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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: E&CO. SUPPORTS THE AWARD-WINNING EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM KIRON.



As part of a corporate social responsibility initiative focussing on education, e&Co. is supporting the innovative educational platform Kiron. Specialised in providing refugees with speedy, low-barrier access to higher education, this Berlin start-up has already garnered the Special Category German Start-up Prize (Deutschen Gründerpreis), an award made by expert jury decision. e&Co. will be financing five grants worth €3,000 each and offering personal mentoring to each student given this support.

kiron With the objective of providing higher education to refugees, the Kiron educational platform offers people who have fled poverty and conflict speedy, low-barrier access to tertiary courses without the usual red tape. All refugees need to do is sign up and start studying, allowing them to bypass the often years-long wait for official authorisation. The Berlin start-up behind the idea got off the ground in 2015 after Europe's most successful social crowdfunding campaign thus far in which Markus Krebler and Vincent Zimmer's idea for integration managed to raise over €500,000 in small-donation capital – and a huge amount of media interest into the bargain. By working with existing MOOC (massive online open courses) providers such as edX and Coursera, Kiron is offering its students the ability to study online for one or two years and build up ECTS points which can then be put towards gaining an accredited bachelor's degree at one of the 19 partner universities currently involved: institutions such as RWTH Aachen, FH Lübeck, BAY Berlin, HNE Eberswalde, TH Wildau, the University of Kassel, Macromedia Berlin, and Sciences Po Paris recognise the points refugee students gain, cutting their time to completion down to one or two years once they can officially register. The integrated platform with MOOC-format syllabuses has already attracted more than 1200 refugees who are now enjoying the freedom of academic study; instead of facing a demoralising wait with nothing to focus their energies on, Kiron students can play an active role in society. As Markus Krebler puts it: "These are people who don't want to think about their traumatic past, but about a perspective for their future."

It is this perspective that e&Co. AG is supporting, helping five refugees to gain access to tertiary education – and offering more than just money. Our social commitment

extends to personal mentoring in which the students receive continuous coaching from our consultants.

“2015 was a year which showed like no other in just how privileged an environment we live our lives and how much freedom we enjoy – not just freedom of speech and expression, but the freedom to educate ourselves and to take business decisions as we see fit. These are foundations on which Germany has built its prosperity. As such, we see our social responsibility in helping disadvantaged people to gain these freedoms. Of course we can’t help everyone, but Kiron is an ideal partner in our efforts to support at least a few people: as a digital start up with a genuinely sustainable idea, it has shown that the world can be changed – and chimes in with our company motto of ‘enabling value’.” Hanns Peter Becker, CFO of e&Co. AG