



# Language assistance is also in demand in the delivery room

Idajete Redziepi is an honorary translator. In Stolberg she looks after families who speak Albanian. Many impressions.

Stolberg. Idajete Redziepi helped at three births was in the past three years. In the delivery room, she held the hand of future mothers and showed them the right way to breathe. "I've been participating as well. Then I was knocked out," she says, laughing. Idajete Redziepi, however, is not a doctor or midwife. She is an honorary translator and helps the people who are not able to speak the German language – even in the delivery room. She says: "We try to help people from all countries. If they don't accept our help, we cannot do anything."

## High unemployment rate

Idajete Redziepi has been living in Stolberg for 20 years. Today a trained nurse, she was born in Macedonia a country with a high unemployment rate, a weak infrastructure and missing investments in the sectors education and health, says Redziepi. "The municipal hospitals are bad. The patients have their infusions themselves and even get their own mattresses for the hospital. After finishing with school and studying the chance to find a job is low", she says. This is also the main reason why many people leave their home and



come to Germany. 280 people from Macedonia live in Stolberg. That makes a total of 0.5 per cent (see info box). With her colleague Muarem Zaimi, who is fluent in seven languages, Idajete Redziepi looks after Macedonian and Albanian Families living in Stolberg. What does it mean to her?

Visits to lawyers or physicians as well as the applications for German or integration courses in the Helene-Weber-Haus or in the community college. At least four times a week she is on the road. "Sometimes the bell rings at 10 o'clock or my phone at one o'clock in the night and parents tell me that their child is sick. Then I need to go there. I'm there day and night for them," says Redziepi.

Currently the situation in Stolberg is quieter than three years ago when the great wave of refugees arrived. During this period Idajete Redziepi met K. Mazeena Ismail, the chairman the association 'Frauen für Frauen in Stolberg', and decided to work as an unsalaried translator. "There was a lot to do those days. During my first year I was not there for my own family because there was much work to be done. Everyone needed our help," she says.

Initially, Idajete Redziepi worked in the office for equality and then participated in the integration work. Two times a week she works in the office of the Integration Council in the Stolberg town hall. "That is already a routine for me" she says. Once a week she



leads a small German language course organised by 'Frauen für Frauen in Stolberg'. Moreover she also makes a training as a daily companion, which will be completed in the upcoming weeks. "I really like to be in touch with people, no matter how old they are and I simply want to help them," says Idajete Redziepi.

"That makes me very angry. If I want to live in a new country learning the language is my highest priority," Idajete Redziepi is sure. These not so beautiful moments are the exception. Much more there are numerous positive moments. These include, among others also the births to which Idajete Redziepi was allowed to be present at. "I cannot describe how beautiful that was. These are moments that I never forget" she says.

## **Understanding is important**

Understanding is important when people are in a new country. "When I came to Germany, I wanted to learn the language of course just to communicate with others. That was not easy though. Sometimes I feel sorry because I say something, but already know, that it is wrong. You need to overcome yourself", says Idajete Redziepi. She has never visited a German course. "That's why I struggle with the grammar sometimes," she says. Speaking with Germans helped her. That certain people do not want to learn the language of the country they live in is reasonable to her.



## Put another focus in the future

K. MAZEENA ISMAIL

Chairman of the Women 's Women in Stolberg

*Mrs. Ismail, how many translators are currently working unsalaried in your association and which languages do they speak?*

**Ismail:** Right now we are seven translators, who speak different languages in our association. For example Arabic, English, French, Singalese, but also Albanian, Kurdish, Turkish and Afghan. The most demanded translators are those of Arabic origin.

*Your volunteer staff are not only translating different languages, but give also different courses for Refugees.*

**Ismail:** Exactly. Right now we have a total of 25 voluntary workers and translators belong. We offer baking and cooking classes as well as a bicycle training for refugees. Some of our helpers are born in Germany and hold German courses or have a partnership with refugees.

It would be important that we gather some more Germans, which would support us voluntarily.

*Why?*



**Ismail:** Because we do need more people, who would like to teach refugees the German language. If they are the not able to understand German they will merely be able to communicate with people with equal background in their own language. But that is not the point. That is what we want to lay a greater focus on in the future.