# BERLIN GOVERNANCE PLATFORM

## Pairity
Evidence-Based, Community-Driven

# *Re:Match* – Relocation via Matching

## Transition to Stability: 12-Month Results

# *Re:Match* –
# Brief Project Overview

The *Re:Match* project employed a data and preference-driven matching system to relocate 78 displaced Ukrainians from Poland to six German municipalities from April through September 2023, during Phase I of the pilot. The participating municipalities were: Kiel (Schleswig-Holstein), Braunschweig, Salzgitter (Lower Saxony), Düsseldorf, Troisdorf (Northrhine-Westphalia), Rottenburg am Neckar (Baden-Württemberg).

*Re:Match* offers managed relocation, illustrating how city-level governments can provide sustainable pathways for solidarity in Germany and Europe more broadly. Municipalities participated in programme co-design, motivated by the desire for a system that considers dynamic service availability and complementarity with refugees' needs, backgrounds, and preferences.

The bespoke algorithm maximizes collective welfare by assigning best possible matches given attributes and preferences, and municipality services and capacities. The process finds optimal allocations of scarce resources across cohorts.

The ↗ **Interim Evaluation Report** of January 2024 provides a detailed account of the programme context, methodology, role of the municipalities, matching procedures, matching outcomes, relocation dynamics, and outcomes and satisfaction 30 days after relocation.

The ↗ **Six-Month Results** publication provides the results from follow up surveys and interviews with the participating refugees on medium-term satisfaction and integration outcomes after around 6 months.

The **present publication** provides the results from follow up surveys and interviews with the participating refugees on longer-term satisfaction and integration outcomes after around 12 months. For direct comparability between the one-month, six-month, and 12-month surveys, responses to each question are reported as relative percentages to those who answered the question.

## → PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES

**PHASE I**
10/2022 – 10/2023

**STAKEHOLDERS**
→ Berlin Governance Platform in cooperation with Pairity and Salam Lab
→ 6 German municipalities from 4 federal states
→ Ukrainian protection seekers in Poland

**RELOCATION VIA MATCHING**
3 cohorts with a total of
78 protection seekers in
34 households

Kiel

Braunschweig
Salzgitter

Düsseldorf
Troisdorf

Rottenburg a.N.

## → HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITIONS

**11**
**SINGLE MOTHER**

**9**
**2 + ADULTS**

**8**
**SINGLE**

**4**
**SINGLE MOTHER + GRANDMOTHER**

**3**
**PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS**

**2**
**COUPLE + CHILDREN**

# Re:Match –
# 12-Month Results

All adult participants from *Re:Match's* first phase in 2023 received an online survey a minimum of 12 months after relocation to measure long-term integration outcomes. All participants were invited to respond to in-depth follow-up questions about their city-match, expectations, and programme advice. The results in this section refer to the survey results (n = 32, response rate of 68%) and direct quotes from participants (n = 8).

## Programme Satisfaction & Success

At 12 months, the majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the programme, stating that it met overall expectations (69%), which remained relatively stable over time. Additionally, 88% affirmed that participating in *Re:Match* continued to be a good decision after 12 months **[→ Figure 1]**. The stability of satisfaction levels from six to 12 months underscores the programme's sustained efficacy.

"**The city fully meets my wishes and needs. Beautiful, cozy city, well-developed infrastructure, access to all types of transport, close distance to the big cities of Cologne and Bonn, the presence of the Ukrainian community. I am very happy that I was chosen this city. I'm very happy that my family got a room in a house and we didn't have to go through camps and dormitories. It makes it very easy to adapt. It helped me a lot to speak English and Turkish. It makes my adaptation much easier. In general, I am very pleased with the choice of the city and your great help. Your programme has made my adaptation as a mother with three children much easier.**"

– Participant matched with Troisdorf

## Figure 1 → GENERAL SATISFACTION

**Question: Based on my experience,
after one year, I would describe the *Re:Match* programme as...**
Graph shows the increase in agreement from 1 month to 1 year in **green**

**Meeting my overall expectations**

| 68% | +1% | **69%** |

**A good decision for me and my family**

| 80% | +8% | **88%** |

■ 1 Month    ■ 1 Year

Participants also reflected on broader programme themes, based on their experiences after one year. In terms of programme satisfaction, **the overwhelming majority of participants would recommend *Re:Match* to others (94%)**. Most participants agreed that the *Re:Match* preference-based matching algorithm was fair and transparent **(72%) [→ Figure 2]**. One participant even noted that the individualised approach taken by the matching algorithm was essential to finding the right fit for each family.

"**Approach each family on an individual basis. It's like an IKEA bar, everyone makes their own hot dog. A person will not put too much mayonnaise or ketchup – everyone will add within their own norm. It's the same with this approach: a person only needs what they need. An approach like *Re:Match* can help to get it faster, and in the right amount.**"

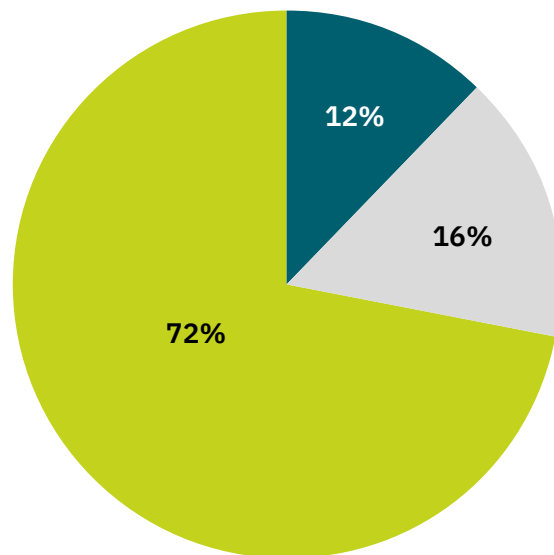– Participant matched with Düsseldorf

## Figure 2 →
## REFLECTIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL OVERALL PROGRAMME EXPERIENCE

**Question: Considering my experiences after one year …**

**I would recommend *Re:Match* to other displaced people looking for a way to move between countries**
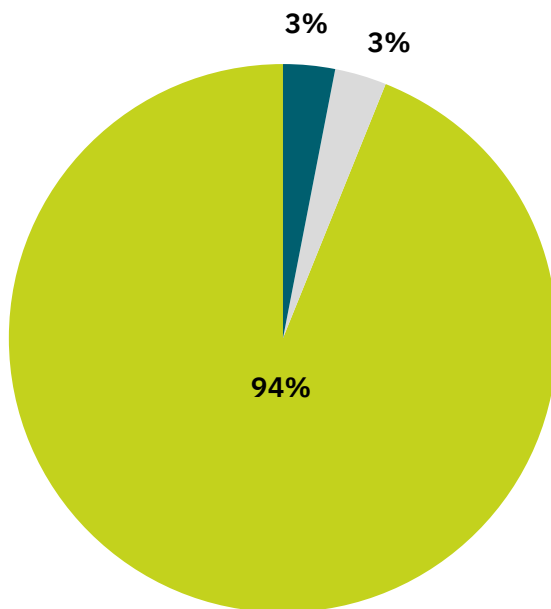
**Regardless of if the city was a good fit, the matching system using interviews and data was fair and transparent**



Left pie chart: 94% Agree, 3% Neutral, 3% Disagree

Right pie chart: 72% Agree, 16% Neutral, 12% Disagree

■ Agree   ■ Neutral   ■ Disagree

After a year, the majority of participants agreed that matched cities **still felt like a good fit (63%)**, with a minor increase (5%) from the six-month results **[→ Figure 3]**. Those who disagreed that the city was still a "good match" still appreciated the programme and were able to integrate into communities. For instance, 88% of those who disagreed about the quality of the city, agreed that participating in *Re:Match* was still a good decision for their family and 100% either agreed or were neutral that social services and benefits adequately met their needs.[1]

### *RE:MATCH* RETENTION: AFTER 1 YEAR

A major indicator for programme success, is retention – whether or not participants remained in the location they were matched with. After a year, retention rates among surveyed participants were very strong:

*100% of participants were still in the vicinity of their matched city:*

→ 91% stayed in their matched city;

→ *9% moved within an hour of their matched city (50–80km away), still near enough to access the services and networks they initially set up through Re:Match. All who moved, cited the reason was lack of affordable housing and moved after a few months of unsuccessful house searching.*

It has to be noted that as of this report, Ukrainians receiving social benefits can face restrictions on moving to other cities, but exceptions are allowed for reasons like employment or attending integration and language courses. Exact rules vary by federal state, with some states (where some *Re:Match* participants live) have lifted these restrictions entirely.

## Social Belonging and Cultural Engagement

Surveys and interviews also measured sense of social belonging to better understand how newcomers were adapting over time. Participants reported an impressive increase in sense of belonging from the first month to six months, and patterns remained stable from six to 12 months. Key increases in social belonging are noted in **→ Figure 4**. The greatest increases were around social services meeting needs, and making friends with Germans and Ukrainians (all +23%). Participants' sense of community more than doubled over time, with a moderate number of participants (38%) feeling like members of the community after a year.[2] These results show that participants had made broader connections to the community over time.

## Figure 3 → SATISFACTION WITH CITY MATCH

**Question: After a year, the city I was matched with still seems like a good match**
Graph shows the increase in agreement from 6 months to 1 year in **green**

**The city I was matched with still seems like a good match**

| 58% | +5% | **63%** |

■ **6 Months**   ■ **1 Year**

[1]Similar to the findings at six months, lower satisfaction was not specific to any one city, with no observable correlation with services or opportunities in a specific city. Even among the participants who disagreed, the majority agreed or were neutral that **they felt safe and happy (75%) and 100% agreed that they would recommend *Re:Match* to other displaced people.** Reasons for dissatisfaction continued to reflect general trends like housing availability which are not exclusive to any newcomer group and are largely exogenous to the *Re:Match* programme design.
[2]Sub-group analyses revealed that the participants who stayed in their matched city experienced an even stronger sense of social belonging. When excluding the 9% of participants who relocated (50-80km away), patterns remained similar but showed slightly greater increases in belonging (an average of 2% higher). Total agreement in each category was either higher or comparable to the 6-month results. However, to focus on overall participant experiences and ensure consistency across all results, Figure 4 includes all participants.

## Figure 4 → SOCIAL BELONGING

**Question: Please rate your agreement with the following statements about your sense of belonging in this new city. I (my family)…**
Graph shows the increase in agreement from 1 month to 1 year in **green**

**Feel…**

**…social services + benefits meet our needs**

| | |
|---|---|
| 58% +23% | **81%** |

**…happy and safe in the community**

| | |
|---|---|
| 68% -2% | **66%** |

**…I see a future in the community**

| | |
|---|---|
| 60% +9% | **69%** |

**…like members of the community**

| | |
|---|---|
| 18% +20% | **38%** |

**Have made close friends with…**

**…local Germans**

| | |
|---|---|
| 33% +23% | **56%** |

**…members of the Ukrainian community**

| | |
|---|---|
| 43% +23% | **66%** |

**…other immigrant community members**

| | |
|---|---|
| 48% +8% | **56%** |

**Feel represented in this city/country…**

**…by political parties and systems**

| | |
|---|---|
| +9% | **9%** |

**…in the news media**
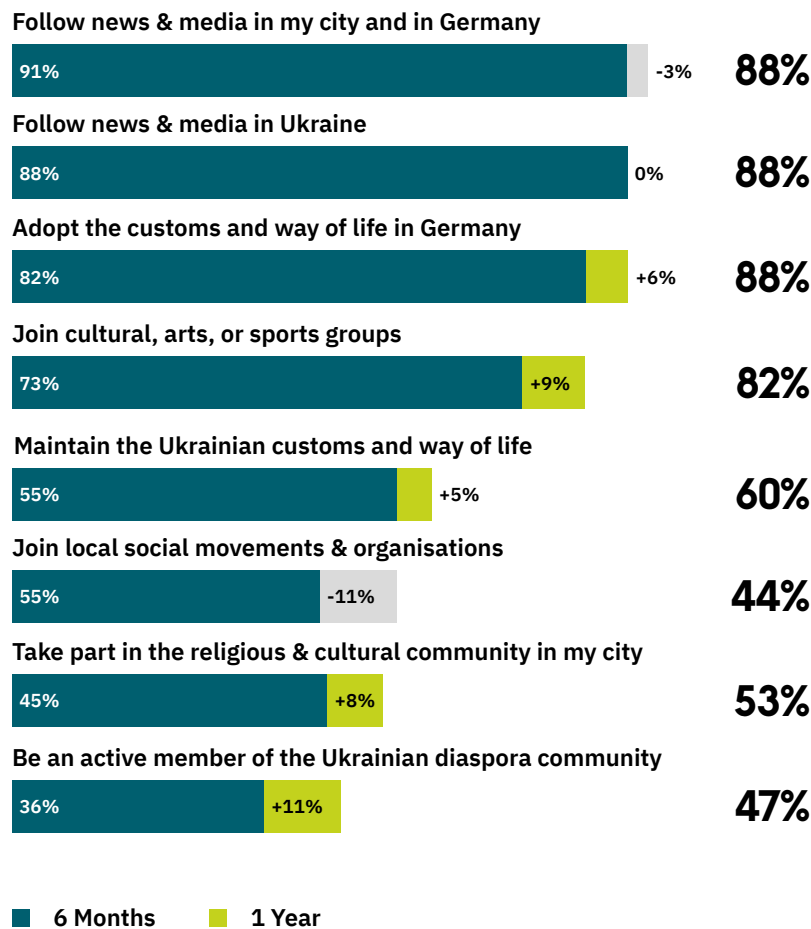
| | |
|---|---|
| 8% -1% | **7%** |

■ 1 Month　　■ 1 Year

The importance of social and cultural engagement in Germany remained quite stable from six months to 12 months. Their main focus was following news in both Germany and Ukraine, but also engaging with the community by adapting to the German way of life and connecting through leisure activities (e.g., joining art and sports clubs) (→ **Figure 5**). After participants settled in, the importance of engaging with their diaspora community increased significantly from six months, but remained the lowest priority overall.

## Figure 5 → SOCIAL & CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

**Question: Please rate your agreement with the following statements about your engagement with social and cultural groups in this new city. It is important for me (and my family) to...**
Graph shows changes in agreement from 1 month to 1 year, increases in green and decreases in grey

**Follow news & media in my city and in Germany**

| 91% | -3% | **88%** |

**Follow news & media in Ukraine**

| 88% | 0% | **88%** |

**Adopt the customs and way of life in Germany**

| 82% | +6% | **88%** |

**Join cultural, arts, or sports groups**

| 73% | +9% | **82%** |

**Maintain the Ukrainian customs and way of life**

| 55% | +5% | **60%** |

**Join local social movements & organisations**

| 55% | -11% | **44%** |

**Take part in the religious & cultural community in my city**

| 45% | +8% | **53%** |

**Be an active member of the Ukrainian diaspora community**

| 36% | +11% | **47%** |

■ **6 Months**   ■ **1 Year**

## Self-Sufficiency

Building a strong community foundation, making social connections, and engaging with the local culture all contribute to self-sufficiency. To capture self-sufficiency metrics, surveys asked whether participants had achieved a list of key integration outcomes, and then asked how challenging it was to achieve each of these outcomes. → **Figure 6** highlights the top five integration indicators most relevant to participants, based on their top-ranked matching preferences. It illustrates participants' progress toward achieving these integration outcomes, alongside their assessment of task difficulty. Additionally, the figure also shows German language levels after one year. Notably, as this was the final follow-up with participants, the "Achievements" figure includes those who selected "in progress" in an effort to represent individuals nearing achievement of these tasks, but whose achievements extend beyond the timeframe of this data collection.
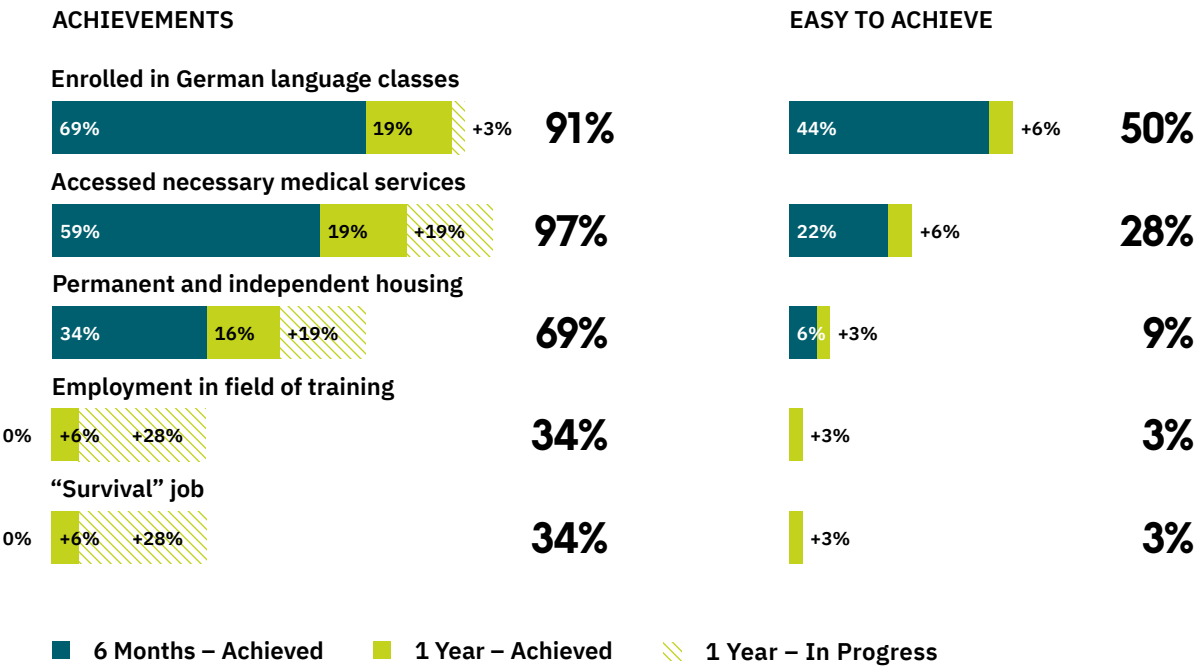
## Figure 6 → KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Question: Have you or your household achieved any of the following?**
*(Including: Achieved or In Progress)*
**Question: For the same items, please list how easy each of these were to achieve**
Graph shows the increase in agreement from 6 months to 1 year in **green**

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Enrolled in German language classes**
| 69% | 19% | +3% | **91%** |

**Accessed necessary medical services**
| 59% | 19% | +19% | **97%** |

**Permanent and independent housing**
| 34% | 16% | +19% | **69%** |

**Employment in field of training**
| 0% | +6% | +28% | **34%** |

**"Survival" job**
| 0% | +6% | +28% | **34%** |

**EASY TO ACHIEVE**

| 44% | +6% | **50%** |

| 22% | +6% | **28%** |

| 6% | +3% | **9%** |

| +3% | **3%** |

| +3% | **3%** |

■ 6 Months – Achieved　　■ 1 Year – Achieved　　▨ 1 Year – In Progress

**GERMAN LANGUAGE LEVELS AT 1 YEAR**

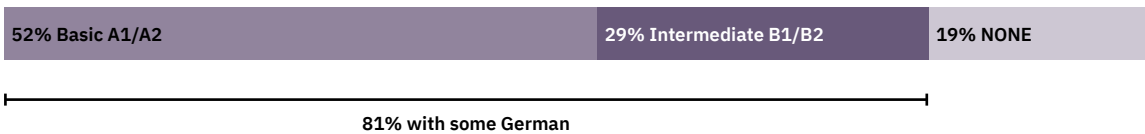| 52% Basic A1/A2 | 29% Intermediate B1/B2 | 19% NONE |

81% with some German

**Figure 6** demonstrates that participants showed significant improvements in self-sufficiency by one year, either entirely achieving or making notable progress in the key areas of self-sufficiency:

### LANGUAGE

→ nearly all participants had enrolled in language courses

→ a vast majority gained German language skills, crucial for integration and labour market participation

→ Re:Match found: 91% enrolled in language courses; 52% had basic (A1/A2), 29% had intermediate (B1/B2) levels.

→ in comparison, large-scale studies have shown lesser language course engagement and language skills for regularly arriving Ukrainian refugees in Germany. For instance, Brücker et al. (2023) found after 1 year, only 75% enrolled or completed language courses and had lower language skills (27% "okay", 8% "good" levels).[3]

### MEDICAL SERVICES

→ nearly all participants accessed their necessary medical services

### HOUSING

→ increase in those who found permanent housing: a very challenging achievement

→ access to private housing represented a major matching preference, and even with challenges the majority found housing

→ comparable to Brücker et al. (2023) who found 74% had permanent housing after a year

### EMPLOYMENT

→ increases in progress towards labour market engagement, the most challenging achievement

→ in their field: 6% achieved employment, 28% in progress of finding a job, thus 34% engaging in their field

→ survival job: 6% achieved employment, 28% in progress, thus 34% engaging in any employment

→ notably all participants that achieved employment had strong language skills (intermediate German or English)

→ further exploration of the results (detailed in the next section) provides further context that employment is not the only meaningful way to pursue self-sufficiency

[3] Brücker et al. (2023) is a comprehensive and representative longitudinal survey of Ukrainian refugees in Germany. Here we compare *Re:Match* results to those from Brücker et al.'s second survey wave (n = 6,754), conducted in 2023 after participants had been in Germany between 9 and 13 months. *Citation:* Brücker et al. (2023). Ukrainian refugees: Nearly half intend to stay in Germany for the longer term. *DIW Weekly Report (28). A policy bulletin from the German Institute for Economic Research,* DIW Berlin. https://doi.org/10.18723/diw_dwr:2023-28-1

## CONTEXTUALIZING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

While full-time employment is often a clear measure of self-sufficiency, it is not the only measure of successful integration, and further context can help us understand those who focus on other foundational integration factors before employment [→ Figure 7].

German language skills are crucial for establishing a life in Germany, accessing services, making social contacts, and accessing the job or training market. By funding German and integration courses for newcomers, Germany supports language acquisition, following a long- term approach in integration. For instance, the majority of participants were occupied with full-time German language classes (53%). As already noted in the six-month report, fluency in German is key to achieving employment and broader social integration. Moreover, participants noted the amount of time and effort it takes to become proficient in German:

"So far I have not had time for such an active integration, because the German language learning process takes a lot of time, I also do a lot of things to learn the language at home. So that stage when you immediately go to the language courses, you do not have time for anything else."
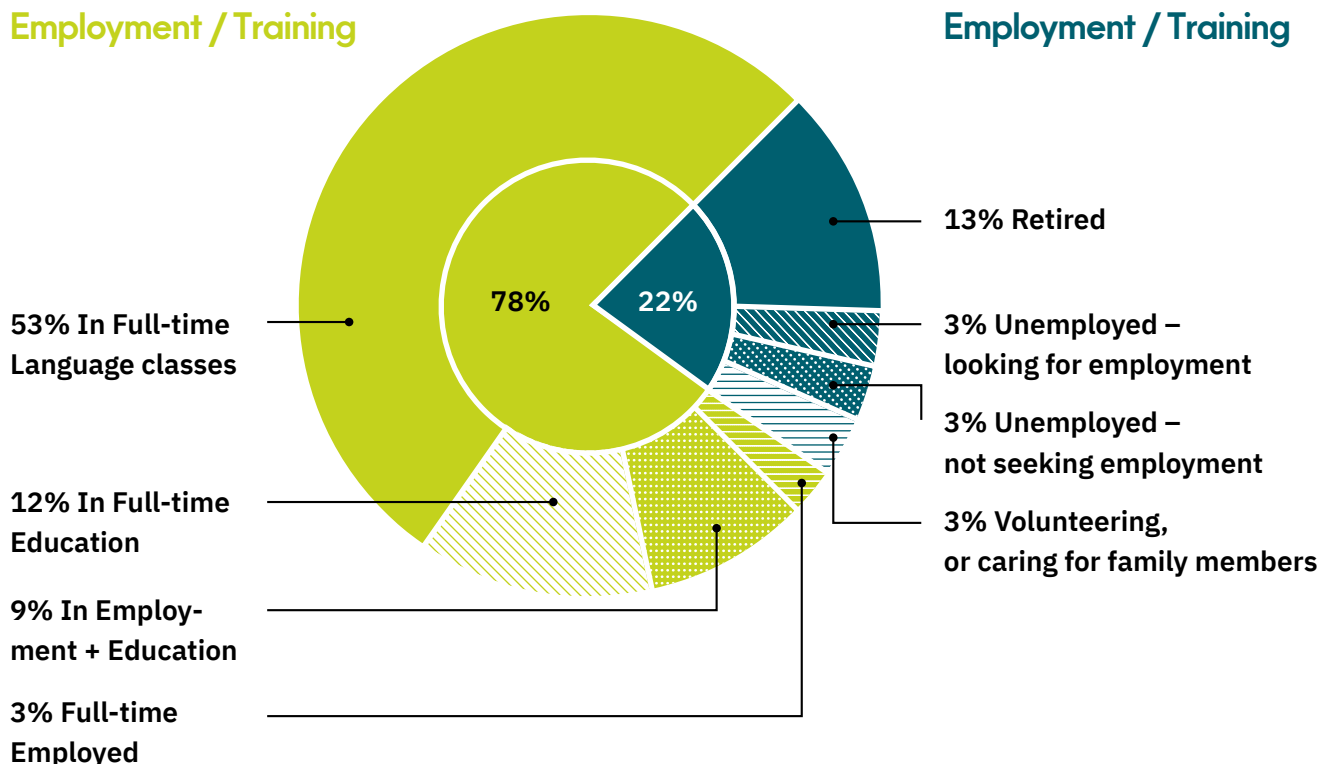
– Participant matched with Düsseldorf

Only 15% of participants were actually focused on employment: 9% of these were also in education and employment, 3% full-time employed, and 3% were unemployed but seeking employment. Employment findings are comparable to Brücker et al. (2023) who found 18% had achieved employment after a year, though noted that only 3% of women with children were employed. Notably, women with children make up the largest proportion of the *Re:Match* participants.

## Figure 7 → DAILY ENGAGEMENT OF ADULTS AT 12 MONTHS

**78% In Education / Employment / Training**

**22% Not in Education / Employment / Training**



**53% In Full-time Language classes**

**12% In Full-time Education**

**9% In Employment + Education**

**3% Full-time Employed**

**78%**

**22%**

**13% Retired**

**3% Unemployed – looking for employment**

**3% Unemployed – not seeking employment**

**3% Volunteering, or caring for family members**

## Integration Support

We asked if people received any support in key integration areas to better understand participants' networks and supports formed by 12 months. Participants were most independent when enrolling in German language courses. Formal government programs were particularly useful for accessing medical services. → **Figure 8** shows that formal government programs, municipal social workers, and community organizations play a helpful role in key integration tasks. Future programming could look to leverage this finding and integrate such supports directly into *Re:Match* to ensure supports are equally accessible.

## Figure 8 → INTEGRATION SUPPORT

**Question: Did anyone support you in these Integration Tasks?**
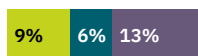
**Enrolled in German language classes**

| 41% | 6% | 6% | 16% | 19% |

**Accessed necessary medical services**

| 16% | 28% | 16% | 6% | 25% |

**Found permanent and independent housing**

| 9% | 9% | 13% | 13% | 16% |

**Found employment in field of training**

| 9% | 6% | 13% |

**Found a "survival" job**

| 9% | 6% | 3% | 9% |

- ■ **Achieved without support**
- ■ **Friends**
- ■ **Community organizations**
- ■ **Municipal Social Worker**
- ■ **Formal government programs**
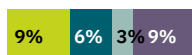
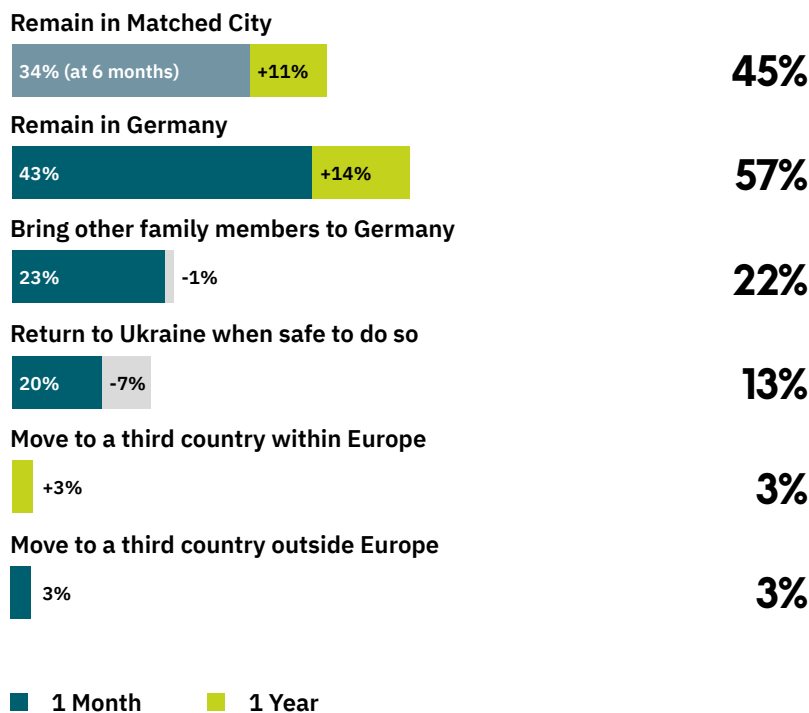# Future Stability: Plans to Remain

Immigrant retention in destinations is a major policy focus and can be seen as a metric for programme success. As noted in the earlier section (*Re:Match Retention: After 1 Year*), 100% of surveyed participants remained in Germany, in the same state, and either in or nearby their matched city.

Participants had become increasingly certain of their plans to stay in Germany and remain in the city where they were matched. This is in line with participants' increased ability to find permanent housing and employment, and learn German. **As participants become more self-sufficient and settled, the foundations they've built enable a transition to stability, securing their future in Germany.** *Re:Match* findings on remaining in Germany (57%) are slightly stronger than Brücker et al. (2023), which found 44% plan to stay in Germany long term.

## Figure 9 → FUTURE MOBILITY PLANS

**Question: Tell us about your future plans for mobility after relocation to Germany.
I (my family) plan to...**
Graph shows changes in agreement from 1 month to 1 year, increases in green and decreases in grey (except for "Remain in Matched City" which was only measured at 6 months and 1 year)

**Remain in Matched City**

| 34% (at 6 months) | +11% |
| --- | --- |

**45%**

**Remain in Germany**

| 43% | +14% |
| --- | --- |

**57%**

**Bring other family members to Germany**

| 23% | -1% |
| --- | --- |

**22%**

**Return to Ukraine when safe to do so**

| 20% | -7% |
| --- | --- |

**13%**

**Move to a third country within Europe**

+3%

**3%**

**Move to a third country outside Europe**

3%

**3%**

■ 1 Month   ■ 1 Year

# 12 Month Programme Reflections

## Retention & Satisfaction

→ The programme showed high retention rates and overall program satisfaction – a large majority still felt that participation in *Re:Match* was a good decision and would recommend the program to others.

→ Even those few who moved from their matched city remained close by, and overall the majority of participants found the algorithmic matching was fair and transparent, regardless of their match.

→ After a year, participants remained positive about *Re:Match* and their pace of integration into communities. Likewise, city services still met their needs and most could see a future in their community.

## Integration Successes & Challenges

→ Enrolling in language classes remained the most successful and easiest achievement, which participants noted as key to successful integration and eventual labour market participation.

→ By 12 months most participants had achieved basic to intermediate German language skills and were focused on language improvement before looking for work. As expected, progress towards labour market engagement increased from six to 12 months, particularly for those with strong language skills.

→ Employment was not the only pathway to improved integration. Participants were mostly focused on laying foundations for self-sufficiency through language courses, and were mostly focused on education and training. Participants showed increased self-sufficiency metrics by 12 months, particularly in securing permanent housing – a challenging task for many in Germany.

## Future Directions

→ Results from data collection at 12 months shows promising long-term results around retention, programme satisfaction and community connections. All factors are crucial in terms of opportunities for scaling and longer-term outcomes in terms of the social integration of newcomers in Germany.

→ *Re:Match's* pre-integration support, including pre-arrival guides and information sessions, played a key role in helping participants connect with community organizations and formal government programmes. Future matching programmes could leverage these integration supports by directly collaborating with government and community programmes to offer wraparound support.

→ Labour market integration remains the major challenge for all newcomers. Future matching programmes could work to improve employment outcomes by including more detailed information on available job market integration programs in cities, or match newcomers directly with local employers and job openings.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

**BERLIN GOVERNANCE PLATFORM** is an independent think tank based in Berlin that develops, promotes and tests transparency-oriented and participatory governance in order to develop sustainable and human rights-based solutions to societal challenges. In the field of migration policy, the BGP develops new policy concepts for safe migration to and within the European Union. ↗ **www.governance-platform.org**

**PAIRITY** is a Canadian and European based organization that applies data and technology driven interventions to facilitate refugee resettlement and community sponsorship, and measure outcomes around integration and social cohesion. ↗ **www.pairity.ca**

**SALAM LAB** (Peacebuilding Laboratory) is a well-known Polish association committed to promoting civil society and human rights. As part of *Re:Match*, Salam Lab informed people seeking protection from Ukraine about the project. The Ukrainian-speaking project coordinator of *Re:Match* personally interviewed people seeking protection on site. ↗ **www.salamlab.pl/en/**

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