

Bold steps toward the future

Working together to combat youth unemployment in southern Europe: Robert Bosch Foundation and Robert Bosch GmbH foster talent and ideas.

Sergio Santos Caballero is no longer sure who was more excited when he was accepted into an occupational training program for mechatronics in Germany, he or his parents. “We were all thrilled,” he recalls. But the thought of him moving away was a new idea for the whole family. Sergio was 19, and living with his parents in Madrid, studying electrical engineering. Now, he was going to go to Germany to learn a trade – and a whole new language. It was clear that taking this step would vastly improve his prospects. Half of all Spanish people under the age of 25 are unemployed. “Even a college degree is no guarantee of security,” Sergio says. He packed his bags.

Professional support

There’s more than just an occupational training program awaiting Sergio in Germany. “Learning a trade in a foreign country involves a great many challenges,” says Jessica Flemming from the Center for European Trainees (CET). The advisory center, which was co-founded by the Robert Bosch Foundation in 2014, helps apprentices from Spain and Italy find their footing in their new living environment in Germany. For Sergio, the program began with a three-month German-language course in his home country. Another language course followed in Germany, along with an internship. “During that time, the applicants have the chance to consider whether they’re really ready to move abroad,” says Flemming. Those who take the plunge receive additional support – because even opening a bank account or finding a place to live can be a huge challenge for foreign apprentices.

The CET doesn’t just support companies from Baden-Württemberg like Robert Bosch GmbH, which made it possible for a hundred young Spanish people to begin an occupational training program in Germany or other location in 2014. The CET is also a

Hard at work: Sergio Santos Caballero from Madrid is training to become a mechatronics engineer in Stuttgart-Feuerbach.



point of contact for companies and government agencies from other countries.

The impetus for the project came from a study by the Robert Bosch Foundation. “Youth Unemployment in Europe” investigated the causes and consequences of youth unemployment in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and provided concrete recommendations for action. The financial crisis isn’t the only reason for youth unemployment. Another hurdle to career entry is a regimented and overly simplistic education system. Even those who are fully trained have hardly any practical experience. “We are promoting dual-track occupational training in these countries, too,” says Flemming.

Projects and initiatives to provide young people in southern Europe with new prospects

Job prospects for young people are also the focus of the foundation project called This Works! The idea is simple. Successful social entrepreneurs make their business ideas available to partners in Italy, Spain, and Greece, creating both jobs and social projects that provide people with stability and confidence. The same holds true for the project START – Youth Culture in Greece.



With its study “Youth Unemployment in Europe,” the foundation provided the impetus for new initiatives to combat youth unemployment.

Photos: Rainer Kwiotek, Tobias Bohm

College graduates develop cultural projects for young people, who contribute their own interests and talents: in the context of hip hop sessions, performance or video art.

In this way, the foundation and company support promising approaches and initiatives for young people in these countries, as not all of them have the chance to learn a trade in Germany like Sergio Santos Caballero. He arrives at the Bosch apprenticeship workshop in Stuttgart-Feuerbach every morning at 7:00 a.m. on the dot. He’s well on his way to successfully completing his occupational training program. For him, taking a bold step for his own future is paying off. *mb*

An adventurer among the melancholy

The **2015 Adelbert von Chamisso Prize** goes to Sherko Fatah for “Der letzte Ort.”

His latest novel, “Der letzte Ort” (The Last Place), is dark and muted. Sherko Fatah tells the story of Albert, a societal dropout from East Germany, and his Arabic translator Osama, both of whom are kidnapped by Islamic militias and carted off to an unnamed no-man’s land in Iraq. While in captivity, subject to the whims of their kidnapers, they begin to talk – about hate between cultures and their own lives.

However, “Der letzte Ort” wasn’t inspired by current events. The author developed the concept over ten years ago.

Given the images of the horrific acts being committed by IS today, Fatah’s work may seem practically visionary to Western readers. The novel could be considered a reflection of the West’s political naiveté. The hope and expectations inspired by the Arab Spring were followed by sobering reality, dashed by the brutal terror of the Islamists.

Literary critic and juror Gregor Dotzauer describes this year’s grand prize winner, Sherko Fatah, as “one of the few adventurers among all the melancholy urban writers.” Fatah was

born in East Berlin in 1964, to a German mother and an Iraqi-Kurdish father. When he was still a young boy, the family moved away from East Germany – first to Vienna, and then on to West Berlin. For many years, Fatah’s literary work has explored the hot spots of the Middle East: the area’s peoples, tumults, and tribulations. He is fueled by his curiosity about his father’s culture, and the need to understand and explain what drives the people in this region: a region shaped by war and fierce political battles. He also strives to discover what it is that helps them survive. Fatah has kept in touch with his Kurdish family and still travels to the region to visit them. So when the award announcement was made last winter, it was no surprise that he was traveling in northern Iraq

and couldn’t be immediately reached with the news that he had won the 2015 Adelbert von Chamisso Prize. As a result of the limited telephone service in the region, he did not find out that he had won the award until several days after it had been officially announced back in Germany.

For over 30 years, the Robert Bosch Foundation has been presenting this literary prize to German-language authors whose work, like Sherko Fatah’s, is shaped by cultural change. All of the prize-winners share a unique feel for language that enriches the German literary landscape. *al*



Berliner with Iraqi roots: Sherko Fatah.

Photo: Yves Noir



Further information is available at www.chamissopreis.de