factories that used Turkish translators. Their isolation began at a young age; most Turkish primary students attended German schools where their classes were comprised of only Turks [4]. Politically, the government’s “integration” efforts were mixed. While the government promised that the immigrants living in Germany were to be “integrated”, the official policy until the late 1990s was to encourage immigrants to return to their countries of origin. Sometimes the government offered thousands of Deutschmarks as an incentive. Since their arrival, Turks have come to represent Muslims in the minds of Germans. For the Turks who stayed in Germany, attaining social and legal recognition from their white German neighbors is still a distant goal. The Turkish story explains Germany’s earliest attempts at handling immigrants; however, the Bosnian immigrants represent the growing xenophobia and resentment in Germany during the pivotal early to mid-1990s.

Figure 2: German Immigration Stats from 1967 to the 1990s [3]

Figure 3: Asylum Seekers’ Countries of Origin (2017) [3]
Bosnian Immigration

An important chapter of Germany’s recent history is its treatment of migrant refugees from across Eastern Europe, notably the Bosnian refugees. During the civil war in Bosnia, Bosnian migrant refugees were persecuted and tortured, so when Germany allowed them to enter their country, the Bosnian migrant refugees were elated. Germany admitted about 320,000 Bosnians during the 1990s, but they were only given “Temporary Protection Status” (TPS) [6]. TPS only offers a short-term or nonpermanent stay for asylum seekers, and asylum seekers are expected to return to their home countries when their country’s crisis ends.

The Bosnians were only permitted to stay temporarily until the United Nations declared their nation safe for return; however, the United Nations never declared it to be safe for return. When the Bosnian War ended in 1996, the German government responded by instituting a policy that Bosnians return to their country as soon as possible. This occurred despite the United Nations’ (UNHCR) announcement that the current state of Bosnia was still dangerous and unstable [6]. Many refugees were forced out of Germany and had no home to return to. Due to this crisis, other countries, including the United States and Canada, intervened by inviting in the Bosnians. The resulting international backlash damaged Germany’s reputation on the international stage and forced German policymakers to reevaluate their practices. This reevaluation led to the increased efforts to become a key center for refuge in Europe for the current refugees [7].

Syrian Immigration

The Syrian migrant refugee situation is described to be “the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time, a continuing cause of suffering for millions which should be garnering a groundswell of support around the world” [8]. Since 2011, 5.6 million Syrians have fled Syria and many more Syrians within the country still need help [8]. At the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the Syrian refugees made their way into Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and many of the other surrounding countries. However, it became apparent that the increasing numbers of Syrian refugees could not be supported by these countries. Government policies restricted legal work for the migrant refugees, which made seeking asylum in the neighboring Middle Eastern countries riskier [9]. As a result, many refugees looked to the European Union for support.

Germany recognized the state of the 2015 immigration crisis and offered migrants access to its welfare state. With the intent to avoid the mistakes of their treatment of Bosnians, Germany has become more willing to allow refugees to remain in Germany for as long as possible. To successfully transport people coming from the Middle East to countries such as Germany, there had to be a new agreement for the right of passage between European countries. Acquiring an agreement for this passage between European nations proved difficult because some EU countries, such as Hungary, were unwilling to allow refugees to enter their country. Under the Dublin regulation, which was put into place in 1990, an EU member can send refugees back to the EU country they first entered, as long as this country has an asylum system. This policy resulted in refugees getting “stuck” in places like Greece and Italy. These refugee “hotspots” suffered from “overcrowding and understaffed detention centers” and had very harsh living conditions [10]. These conditions made life difficult for the refugees. It led to an increased desire to migrate from these “hotspots” and enter countries with better funded and more welcoming integration systems. In response to the worsening refugee situation, Germany waived its Dublin restrictions and allowed many refugees to seek asylum within its borders. During the period preceding the 1990s Germany experienced shifts in its immigration policies, this shift continued after reunification.

History of German Government Immigration Policies

Up until the beginning of the 1990s, the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) used an “ethnocultural and exclusionist” national citizenship model that identified Germany as a single nation-state. The exclusionist model, also known as jus sanguinis, based citizenship rights on ethnic descent. This is in stark contrast to the United States of America, a multicultural nation-state, which uses a territorial birth rights citizenship model, jus solis. Political action to accept and protect foreigners began at the start of the 1990s, Similarly, at the onset of the 1990s, East Germany experimented with minority integration. The East German Government (GDR) established meeting places for foreigners and Germans called, “Cabana[s]” [11] in cities like Dresden and Frankfurt der Oder. In an attempt to increase integration efforts, the GDR gave “resident foreigners” (guest workers in East Germany who had lived in the GDR for at least two years) suffrage in 1989 and permission to participate in local elections in May of 1990. Ongoing legal and financial disputes, as well as some poor organization in the refugee processing initiative in the former GDR, led to only 5% of foreign asylum seekers in East Germany receiving official permission to stay.

While the local, state, and national governments tried to protect foreigners, there was widespread discontent about the increasing number of foreigners moving into the new united Germany, leading to periodic and violent incidents [11]. During the 1990s, German migration policy became more conservative. During the period between 1990 and 1993, the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) and Liberal Party coalition and later in 1999 the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party coalition blocked any proposal to introduce constitutional rights for the protection of minorities. Some political figures in those parties made public statements denigrated migrants. The Constitution Review Commission, which was established as part of the Unification Treaty of 1990, had recommended in 1994 that the constitution have a clause that made the state respect the identity of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities; however, this proposal was ignored by the CDU government on the grounds that it would hinder the assimilation of migrant refugees [12]. Coming out of the 1990s into the 2000s there was a lack of major immigration to Europe until the Syrian and Libyan civil wars sparking the current migrant crisis.

The political responses to the migration crisis represent growing fears about the changing face of Europe. People become more hostile to other ethnic groups if their own ethnic group is losing power [13]. As the historical discussion shows, the growing number of foreigners has caused backlashes against the minorities. There is plenty of public concern with the number of immigrants illegally present in the EU and the overall structure of the asylum system. In response to this attitude and the increased inflow of asylum seekers, the EU has increased funding for asylum and integration policies [14]. However, the influx of asylum seekers has, again, sparked xenophobic fears and provoked countries to close their borders [15]. It is important to understand the different types of techniques to establish a cultural exchange with migrants because there are techniques that are superior to others; however, some harmful techniques remain in practice today.
Moving Towards an Integration Model

The legislative change from an ethnocultural and exclusionist to a multicultural model in Germany requires cultural adaptation that incorporates rather than excludes immigrants’ cultures. Acculturation often occurs when a person or group of people immigrate to another country. It is defined as the modification of a person’s or group of people’s culture by adapting to another culture [16]. In the past German social norms expected new immigrant groups to assimilate in order to fit in; otherwise these groups would be subject to marginalization or separation. Assimilation refers to the process of adapting to a new culture and abandoning one’s own [17]. A major component of assimilation is that it is often made mandatory by local governments, such as mandatory language and cultural orientation classes [18]. Separation is an exclusionary method that attempts to insulate the major and minor ethnic groups, often through physical barriers such as housing divisions. Separation results in a higher probability of neuroticism and can result in difficulties when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. Finally, marginalization operates by undercutting the minority’s access to economic resources and amenities. This forces minorities to leave, and may cause an individual to become more aggressive or close-minded to others’ differences. A study between the links of immigrants’ attitudes and acculturation found that people seeking to assimilate can undergo anxiety, but show more social interaction than those who endure marginalization or separation. Historically during the 1960s, when the Turkish guest workers were moving to Germany, the German government did not use integration or assimilation policies. Instead, the government chose to separate and marginalize Turks, a decision which has had lasting consequences on their communal psychology. In the last twenty years, German social norms have begun transitioning towards a more open and tolerant model of inclusion and integration. Integration focuses on developing a cultural exchange between the newcomers and the locals in order to build a stronger and more diverse community. The UNHCR states that local integration is “a process which leads to a durable solution for refugees” [17]. Countries that focus on integration can help people display an open mind to previously unknown situations. These people are, in general, less aggressive and impulsive while also being more stable and comfortable. They feel safer in their new community [19].

While integration remains the most compassionate approach to interacting with migrant refugees, assimilation remains a common refugee policy that has some merits for the native population. For example, Danish social norms adhere to a more conservative approach to acculturation and practices assimilation. The stance on immigration in Denmark “stands out among its neighbors for its reluctance to integrate” foreigners [18]. Anti-immigrant attitudes dominate the policy decisions being made in Denmark. Some of the Danish policies include “taking out foreign-newspaper adverts warning potential migrants they are not welcome” or allowing police “to seize cash and valuables from arriving asylum seekers to offset the cost of their maintenance” [18]. While the Danish government enacts assimilation-oriented policies to homogenize its population, the German government has more recently chosen to go down the path of integration. An increased integration effort requires the support of many entities in German society; Über den Tellerrand is one of these entities. Über den Tellerrand seeks to informally integrate refugees; they want participants of their events to learn about each other’s cultures by giving them a space to interact and commonly taste plates from the culture of different minorities.

The Role of Refugee Integration Programs

The recent immigration policies in Germany have resulted in many variations of refugee integration programs throughout the country. Refugees are first welcomed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). The BAMF is in charge of “processing asylum applications and administering asylum, welfare, and unemployment benefits.” The state and local governments are responsible for “administering health care, education, and housing needs.” It is the non-government organizations and volunteers that provide for the other needs of refugees through refugee integration programs [15].

The BAMF has outlined criteria that programs should follow to “promote a welcome culture.” A refugee integration program should: provide information of integration services, help refugees fill out paperwork for public authorities, organize guided tours of the area, offer opportunities to learn the German language, and hold sports, cultural, or leisure type events [20].

There are many non-government organizations within Germany that follow the integration guidelines previously mentioned. Organizations such as Be an Angel and Media Residents are a few examples (refer to Appendix F for more information). These organizations offer refugees the opportunity to learn German, connect with the local community, and develop necessary skills to help them live comfortably. Our sponsor, Über den Tellerrand, highlights why the integration of refugees is important. The organization places a strong focus on “integrating [refugees] into German society, while at the same time acknowledging and empowering their agency”. One way the organization helps to integrate refugees is through community events (i.e. cooking events, movie nights, soccer games). The community events help to achieve both the goals of the organization and the goals set out by the BAMF. These community events allow refugees and locals to interact as equals. Overall, the program aims to enrich their local communities by strengthening the relationship between locals and refugees; “to create a sense of belonging as well as reduce stereotypes and prejudices on both sides” [21].
Racism and Discrimination

Racism in Germany is one of the major obstacles for the integration of migrant refugees from countries like Syria, who are primarily Muslim. Racial stereotypes, prejudices, and clichés have become normalized in Germany to the extent that many Germans believe that Muslims have failed to integrate into German society. While the German political elite tends to avoid a public debate about racism in immigration and integration policies, minorities continue to suffer injustices.

Examining racism, and Islamophobia in particular, in the entire European Union is vital to understanding the experiences of Muslims from different geographic regions and ethnic backgrounds. As mentioned previously the migrant crisis has brought along an influx of Muslims from the Middle East. This surge and Islamic terrorism have caused a rise in hate crimes against Muslims, including those who had been living in Germany since before the September 11 attacks in New York. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ (FRA) report on Muslims surveyed 23,500 immigrant and ethnic minority people in all 27 member states of the EU during 2008. Due to the ethnic distribution of Muslims in the EU, the survey could only target specific groups in different countries. For example, in Germany, the agency only spoke to Turks, but in France, they only had the opportunity to speak to people from North and Sub-Saharan Africa. The pie-chart in Figure 6 represents what Muslims in Europe believe to be the reason why they were discriminated against in public. The survey found that on average one in three Muslim respondents, of whom 34% were men and 26% were women (while for 40% the gender was not recorded), experienced discrimination in the past twelve months. Of those Muslim respondents who had felt discriminated against experienced an average of eight discriminatory incidents within a twelve-month period. Muslims between the ages of 16 to 24 experienced more discrimination than other age groups. The survey found that the overall discrimination rate declined as they interviewed older participants. It is noteworthy that the survey found that wearing traditional or religious clothing, such as a headscarf, did not have an impact on Muslim respondents’ experiences of discrimination. Looking at those who were victims of in-person hate crimes, between 53% and 90%, depending on their country of residence, said that they did not report the incident to the police. About 43% of those who did not report to the police, stated that the main reason for this was that they were not confident the police would be able to help them [22].

In comparison to other European countries, strong negative opinions about Muslims in Germany have been noticed by researchers. According to a recent representative study called “Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt” conducted by the University of Münster, up to 60% of Germans are hostile to the practice of Islam. Forty-two percent of people in the western half of Germany and 55% of people in the eastern half of Germany demand that the practice of Islam should be restricted. In 2015, populist movements in Germany had campaigned against “foreigners”, “migrants” and had focused their hate speech on “Islam” and “Muslims” in a stringent and subtle manner in order to avoid anti-fascist policing efforts. These hostile beliefs translated into political activities. In 2015, 18,000 participants of the Patriot[s] against the Islamization of the Western world, gathered in Dresden for a demonstration [23]. As a result of these conditions, policies to combat systemic racism in Germany have been enacted.

Combating racism in Germany remains a difficult struggle. While some laws like the General Equal Treatment Law (AGG), passed in 2006, have been enacted to provide protection and legal remedies to the discriminated, the law still retains clauses that can be used to discriminate (such as described in paragraph 19 section 3). The AGG also establishes the Federal Equal Treatment Office; however, with only a staff of 20 and only having a location in Berlin, it cannot provide sufficient advisory services [24]. Many German federal states lack more than a single body and sufficient resources to combat ethnic or racial discrimination leaving many affected people unable to locate help. As a result of shortcomings of federal and state policies to combat discrimination, organizations such as Über den Tellerrand have taken up the slack [24]. Measuring the success of programs like Über den Tellerrand is important if Germany is to improve its efforts in integrating refugees and reducing the racist attitudes that foreigners face. Therefore, it is useful to discuss what program evaluation is and how it is important.

Outcome-based Evaluation

In providing support and protection to refugees, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are challenged by the difficulties of measuring their overall impact. Defining the goals and outcomes of an organization’s program is not a straightforward process. Implementing a program evaluation can help to clarify the steps needed to achieve specific goals and outcomes [25]. There are many ways an organization can evaluate their program. Three common types of program evaluations include an outcome-based evaluation, an in-depth program evaluation, and a process-based evaluation. An outcome-based evaluation is one way that organizations can evaluate their program’s effectiveness. To conduct an outcome-based program evaluation, organizations collect and analyze the output data (from the activities organized by the organization). After the results, also known as “outcomes”, are analyzed, a report is submitted. The report, usually completed by an outside group (or organization), outlines the organization’s areas of effectiveness as well as areas which need to be improved [26].
One method that organizations may use is in-depth program evaluation. An in-depth program evaluation details a program’s effectiveness for a specific period of time. An organization that is constantly changing (new staff, new projects, new goals) would benefit from evaluating their program in shorter time frames. This would help the organization make necessary improvements early, and minimize yearly overhauls to the organization’s structure. A weakness (or limitation) of this method is that it does not take into account any long-term goals, so it is unable to assess a program in terms of an organization’s mission [26]. Another method an organization may use is process-based evaluations. This evaluation method focuses on how an organization is producing their results; specifically, what are the programs being offered, and how do those programs work. The results of this type of evaluation would help an organization restructure their program to better meet the needs of their clients. However, an organization that is trying to measure their impact on a target group would not benefit using a process-based evaluation on its own. It would make more sense to focus both on the processes and outcomes, so that the organization has the data to show potential clients or funders if they are meeting a desired impact [27].

Through an outcome-based evaluation, programs measure their successfulness in meeting short-term, immediate, and long-term outcome indicators and goals. More importantly, an outcome indicator can be evaluated annually. Not only does this provide more useful information on the organization’s effectiveness, it is less time consuming and more cost effective compared to other methods [26].

The basic components of an outcome-based evaluation are inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and the outcome targets and indicators. In contrast to inputs, outputs, and activities - impacts, benefits, and changes (all of which are outcomes) are being assessed. Outcomes are any of the participants’ characteristics (knowledge, skill, and attitudes among others) which are expected to change after receiving the services offered by the program [28]. The outcomes can further be categorized as short-term (immediate effects: weeks-months), intermediate (intended effects: months-years), and long-term (intended effects: years-decades) [29]. Short-term outcomes include knowledge and skill (learned by the participants), intermediate outcomes include behaviors (changed within the participants), and long-term outcomes include values, conditions, and status (changed within the participants). To measure the program outcomes, outcome indicators are necessary. Outcome indicators are observable or measurable performance elements, which may include what you hear, see, or read. Additionally, the outcome-based evaluation can be visually represented with a logic model. A logic-model is a model depicting the specific inputs, activities, and outputs that lead to the intended impact of the organization (the outcomes) [30]. An example of a logic model for Über den Tellerrand can be found in Appendix J.

Methodology for Program Evaluation

We have determined that the German government’s efforts to assist migrant refugees and immigrants integrate have been insufficient, this idea is supported by the number of non-profit organizations, such as Über den Tellerrand, that have arisen to foster communities in different places. Measuring the success of their program can be done using a program evaluation. Our team was given the responsibility to create a program evaluation for Über den Tellerrand.

Our project goal was to evaluate Über den Tellerrand’s impact on the community events participants. The final deliverable was an assessment of their impact, a handbook and survey to be used for future program evaluations, and a proposal for future improvement. Four objectives directed our research towards achieving our project goal. The objectives include:

1. Clarifying the Goals of Über den Tellerrand’s Community Events
3. Developing, Testing, and Implementing Program Evaluation
4. Preparing Final Program Evaluation and Deliverable

To complete our objectives we utilized a mixed-methods approach, including interviews, online/paper surveys, and archival research. The methodology flow chart, identified as Figure 5, outlines how we completed each objective and what we got from each. The final deliverables we made for Über den Tellerrand included a handbook meant to guide them on how to evaluate their program going forward, our survey data and instrument, a menu template, and a design for a new community event (for further details see Figure 5).

Objective 1: Clarifying the Goals of Über den Tellerrand’s Community Events

To create a useful evaluation tool for Über den Tellerrand we clarified the organization’s goals. This was done through one-on-one interviews with the Über den Tellerrand staff. The goals were then categorized based on certain themes (discussed below) and ranked by their level of importance. The ranking was completed by the staff with a follow-up ranking form (which can be found in Appendix D). We also determined the organization’s preferences in regards to the purpose, scope, and protocols for the proposed evaluation instruments.

Clarification of the program goals

In doing a program evaluation, it is necessary to understand what the organization’s desired outcome is because the goals inform the evaluators if the program met the organizer’s expectations. Toward this end, we conducted nine in-person interviews with the organization’s program managers and board members at their main office, located in Berlin. The interviews helped us to collect data on the organization’s goals, which were then ranked by the board members.

We identified three relevant themes based on the results which include: sharing (culture, interest, ideas), support (integration process, encounter spaces) and socializing (having fun, eating food, creating social networks). These themes were decided based on the frequency in which words associated with the theme showed up (in the list of goals). The goals identified through the interviews were categorized based on these themes (any goals that did not fit with the themes were not utilized). Categorizing the goals helped us in creating the ranking form for the Über den Tellerrand staff (protocols and tools found in Appendix C).
*UdT stands for Über den Tellerrand*

Figure 5: Methodology Flow Chart

1. Participants Interviews
   - Opinion on UdT's role in alleviating immigrants integration

2. Staff Interviews
   - Goals Clarification & Possible Survey questions

3. Development & Test Surveys
   - Quantify UdT's impact on their participants
   - Data Analysis & Debriefing with UdT

4. Handbook
   - Guidelines on: Program Evaluation + Inputing & Interpreting data in Excel

   - Finalize revised Survey
     - For UdT to use in future evaluations

   - Recommendations of Improvement
     - Find areas UdT should work on

Development of tools for future UdT's program evaluation

*UdT stands for Über den Tellerrand*
After categorizing the goals, we took the most frequent goals (that showed up in our results) and implemented them into a ranking form. The ranking form, created using Google form, was distributed to the staff for completion. The ranking form was based on a Likert scale (1-5 rating). We were then left with a list of goals (after 6 staff members completed the ranking form), each rated between 1-5. We took the four highest rated goals to help us create the questions for our initial evaluation tool.

Clariﬁcation of the purpose, scope, and protocols

The development of our initial evaluation tool was further supported by clarifying other variables such as language used within the evaluation tool, evaluation tool format, and protocols for data analysis. We interviewed Ms. Kaldinska to go over the purpose, scope, and protocols for the program evaluation (refer to Appendix E for interview script). The main topics we discussed included: language (German, Arabic, English), format (paper, electronic), time of implementation (before, during, or after program event), duration of data collection, and content of the evaluation tool. We also discussed the protocols for data analysis (using Google Sheets, Microsoft Excel, or other software).


To improve our understanding on the current practices for program evaluation in Germany, we conducted 3 interviews with representatives of non-government organizations in Berlin. The organizations that we interviewed included Media Residents, and Be an Angel. We reached out to these organizations because of the similar participant demographic and desires to support refugee integration to Über den Tellerrand. After gathering information on each organization we developed interview questions that would clarify organizational goals, define successful integration, and assess how programs are being evaluated (a script of the interview questions for the NGOs and the interview protocols can be found in Appendix F). We analyzed the program evaluation protocols and instruments based on the themes discussed in Objective 1.

If the intended outcomes of the program evaluation fit with the themes we would proceed by debriefing with the community events program managers. The fit was determined by using keywords associated with each theme (sharing, support, and socializing). We would analyze the outcomes identified through the interviews for the keywords. The debrief with the program managers allowed us to share other potential program evaluation protocols or instruments that could be used in the development of our evaluation tool. Additionally, comparing the goals of the NGOs with the goals of the Über den Tellerrand staff helped us to confirm the relevance of the information we gathered through the interviews.

We also had the interviewees from each organization discuss the most important factors for successful refugee integration. Creating a better definition of successful integration helped us in the design of questions for our evaluation tool.

Objective 3: Developing, Testing, and Implementing Program Evaluation

We utilized the findings from the interviews with other NGOs (Objective 2) and the Über den Tellerrand staff (Objective 1) to formulate the survey questions for our pre-test. After the pre-test, we debriefed with Ms. Kaldinski and performed the first data analysis to aid in the revision of our evaluation tool. We distributed the revised survey to the community events participants to collect data for our final results, and made further revisions if necessary. Figure 9 illustrates the different steps in implementing our survey instrument.

Developing Initial Survey

Prior accomplishments from Objectives 1 and 2 helped us to design the first iteration of our evaluation tool. Overall, we have gone through four iterations of the survey tool. Based on the conversation with Linn Kaldinski, it was necessary that we centered our focus on creating a survey. This survey was used to evaluate the impact of Über den Tellerrand’s community events program.

A survey would be the most efficient tool in collecting data for both open-ended and closed-ended questions. While the final product survey will utilize closed-ended questions, we will use open-ended questions to gather patterns of data to create more accurate close-ended questions, the accuracy will reflect the most common demographics at Über den Tellerrand. The main consultant during our designing process was the organization itself. We were informed about how Über den Tellerrand had never evaluated any of their community events. This presented a challenge in itself, because our survey would be starting with no baseline. The questions themselves were formulated based on the goals identified through the interviews with the Über den Tellerrand staff and the evaluation tools used by other NGOs.

We also attended the 50 Plates of Lentils event, held on March 9th, to make observations. The observations were done to get a better understanding of the participant demographic and overall structure of a community event. This helped us to design both the survey and protocols best suited for the particular events. We identified languages that would need to be used (for the survey) in addition to how many participants could use their phones (for an electronic survey). Most importantly, we were able to determine the participants willingness to speak with us.

Survey Pilot Test

To evaluate our first survey, we had to run a pilot test and analyze the results for their effectiveness in measuring the impact of the program. We administered our first survey at the Persian Night event on March 23rd, which had about 40 participants. The survey was distributed electronically using a QR code during the event. Before the participants completed the survey, we introduced ourselves, the project, and the reasoning behind conducting a survey.
Survey Revision and Implementation

Utilizing the answers produced from our questions, we evaluated the survey to make any necessary changes and improvements. When evaluating our survey, it was important to determine whether the questions were interpreted correctly and whether they elicited intended answers. This would allow us to make modifications to the content within our initial survey. To gauge how participants understood the questions, we made observations during the survey completion. We observed facial reactions, time to complete the survey, and frequency of participants asking clarifying questions. This helped us to identify moments of discontent or satisfaction towards specific questions (and towards the survey itself). Direct conversations with the participants were also valuable to gather knowledge of which questions were harder to understand than others. We also presented our findings to Ms. Kaldinski to gather feedback for future survey distribution.

Another important part of the survey revision was to evaluate the effectiveness of our survey. We relied heavily on the results of Objectives 1 and 2. In these two objectives the goals of the Über den Tellerrand staff were defined and other evaluation techniques were also examined. After every survey distribution, we wanted to verify that the data collected reflected the Über den Tellerrand staff members’ goals for the community events program. We analyzed the survey answers because they provided more context on the intended impacts of the program. We physically highlighted all the goals from the Über den Tellerrand staff (see Appendix C for defined goals & questions) that were successfully answered by the survey responses, and anytime we noticed that the survey questions were not meeting the staff’s goals, we made alterations to the survey.

Once the survey was revised, we administered it to more community events participants. Based on the feedback from Ms. Kaldinski, and the results of the pilot test, we gave participants the option to complete a paper or electronic survey at the 50 Plates of Dessert event on March 24th. We distributed the survey during the event again, and collected more data. After the distribution of the survey again at the Music event on April 3rd and further debriefing with Ms. Kaldinski, our team found it necessary to revise the survey once more. The main change we determined necessary was to administer all future surveys using paper.

Additionally, at the end of each survey we asked if the participants would be interested in participating in a follow up interview (the interview questions for this can be found in Appendix H). We conducted these interviews to determine whether the program’s intended impact is prominent, and whether the survey questions successfully measured that impact. The data collected was also used to further revise the evaluation tools and questions.

Objective 4: Preparing Final Program Evaluation and Deliverables

After debriefing with Über den Tellerrand and revising the instruments and our protocols, we provided Über den Tellerrand with three main deliverables to use for future program evaluations: the set of questions to gather data on the success of their program, a handbook with guidelines on how to conduct future program evaluations and gather data, and a final set of recommendations for Über den Tellerrand’s program based on our evaluation.

The first deliverable is the survey. Our survey revision process was detailed in the sections within Objectives 1 and 3. After every community event, we verified that the results we were obtaining actually answered the questions raised by the Über den Tellerrand staff (as seen in Objective 1). If they were not, then a revision was made to the survey questions. Ultimately the purpose of our final survey is for Über den Tellerrand to have a useful tool to evaluate its program. The survey will help retrieve extensive insight from the participants of the events without the need for individual interviews later on. The second deliverable is the handbook with guidelines on how to conduct a program evaluation, data entry, and data interpretation. The handbook includes the methods that we used to perform our data analysis and complete our objectives. We used Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets to manage our data. This was deemed acceptable by Ms. Kaldinski, as she stated the staff are comfortable with using both. Since Über den Tellerrand has never evaluated their program before and lacks the experience to develop their own program evaluation guidelines, the handbook will enable Über den Tellerrand to conduct independent evaluations in the future.

The third deliverable is a blueprint for a new community event (see Appendix K). We have designed a scavenger hunt, which can be included in the organizations “special events”. The basis for our scavenger hunt was formed after connecting with other organizations that share similar goals to Über den Tellerrand. Connecting to other organizations allowed us to then formulate the details of the event. To confirm that the event met the satisfaction of Über den Tellerrand, we had Ms. Kaldinski read it over.

Developing the Results Framework

Using the results from both Objectives 1 and 2, three themes were determined to help support our findings. The conclusions we have drawn from our survey data also highlight the connections that the themes have with Über den Tellerrand’s goals.

The survey and interview results are characterized by three themes: sharing, support, and socializing. The themes were formulated after our interviews with the Über den Tellerrand staff for Objective 1. In formulating the themes, we analyzed the goals for the community events program (as determined through interviewing 9 staff members). To conduct the analysis, we identified keywords (explicitly within the staff’s goals for the community events) to help categorize the different goals. The keywords were chosen based on how often they showed up in the list of goals, and their relationship to Über den Tellerrand’s mission statement (words such as “the” or “and” were not included). The frequency of each keyword is depicted in Figure 7.
By connecting the keywords to one another, we created three themes. First, we determined that culture was associated closely with the idea of sharing. Sharing refers to the mutual experiences of cultures, interests, and ideas (Figure 8). We did this because the word culture was used when describing goals that dealt with sharing. Specifically, one of the identified goals was “sharing cultures, interests, and ideas.” Through exchanging information about different cultures, the staff hopes locals and immigrants can work to reduce stereotypes and prejudices. Second, the idea around encounter and space relates closely with the idea of support. Support entails the resources available to help integration efforts (Figure 8). This was determined because the words encounter and space are usually used within the same goal; “create encounter spaces for locals and immigrants.” The lowest rated goal was “helping people become more aware of their privileges and their differences.” The highest rated goals (A, B, C, and E) helped us in confirming the themes for our questions. Goal (A) represents our concept of support because the space is an available resource that enables locals and immigrants to interact. Goals (B and D) represent our concept of sharing because prejudices can be reduced through learning about other cultures. Goal (E) represents our concept of socializing because participants attend events to build relationships with others.

We then developed a better understanding of how organizations characterize successful integration and program evaluation. Based on the results from the interviews with other refugee organizations (Objective 2), we identified the most important factors of successful integration according to the two refugee organizations in Berlin (Figure 10). We categorized these factors based on the themes from Objective 1 (as seen in Figure 11). The factors can be seen as an outcome of our defined project themes. Understanding the specific factors above also allowed us to determine if the evaluation tools and protocols from the other organizations were relevant. One of the organizations we interviewed, Media Residents, identified “employment” as the most important factor. The reasoning behind this was because earning money and being employed would feed into all the other factors. Dustin, a staff member at Media Residents, states that “employment opportunities are like THE biggest point for immigrants...With a job acquired, social interactions happen naturally. And with those interactions they start to learn German more easily. It works like a chain, everything depends on another.”

Another organization, Be an Angel, identified “language” as the key piece to successful integration. Andreas, a board member of Be an Angel, explains how learning the German language can help refugees share their stories. He claims that local Germans are aware of the refugees within Germany, however they do not actually go out and try to meet them. So through programs like Media Residents and Be an Angel, refugees are given the opportunity to meet locals and share their stories. An additional point that Andreas makes is that society should go beyond just integration. He believes that “empowerment” is more valuable; that refugee organizations should be offering support that enables refugees to live confidently in their new home.
Our sponsor, Über den Tellerrand, had a different view on what successful integration should look like. After the staff interviews from Objective 1, we also asked them to discuss what they believed was the most important factor. The most frequent answers centered on “having a social network” and the idea that not one factor alone is more important than another. Factors such as employment, learning German, and social interaction among others are all equally useful. One of the staff members states that “a stable social network...can feed into all elements” while another staff member believes that “all factors are of almost equal importance...the interaction of all factors being fulfilled makes good integration.” These organizations share the idea that successful integration is a multifaceted process. In the end, it is the work of all different factors which the outcomes and goals should be based upon.

Through our own program evaluation of the Über den Tellerrand community events, we have collected data which provides information on both the changes occurring with the participants (reducing prejudices, learning German, etc.) and the organization’s impact. Ultimately, our program evaluation identified the prominence of how well the events exhibit sharing, socializing, and support.
Reducing Prejudices through Sharing

The outcomes associated with sharing are prevalent in the Über den Tellerrand community events. Sharing can entail the different conversations that participants have with one another, in addition to the exchange of cultures, interests, and ideas. From our own participation in the community events, we have observed the interactions between locals and immigrants. The data collected with our survey also provides findings centered on this theme.

We also found that some events allow immigrants to share their cultures with other immigrants and local Germans. For most of the events, their culture is shared through food. This is done by immigrants or locals helping to teach other participants how to cook meals of their home country. The findings from the survey also highlight sharing. One of the main ideas behind being able to share one’s culture is to reduce prejudices. From the survey, 60% of the participants feel more comfortable talking to people with different ethnicities at Über den Tellerrand than in public, whereas 14% are not. This suggests that the community events participants have an easier time speaking to those from different countries in a space like Über den Tellerrand. However, this statistic does not take into account anyone who was already comfortable speaking to those of different ethnicities. This means that realistically the 60% could be higher or lower if those who omitted the question (26% of participants) answered. Another finding, however, may help to conclude that Über den Tellerrand is helping to eliminate prejudices. In response to whether attending the Über den Tellerrand community events had helped to eliminate prejudices, 56% of the respondents (across all the survey results/events) believed the participation in Über den Tellerrand’s Community Event helped and 12% responded that it had not helped. It is important to take into account that not everyone believes they have any prejudices towards others to begin with. This notion could explain why 12% of participants might think Über den Tellerrand is not helping to reduce prejudices. If our theory is correct it would mean that the 56% value is a very significant number for measuring Über den Tellerrand’s impact on reducing prejudices. In addition to the statistics, our participant interviews also showed a reduction in personal prejudices. One of the respondents who had attended the event for the first time actually did not know that many of the immigrants spoke German and how willing they were to integrate themselves into society. The respondent had a background in law, knew of the immigrant situation on a more broader legal perspective, and thought that it was very interesting to get to know them on a more personal level. The respondent held very positive opinions about Über den Tellerrand but the respondent thought that Über den Tellerrand should try to invite more Germans who live in rural areas to meet with refugees. The participant felt very strongly about the work that Über den Tellerrand has been doing to reduce prejudices. Overall, based on these findings we conclude that Über den Tellerrand is promoting an atmosphere that allows for reduced prejudices (through sharing information). Sharing would not be possible without a concrete social network maintained by Über den Tellerrand and its participants that could spread the message of tolerance.

Building a Social Network

Our data and observations have helped us to gauge how well the community events are building social networks for the participants. The data suggests that Über den Tellerrand has successfully maintained a steady network of participants. From our survey slider question where respondents had to choose from 1-5 (where 1 means that the participants are not willing to attend future events, and 5 means that they are very likely to attend future events), the median response was a 4. Additionally, many participants said that they attend the events weekly or monthly. This means that the participants are finding great interest in the community events and are willing to come back to future events. For example, from one of our participant interviews we were told that the respondent actually had dinner on the next day with some of the other participants who attended the community event. This indicates that people are socializing and making new friends at community events.

According to our data, 55% of the survey respondents had learned about Über den Tellerrand from personal recommendations. This knowledge further suggests that participants value the events and the social network Über den Tellerrand has built. Our survey results also determined what was driving participants to attend Über den Tellerrand’s events. Participants come to make new friends and find other people who come from a similar background to them in order to “feel more at home.”

In addition to our survey analytics, the participant interviews also showed a high emphasis on the importance of socializing and the social network. Our first interview respondent, who had German background, was actually very surprised that the immigrants spoke German well and that they are motivated to integrate themselves into German society. The participant believed that her opinion about refugees in Germany changed drastically after participating in a single event. Based on this interview and our survey data, we can conclude that a social network is being created both for the immigrants that participate and for the local Germans as well. Though the social networks participants are able to receive resources from Über den Tellerrand to further expand their network or improve their own integration.

Offering Resources for Support

Two of the main goals of Über den Tellerrand is to develop a space that can support its participants’ interactions, while also helping them to live more comfortably in their local communities. When analyzing the statistics, we discovered that practicing a language (i.e. German) is a major reason why many immigrants decide to partake in the community events. So Über den Tellerrand, by creating a space where immigrants can improve their German, are supporting the establishment of a bridge to improve communication between different cultures.

The main reasons that people keep returning for community events are to strengthen the relationship with people they have met, to continue learning about other cultures, and to have a fun experience. All of this is being accomplished through the support of the Über den Tellerrand staff and volunteers, and the resource provided by Über den Tellerrand. In fact, one interviewee mentioned how refugees from Syria come to Germany with no knowledge about the country. It was not until they were introduced to an organization like Über den Tellerrand that they found needed support. Without any knowledge about resources in Germany, immigrants face the many social and bureaucratic barriers alone and this can have lasting financial consequences. Specifically, the most support was coming from the participants of the community events. They also mentioned how the other participants at the events are always willing and happy to help solve issues anyone might have.
One of the more positive results from the evaluation was that up to 82% of the participants feel that Über den Tellerrand is a safe space where they never feel discriminated against, an additional 14% feel that it may be a safe space and only 4% think that it is not. Since only 4% perceive Über den Tellerrand to not be a safe space, the Über den Tellerrand staff have done an excellent job at establishing a friendly environment. Our discussions with the interviewees revealed that they had generally good experiences. These statistics are of particular relevance since around 38% of the total participants say they have felt discriminated against in Germany and up to 54% of the participants have deemed that question as relevant to them, have felt discriminated. As a result, the space that Über den Tellerrand has created is indeed supporting the people who have felt discrimination, while also aiding in the reduction of discriminatory acts.

### Linkage between Sharing, Socializing, and Support

Overall, our results point out that Über den Tellerrand’s community events program showed positive results in their first evaluation. The participants are socializing with one another and creating new social networks that help them to integrate further into German society. The participants are sharing personal stories with one another and in the process are getting rid of prejudices that may have existed within them. The participants are receiving the support and resources needed for them to socialize and share with others.

### Assessment of Participation Composition

Unrelated to the thematic framework, the Über den Tellerrand staff were also interested in the demographics of the community events. The majority of the participants are between the ages of 26 and 35, but there are also many between 19 and 25 as well. One major aspect of the demographics is the country of origin among the participants. Of the people who attended the community events, 73% come from an immigrant background, as opposed to 27% who come from a German background. This is important because Über den Tellerrand’s goal for the community events has three components: to reduce prejudices German people may have about the immigrants, to start building a social network, and providing both locals and immigrants the resources to share and socialize. If an overwhelming majority of the participants come from an immigrant background, then the goal is not being fully accomplished because there are too many non-Germans participating. The Über den Tellerrand staff also reiterated this to us during our staff interviews, where many were interested in actually learning more about the percentage of Germans to immigrants, and that they desired it to be more 1 to 1, or 50% of each.

### Final Project Deliverables

One of the main purposes of our program evaluation was to develop various deliverables for our sponsor. The following deliverables for Über den Tellerrand include: a survey questionnaire, a guideline handbook detailing our protocols, data entry, and data interpretation, and a new design for a community event.

In developing our survey, we utilized the findings from the staff interviews (Objective 1) and the refugee organization interviews (Objective 2). After conducting the pilot test, we modified the first iteration of our survey and our protocols. One of the first changes we agreed upon was to distribute a paper survey (that included a QR code). We changed the survey format based on our observations at the events. At the events we determined that distributing an electronic survey negatively affects the flow of the event, is more intrusive, and may require the survey distributor to hand out their own electronic device. In terms of the protocols, we mentioned previously that Media Residents found success by developing friendships with the participants. When attending the events, we prioritized participating instead of collecting data, to build a more personal relationship with potential respondents. Media Residents also suggested that less questions could be more useful, however the data that the Über den Tellerrand staff desired required a survey with more than 10 questions (questions related to demographics and our three themes).

Based on the results of Objective 1, we determined that the four most important goals were: creating encounter spaces for locals and immigrants to meet; sharing culture, interests, and ideas; reducing prejudices; helping people create sustainable relationships. For our second survey iteration, we analyzed the questions to identify if they were reflective of those goals. Questions such as “why are you coming back to the events?” elicit answers specific to the goals and themes. The answers for the question about coming back to the event include “building relationships with participants” and “learning about different cultures”. The first answer correlates directly with helping people create sustainable relationships. The second answer correlates directly with allowing locals and immigrants to share their culture, interests, and ideas. All other questions were modified this way.

We also met with Ms. Kaldinski for her feedback during the second, third, and final survey revision processes. Through these meetings we determined when to conduct the survey and the desired formatting. We already decided to use a paper format, and confirmed that this was okay with Ms. Kaldinski. One of the staff members mentioned that we do the survey at the end of the event. Initially we distributed the survey during the event, which interrupted the activities. Both changes made collecting data better, as we mentioned with the difference in the number of respondents. For the last survey revision, we consulted with Ms. Kaldinski about each question. We altered the question asking about whether, “[participants] feel more comfortable talking to people from different ethnicities at Über den Tellerrand’s events than in public” from a multiple choice to a slider scale question because Ms. Kaldinski thought that we should measure how comfortable they feel. We also made other word changes in our survey to improve the clarity and simplicity of our questions.
Despite the success with the paper format, we still believe that having an online survey would be more efficient. It would be easier to manage the data, and eliminate waste (the paper). To compromise, we are providing a survey that still includes a QR code. In addition to the online survey, we have added a suggestion box for participants to offer ideas in changing current or developing new community events. To supplement the survey instrument, we have also developed a guideline handbook. The handbook goes over the protocols for conducting a program evaluation. It provides step-by-step instructions that detail the processes for our specific methods. There are also tips on how to input and analyze the data collected from the survey.

The last deliverable that we developed for Über den Tellerrand was the design of a new community event. For the new community event, we have designed a plan for a scavenger hunt. We identified through our conversations with Media Residents and Be an Angel that immigrants have trouble finding where these organizations (and areas of support) are. Through a scavenger hunt, participants will become more familiar with the city, identify places that can help them integrate into society, and also potentially help build the network between different NGOs.

**Recommendations for Improvement**

We have generated several recommendations to improve the Community Events program because advancing Über den Tellerrand’s growth and bettering its integration efforts will establish stronger communities built around its event centers. If Über den Tellerrand desires to truly integrate people from immigrant backgrounds into Germany, they will need to network with Germans on a similar level as they do with immigrants. We propose that the staff encourage the German participants to politely ask their friends to come with them to an event, or to simply recommend the events to their friends. From our results we discovered that only a quarter of the participants in the community events are German. According to an Über den Tellerrand staff member, the number of Germans to non-Germans should resemble more of a 50% split, in order to increase local German awareness on the situation of the immigrants. This will in turn lead to the reduction of prejudices between people of different ethnic backgrounds. We recommend that Über den Tellerrand put more effort in promoting its events for the local Germans in order to increase German participation in these events. One way to do this is by further promoting their events on social media and flyers. Currently, they post photos and videos and the list of upcoming events on their Facebook page. They could benefit by using a combination of inviting more people to the events (using the invite feature on Facebook) and also rephrasing event descriptions, for example using a phrase like, “Are you interested in learning how to cook delicious new foods, while also getting to meet new people and learn more about different cultures?” This can help create a more 50% split between local Germans and immigrants, while also creating more ways to spread the knowledge about these community events.

Another recommendation is to increase the number of ways that the immigrants can share their stories. As it stands, the only way free-of-charge to learn more about the immigrants’ stories is by learning it first hand when talking to immigrants while attending community events, but this depends on the connection you make and how much a person wants to tell you right then and there. There are also other ways to learn more about immigrant stories that include purchasing published books or attending the paid cooking class presentations. However, these do cost money and more people may be inclined to not pay a fee to learn more about immigrant stories. Creating an online blog space on social media or on Über den Tellerrand’s website where immigrants can share their stories with a larger audience can increase awareness among the Germans. This can also help lead to the reduction of prejudices, which is a major part of Über den Tellerrand’s mission. One way to do this is by creating a space on their website where immigrants can add personal stories. A better way to increase awareness is through social media. Über den Tellerrand can create a post with a picture of the person and then caption that picture with the story that the person desires to tell. This can be done in both Instagram and Facebook, and we believe that more German people would sympathize with the immigrants’ hardships after seeing their posts.
We believe that Über den Tellerrand could also improve some of its events by targeting different demographics. For example, the Easter Event’s main focus was on a children’s activity, and we feel that the event would have been aided by the presence of more children/families. This would allow for different families to hold conversations together, and grow their network. The activities in the event included decorating eggs, arts and crafts, and baking desserts. These events are typically done in a family setting, and do not appeal to single people (in their 20s and 30s), and hence the presence of more families will aid the effectiveness of the event itself. However, when we attended there were only 4 children, even though the activities were best suited for children to do together. There were some older participants (about in their 50s and 60s) who felt out of place. In a conversation with one of the older participants, we discovered that making Easter related art was meant for children to do. In fact, one of the participants (in his 20s) did say that the event was boring and that it was the only boring event of participation up until this point. The activity of cooking a meal was also structured differently for this event. We observed that the participants helping to cook the desserts were only the children at the event, and the single adults rarely got to participate (other than the actual volunteers leading the cooking process). This event was designed for families, specifically the children, and can be improved greatly by targeting that demographic. One way to promote this demographic is by using social media to invite more families, captioning posts with a message such as, “Are you looking to celebrate Easter-related events with our family? Come to Über den Tellerrand to have an exciting family-themed event.”

Finally, we recommend Über den Tellerrand to engage further with other non-profit organizations that focus on assisting migrant refugees (Figure 12). Doing so could establish a multi-organizational network that can provide different services to meet the needs of the growing immigrant population because currently many participants that we have spoken to are not aware of the many avenues for assistance. Organizations such as Be an Angel and Media Residents, whom we have interviewed, are in similar developmental stages as Über den Tellerrand and all three of these organizations will benefit from collaborating with one another. Be an Angel actually showed interest in collaborating with other organization such as Über den Tellerrand given their common objectives and how they can collaborate. Promoting each other’s events could help offer a wide variety of activities or services for immigrants. For example Media Residents offers a coworking space and technology for immigrants to fulfill personal projects; this can help people who lack a job a space where they can work on developing something or even apply to jobs. The blueprint of the scavenger event that we developed could be used to strengthen the network between the organizations. The event itself would be organized by Über den Tellerrand, in collaboration with the other organizations. The goal of the scavenger hunt is to help immigrants become more familiar with both their new home and the different resources available to them. The different NGOs can work to establish their own locations as part of the scavenger hunt (which would enable immigrants to come into contact with more refugee organizations).

Conclusion

The migrant crisis and Germany’s immigration history has led to the current situation where non-profit organizations, like Über den Tellerrand, must rise to meet the needs of immigrants. Our program evaluation of Über den Tellerrand’s Community Events program has demonstrated that Über den Tellerrand has succeeded in reducing prejudices amongst its participants and has created a fun and safe space for immigrants and native-born Germans to interact, along with an expanding participant support network. In doing so, Über den Tellerrand has revitalized the lives of immigrants who have endured war and discrimination, and has brought Germany closer to a becoming a multicultural and inclusive nation.

Our Interactive Qualifying Project will deliver Über den Tellerrand their first program evaluation of the community events. This program evaluation will help Über den Tellerrand to understand the effectiveness of their current impact, and allow them to improve and expand the community events program. Future growth and improvement will foster greater understanding between native-born Germans and immigrant which will lead to a more inclusive Germany.

Through this project we were able to learn how to technically evaluate a program. We tested different methods to do so. We also learned a lot about other cultures and had the opportunity to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. We hope that our efforts will indeed “make the world a better plate.”

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