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Diana Mouzales-Napp (centre) at the European Women Business Mentoring Award "Mentora2005" ceremony in Vienna, Austria / © Foto Fischer, Graz

MY LIFE IN GERMANY

**“Much has been done to see that foreigners are integrated,”
Diana Mouzales-Napp on how she was supported to become
self-employed in Germany**

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My father is Greek and my mother is Ghanaian. I came to Germany in the late 1990s to learn the German language and be a bilingual secretary. And Cupid's arrow pierced my heart.

The Germans are a down-to-earth people and I was fascinated by their difficult language.

It was not an easy road considering the language barrier when I first came. I realised that learning the language means being integrated. Without the language one is always on the defensive.

There are challenges in living outside one's country of birth and it takes a lot of courage; then one is divided between two cultures. One has only to adapt and make the best out of both worlds.

I believe the Germans are very friendly and always elated when they come across foreigners who are integrated or endeavouring to integrate in German society. Much has been done to see that foreigners are integrated.

I bless the day I met Hannelore Scheele, who at the time was the chairwoman of Käte Ahlmann Stiftung, an organisation that runs the mentoring project TWIN ("Two Women Win").

When I became self-employed in 2000, I needed to learn the ropes since the German system is totally different from where I came from. While gathering all necessary information I could lay my hands on, I attended a seminar for newly self-employed entrepreneurs and got to know TWIN.

Mrs Scheele brought me together with Inès Melamies, the CEO of Blue Rondo International, a management consultancy for international press and public relations.

Mrs Melamies became my mentor and taught me almost everything I needed to know about being self-employed in Germany. We had a strong chemistry and were a great team, winning the European Women Business Mentoring Award "Mentora2005" in Austria.

The contest was organised by the Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen (Austrian Federal Ministry for Health and Women). This consequently led to my joining the VdU – Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen (German Association of Women Entrepreneurs) which also belongs to the FCEM World Association of Women Entrepreneurs.

How do I see my future in the country? By God's grace a very prosperous future.

Diana Mouzales-Napp (56) is the CEO of Mouzapp für Afrika, a translating office for African languages based in Gelsenkirchen

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