

Beat: News

40 refugees start

Bridge internships

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USPA NEWS - Participants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Gambia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria. Fourteen-week internship in cooperation with the German Federal Employment Agency. Daimler qualifies refugees for the German labor market Internships for several hundred more refugees are planned at other company locations

Forty refugees and asylum seekers have started a so-called 'bridge internship' at Daimler. The participants who come from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Gambia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria are between 20 and 51 years old. In the program Daimler is working with the German Federal Employment Agency and Job Centers. Wilfried Porth, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG responsible for Human Resources and Director of Labor Relations, IT & Mercedes-Benz Vans: "We see immigration as an opportunity. For it to work, the integration of the refugees has to be successful. Our 'bridge internship' helps us to contribute to this political and social goal by smoothing the way for people to enter the German labor market."

This internship lasts 14 weeks. The participants were selected by the Federal Employment Agency and the competent Job Centers. They are not in competition with the core workforce or temporary workers. Successful participants can be placed in other companies, temporary agencies, and professional training programs.

"The best way for people to integrate is at the workplace. Doing things together creates understanding for one another. That is why we are delighted that many colleagues have expressed a willingness to mentor the 'bridge interns'.

Discrimination and racism have no place at Daimler. We support the program, which we see as humanitarian aid within our practical possibilities. However, it is also clear: The 'bridge interns' are not in competition with temporary agency workers or our core workforce. This program does not put anybody at a disadvantage," said Michael Brecht, Chairman of the General Works Council at Daimler AG.

German lessons for three-and-a-half hours per day -

The 'bridge interns' start work with their co-workers on the early shift at 6:00 a.m. The working time for the practical section is three-and-a-half hours per work day. In axle production and logistics, the aim is to provide the trainees with some of the basic skills for the work in industrial production. In the training, they can learn how machines are equipped or how components are sorted and provided, among other things.

The participants also gain insights into the way Daimler employees operate robotic welding machines or do the service maintenance for other machinery. Refugees spend another three-and-a-half hours per day learning German in small groups of 10 people and receive help with writing job application letters, for example.

The German Federal Employment Agency finances the first six weeks of the internship. For the remaining eight weeks, Daimler pays compensation for the daily work time of three-and-a-half hours in accordance with minimum wage law.

Daimler is financing the German courses for the full duration of the bridge internships. "As a large company, we are assuming our social responsibility and are making our infrastructure available. We can certainly get more done than many small and medium-size companies, which do not have our possibilities," said Wilfried Porth.

The first 'bridge internship' has started at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Stuttgart-Untertürkheim. The program is to be extended to other locations in the coming weeks and months. With the 'bridge internships' organized in cooperation with the German Federal Employment Agency, Daimler wants to prepare several hundred refugees and asylum seekers for the German labor market.

Many aid campaigns for refugees

Daimler has been providing active assistance for refugees for some time. Since 2013, the company has worked with "Wings of Help" to send three convoys with relief supplies to Syrian refugee camps in Turkey. The company also sponsors other integration projects in Stuttgart and Sindelfingen, has donated one million euros to "Ein Herz für Kinder" (A Heart for Children) to aid refugee children and, with its employees, has provided more than 600,000 euros to the German Red Cross for use as emergency aid for refugees.

Further assistance ranges from financing German lessons to food donations from Daimler canteens. In addition, the company has also

provided a "helpers' fleet" of Mercedes-Benz vehicles to relief organizations. Daimler's team of company physicians also examines the medical care provided to refugees in their living quarters.

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