

# Language Café St. Michael and International Ladies' Café Tamsweg



International Ladies' Café Tamsweg  
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## Location

Tamsweg / Lungau / Salzburg County

## Country

Austria

## Short summarizing description

The Language Café Project (the Language Café St. Michael and the International Women's Café Tamsweg) have been a meeting venue since 2012. They are the place to go for migrant women of all backgrounds in the region, regardless of their status. Local and migrant women meet here at least 20 times a year (in each location) to experience integration in its most gentle and human form: with a warm welcome from woman to woman, thus helping newcomers to gradually come to grips with the German language, giving them someone to talk to and with it a low threshold introduction to local customs, traditions and values. Local women, newcomers from other EU-countries and other parts of the world as well as migrant/refugee women find the language café to be a place of mutual respect and enjoyable dialogue. Excursions, workshops, special talks and activities, trips to become familiar with the region - all of this is part of the package to help them feel at home and to let friendships flourish.

## Key Terms

Migration – integration - women

## Context and background, Which problems/challenges does your measure try to solve/cope with?

The language cafés provide an open door to women who have a hard time connecting with peers and with the local population. Attendance involves no expenses, no red tape and no obligations, it provides particularly women with restrictive family backgrounds and traditions with an opportunity to gradually become part of the place where they now live. This way it offers a way out of loneliness, isolation and often enough sadness and helps to make a start for a new life.

## Which are the key objectives of your measure?

Integration of women regardless of their background  
An encouraging start to learn the German language and make progress  
Low threshold assistance to acclimatize in a cultural and social context  
Information on all essential means of creating a home and a life  
The offer of a safe place to make new contacts and join networks

## Who are the main target groups and beneficiaries of your measure?

Women with a migration background, both refugees and others  
Women from outside the region who have moved here  
Women from the region who can/will/want to welcome others and give them a hand  
Migrant families, in particular children, who benefit from their mothers' integration

## Which actions have already been implemented and which results have been achieved so far?

We have established the Language Café in two key locations in the district, they have been running successfully for over five years (since 2012) by now. During this time they have become well known in the region and have attracted considerable numbers of women, who found them great places to get started in their strife to learn and assimilate. The project per se has helped women to learn and/or improve their German, has given them a place to go where they are welcome outside their own family homes, has provided them with a friendly environment where they can meet & greet without obligations, find peers and friends and obtain crucial knowledge to manage their lives. The language café project has since received a number of official recognitions and awards, one of them the recently awarded "ARGE ALP Recognition Award for Integration in Alpine Regions".

## Which were the main problems and challenges you were/are facing when implementing the project and how did/do you (try to) overcome them?

The two key issues were financing the project and finding acceptance, particularly with family members (i.e. husbands) of migrant women. The project started off without any means. However, a first donation could be found relatively soon: the Institute for equal opportunities and anti-discrimination decided to provide a small sum. In the following years the county government donated money. With empathy, diplomacy, good arguments and "visiting rights" it was possible to convince husbands that there was no harm in coming to the language café.

## Link to website

<http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at/>

## Starting date

2011-03-15

## Duration

69

## Regional scale

2 - small region (some municipalities, a mountain valley etc.)

## Other involved partners

Within a wide scale of local authorities, businesses and farms, we have a dynamic circle of partners with whom we arrange events, excursions and more.

## Contact person

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<http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at/projekte/sprachcafe/>

## Category 1, Managing social change

We enable both sides – locals and migrants alike – to make their first step to get to know the other. Since our philosophy is focused on excluding nobody, regardless of status and background, the language café is indeed the first opportunity to open a door for each other. We have seen many times over how quickly the local population drops their fears and misgivings as soon as direct human contact is established. Another essential and successful component is our continued effort to bring in opinion leaders from all walks of life.

## Category 5, PR impact and awareness raising

We have made active use of a range of mediums from the start: Our website [www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at](http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at) is a much used information hub, our monthly newsletter reaches \_\_\_ recipients. The intern. language café is organised through a lively WhatsApp group and our Facebook page provides an additional and quite popular source of information. Both radio stations and TV have reported on the project various times. In addition we keep good contact with local councils and their own community papers. The leaflets we distribute are probably one of our most used means of communication, furthermore we introduce people to the project through public talks and participation in events on migration issues. The following links provide more detail on our presentation:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Q9SfEzJOFVcAx\\_Xx8lvXnRnT1ueOtO1d7EmZcMSPRhs/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Q9SfEzJOFVcAx_Xx8lvXnRnT1ueOtO1d7EmZcMSPRhs/edit?usp=sharing) (English)  
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/12rLhQxdrZfvMOLUa47OrrGJQZCoLYpqqEjKnJ0lBuM8/edit?usp=sharing> (German)

## Category 6, Innovative dimension

The philosophy behind our work was and still is: „Provide what is needed!“ In the beginning it became quite clear that – in contrast to all the official channels dealing with migrant issues – it was necessary to create a lowest-threshold-possible solution for women. We firmly believe that these are our strongest arguments for this project: total openness, no expenses involved, no permissions required, no commitment necessary, a sheltered and safe haven. This helps migrant women to overcome both their own shyness and – as is often the case – the concerns of their husbands or fathers. Once familiarity has taken over the women find it a lot easier to open up and enjoy what they have come for: talk, make friends and start to feel at home.

## Category 7, Transferability

In principle any region or municipality can take this project on board on a one-to-one basis. The needs of migrant women are very similar everywhere, so are the solutions. The key element is to find a well organised women's network ready and willing to act as a lead partner. In fact, many regions should have an active interest in setting up similar projects: efficient and humanitarian integration efforts should be on every agenda! We are happy to share our experiences and welcome interested visitors. our flyer: [http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Flyer\\_Sprachcafe2017\\_2HJneu.pdf](http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Flyer_Sprachcafe2017_2HJneu.pdf) some pictures of our activities: [http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Sprachcafe\\_Bildergalerie-Neu.pdf](http://www.lungauerfrauennetzwerk.at/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Sprachcafe_Bildergalerie-Neu.pdf) (an upload is not possible - too much MBs)

## Category 8, Embedment in a comprehensive welcoming strategy

In the Lungau region, as well as in many other neighbouring districts, there is a great number of forces in play to supplement mutual efforts. County and district authorities, a number of NGOs (Caritas being one of the most active and prominent) and a local group of idealistic men and women (<http://www.lungauerinnenfuermenschen.at/>) are all contributing to the great overall goal of giving migrants a maximum of support and opportunities. Coordination between these forces works out relatively well by now (credit is due to local authorities) and the part of voluntary helpers is tremendous. However, our project is the only one placing such emphasis on reaching women and we think it is a very important element, deserving more recognition and support.

please follow the links above - the documents are more than 3 mb. Also the picture upload isn't possible although less than 2 MB ?

please follow the links above - the documents are more than 3 mb - but online! :-)