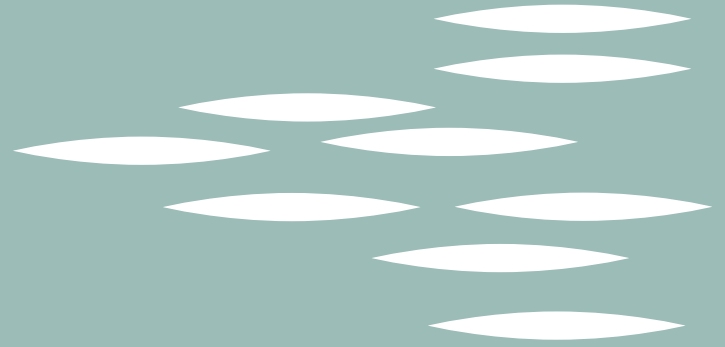




BERLIN
GOVERNANCE
PLATFORM

Pairity

Evidence-Based, Community-Driven



Re:Match – Relocation via Matching

From Arrival to Belonging:
Six-Month Results

Pilot Project Evaluation
September 2024

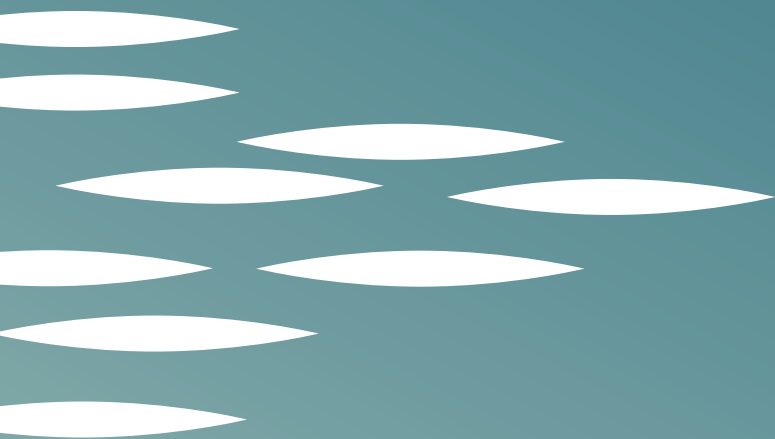
Re:Match – Brief Project Overview

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. 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 present 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. For direct comparability between the one month and six month surveys, responses to each question are reported in this paper as relative percentages to those who answered the question. Longer term outcome evaluation (12 months) is underway and will be published in late 2024.



→ PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES

PILOT PHASE
10/2022 – 10/2023

PHASE II
Since 11/2023

STAKEHOLDERS

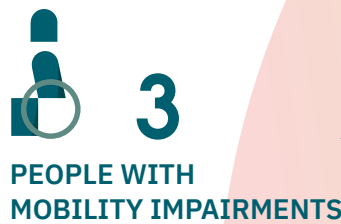
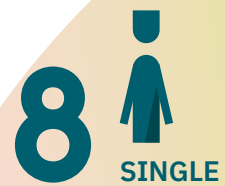
- Berlin Governance Platform in cooperation with Pairity and Salam Lab
- 6 German municipalities from 4 federal states
- Ukrainian protection seekers in Poland

RELOCATION VIA MATCHING

3 cohorts with a total of
78 protection seekers in
34 households



→ HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITIONS



Re:Match – Six Months Results

All relocated participants from *Re:Match*'s first phase received an online survey a minimum of six months after relocation to measure integration outcomes. Some participants from a range of cohorts, cities, and household compositions were also invited for interviews. The results in this section refer to the survey results (n = 33) and direct quotes from the interviews (n = 4).

“I like everything I have seen - this is a beautiful hospitable country, a beautiful city, and there are still places in schools, places on courses, accessible healthcare, which is very important. Thank you to everyone for everything, to all the *Re:Match* team and the Municipality team.”

– Participant matched with Rottenburg am Neckar, Cohort 1

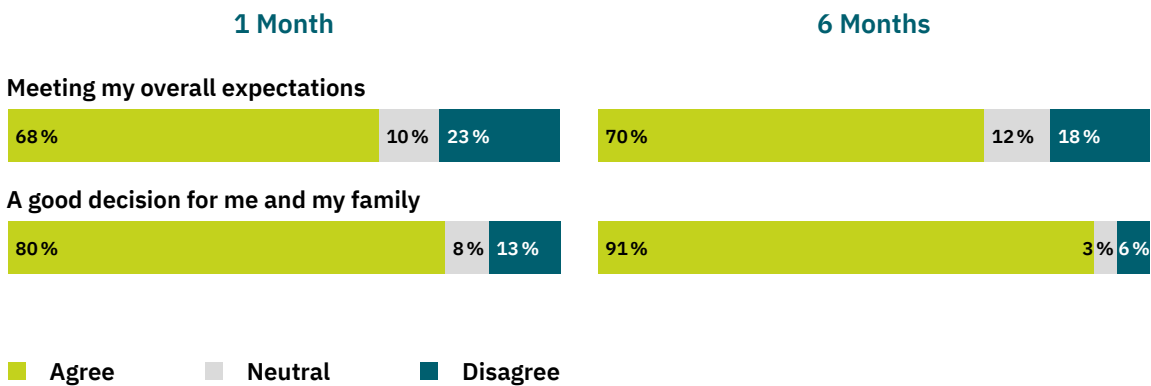
Programme Satisfaction

Overall, the majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that at six months, they remained satisfied with the programme, stating that it met overall expectations (70%), which remained relatively stable over time. 91% stated that participating in *Re:Match* remained a good decision – an increase of over 10% from survey responses one month after arrival [→ **Figure 1**]. The longer participants live in Germany, the more assured they are of their decision to participate – a positive indication of the programme's efficacy over time.

As participants spent more time in Germany, over half agreed that matched cities still felt like a good fit (58%) [→ **Figure 2**]. While 24% disagreed that the city was still a “good match”, further investigation showed that differing opinions of what constitutes a “good” fit did not detract from their ability to appreciate the programme or integrate into communities. For instance, 100% 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 75% agreed that social services and benefits adequately meet their needs.

Figure 1 → GENERAL SATISFACTION

Question: Based on my experience, overall, I would describe the *Re:Match* programme as ...

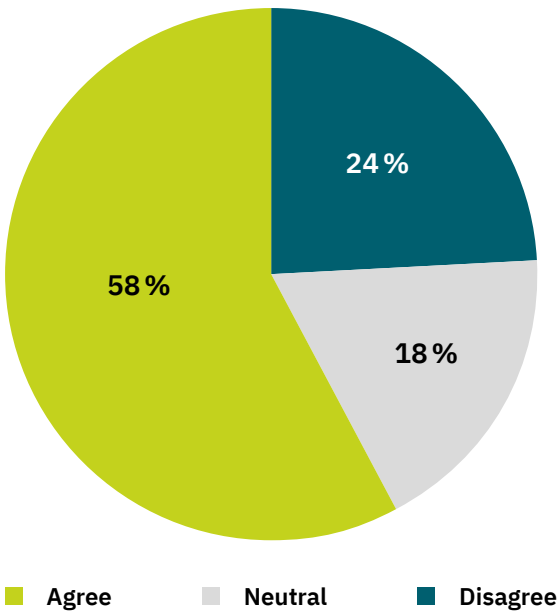


“I really like it here. In general, I am still very happy. The conditions are very good, spacious accommodation, everything is provided. I think this is the best place I could have gone to.”

– Participant matched with Salzgitter, Cohort 3

Figure 2 →
SATISFACTION WITH CITY MATCH

Question: The city I was matched with still seems like a good match.



Lower satisfaction was not specific to any one city. Two cities received agreement from all participants in terms of satisfaction at six months, and the remainder varied, 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 could see a future in the community (75%)**. Reasons for dissatisfaction often reflected general trends like housing availability which are not exclusive to any newcomer group and are largely exogenous to the *Re:Match* programme design.

SOCIAL BELONGING AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

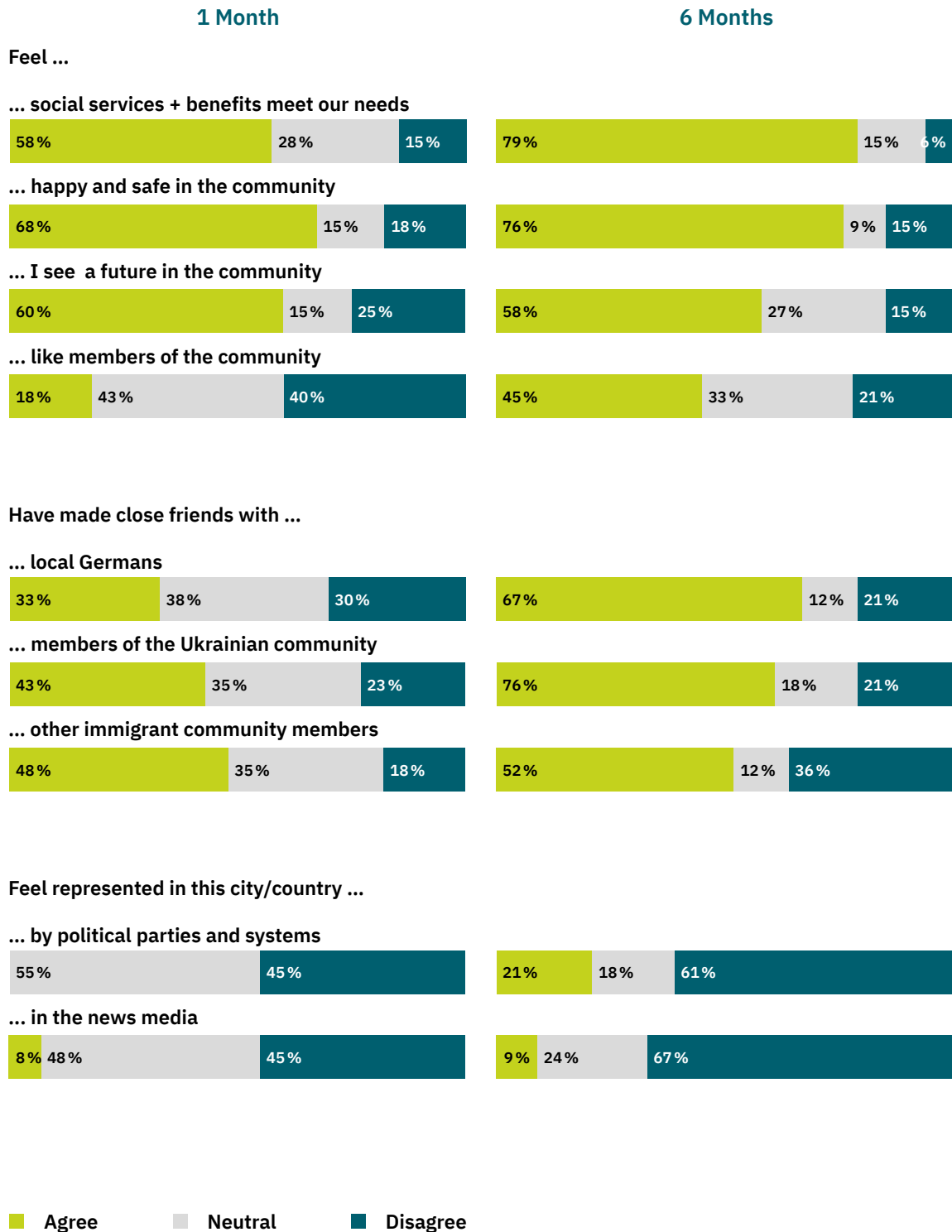
Surveys and interviews also measured sense of social belonging at one month and again at six months to better understand how newcomers were adapting to new communities. Participants reported an impressive increase in agreement around belonging from the first month to six months. For instance, agreement that social services and benefits adequately met their needs increased from 58% to 79%. A majority of participants also felt safe and saw a future for themselves in their community, both of which remained somewhat stable over time. **Nearly half of participants (45%) had already begun to feel like members of the community at six months** - a 27% increase from one-month surveys. This finding is impressive given that sense of social belonging and community-building is often a longer process than integration metrics like employment or language acquisition.

In terms of other belonging indicators, participants reported **significant increases in friendships with local Germans (an increase from 33% to 67%)** and other Ukrainians (an increase from 43% to 61%). In terms of representation, none indicated that they felt represented by political parties after one month, and 21% reported that they felt represented at six months. However, the majority disagreed that they felt represented by the political system or in news media, and this disagreement grew over time. This is not unexpected, as representation in media and politics may not easily change in a short period of time, but demonstrates an important contrast, showing that even when feeling underrepresented on a national scale, close daily connections at the community level play a larger role in fostering a sense of belonging and contribute to a sense of social well-being.

Once initial integration tasks are achieved, newcomers gain more capacity to focus on longer-term integration projects like social and cultural engagement. For the cultural aspects of life in Germany, the majority of participants agreed it was important to follow the news in both Germany and Ukraine, and to engage with the community by adapting to German culture and joining local organizations like cultural groups and sports clubs [→ **Figure 4**].

Figure 3 → SOCIAL BELONGING

Question: Please rate your agreement with the following statements about your sense of belonging in this new city. I (my family) ...



Responses were more divergent around the importance of engaging with their diaspora community (36% agreeing, 33% neutral, 30% disagreeing). This is an interesting finding, given that at baseline (pre-relocation interviews) 67% ranked cities with a diaspora as a top matching criterion, and 58% noted it was important to connect with Ukrainian diaspora. These findings suggest that while connection to Ukrainian diaspora may be an initial driver of relocation decisions, it became less important over time as people settle into their communities, learn German, and meet a wider range of community members.

Overall, **Figure 4**, provides insights into the areas we can expect these newcomers will focus on in the coming months as they continue their integration journeys.

“Almost right away, I went to the language courses. Hence, most of my time I was in courses, but I tried to travel around this land a little and integrate myself. I have German friends, so they are the people with whom I try to communicate in German and improve my German.”

– Participant matched with Düsseldorf, Cohort 2

SELF SUFFICIENCY

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 5** represents the top five integration indicators that were relevant to the most participants and reflected top-ranked matching preferences. The figure shows whether participants were able to achieve the integration outcomes, followed by their ranking of how challenging the individual task was.

→ Enrolling in language classes was the most successful and easiest to achieve. This is promising, as many participants reported that learning German was the key to successful integration and was the top-ranked matching preference across all cohorts.



¹Brücker et al. (2023a). ↗ **Ukrainian Refugees in Germany: Evidence from a Large Representative Survey**. *Comparative Population Studies*, 48, p.411; and Brücker et al. (2023b). ↗ **Geflüchtete aus der Ukraine in Deutschland: Knapp die Hälfte beabsichtigt längerfristig in Deutschland zu bleiben**. Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung. IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung. p.388.

→ The availability of private housing was a major matching preference for participants. Unfortunately, housing remained a wide-spread challenge, and is not unique to programme participants.

→ Employment remained the greatest challenge. Only 6% of households had found employment, and a large majority (84%) obtained neither employment in their field of training nor a survival job after six months. This was echoed in interviews, where participants clarified that German language requirements for employment impeded their ability to find work. However, many noted that they remained focused on German language learning. While short-term outcomes for employment were a challenge, the ease of language enrollment suggests that employment outcomes are likely to improve in tandem with language acquisition over the longer term. Importantly, these employment outcomes can be contextualized by a recent large-scale study (Survey of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany¹) which found that German language skills, but also household composition, were related to employment: after six months 17% were employed, but this fell to just 3% for single mothers with children, who notably, make up a large proportion of the *Re:Match* participants.

“The job that I found is without the German language knowledge, all communication is in English... To learn German in my field, just to work and communicate freely with my colleagues, it would probably take a year, or maybe two. That’s why the language probably became the biggest obstacle to achieving success quickly, to quickly finding a job.”

– Participant matched with Braunschweig, Cohort 2

“The main difficulties of these tasks are related to not knowing the language.”

– Participant matched with Kiel, Cohort 4

“As for the language itself, German society helps a lot and attempts to instruct people to learn German. It gives you all the tools for studying the language and also makes it possible to join language courses... if a person needs to learn the language in Germany, they will have all the necessary tools for that.”

– Participant matched with Salzgitter, Cohort 3

Figure 4 → 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...

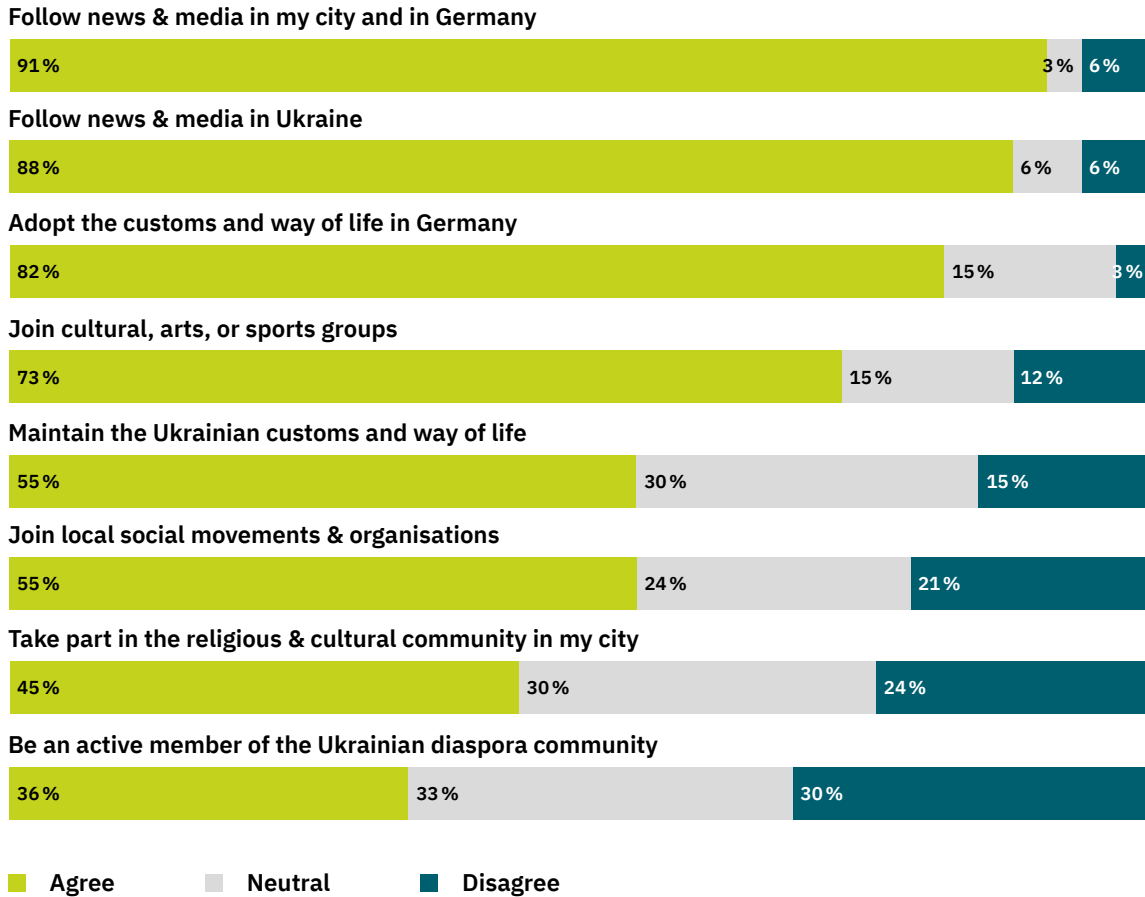
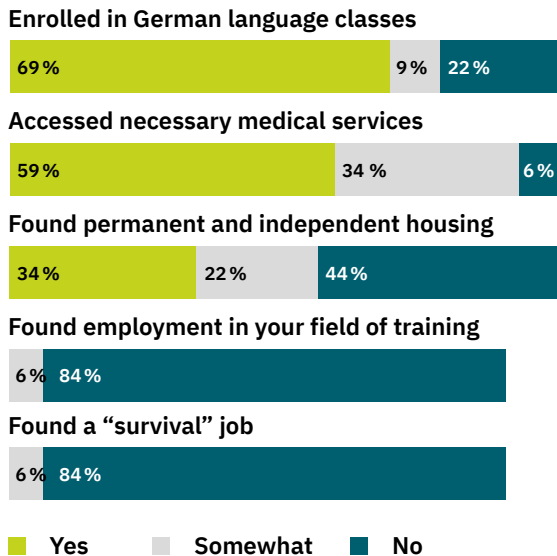


Figure 5 → TOP 5 INTEGRATION OUTCOMES: ACHIEVEMENTS & CHALLENGES

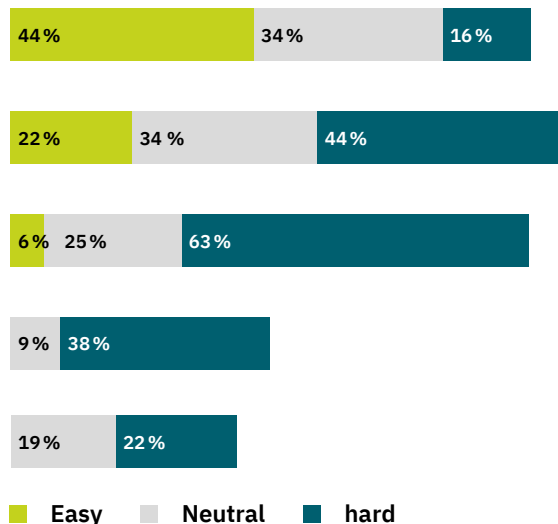
Integration: Achievements

Question: Have you or your household achieved any of the following?



Integration: Challenges

Question: For the same items, please list how easy or hard each of these were to achieve.



Future Mobility

Immigrant retention in destinations is a major policy focus and can be seen as a metric for programme success. As described in Figure 6, participants planning to remain in Germany increased from 43% to 53% at six months - though a good deal of uncertainty remains. Over time, more participants become certain they would not return to Ukraine (41%, or an increase of 18% since the one-month surveys), though nearly as many were uncertain about returning to Ukraine (38%). However, uncertainty was not commensurate with a desire to move within or outside of Europe but was reflective of a more general uncertainty. In terms of cities, 34% of participants were certain they would remain, but a large percentage remained undecided (41%). During interviews, participants clarified that improved language skills and employment prospects would help solidify their future plans.

“I want to take this coaching class to better understand what to do next. I still have such hesitation about whether I should go back to Ukraine when the war is over, when it is calmer. I want to understand what my chances are here [in Germany] to find a job based on my experience. I think it all depends on the situation in general, and you need to decide how this is the situation.”

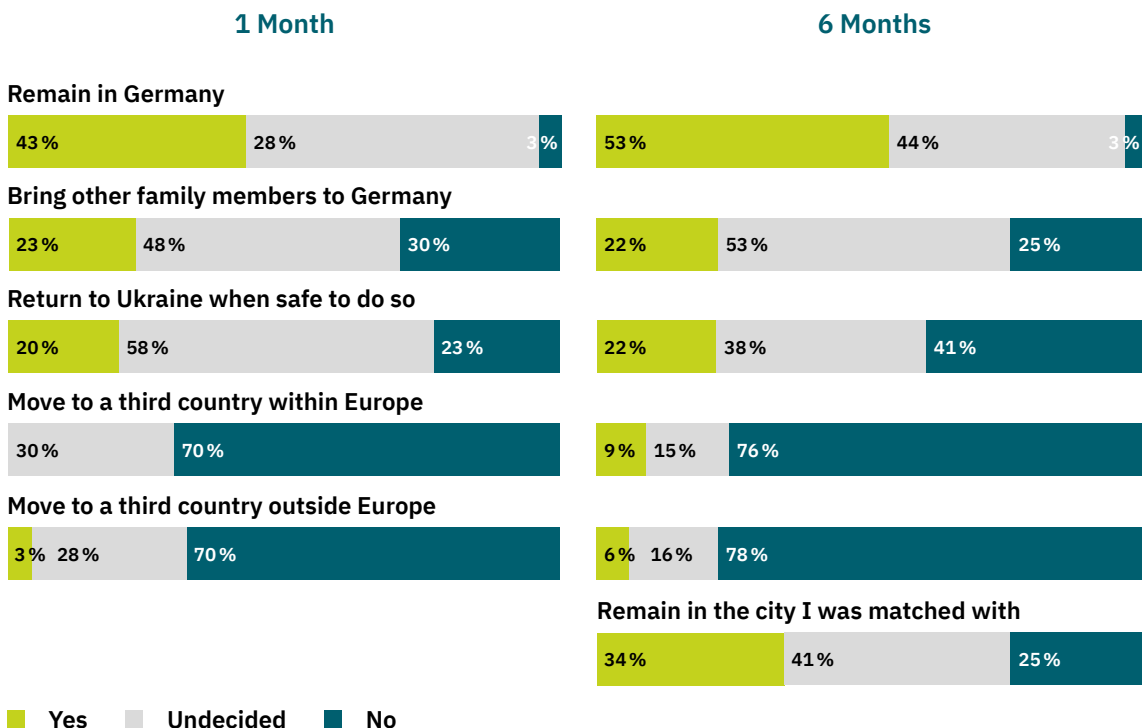
– Participant matched with Düsseldorf, Cohort 2

“For me, it is important to start working, because language is practiced faster, an+d integration is faster, then we could decide whether my husband will quit his job in Kyiv, because at the moment we decided not to risk it. I need to find a job. I want my husband to quit his job so that we can reunite the family.”

– Participant matched with Rottenburg am Neckar, Cohort 1

Figure 6 → FUTURE MOBILITY PLANS

Question: Tell us about your future plans for mobility after relocation to Germany. I (my family) plan to ...



Six Months Programme Reflections

Match Satisfaction

- The programme showed high and increased rates of satisfaction – a large majority still felt that participation in *Re:Match* was a good decision for themselves and their families.
- Even those who no longer felt positive about their particular cities remained positive about *Re:Match* in general and their pace of integration into communities. Likewise, city services still met their needs and most felt safe and happy.
- Priorities may change after relocation. For instance, the desire to engage with Ukrainian diaspora communities was an important match criterion for many participants but became less important after six months of social and cultural integration.

Integration Successes & Challenges

- Enrolling in language classes was the most successful and easiest integration achievement, which participants noted was key to successful integration.
- The relatively slow pace of German language skill played a major role in reported integration outcomes at six months, particularly in regards to limiting participants' labour market engagement. This finding underscores the importance of accessible language and integration courses.
- Regardless of relatively low metrics for self-sufficiency at six months, participants showed increased and high rates of social belonging and connectedness – which are crucial determinants of social cohesion.

Future Directions

- Results from data collection at six months shows promising medium-term results around programme satisfaction and participants' sense of social belonging. Both are crucial in terms of opportunities for scaling and longer-term outcomes in terms of the social integration of Ukrainian newcomers in Germany.
- Self-sufficiency results will likely improve after participants achieve greater levels of German language proficiency, particularly around employment outcomes. For this reason, the *Re:Match* program collects data on the results after 12 months in order to obtain a longer-term overview of the integration process.
- *Re:Match* participants benefited from growing social networks. Several participants learned of the programme from others who had previously been relocated and benefited from their support for integration. Social and support networks could grow with program scaling, and future iterations should formalise peer support and systematically engage past participants.



PROJECT PARTNERS

BERLIN GOVERNANCE PLATFORM (BGP) 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. BGP is the initiator and leader of *Re:Match*. ↗ www.governance-platform.org

PAIRITY is a Canadian-based organization that applies data and technology driven interventions to facilitate refugee resettlement and community sponsorship, and measure outcomes around integration and social cohesion. As part of *Re:Match*, Pairity advised on the development of questionnaires, developed the customized matching algorithm and supported the monitoring and evaluation. ↗ 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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Craig Damian Smith, PhD (Pairity), Katja Wagner (BGP)

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