

Call for proposals

Information for Applicants 78b

Study Groups on Migration and Health

I. Background

Academia and politics in Germany have been somewhat slow in reacting to the fact that Europe, and especially Germany within Europe, has become one of the world's main migration regions. Political elites in Germany only gradually begin to conceive international migration and immigration as normal and permanent features of modern society. Correspondingly, it is up to research to focus on the structural potential for the integration of migrants in European society. Relevant research can make a contribution to the public debate surrounding the issue. Success will depend to a great extent on researchers undertaking their investigations in dialogue with practitioners in the field.

In light of this, the Volkswagen Foundation introduced calls for proposals for **Study Groups on Migration and Integration** in 2003 under the terms of its funding initiative **Future Issues of our Society – Analysis, Advice and Communication between Academia and Practice**. As a result of two previous calls a total amount of 7.2 million euros has been allocated to twelve groups until now. All calls are aimed at proposals that investigate the various options open to migrants for participation in differentiated social structures of society, the impact of migration on the social structures and the processes involving the social integration of migrants. Migration and integration are to be treated as processes of social mobility, set in relation to social change.

It is with this perspective in mind that the twelve funded study groups are working on a variety of topics in the fields of economy, education, language, organization and participation.

II. Objectives

With this third round of applications, additional study groups will be invited to explore in depth the subject area of **migration and health**. **Study groups** are to be organized along the following lines:

- They should concentrate on the thematic area of “migration and health”, as described below, and contribute to a better understanding of integration processes in this area. Related aspects of migration and integration in other areas are to be considered.
- They should combine the clarification of unresolved empirical and theoretical research issues with public debate and dissemination of the research results.
- They should bring together relevant competencies from different disciplines and practice fields concerned with the research subject. This approach explicitly encourages supra-regional and cross-border programs of cooperation.

III. Migration and Health

The following examples are intended to illustrate this subject area, without, however, exhaustively predetermining potential research questions or topics.

Modern societies have established health systems which enable access to all members of society, albeit to varying extents. In this respect the health system represents an important field for observing the participation of migrants and its changes in the course of integration processes. Due to the past predominance of migrant workers, it was initially assumed that migrant populations comprised mainly relatively young people in good health. As the course of integration processes unfolded it became clear that the incidence of sickness and health complaints in these populations bears similarity to that of the indigenous population and that in everyday life migrants are confronted with difficulties in obtaining medical treatment. In Germany this assumption rests solely on a small number of selective surveys. There is a dearth of reliable data on the state of health and the utilization rate of institutionalized health care by migrants in Germany as a whole.

Health surveys should encompass not only those non-Germans covered by statistics, but also the much greater number of residents with migrant background. Important areas of investigation include gynaecology, psychic disorders and chronic pain. Beside primary and emergency treatment on the part of general practitioners and hospitals, prevention and rehabilitation are also of interest. The aim is to trace the paths of patients through both the professional as well as the non-professional system, to identify subsequently encountered (or absent) interfaces and barriers to access, and to determine the real need for health care services, the qualitative form of diagnosis and therapy, as well as the results of treatment.

The issues revealed by epidemiology and research on health services cannot be adequately addressed solely by the pertinent theoretical and clinical departments of medicine. More often than not there are interconnections to other aspects of integration processes. Migrants play an increasingly important role in health organizations, not only as patients, but also as doctors and nurses. In particular, there is a lack of international comparisons regarding the impact of migration on internal structural development and on the ways and methods of organizations affected by migration. In this respect an interesting avenue of investigation would be to find out whether – and if so how – previously existing health systems are impacted by the influence of migration.

Initially the causes of inappropriate or deficient health care in respect of people with migrant histories was attributed mainly to language barriers, partial ignorance of the system of health care services, as well as the rejection of individual elements within the system on cultural grounds. In the meantime there is an awareness that real or perceived deficits are not only on the side of the migrants themselves, but also in the structure of health care services and the competencies of persons working in the health care system. Guidelines and recommendations involving the participation of therapists and interpreters who speak the migrants' languages as well as special facilities for migrants are aimed at reducing such deficits. However, little is known about the effect of such provisions on the skill-sets of workers with or without migration histories in the health care system, or on the utilization of health care services, or the levels of satisfaction with the treatment provided.

Changes to the system of health care services necessitate not only adaptation on the part of the organizations concerned, but also involvement on the part of the private and informal social resources of the migrants, as well as migrant networks and organizations. To what extent will this facilitate access to the health

services? Is there a trend toward the formation of migrant organizations with similar functions as religious and other non-profit organizations in the host society? Does this lead to interaction among the various organizations? What is the role of ethnic identities, adopted by migrants themselves or imposed on them by others?

Last not least, little is known about how health care provision impacts the personal and family everyday lives of migrants and their economic situation. In this connection the gender-specific aspects deserve particular attention. People with migrant histories also have issues with regard to work-life balance, for instance, when family care is needed.

IV. Funding possibilities

It is expected that three additional study groups will be funded with up to maximum 800,000 Euros each for periods of three years. The funding provided by the Foundation can be used to pay for staff costs as well as non-personnel expenditure (including travel costs) – also for partners in other countries and for practitioners participating in the group. The funds are to be used to secure the cooperation of complementary research expertise both within Germany and from other countries in the work of the study groups. They should also be used to implement suitable forms of dialogue with the representatives of relevant practice fields.

In addition to dissemination activities and establishing contacts with users, each study group will be expected to exchange their results with the other groups and external experts. The activities of the groups and their networking will be actively accompanied by the Foundation and its consultants.

Commensurate with the high demands placed on study groups, applicants should command considerable expertise in the thematic core of

their respective field. It is expected that successful applicants will be able to contribute some of their own resources. Special importance is attached to the development and application of suitable methods of research in the proposed study groups. Preliminary studies with regard to preparatory methodology as well as the desired integration of different fields of research and research approaches might help to assure the required quality of research. For this purpose pre-proposals can be accompanied by applications for up to 20,000 euros to cover personnel and non-personnel expenses.

V. Review process

The processing of applications involves a two step procedure. In a **mandatory** first stage, prior to any formal submission of applications for funding, only **pre-proposals** should be submitted to the Foundation. **Closing date for the submission of pre-proposals is January 15, 2008.**

Pre-proposals will be selected on the basis of comparison by an international and interdisciplinary panel comprising representatives of academia and practice. Following peer review of the pre-proposals received, a detailed application may be requested from applicants. This request can be accompanied by a grant of up to 20,000 euros for preliminary studies, if the respective application passed the review process successfully.

A request for a more detailed application, however, does not in any way indicate funding approval of the study group. The full proposals will subsequently also be evaluated by the international and interdisciplinary review committee. The panel may invite applicants to make a presentation of their project.

VI. How to apply?

Pre-proposals and, where applicable, related applications for the funding of preliminary studies must arrive at the Volkswagen Foundation's office **not later than January 15, 2008**. They are to be **written in English** (with German abstract) in accordance with the application form (available at the download center in the section "service" of the Foundation's homepage). When filling out the form, please note the upper limits for the abstracts (150 words each), the pre-proposal (5,000 words), CVs (2 pages each) and, where applicable, a related application for preliminary studies (2,500 words). Proposals which exceed these limits will not be processed. Please send a signed copy of the completed form to the Volkswagen Foundation by postal mail. In parallel please submit the completed form electronically (preferably by e-mail with separate pdf files for the pre-proposal and each attachment or by CD-ROM).

The Foundation can provide funds only to academic institutions. Applicants who are not members of universities or known research institutions should also supply details on legal status, statutes, trustees and boards, charitable status, budgeting and auditing of the respective institution. If available, these applicants are required to supply an annual report or a general description of their institutions.

Pre-proposals from abroad are welcome. They should, however, give detailed information on the cooperation with academic institutions in Germany in the proposed study group.

The Foundation does not consider pre-proposals and detailed applications which are pending at another funding institution, neither in the identical nor in a similar form.

VII. Information

Further information concerning this funding initiative can be obtained from the Volkswagen Foundation's office in Hanover.

Contact person: Dr. Alfred Schmidt

Phone: +49(0)511 8381-237

Fax: +49(0)511 8381-344

E-mail: schmidt@volkswagenstiftung.de

VolkswagenStiftung

Kastanienallee 35
30519 Hannover

GERMANY

Phone +49(0)511 8381-0
Fax +49(0)511 8381-344
www.volkswagenstiftung.de

