

Germany – Best Practices Identified During the Embrace UAM Mobility

Early-Stage Integration, Vocational Orientation & Community-Based Support for UAM



Content

Introduction..... 3

Best Practice 1: Local Support Ecosystem & Multi-Actor Cooperation 3

Best Practice 2: Vocational Orientation as a Tool for Stability, Motivation & Long-Term Integration..... 5

Best Practice 3: Virtual Reality for Vocational & Language Learning 6

Best Practice 4 — Community Participation, Social Inclusion & Local Belonging..... 8

Best Practice 5: Interdisciplinary Understanding of UAM Support Systems 9

Introduction

The Germany mobility within the Embrace UAM project took place in Bochum, Germany, and focused on practical approaches supporting the early-stage integration of unaccompanied minors through language learning, vocational preparation, community participation, psychosocial support, and employability pathways. The activity was hosted by **Urbanes Kulturteam Ruhr** and involved exchanges with several local organisations and initiatives working in the fields of integration, migration, youth support, vocational education, and community engagement. During the mobility, participants from Italy and Greece engaged with:

- **Urbanes Kulturteam Ruhr**
- **QUAZ.ruhr**
- **Project JUVENTUS & Aktiv F**
- **Project Woody**
- **Plan B shelter for unaccompanied minors**
- **Refugee reception Center at Nordbad**
- **Bosangani e.V.**
- expert input from **Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe Bochum**

The mobility highlighted how successful integration depends not only on accommodation and legal procedures, but also on:

- participation,
- future perspectives,
- social belonging,
- practical learning opportunities,
- and coordinated local support ecosystems.

Best Practice 1: Local Support Ecosystem & Multi-Actor Cooperation

One of the most important practices identified during the Germany mobility was the strong cooperation between local institutions, organisations, educational providers, shelters, and community actors supporting unaccompanied minors. The mobility demonstrated how support for unaccompanied minors in Germany is organised through a network of interconnected actors rather than through isolated services. Participants observed cooperation between:

- youth support organisations,

- shelters,
- vocational education providers,
- municipalities,
- community associations,
- integration centres,
- and psychosocial support actors.

For example:

- **Urbanes Kulturteam Ruhr** focuses on youth participation, inclusion, and community engagement,
- **QUAZ.ruhr** combines integration, language learning, and vocational education,
- **Plan B** provides direct shelter and residential support for unaccompanied minors,
- Refugee reception Center at Nordbad gives housing and supports orientation and access to local services,
- while organisations such as **Bosangani e.V.** strengthen community-based participation and intercultural inclusion.

The observed model showed how different actors complement each other and contribute to a broader integration pathway.

Why It Is Innovative

The practice recognises that the needs of unaccompanied minors are:

- legal,
- educational,
- emotional,
- social,
- health-related,
- and vocational simultaneously.

Rather than expecting one institution to address all these dimensions alone, the German approach promotes coordinated local cooperation.

Transferable Value

This practice can inspire partner organisations to:

- strengthen local cooperation,
- develop referral pathways,

- improve communication between actors,
- and create more coordinated support systems for unaccompanied minors.

Best Practice 2: Vocational Orientation as a Tool for Stability, Motivation & Long-Term Integration

A central best practice identified during the mobility was the integration of vocational orientation into the early stages of the integration process. At organisations such as **QUAZ.ruhr**, **Project JUVENTUS**, and **Aktiv F**, participants observed how vocational preparation is introduced early in order to help minors develop realistic future perspectives and long-term goals. The approach combines:

- profession-oriented preparation,
- language learning,
- practical orientation,
- educational pathways,
- and confidence-building.

Professionals explained that vocational participation is not viewed only as preparation for employment, but also as:

- a source of structure,
- psychological stability,
- independence,
- motivation,
- and social participation.

At **QUAZ.ruhr**, participants observed how language learning is directly connected to vocational education and workplace preparation. Learners gradually become familiar with:

- professional environments,
- workplace communication,
- profession-specific terminology,
- and practical skills connected to future employability.

The educational environment itself functions as:

- a stabilising structure,
- a future-oriented learning space,

- and a bridge toward independent participation in society.

Why It Is Innovative

The German approach understands vocational preparation not only as labour-market integration, but also as a psychosocial and developmental process.

It helps young people:

- regain motivation,
- build confidence,
- and reconnect with future perspectives after periods of instability and displacement.

Transferable Value

This practice can support:

- earlier employability preparation,
- stronger educational participation,
- increased motivation,
- smoother transitions into adulthood,
- and more sustainable integration pathways.

Best Practice 3: Virtual Reality for Vocational & Language Learning

One of the most innovative practices presented during the Germany mobility was the use of **Virtual Reality (VR)** for profession-specific learning, vocational orientation, and language acquisition. Participants took part in workshops demonstrating how VR can support unaccompanied minors in learning practical vocational skills and profession-related language within a safe and interactive environment. The VR simulations included vocational scenarios such as:

- kitchen assistant,
- housekeeping,
- and stock management assistant.

Within the simulations, learners are able to:

- observe workplace routines,
- learn the sequence of professional tasks,
- practice profession-specific German terminology,

- understand workplace expectations,
- and familiarise themselves with professional environments and equipment.

For example, in the kitchen assistant simulation, learners can practise:

- hygiene procedures,
- food preparation routines,
- teamwork situations,
- kitchen organisation,
- and workplace communication.

Importantly, the simulations create a low-pressure learning environment where mistakes do not lead to stress or real-world consequences.

Why It Is Innovative

The VR approach addresses several barriers experienced by unaccompanied minors simultaneously:

- language insecurity,
- fear of failure,
- lack of workplace familiarity,
- interrupted educational biographies,
- and low confidence in traditional learning settings.

Instead of relying only on theoretical instruction, the approach creates:

- immersive,
- visual,
- practical,
- and experiential learning opportunities.

Transferable Value

This practice can contribute to:

- stronger motivation,
- faster profession-specific language acquisition,
- increased confidence,
- improved vocational orientation,
- and safer preparation for internships or employment.

It also demonstrates how digital innovation can make vocational learning more accessible and engaging for vulnerable youth groups.

Best Practice 4 — Community Participation, Social Inclusion & Local Belonging

Another important best practice identified during the Germany mobility was the strong emphasis on community participation and social belonging as part of the integration process. Through the activities of:

- **Urbanes Kulturteam Ruhr,**
- **Project Woody,**
- and **Bosangani e.V.,**

participants observed how integration can be strengthened through social interaction, neighbourhood engagement, and participation in local community life. The observed approaches included:

- community activities,
- youth participation initiatives,
- intercultural exchange,
- informal social interaction,
- and local engagement opportunities.

The organisations intentionally create spaces where unaccompanied minors can:

- meet local residents,
- interact with volunteers,
- participate in social activities,
- and develop social networks outside institutional environments.

The approach recognises that successful integration also depends on whether young people feel:

- visible,
- included,
- accepted,
- and connected to the local environment.

Why It Is Innovative

The model moves beyond viewing integration only as an administrative or legal process. Instead, it promotes integration as:

- participation,
- social connection,
- relationship-building,
- and belonging.

Transferable Value

The practice can contribute to:

- reduced isolation,
- increased self-confidence,
- improved intercultural understanding,
- stronger local acceptance,
- and healthier long-term integration outcomes.

Best Practice 5: Interdisciplinary Understanding of UAM Support Systems

A final important best practice identified during the mobility was the interdisciplinary understanding of support systems surrounding unaccompanied minors. During the mobility, **Ms Vajani Zarges**, Head of the Department for Unaccompanied Minors at **Medizinische Flüchtlingshilfe Bochum**, delivered an expert lecture at Urbanes Kulturteam Ruhr focusing on the German support framework for unaccompanied minors. The lecture addressed:

- legal procedures,
- psychological support,
- trauma-related challenges,
- medical observation,
- healthcare access,
- economic integration,
- and coordination between support actors.

The expert input demonstrated how legal status, health, psychological stability, education, and future employability are interconnected within the integration process. The session also highlighted the importance of cooperation between:

- youth welfare services,
- healthcare providers,
- psychosocial support structures,
- educational institutions,
- and community organisations.

Why It Is Innovative

The expert contribution encouraged participants to understand UAM support not as isolated services, but as a coordinated and interdisciplinary system.

It highlighted the importance of:

- holistic case understanding,
- integrated support pathways,
- and multi-sector cooperation.

Transferable Value

This practice can support:

- stronger interdisciplinary cooperation,
- improved referral systems,
- better understanding of complex vulnerabilities,
- and more holistic support approaches for unaccompanied minors.

It also demonstrated the value of combining:

- practical observation,
- expert knowledge,
- and reflective professional exchange within international mobility activities.