How would that look, specifically?

Hamann: Again: The refugees need opportunities, possibilities, prospects, and they have to recognise that they are the ones who have to avail themselves of these. During the asylum process you're not actually entitled to go on a German course. But they have to learn the language – that's why we've been offering German courses every day from the very beginning. We've also arranged externally for them to be able to attend regular German courses at the nearby Kurt Tucholsky School, and for childcare to be provided at these times. Naturally we don't force anyone to go. But we can make offers. The Europa-Gymnasium high school has approached us and is providing two scholarships. There were two people we particularly encouraged, who worked hard, and they now have these scholarships. We cooperate with companies. There's a caterer round the corner who cooks with our refugees from time to time. We have interns from the Faculty of Psychology who are working with our refugees. We had a company manager who worked here with us for a week. We organise meetings with the locals: every Saturday and Sunday we have a 'Coffee&Cake Conversation'. Outside groups bring cake, we provide the coffee, then sometimes up to 100 people sit there just chatting to one another. Big firms come, or small communities, or private individuals. That's how people come together; that's the only way integration can work. We have to do everything we can to show these people that they have prospects.

Duric: We also have Arabic speakers coming to us, and once a week we sit down with the refugees and discuss their and our concerns. We take minutes of these meetings and put them up publicly on the wall. We also had a job fair here in the shelter.

How would you describe the mood in Germany at the moment?

Hamann: On the one hand there is a very great and permanent culture of welcome and of helping, and on the other a diffuse fear of being 'overwhelmed by foreigners'. But here too the debate is too dominated by clichés. The naïve multicultural helpers on the one hand, and straight to the racist critics on the other. These clichés are no help to us either.

Angela Merkel said, 'We can do this.' 60% of Germans now believe that we can't do this any more. Can we do this?

Hamann: What's that supposed to mean? What are we supposed to *do*? There's this story about a boy on the beach and a starfish. A boy is on the beach; it's ebb tide, and there are lots of starfish on the sand. He picks up the starfish and throws them into the sea. Then along comes a man and says to the boy, 'What you're doing is completely pointless. There are so many starfish; you can't save them all.' The boy looks at the man, picks up a starfish, throws it into the sea and says, 'But I've saved that one.'

Last year it was one million refugees. This year it may be another million. Do we need an upper limit? How many people can we integrate into our society?

Hamann: How do we establish success? In that every refugee is integrated? That certainly isn't going to happen. In that there are no more Nazis, who hate other people? That won't happen, either. But what does it mean, then, that we haven't done it? Is that even the relevant debate? Rather, we should be talking about how and not whether we can do it. And look: we did it once before, with the migrant workers. Why shouldn't we manage to make it work again? We have politicians called Dilek Kolat, Özcan Mutlu and Cem Özdemir; we have intellectuals like Navid Kermani, who gave a speech to the German Bundestag on the 65th anniversary of the Constitution. We have people who aren't called Sabine Müller or Martin Schmidt who are now helping to shape this country. We can see from this that it can work.

Duric: Will it be easy? No! Can we do it? Of course! Why not? We all just have to do something for it and work together.

ALEM GRABOVAC is a freelance author and journalist living in Berlin. He writes regularly for Berlin's *Tageszeitung* newspaper (*taz*).

Translation: Charlotte Collins

Many refugees, especially Syrians, are being taken in by Arab states, including Egypt. There, they often have different problems to those facing refugees in the West. The journalist Amira El-Ahl has been finding out about the situation of Syrian refugees in Egypt.

BEING SYRIAN IN EGYPT

DO REFUGEES FEEL AT HOME IN OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES?

BY **AMIRA EL-AHL**

The Ibn Tulun Mosque is the oldest mosque in Egypt still preserved in its original form, and it has the largest surface area of any mosque in the capital. On ordinary days it is an oasis of calm. The thick walls encircling it like a rampart shut out the noise of the city that clamours outside its big wooden gates. These majestic wooden gates have seen more than a thousand years of Egyptian history. In many respects, this is a magical place.

But on this cold Saturday in late January, in the Ibn Tulun Mosque in the historic Old City of Cairo there is pandemonium. About a hundred and fifty children and adolescents are running excitedly around the great courtyard. It's not easy getting them to calm down. They're divided into groups, and each group is assigned a colour. A volunteer shouts instructions at the top of his voice, and the red group dutifully stands in line. The young Egyptian who's accompanying the children today raises a couple of boards in the air and starts asking them questions. The group can only enter the mosque when all the questions have been answered.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR THE CHILDREN Who built the mosque? When was the mosque built, and where is it?

An eager boy in a blue hoodie is frantically snapping his fingers. He knows the answer and can't wait to tell everyone. 'It was built by Ahmed Ibn Tulun and the mosque is on the Gebel Yashkur,' he calls out. Bravo, he's got everything right. The quiz continues. What historical epoch began with his rule? A girl of about thirteen with a white headscarf and big brown eyes guesses that it was the Ottoman Empire. That's not correct, but after thinking about it for a while another girl does know the answer. It was the Tulunid dynasty. The children join in with enthusiasm; they're beaming, because they're getting a chance to display their knowledge.

These children and young people are Syrian refugees. In the previous weeks they've learned a lot about the history of the country, through workshops and excursions to Old Cairo. The project has been financed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and co-ordinated by, among others, Terre des Hommes. The aim of the

Syrian refugee children in the Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo. Photo: Amira El-Ahl.

project is to encourage the peaceful coexistence of Syrian refugees and their hosts in Cairo, emphasising the historical connections between Egypt and Syria. 'Many of the children know little or nothing about their homeland and its history, because they never went to school there. They were too young, and the war broke out,' explains Jan Abaza, the co-ordinator of the Terre des Hommes community

*'I did not lose any of my children,
I did not lose any of my family members.
I was not raped, tortured or even
arrested. I did not have to live in a refugee
camp, in a tent floating with mud.*

*I did lose my house, job and all of my
previous life (except for myself).
I lost count of how many friends I have lost;
some of them tortured to death,
some of them for saying a word.
Some of them killed coincidently by some
sniper, and those who survived
either wandered around the world,
or stayed in Syria and radicalised towards
themselves or towards others.
Some of them were stronger and braver
and remained resistant.'*

Jan Abaza

centre in Ain Shams. The festival today in Old Cairo, and the workshops in the weeks beforehand, were also intended to familiarise the children with architecture that is – or was – to be found in Syria, too, in similar form. The Ibn Tulun Mosque, for example, is somewhat reminiscent of the great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.

Inside the mosque the quiz continues. The children are playfully led from one spot to another, and learn a lot about this beautiful building. Today their mothers are with them. They're carrying big bags, and at lunchtime they take out plastic containers with Syrian delicacies. They sit in the mosque's interior courtyard, watching their children play as they enjoy the warm rays of the sun and their home-made tabbouleh; perhaps right now, for a little while, they are able to forget their everyday worries.

REFUGEES HELP REFUGEES 'It's so wonderful to see the children so happy. Many of them really have a hard life; many have depression and serious problems,' says Jan Abaza. 'The children are grateful for breaks like this.' Jan Abaza is herself Syrian. The 47-year-old has been living as a refugee in Cairo for three years. In Syria she worked for the Danish Refugee Council. When the civil war began, she was also active as a volunteer, bringing medical supplies to people in need. It was a dangerous job, and after two of her closest friends and colleagues were arrested she had to go into hiding. From then on she never spent two nights in the same house, but she didn't want to leave her homeland and the people there who needed her help. 'My children convinced me in the end; they wanted to go,' she says.

She found out from her employer that her name was on a regime blacklist. She and her two children were only able to leave the country clandestinely. They fled to Beirut and from there, the next day, to Cairo, where her sister has lived for twenty-five years. 'I actually thought it would just be temporary,' says Jan Abaza, laughing. She has an open laugh and her pale-coloured eyes flash. The hardships and psychological stress she has experienced don't show in her face.

She took two months' leave from her work, but after seven months in Cairo she had to admit to herself that this stay would not be temporary; that the war just continued, day after day. And so she decided to get involved with working for Syrian refugees in Cairo. She first made contact with an organisation called Souriat, and with the help of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights and the UNHCR they opened two community centres for Syrian refugees. Since last year she has been working for Terre des Hommes and coordinating the community centre in Ain Shams. Terre des Hommes' child protection project is supported by UNICEF. 'We offer psychosocial support here,' says Jan Abaza. Her team consists of twenty-one members, Syrians and Egyptians, including trainers, caseworkers, psychologists and psychosocial caregivers. Altogether, Terre des Hommes runs four community centres for the child protection project, in different parts of Cairo: in Obour, Ain Shams, 6th of October and Haram. 'These are the areas where the majority of Syrian refugees live,' explains Jan Abaza.

Last year Jan Abaza and her team reached 1,500 children and their families. 650 of them needed specialist help from psychologists or psychiatrists. This year they aim to reach 3,000 children and their families. Many of the children suffer from depression; some have lost a parent, or their parent is missing; the children are struggling with sorrow and often have behavioural problems.

The employees visit the families in their homes and try to persuade them to send the children to the community centre. 'It's often very difficult to convince the parents,' says Jan Abaza. The parents, she says, often don't realise that their children are traumatised. The centre offers a variety of activities, such as theatre, art or sport programmes, as well as programmes that aim to teach the children skills for their daily lives. It also offers school programmes for children who don't go to school or have difficulty keeping up in Egyptian schools.

According to estimates by the UNHCR, there are around 300,000 Syrian refugees living in Cairo. Only 175,000 of them are registered with the UNHCR. But only those who have the UNHCR's yellow registration card get a six-month residence permit from the Egyptian authorities. Anyone caught without one is deported to Turkey or back to Syria. Those with a residence permit are not allowed to leave the country. If they do so anyway, they can't come back to Egypt. Not officially, anyway. Unofficially, there's always a way, says Jan Abaza: 'You can buy a Syrian visa for 3,000 dollars.' You can always find a corrupt Egyptian official.

PROBLEMS REGISTERING FOR SCHOOL There's another problem. Only those who have a residence permit are allowed to go to an Egyptian school. A study by Save the Children in 2013 found that Egypt does allow Syrians access to universal health care, and also to education, but that there are a lot of procedural steps to be followed in order to claim this privilege. The report said that the

Public event for Syrian refugee children in Cairo. Photo: Amira El-Ahl

confusing bureaucracy made it difficult for them to gain this access.

However, many Syrian families don't send their children to school for other reasons. 'Half of the female teenagers we work with don't go to school,' says Jan Abaza. The reason is that their families are worried about them. 'They're afraid that their girls might be sexually harassed, or become the victims of violence, even if in reality this isn't really a problem.' In Save the Children's February 2013 Syrian Emergency Needs Assessment Report Cairo (ENA), it says:

'Many of the displaced Syrians, especially the most recent arrivals, have a feeling of temporariness and have taken some time to construct an identity as a refugee. A sense of unreality may prevent them from accessing available services. This negatively affects their social integration, medium-term livelihood concerns and the educational status of their children.'

It goes on to say that many of the children are not registered in school, although there were no logistical or financial hurdles for the families. The only explanation for this, according to the report, was that the parents had the sense that their situation was a temporary one, and that they would soon be able to return to Syria.

Jan Abaza agrees with this assessment. She says that three years ago, when the Syrians started coming to Cairo, far fewer children went to school than go today: it's slowly getting better. 'They've understood that they don't have much choice,' she says. 'They're going to be staying in Egypt for quite a while. None of us know when we'll be able to go back to Syria, and the children have to go to school. We have to live.'

Part of her work, she explains, is not just convincing the families to send their children to school, but also helping the children to help themselves. 'We teach them how they can react and defend themselves.' The majority of Syrians live in poor quarters of Cairo where there are many problems and the Egyptians themselves are struggling to survive. The atmosphere there is rough and the unfamiliar territory is frightening for the new arrivals. Save the Children's ENA report says: 'Restricted freedom of movement, either from fear, unfamiliarity with the area or parental over-protection, has been extensively reported among the interviewed households, especially among children, young girls and women, and has been listed among the causes of domestic violence and feelings of isolation and exclusion.'

Exclusion is a big topic, as is the feeling of not belonging. The majority of Syrians are struggling with their new circumstances and with the big changes that life in Egypt brings with it. Although they are living in an Arab Muslim neighbouring country, they have problems integrating and getting their bearings. 'For one thing, Syrians are much more conservative than Egyptians,' says Jan Abaza. The women dress more conservatively and are shocked by how un-Islamically many girls in headscarves dress in Cairo, wearing figure-hugging, attractive clothes. 'In addition, Syrians find Egypt dirty, they don't like the food, and they're stressed out by life in the crowded, poor districts where they have to live,' Abaza adds. 'There are many similarities between Egypt and Syria, yet Syrians still have problems living here,' she says. 'How are they going to cope in Europe?'

LOST GENERATION? She fears that the next generation of Syrians will be a lost generation. Things are easier for those who stay in Egypt or another Arab country, she says. 'I see the children who left Syria before they started school. They know nothing about their homeland, the history of Syria, the architecture.' These children, she says, assimilate very easily, adopt the Egyptian accent, settle in here. 'That's good, because they have to lead a normal life; and it's bad, because they're Syrians and need to know what that means,' says Jan Abaza. It's a dilemma. This identity crisis is, she says, greater still for Syrians who have fled to the West: the collision of such different cultures could hardly go well. 'People go to Europe and think they can just carry on living the way they have done up to now, follow their own rules and traditions, but that's not possible.' At home these children are raised very conservatively, says Abaza, with Syrian values and traditions, while outside their own four walls they encounter the absolute opposite. 'That's why I'm afraid, because we'll have a lost generation that has no identity.'

Very few Syrians are as open and cosmopolitan as Jan Abaza. She could live anywhere in the world and get along all right, but she doesn't want to. She's staying in Egypt, because there she can help her compatriots. 'There aren't many Syrians here who can work with refugees; there are hardly any qualified personnel,' she says. The majority of her friends and colleagues are now in Beirut, Turkey or Europe. But she will stay, and as soon as she can she wants to go home. 'I love the Arab way of life; there's a kind of intimacy here that you can't find in Europe. And I think I'd get bored.'

There's one Syrian tradition that Syrians in Egypt especially miss: the weekly Friday picnic, called the *seran*. Every Syrian, Abaza explains, regardless of their social background, spends this day with their family. 'Everyone goes outside; it's a must on this day.' People stream into the parks and green spaces and enjoy the treats they've brought with their families. To provide the families with a little piece of home, this year Jan Abaza has a budget to go on small excursions every month. Three times a month they do something, once just with the mothers, once just with the children, and once with the mothers and children together. The mothers bring homemade Syrian delicacies, and on these days there's a lot of eating, chatting, and weeping, and a lot of laughter, too. And sometimes, when they're in a place that's screened off from their surroundings, the women bring along their favourite music and dance.

AMIRA EL-AHL is a German-Egyptian journalist living in Cairo.

Translation: Charlotte Collins

Migration is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, it is a constitutive part of humanity and has existed for thousands of years – even in Europe. This article by the migration researcher Jochen Oltmer puts migration in its historical context and gives us a better understanding of current developments.

THE LONG MARCH
EUROPE AND GLOBAL MIGRATION

BY **JOCHEN OLTMER**

Since the earliest days of humanity, migration has been a key element of societal change. This is why it is a myth to believe that spatial population movements – even those over great distances – are a phenomenon of the Modern Age or even the present day. Global migration on an enormous scale did not just begin with the development of today's means of mass transport. Just like people in the Modern Age, people in the pre-Modern Age were not absolutely settled in one place. It is also a myth to believe that past migration was a linear process, i.e. from permanent emigration from one region to permanent immigration to another. Indeed, remigration, forms of circular migration, and fluctuations were and still are characteristic of local, regional, and global migration. In the past, migrants did not leave home and set out into the complete unknown, and the same is true today; movement within networks is a key feature of past and present migration. In fact, the fundamental forms of migration and conditions that lead to it have hardly changed at all over the past few hundred years.[1]

Global migration on a larger and large scale began with the start of Europe's global political-territorial, economic and cultural expansion in the fifteenth century. Between the sixteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the exodus of Europeans from their home continent to other parts of the world was moderate in scope. However, in the years that followed and right up until the early twentieth century it led to sweeping changes in the make-up of populations, especially in the Americas, the South Pacific, and parts of Africa and Asia. At the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries, the peak of European emigration coincided with the start of Europe's history as a continent of immigration.

Since the late 1980s, historical migration research has identified an enormous variety of past migration events and can now reveal trends that cover not just several decades, but several centuries. These trends must be taken into consideration if we are to understand and explain the migratory processes and structures of the present day. The rough overview that follows focuses on the conditions, forms and consequences of spatial population movements that originated in Europe from the sixteenth century onwards. It also explores the reasons for Europe's transformation into a continent of immigration. In this way, the aim of this article is to illustrate the important role played by Europe in global migration in the Modern Age and at the same time to make it clear that comprehensive and wide-ranging migration has been the norm throughout history.

A NEW BEGINNING WITH FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES The term 'migration' refers to the spatial movement of people. It is used to describe those patterns of regional mobility that had far-reaching consequences for the course of migrants' lives and which resulted in changes to social insti-

1 Jochen Oltmer, *Globale Migration. Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich, 2012).