

Integration through training

Opportunities for everyone

Learning together and learning from one another, to grow as a group: in recruiting for its vocational training programmes, Kaeser Kompressoren does not only rely on young people from the Coburg and Gera region but also on refugees and other youth from across Europe.

On the 1st of September, the latest intake of Kaeser's vocational training programme began their training: 21 young people with a refugee background, 12 from European countries other than Germany and 77 from the Coburg and Gera region. The rich diversity of the group has brought its challenges, but has also brought many opportunities.

As one of the largest companies offering vocational training in the region, Kaeser Kompressoren – the compressed air specialist based in Franconia, Germany – offers exceptional professionalism in the area of vocational training for technicians. Kaeser apprentices are amongst the very best in the districts of the chamber of commerce and industry (IHK) in Bavaria and throughout Germany as a whole. In its highly professional training program, Kaeser is now pursuing the objective of providing significantly enhanced support to all apprentices toward successful completion of their vocational training, thereby facilitating genuine integration within the company, social environment and region.

An excellent foundation

Hassan Saddiki (24) and Wael Almhamid (19) have completed the first few days of their training and have already gained first experience. Hassan is from Spain and has been in Germany for only five months. Dual vocational training is not offered in his native country; in contrast to Germany, the only instruction available is theoretical in nature – and is only offered in school. “I am interested in working with metal and I didn’t have the option of pursuing this type of training at home. Now I can learn what I want to”, he says. Wael is from Syria, has been in Germany almost two years and now speaks outstanding German. He also likes working with metal as well as working together with the other young people. “I will retain what I’m learning here forever. It’s an excellent foundation”, he says with pride. They are both impressed by Kaeser’s commitment to its apprentices and are excited that the apprentices have grown into a large cohesive team in just the first few days.

A great deal of advance preparatory work was required to support the youth with refugee backgrounds, in particular. “It wasn’t easy to find suitable candidates”, says the Vocational Training Director, Rüdiger Hopf, look back: “Dual vocational training is simply unknown in the native countries of most of the refugees and even of the other European apprentices. The matter was further complicated with regard to the refugees in that they often had no transcripts and it was nearly impossible to assess their skills at the outset. We therefore decided to take the practical approach; between February and August 2016, some 70 potential apprentices underwent a practicum at Kaeser Kompressoren – usually lasting between four and eight weeks.

Investing in expansion

Since there are now significantly more apprentices than last year, considerably more space and staff are required as well. To ensure optimal learning conditions for the apprentices, Kaeser made a series of major investments: expanding the training centre to add an extra 400 square metres of space, procuring additional tool machines and hiring two more trainers. And because language often remains a major



hurdle, Kaeser has also hired a German teacher who provides supplementary language instruction internally at the company.

Aside from the actual work itself, housing has also played a key role. Here as well, Kaeser has taken a practical approach: new apprentices can choose to be housed in a residence building owned by the company. Kaeser purchased the building, which formerly served as the Coburg youth hostel, and has modernised and renovated it into apartments. The facility now offers 30 rooms for the young apprentices.

File: o-integration-de

xxxx keystrokes – Approved for publication, notice appreciated

Images:



Filing, machining, measuring: in the first weeks of the training, the new apprentices learn the basics of their jobs. Things are going especially well in the newly constructed areas of the training centre. (Wael Almhamid is in the foreground in the first image).



A one-week training camp gives the new apprentices a chance to get to know one another and grow into teams. (Hassan Saddiki is at the far left in the first image).



Rüdiger Hopf, Director of Vocational Training