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# RECEPTION CENTER FISCHLAKEN

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University of Duisburg-Essen, Master of Urban Systems - research seminar results

# MAKING HEIMAT GERMANY, ARRIVAL COUNTRY

## REFUGEE ACCOMMODATION EVALUATION

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### **Special thanks:**

Uwe Klein (Fischlaken neighbor)

ProAsyl

### **Research seminar in collaboration with the Deutsches Architekturmuseum**

Institute for City Planning and Urban Design, University of Duisburg-Essen

**Organization and teaching:** Marielly Casanova, Janka Lengyel

Complex urban issues require a comprehensive investigation methodology. The last Venice Architecture Biennale has shown a new phase of the architecture profession. The sole function of architecture as an object is shifting into a powerful tool to encourage collaborative urban development processes. At the same time collaboration goes beyond discussion, it is a re-distribution of responsibilities and a sum of expertise. Personal stories, desires, needs, actions and experiences cannot be represented by plans and sections only, but are incorporated in a comprehensive narrative, which includes a series of political, economic and social arguments and facts. The relevant role of the architect in this process is the mediation of different disciplines in order to clearly represent and communicate criticism, strategies and ideas.

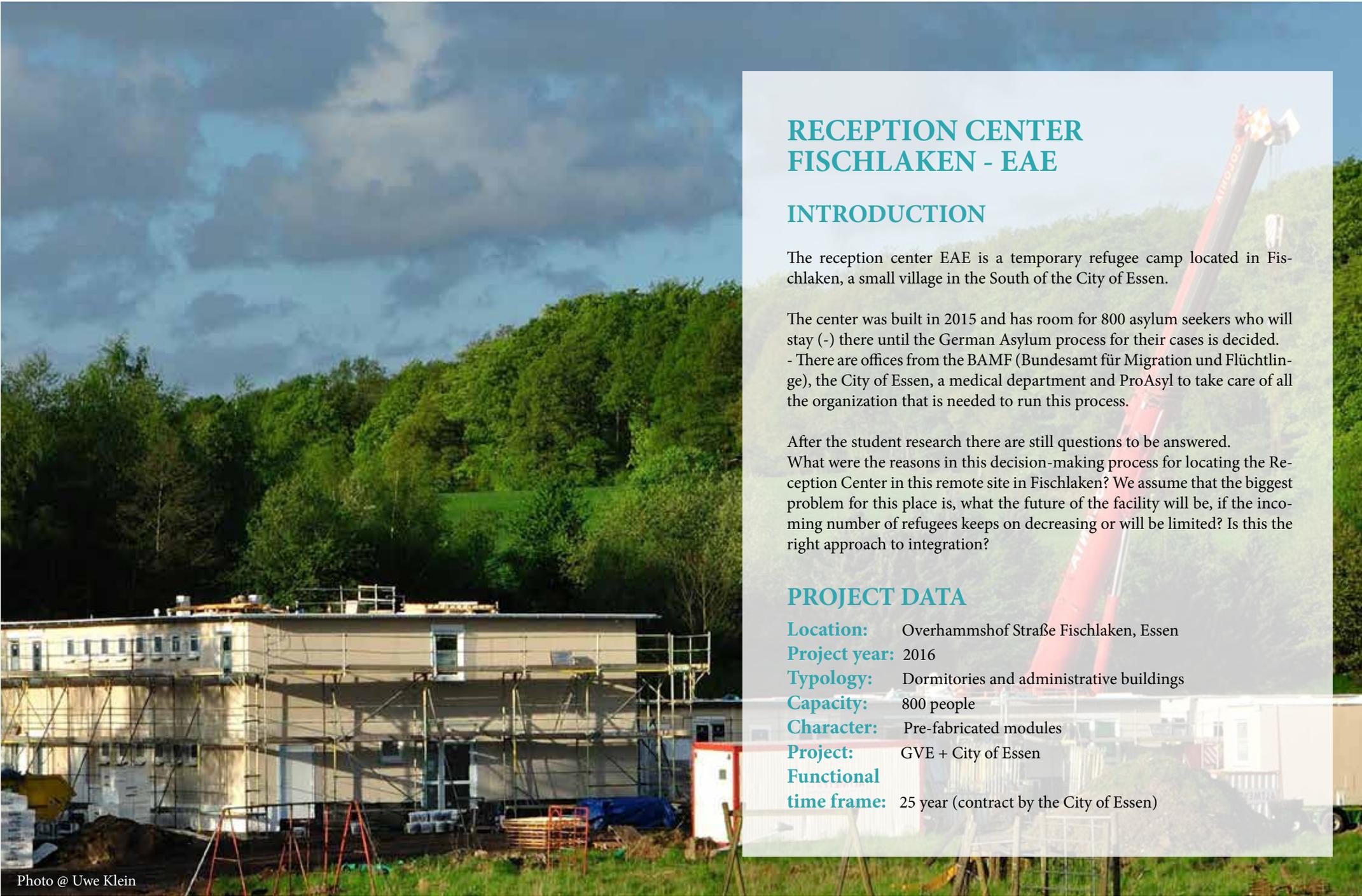
The call for projects in the Venice Biennale achieved the compilation of a series of projects that were implemented all over Germany to accommodate the massive influx of refugees. The aim of this seminar was to document two of these projects along with their social, economic and physical context. The evaluation provides a series of characteristics (positive as well as negative) to learn from and reflect on the complexities behind permanent or temporary housing for refugees and the influence on their integration process.

**Making Heimat was a research seminar organized by the Institute of City Planning and Urban Design in the context of the Master of Urban Systems at the University of Duisburg-Essen, from November 2016-January 2017.**



Cover design @ Janka Lengyel

Cover photo @ Uwe Klein



## RECEPTION CENTER FISCHLAKEN - EAE

### INTRODUCTION

The reception center EAE is a temporary refugee camp located in Fischlaken, a small village in the South of the City of Essen.

The center was built in 2015 and has room for 800 asylum seekers who will stay (-) there until the German Asylum process for their cases is decided.  
- There are offices from the BAMF (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge), the City of Essen, a medical department and ProAsyl to take care of all the organization that is needed to run this process.

After the student research there are still questions to be answered. What were the reasons in this decision-making process for locating the Reception Center in this remote site in Fischlaken? We assume that the biggest problem for this place is, what the future of the facility will be, if the incoming number of refugees keeps on decreasing or will be limited? Is this the right approach to integration?

### PROJECT DATA

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Location:</b>              | Overhammshof Straße Fischlaken, Essen    |
| <b>Project year:</b>          | 2016                                     |
| <b>Typology:</b>              | Dormitories and administrative buildings |
| <b>Capacity:</b>              | 800 people                               |
| <b>Character:</b>             | Pre-fabricated modules                   |
| <b>Project:</b>               | GVE + City of Essen                      |
| <b>Functional time frame:</b> | 25 year (contract by the City of Essen)  |

# REFUGEE SITUATION

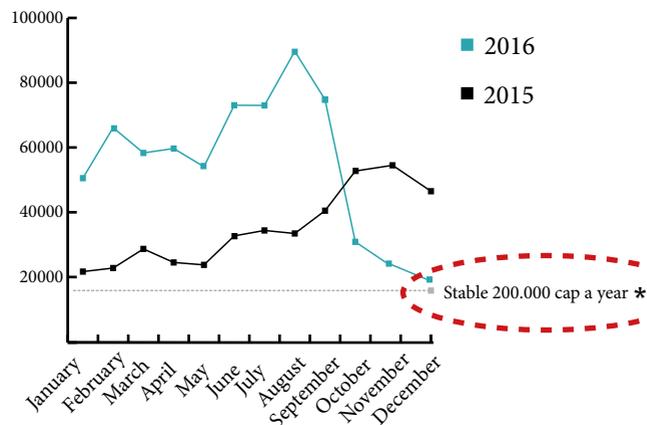
## NATIONAL - REGIONAL - CITY SCALE

Asylum applications in 2016 dropped

# 63%

compared to applications in 2015

Asylum applications in Germany in 2015 and 2016:



\* CSU's Seehofer: cap on migrants a precondition for next government, www.dw.de, 15.12.2016

Germany received between Dec 2015 to July 2016

# 365.773

Asylum seekers

Calculation based on the data - Dec 2015 to July 2016, source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,

# 93%

applications in 2016 were processed

# 58%

got a positive answer

Source for the data on this page: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2016

According to a press release by the "Federal Ministry of the Interior" (in German: BMI) on January 11. In 2016 the number of asylum seekers in Germany decreased significantly compared to 2015, from 890.000 thousand to 280.000 (-). Moreover, the increasing number of asylum applications in 2016 is due to the number of people that were not able to apply for an asylum in the year before. (BMI, 2017)

The so called "Königsteiner Schlüssel" states that North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) should receive **21.21%** of Asylum seekers. If a cap of 200.000 applications per year would apply as discussed between the CDU and CSU, the NRW would receive around:

# 42.420\*

per year only in NRW in the future

\* Calculation made based on the "Königsteiner Schlüssel" percentages for NRW and City of Essen

# 2.121\*

per year in Essen

| Reception centers (EAE) in NRW                | Capacity   | Capacity per year |
|---|------------|-------------------|
| Dortmund (Buschmühle)                         | 1000       | 48000             |
| Siegen-Wittgenstein (Burbach & Bad Berleburg) | 1000       | 24000             |
| <b>Essen</b>                                  | <b>800</b> | <b>38400</b>      |
| Unna- Massen                                  | 800        | 38400             |
| Bonn  | n/a        | n/a               |
| Bielefeld                                     | 450        | 21600             |

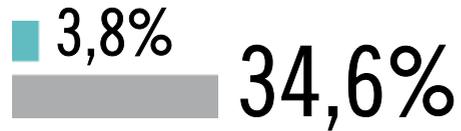
Sources: Landesregierung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2016 capacity per week; several newspaper articles

"... We would probably stop considering the expansion of places from 800 to 1.040 in the reception center at the Hammer Strasse. From April should stay in 800 places and from October we would reduce it to 550 places." (Stadt Essen: Presse- und Kommunikationsamt, 2016).

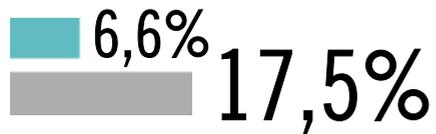
# ESSEN vs. FISCHLAKEN

## CITY SCALE

Social Welfare



Unemployment



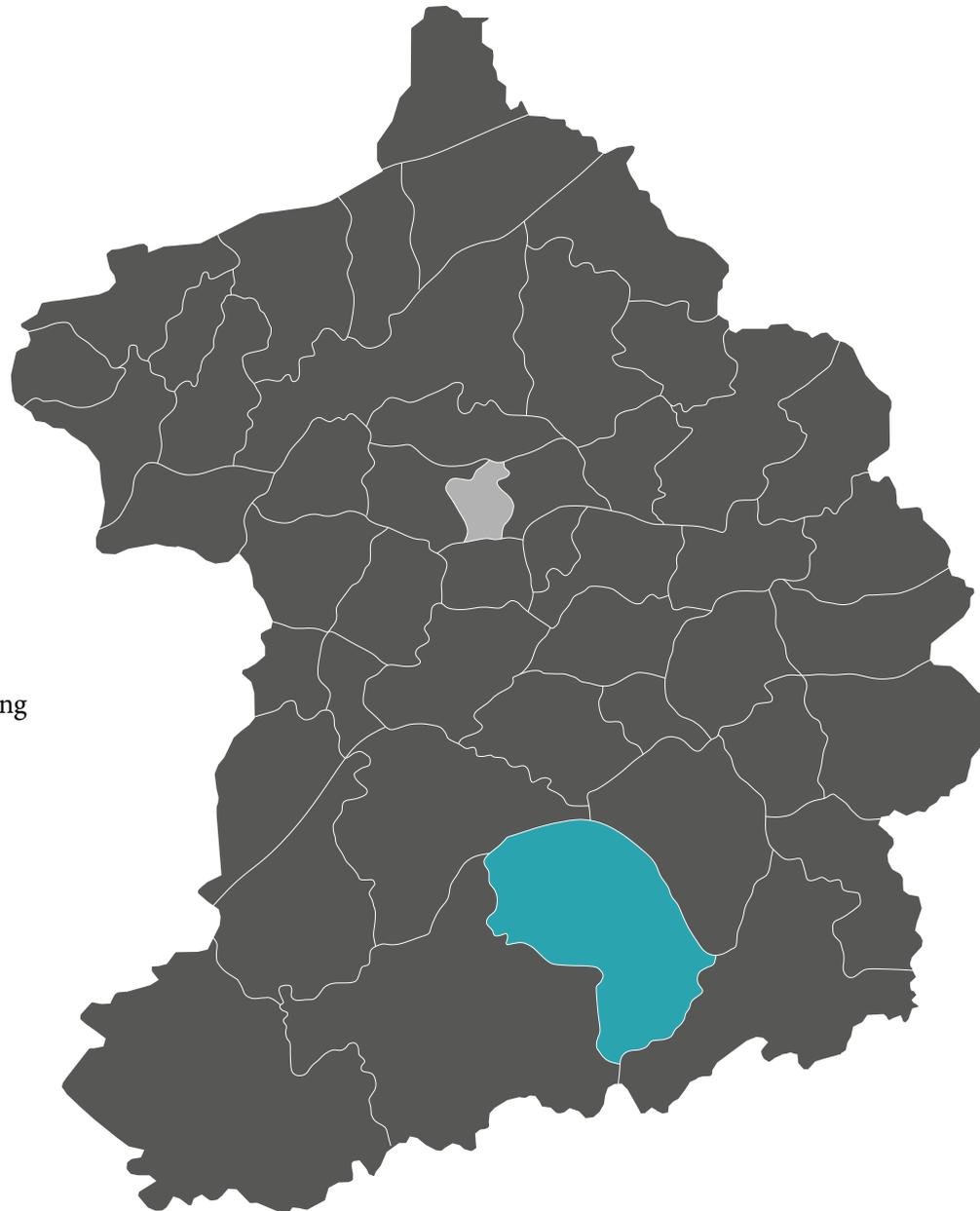
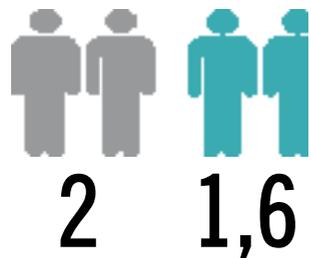
Foreign population



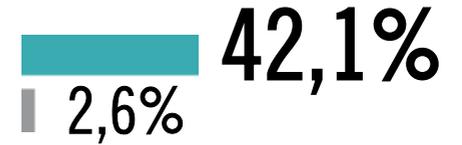
Average number of apartments per building



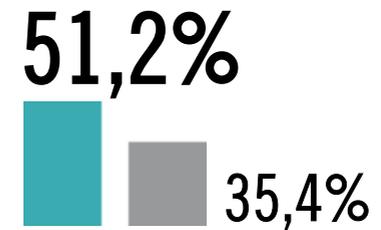
Average number of people per household



Apartments used by owners



Average residential floor per capita in m2



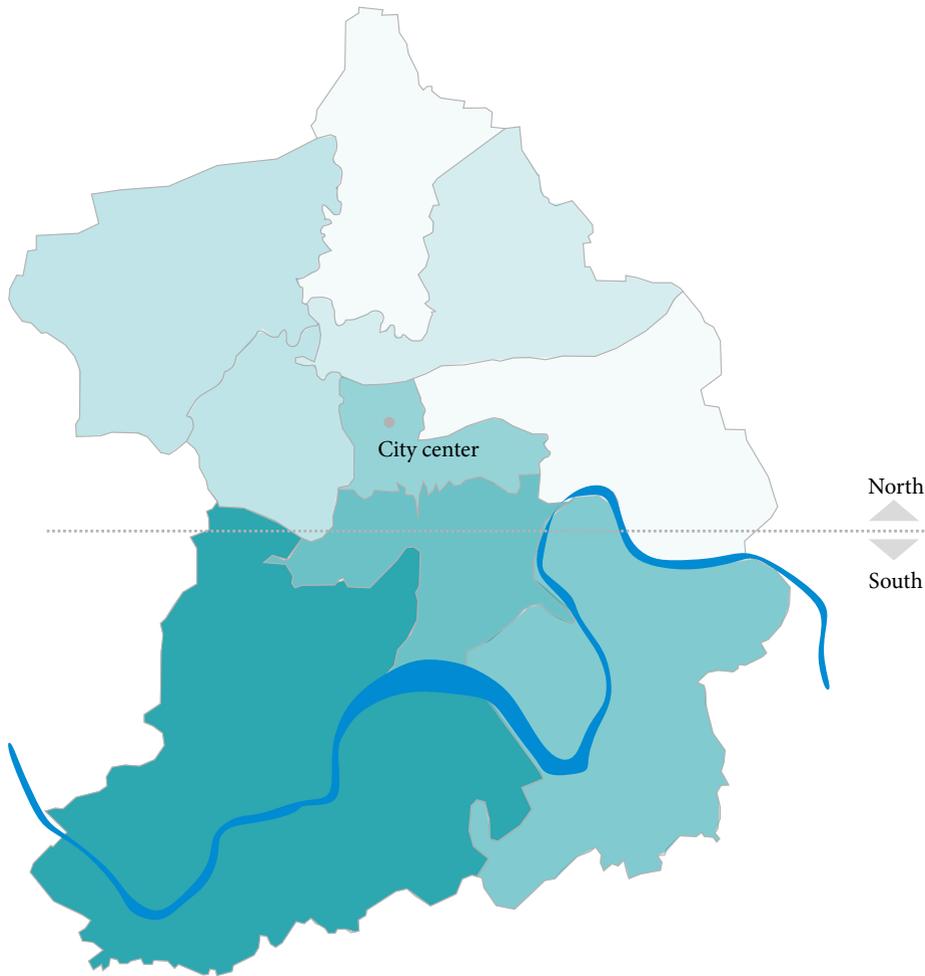
“Migrants’ ascendance up the urban ladder often depends on financial, employment, and small-business from other migrants of similar backgrounds.”  
(Saunders, 2016: 24f)

Essen Fischlaken

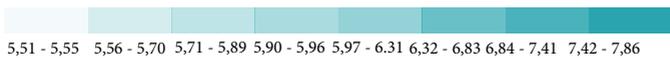
Essen city center

# ESSEN

## CITY SCALE



Euros/Sqm



Map © Housing Market report, Vonovia and CVRE, 2016.

Fischlaken is not an “arrival city”. The district is isolated and disconnected from the inner city and also from close inner quarters in Essen (e.g. Essen Werden and Kupferdreh). There is no variety of uses and is far away from business and other commercial activities. Besides from that, it is one of the most expensive districts in Essen.

### “Arrival City” Thesis:

“Arrival City is Affordable”

**5.9 Euros/m<sup>2</sup>** average rent index

Source: Housing Market report, Vonovia and CVRE, 2016.

“Arrival City is on the Ground Floor”

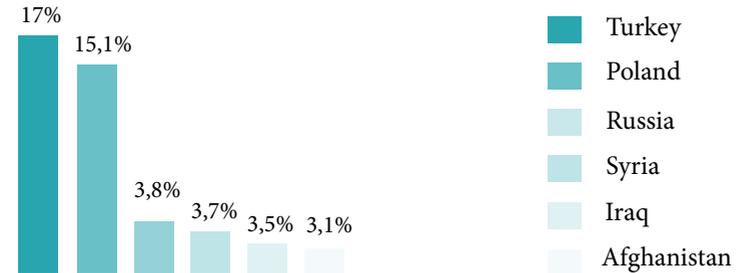
**The inner city** variety of business and mix-uses  
Ethnic quarters, mix uses and dense inner districts creates livability in the neighbourhoods.

“Arrival City is a Network of Immigrants”

**23,3%** of the population has migration background

In Essen there are several areas with a high ethnic diversity allowing immigrants to connect with their own culture.

**14%** are foreigners      **9,3%** with double citizenship:



**4.125** refugees were admitted in Essen in 2016

The majority of refugees came from countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia and Macedonia.

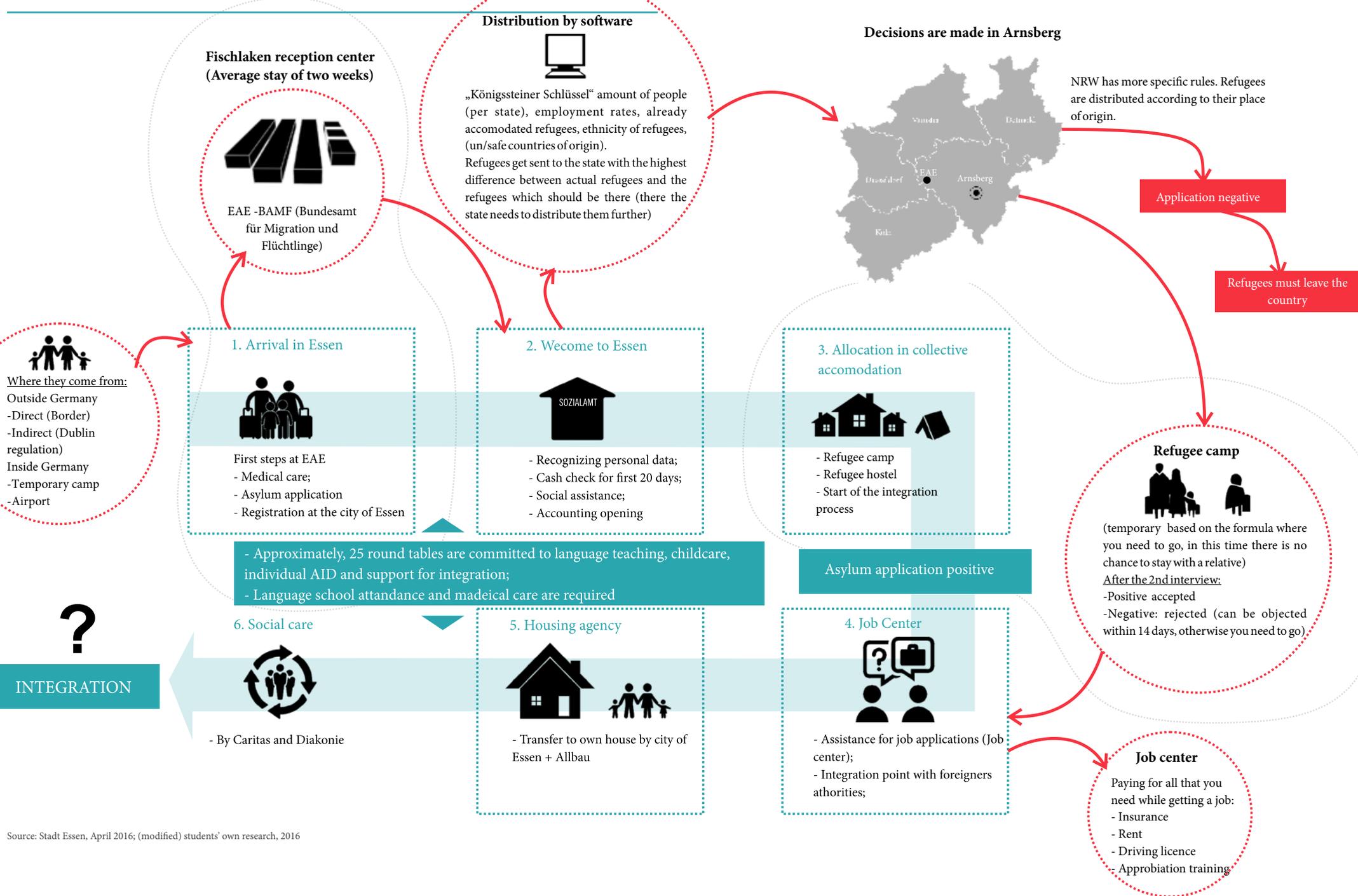
Source: Stadt Essen, Amt für Statistik, Stadtforschung und Wahlen, 2016

“Arrival City is Close to Business”

**Mix-use** in the central areas

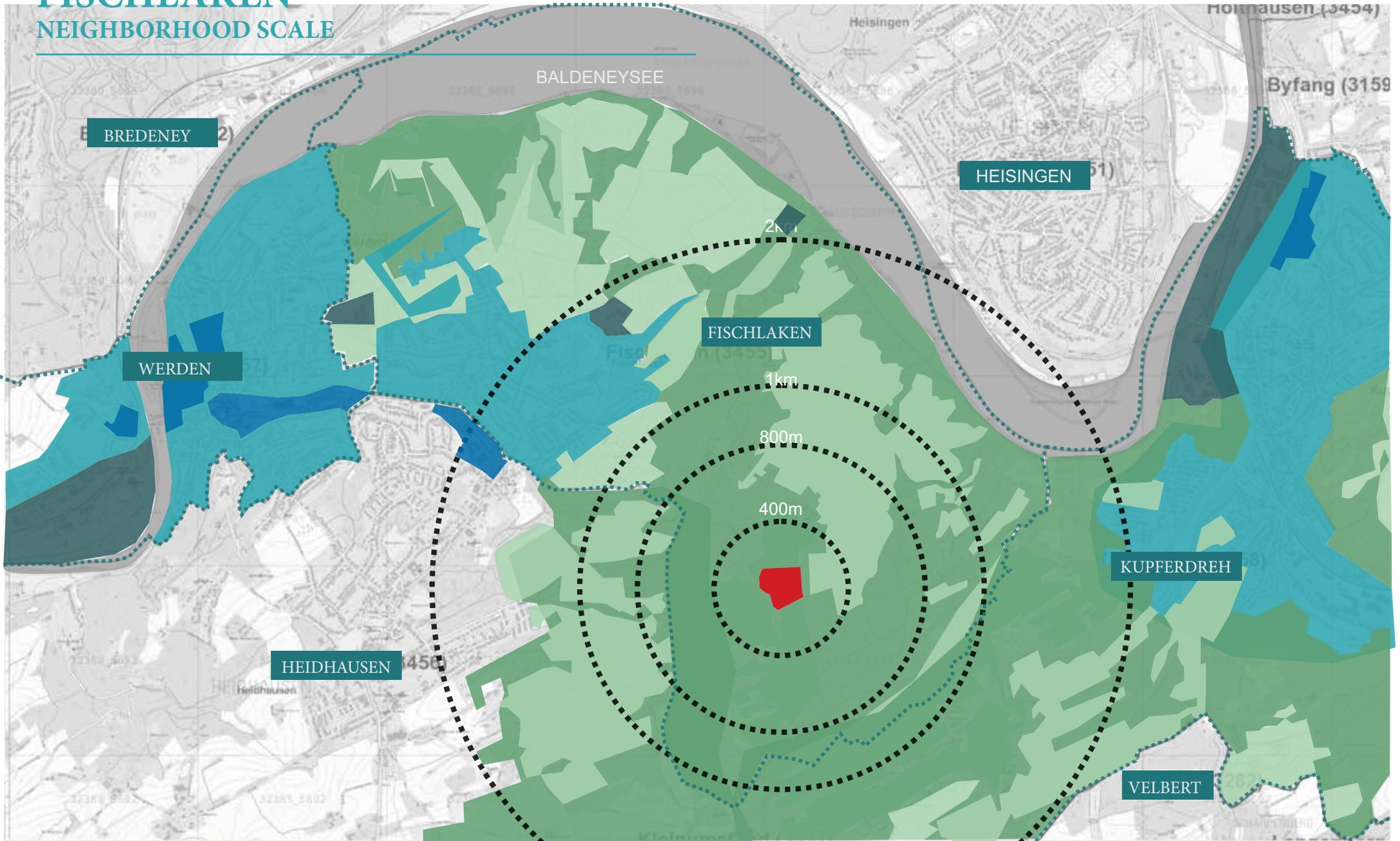
The mix-use character of the inner districts in Essen allows plenty of businesses and entrepreneurs to run side by side to the residential streets and schools.

# ASYLUM APPLICATION RECEPTION CENTER PROCESS



# FISCHLAKEN

## NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE



- Fischlaken reception center
- Commercial centers
- Residential use
- Forest
- Industrial
- Agricultural use  
 - Horse farm  
 - Organic farm  
 - Baumschule

# FISCHLAKEN

## RECEPTION CENTER SURROUNDING AREAS



Photo @ Raina Saran

Overhammshof Straße



Photo @ Raina Saran

Fields - reception center context



Photo @ Raina Saran

Hammer Straße



Photo @ Alejandra Vaquero

Fischlaken is not an “arrival city” and it is not supposed to be one. Therefore, the disconnection from the city and close urban centers is not an issue for the residents of this area.

However, it provides a calm and beautiful environment, and at the same time, according to our findings the facility itself also offers a great potential (which is only partially used today). The reception center is outside of the urban city centers, far away from the hustle of the Ruhr-Metropolitan areas and therefore gives refugees an opportunity to arrive in peace, have some rest and recover from their journeys. It also helps the employees who work there to organize the administrative part of the German immigration process in one central place, and in a relaxed atmosphere, too.



Photo @ Alejandra Vaquero



Photo @ Alejandra Vaquero

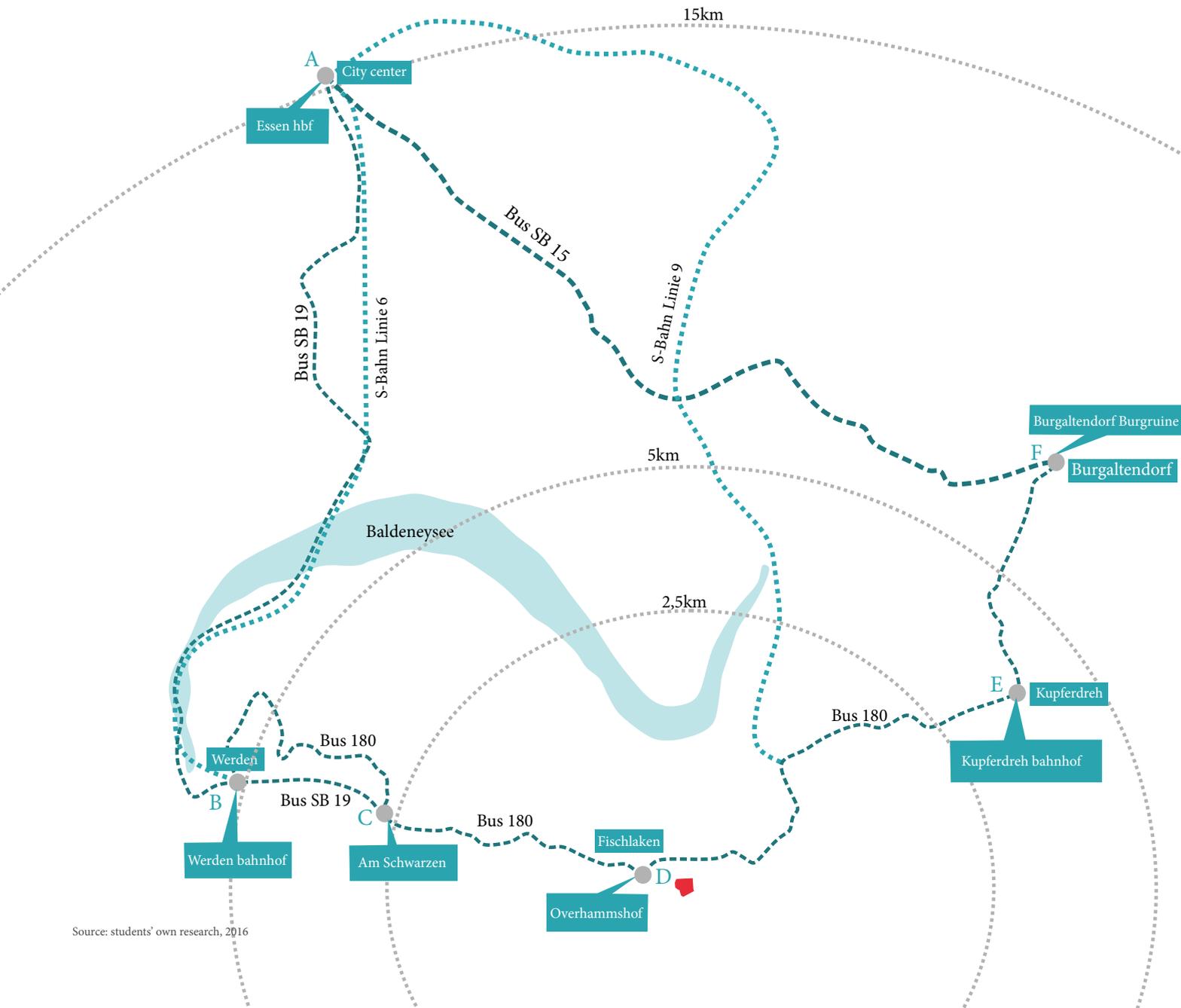
Additionally, the space around the reception center is beautiful and can be used for many different activities. Of course after the paperwork is done it is better for both the refugees and the people who will spend some time with them to have permanent housing in a city. But that can be done after the first two weeks in the reception center when most of the process is over. More opportunities for the facility are shown on the following pages.



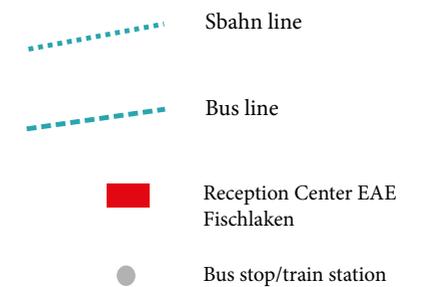
Photo @ Raina Saran

# ESSEN - FISCHLAKEN

## TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS



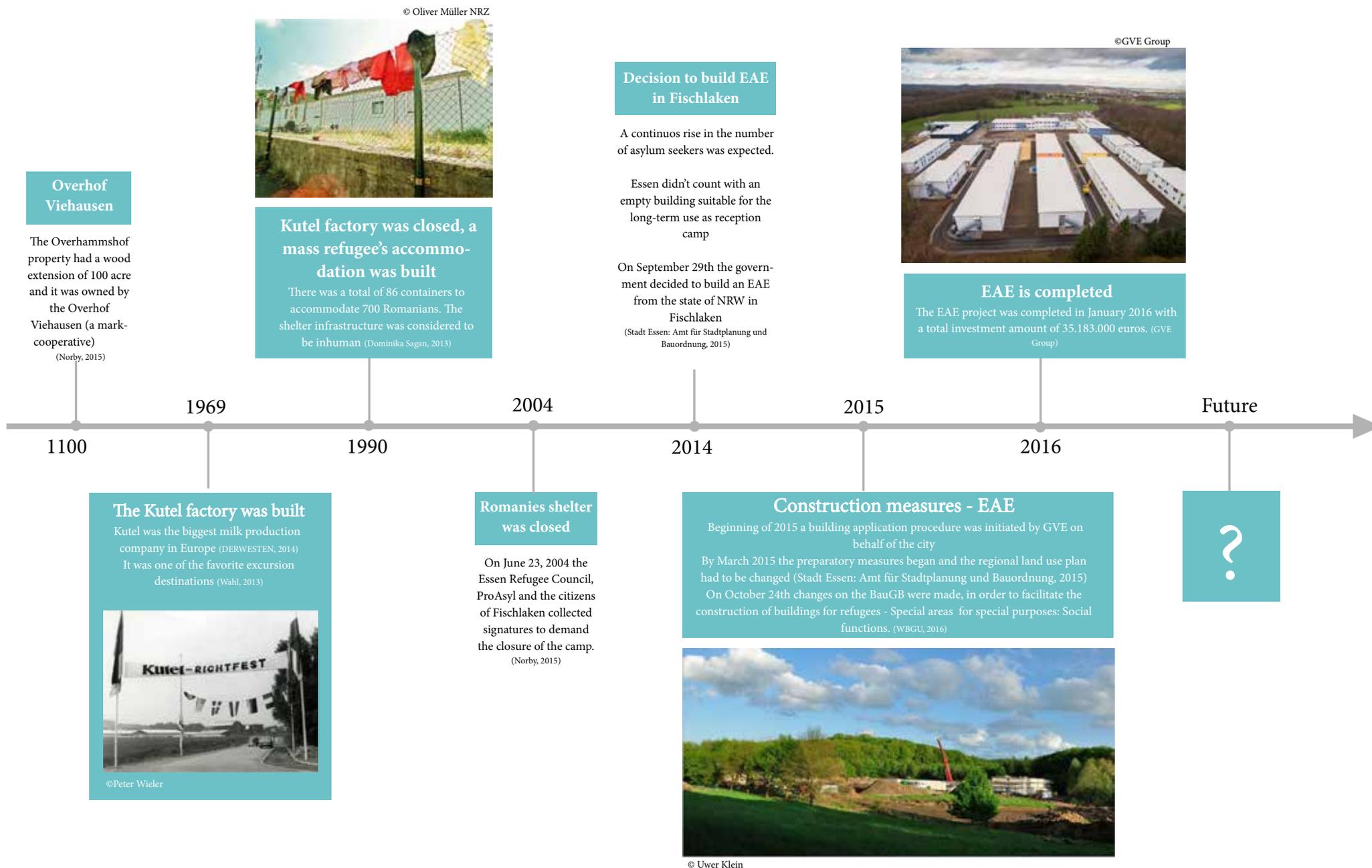
- 1** Route 1: A + C + EAE  
 Essen Hbf -Am Schwarzen (Bus SB 19): 19 min  
 Wait time: 5 min  
 Am Schwarzen - Overhammshof (Bus 180): 4 min  
 Total time: 28 min
- 2** Route 2: A + E + EAE  
 Essen Hbf -Kupferdreh BF (S-Bahn Linie 9): 12 min  
 Wait time: 8 min  
 Kupferdreh BF - Overhammshof (Bus 180): 13 min  
 Total time: 33 min
- 3** Route 3: A + B + EAE  
 Essen Hbf -Werden BF (S-Bahn Linie 6): 9 min  
 Wait time: 7 min  
 Werden BF - Overhammshof (Bus 180): 18 min  
 Total time: 36 min
- 4** Route 4: A + F + EAE  
 Essen Hbf -Burgaltendorf (Bus SB15): 29 min  
 Wait time: 1-11 min  
 Burgaltendorf - Overhammshof (Bus 180): 29 min  
 Total time: 59-69 min



Note: Due to frequent delays and considerably long gaps between rides, the travel times could considerably increase.

# RECEPTION CENTER SITE

## DEVELOPMENT TIME-LINE



# RECEPTION CENTER

## LOCAL SCALE - THE BUILDING



- 1 Entrance/Security
- 2 Mensa and Kiosk
- 3 BAMF  
Medical care  
Registration - Stadt Essen  
Pray room  
Laudry  
Clothing donation (Kleider - Kammer)
- 4 Pro-Asyl - Information  
Entertainment and tv room
- 5 Kindergarden
- 6 Building 6: capacity for 100 people  
- Collective dormitories (4 persons per room)  
- Collective bathrooms and showers
- 7 Building 7 (capacity for 50 people)  
- Collective dormitories (4 persons per room)  
- Collective bathrooms and showers
- 8 Reserved for quarantine

There are three rooms:  
one where they give the laundry to wash, another where it is washed and ironed, and the clothing store where new clothes are received.



Photo @ Ellen Hillal

There is extensive area between the different buildings, currently underutilized. It has the potential to host different activities, sports or other infrastructure.



Photo @ Ellen Hillal

The buildings are designed for collective bed-rooms and collective bathrooms.



Photo @ Ahmed Gharib

# FISCHLAKEN

## NEIGHBORHOOD / LOCAL SCALE- People

"I can only talk about personal experiences... there was just one night during the winter, I think it was 10 pm, when a refugee that already had his asylum permit - I don't remember from where he was, maybe Gelsenkirchen - knocked on my door to ask me for food and a place to sleep. He came to visit his family at the EAE and they didn't let him stay the night there..." Neighbor

"Four years ago I left Afghanistan. On my way to Sweden the German police took my fingerprints..."



"...with the help of a host family I had learned Swedish I and was integrating myself pretty well in Sweden. Unfortunately, due to the Dublin regulation, I had to come back to Germany..."



"...after four days in Fischlaken, I've been transferred to another EAE in Unna. I got some instructions of how to get there but everything is written in German, I don't understand that well..."



"We just come here to get some wi-fi, we don't have enough money to get internet on our cellphones..."

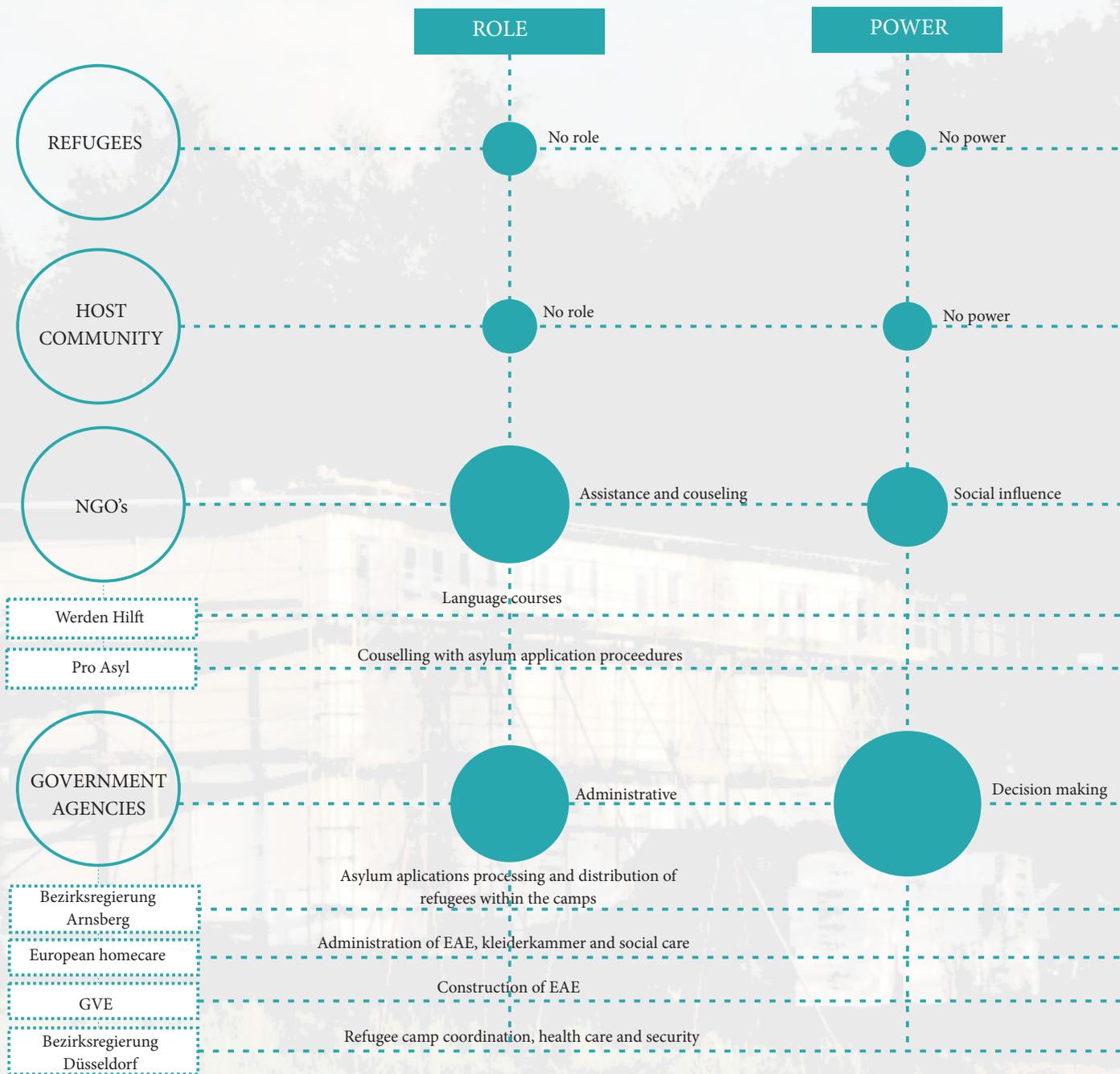


"It's rare to see someone doing any sports in here. There is no space, there is no terrain, no ball... I think it's because we are not supposed to stay here for a long time."



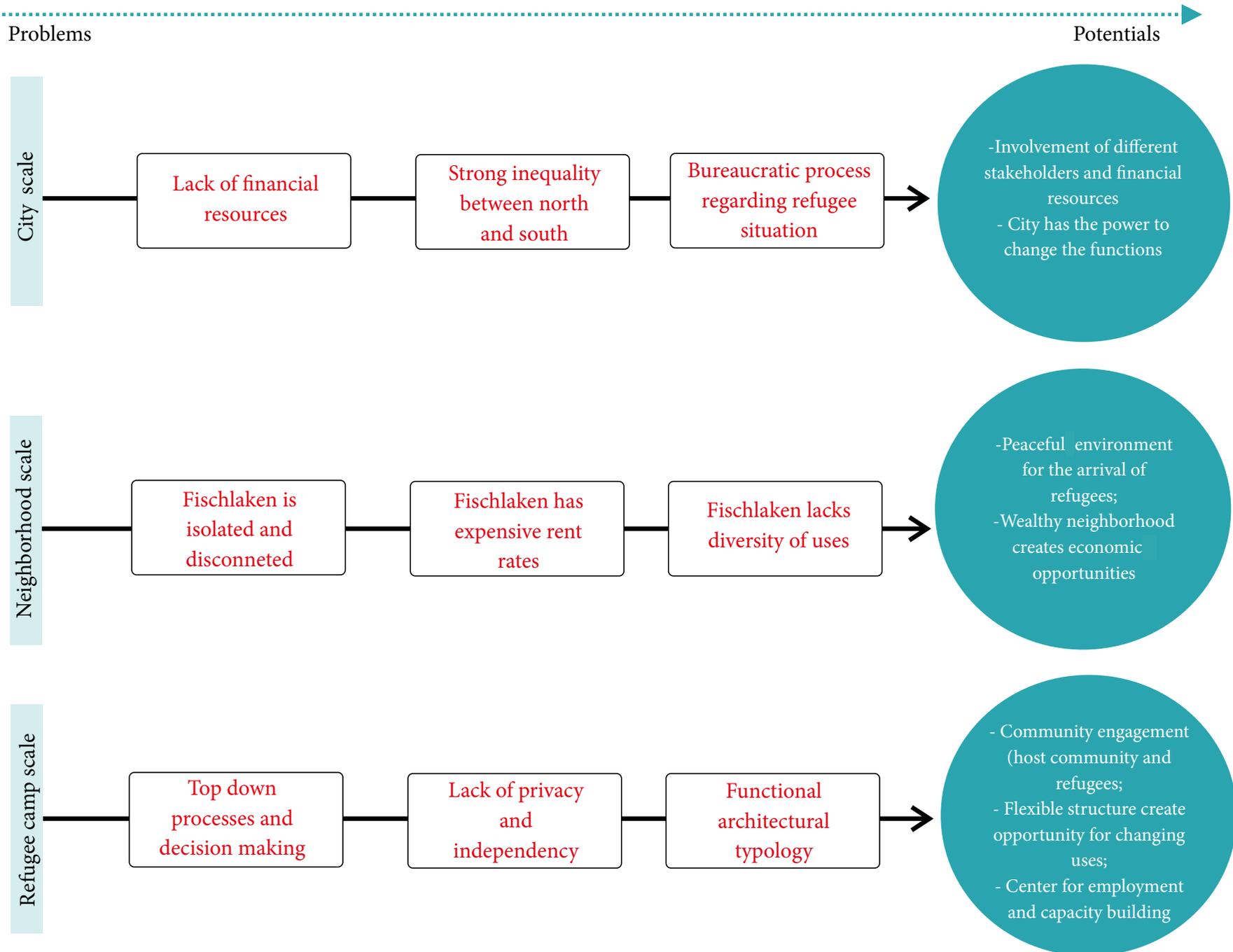
"In Fischlaken there are almost no substantial shops, so services and no pubs, but there is a person who brings vegetables and fruits "bis zur Haustür" (to your home door) especially for old people." Neighbor

# RECEPTION CENTER STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS



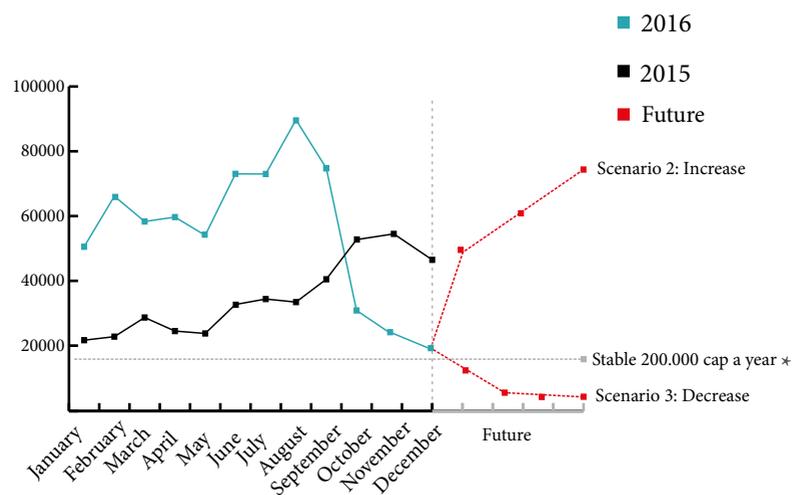
# RECEPTION CENTER

## PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS



# RECEPTION CENTER

## FUTURE SCENARIOS



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2016

\* CSU's Seehofer: cap on migrants a precondition for next government, www.dw.de, 15.12.2016

### Scenario 1: What if nothing is done?

Nothing is done to change the EAE infrastructure. It will run for 25 years, then it will be deconstructed by the end of the contract

This will mean:

- Misused and deteriorated structure
- Refugees will keep facing complicated and extensive bureaucratic process for their asylum application
- Refugees will face obstacles to integrate into the German society

Why:

Currently, the refugee camp has a capacity of 800 people, but the infrastructure is underutilized due to the evidently decreasing rates of asylum seekers. Fischlaken is not an "arrival neighborhood", because of its disconnection with lively districts, the lack of mixed uses and expensive rental costs. If the possible ways for improvement are not taken, the complex will be misused further and be at the risk of deterioration. The integration process becomes harder as long as the top-down approaches among the refugees, municipality and camp administration continue. Refugees have everything being taken care of from reception, laundry to the necessary steps before getting to the real life challenges of integration.

### Scenario 2: Higher rates in asylum application

The number of asylum seekers will not decrease, but rather a higher number of immigrants will continue seeking asylum in Germany

This means: improvements are necessary in:

- **Infrastructure:** Improved connections of Fischlaken to the inner districts of Werden, Kupferdreh and the city center of Essen.
- **Improved information technology:** infrastructure for helping foreigners to move around the city, with language and other useful assistance on living in Germany.
- **Inside/outside integration:** through festivals, sport activities and counseling services (e.g. information about jobs and necessary skills).

Why:

Refugees stay (-) an average of 15 days in the reception camp. The disconnection with the city and the lack of infrastructure for activities (-) make it difficult to improve a permanent use of the facility unless (-) conditions improve. The camp infrastructure can be optimized to provide an early integration process. Rather than facing (-) bureaucratic decisions, they can get a first insight into German culture, be informed about the job market in Germany and already practice and improve skills.

### Scenario 3: The number of refugees will continue to decrease

The number of asylum seekers in Germany will continue to decrease by 20% each month

This means, that a further vision can be developed for the camp:

- The flexible structures could be transformed for new uses (-) change the typology of the buildings into more permanent housing/workshops. A "Naherholungsgebiet", a recreation area or a place of interest for tourists could be an alternative considering the potential of the context (landscape, uses, and local tourism close to the "Baldeneysee" (-) and popular hiking/bike trails) – offer both Germans and refugees cultural and leisure activities such as horse riding, forest excursions, sports, language courses and tandem programs. Thus, opportunities for work and social exchange are given.

Why:

Like the Kurtel factory in the 60's, these are favorite tourist excursion destinations for many families, offering playgrounds and pony rides for kids. The potential of the area can become more lively by bringing new uses. This can make Fischlaken more diverse.

# RECEPTION CENTER

## SCENARIO 3

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