

# Syrian IT expert extends web lifeline to fellow migrants

January 29 2017, by Jona Kallgren

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In this Jan. 19, 2017 photo 28-year-old Talal Mando, left, a refugee from Homs, works with writer Mohanad Al-Naheel on his website arabalmanya.com in Berlin, Germany. The website with information and news for recently arrived migrants to Germany has hit one million visitors.(AP Photo/Jona Kallgren)

Migrants navigating a new language, unfamiliar cultural conventions and Germany's multitude of rules and regulations are finding help online in their adoptive country courtesy of one of their own.

The website [arabalmanya.com](http://arabalmanya.com)—which translates to "Arabs in Germany"—was founded a year ago by Syrian IT expert Talal Mando. The site contains a range of information, including news about Germany, feature stories explaining German culture and crucial job offers for newcomers.

"No one came to Germany to sit around," Mando, who was part of the flood of 890,000 [migrants](#) who came to Germany in 2015, said of the site's success. "The people want to work and learn new things."

The idea for the site came to Mando shortly after the soft-spoken 28-year-old arrived in Germany and started looking for guidance about how to apply for asylum, learn German, and find work.

He quickly realized that most written information was available only in German or English—not a problem for him as a fluent English speaker, but a major barrier for many fellow Syrians and other migrants who spoke only Arabic.

"That's when I got this idea to make a website for Arab people that are in Germany," Mando said in the living room of his Berlin apartment, which doubles as headquarters for the free website.



In this Jan. 19, 2017 photo 28-year-old Talal Mando works on his website [arabalmanya.com](http://arabalmanya.com) in Berlin, Germany. The website with information and news for recently arrived migrants to Germany has hit one million visitors. (AP Photo/Jona Kallgren)

Since the website's launch in December 2015, it has received more than 1.1 million visits and more than 4 million page clicks, nearly all from users inside Germany, according to Google analytics.

Many German organizations have reached out to help migrants get settled and some television networks offer Arabic language programming. Mando said he thinks [arabalmanya.com](http://arabalmanya.com) has resonated particularly well with newly arrived Syrians because he and others working on the site have shared their experience.

He now has five people writing for the website, all Syrian migrants

working for free after a small startup grant from a local organization ran out. Mando, who works as a freelance web designer, estimates he has put about 5,500 euros (\$5,800) of his own money into the project.

The volunteer staff has written more than 1,400 posts, many of them job listings they've translated into Arabic. They also answer about 50 emails a day seeking advice on where to find a doctor, where to learn German, how to register for school, and what documents to bring and clothing to wear to job interviews.

"I do it because people need it. It's that simple," he said. "People need information and jobs here in Germany, and we provide it."



In this Jan. 19, 2017 photo 28-year-old Talal Mando poses in front of a screen with his website [arabalmanya.com](http://arabalmanya.com) in Berlin, Germany. The website with information and news for recently arrived migrants to Germany has hit one million visitors. (AP Photo/Jona Kallgren)

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