

Talents for Austria



Our student and now apprentice Nasier with his boss (Erna Schuss, owner of grocery store "Adeg Schuss") on the day his apprenticeship contract arrived
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Location

Styria, Lower Austria

Country

Austria

Short summarizing description

Due to an ageing population and a trend towards higher education, Austria is facing a huge lack of apprentices and skilled workers, which will only increase in the years to come. At the same time, the global migration movements call for new migration models to foster social cohesion and cultural diversity. Around 95.000 refugees came to Austria in 2015, 14.000 of them to the province of Styria, many of them unaccompanied minors. There were not enough accommodations and no answers to the questions of their linguistic, cultural and professional integration. In an effort to create a win-win situation, we started "Talents for Austria", a boarding school with job training & placement for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (UMA). Within the project's 24-hour-care, the UMA receive basic education, learn German and our values, receive a specialist job training and are placed in the job market. After one year they can work as apprentices and thus contribute to the Austrian social system.

Key Terms

education; employment; integration

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

Shortage of apprentices / skilled workers: Austria faces a huge lack of apprentices/ skilled workers due to demographic developments: Fertility rates in Austria have

dropped from 2.82 in 1963 to 1.53 in 2016, the population ages, baby boomers will retire. More young people choose higher education instead of dual education (school + job training). In tourism, a core sector of the Austrian economy, the number of apprentices has dropped approximately 30% over the past seven years. Integration: Austria received a record of 89.098 asylum applications in 2015 and 42.073 applications in 2016. Usually, only half of the persons entitled to asylum has found a job after 5 years. The federal state "saves" 10.000 € per refugee per year, if he/she is not receiving needs-based guaranteed minimum income.

Which are the key objectives of your measure?

Successfully and fully integrate UMA (language, values/culture, work) so they become contributing members of our society and social system. Allow Austrian companies to fill vacant apprenticeship positions and successfully counter the shortage of skilled workers. Increase chances of UMA entering/remaining in an apprenticeship and the labour market with specific job training. Foster social cohesion, raise awareness for cultural diversity and increase acceptance among locals.

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

UMA;

Companies, international concerns and industry sectors seeking apprentices / skilled workers: in active contact with 120 regional businesses, cooperation with economic sector (tourism) and international concern (special program for listed company in steel sector);

Federal State: UMA don't receive benefits, but contribute to the social system;

Population: services can be provided again, where personnel was lacking before (e.g. restaurants could serve only breakfast, no cook for half board)

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

2 schools running (30 staff members, 66 UMA);

5 hours of class/day for UMA w/ certified teachers for German as Foreign Language and job training by experts in the afternoons;

1 accommodation for 20 students who turned 18;

13 language courses for adult refugees with 150 attendees provided in 2017;

Official examination centre for OESD language certifications;

Close to 200 language certifications (A1, A2, B1, B2) carried out;

17 UMA in apprenticeship, 5 were active as seasonal workers, 4 are in high school, 3 with preliminary contract (will be hired upon clarification of asylum status) and ~20 did a traineeship;

ISO 9001 and 29990 certified;

Finalists at 2017 PWC Social Impact Lab and 2017 European Public Service Award (EPSA), Best Practice Modell of European Union;

New boarding school opens 12/17 in Lower Austria (45 places), new school with training restaurant opens 02/18 in Graz (24 places);

Participation in international expert panels with government representatives (SRB, BGR, TUR)

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

One challenge was the local population. Before the establishment of a new school, town hall meetings were held with the respective mayors, to inform the residents and address their questions and fears. Also, new impulses and ideas of the citizens were received and integrated in the general concept. We live by an open-door-policy and have visitors regularly. Furthermore, financing the project was extremely difficult: our project is based on a five-step process (Boarding school, education, job training, job

placement, ongoing support), but state subsidies correspond to only one step at the time.

Link to website

<http://www.talente-entwicklung.com/schule>

Starting date

2015-11-01

Duration

24 and ongoing

Regional scale

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

Other involved partners

City of Trofaiach/Styria, mayor Mario Abl; Municipality of Niklasdorf/Styria, mayor Johann Marak; City of Korneuburg/Lower Austria, mayor Christian Gepp; Regional government of Styria and Lower Austria; Economic Chamber

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Category 1, Managing social change

The mutual benefits of our project are evident: On the one hand, UMA are successfully and fully integrated (language, values/culture and work), so they can become contributing members of our society and social system. On the other hand, our measure counters the shortage of skilled workers, since Austrian companies can once again fill vacant apprenticeship positions. We are in active contact with 120 regional companies and have a cooperation with an entire economic sector (tourism). Furthermore, we run a special program for a stock-listed company in the steel sector. Our project raises awareness for and increases cultural diversity and social acceptance on all levels of the daily life in the local community: Our students are involved in local associations like the voluntary fire brigade. They spend time with their "buddies", individuals and/or families who invite them to their home and spend time with them. We also offer seminars on intercultural competence and conflict management.

Category 2: Integrating migrants into the local/,regional labour market

The UMA in our boarding school are cared for 24/7, with classes, tutoring and leisure activities. 5 days a week they attend classes (German and basic education) and receive a practical and specific job training, for example for gastronomy or construction. To show the details of our integration process into local businesses, we would like to present the concrete case of a former student of ours: Sameullh attended our school, completed the programme with a German certificate and works as apprentice (cook) at a local restaurant/hotel since March 2017. One of his colleague acts as his "buddy". His employer was looking for an apprentice for over six months and is glad he finally found someone. As stated in a recent TV interview, he is very

happy with Sameullh and would like to hire one apprentice from our school each year. [See also this link](#)

Category 4: Supporting change in the local / , regional dual education system

To support the transition of our students from school to dual education, we have one colleague acting as “job integration coach”, who actively contacts regional enterprises, which are looking for apprentices (current network of 120 enterprises in the region). Together with the company, she defines the required profile for the position and matches it with suitable students, according to their skills and competences. In the next step, the company can get to know one or more suitable students through a traineeship. If desired, we also hold seminars about intercultural communication for the managers or employees. Ideally, the traineeship ends with the establishment of an apprenticeship contract. After our student starts working as apprentice, we still support him and the employer, should any questions or difficulties arise (e.g. learning support, conflict management, tasks with different authorities, ...). So far, we have 17 students in apprenticeships and no drop-outs.

Category 5, PR impact and awareness raising

- state-of-the-art social media presence (website, facebook 1050 followers, newsletter 350 subscribers)
- “open house policy” that encourages locals, but also public officials, business owners and press to visit us (average of 1 visit/week).
- network of "buddies" (locals) that spend free time with UMA; 120 enterprises in our network for potential apprenticeships
- total of 30 articles published about our project in 2017, in local, regional and national newspapers and magazines.
- participation in expert panels (e.g. UNICEF, Govts. of Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey; UN; Styrian Regional Govt.; FRA)
- exhibitor at Austria's biggest tourism & gastronomy fair “GAST”
- Finalist at 2017 European Public Sector Award and official Best Practice of the EU (150 submissions from 30 EU countries & agencies)
- only Austrian project chosen as finalist for the 2017 PWC Social Impact Lab for social enterprises, in a finale of 10 projects (140 submissions from the Netherlands, Germany and Austria)

Category 6, Innovative dimension

„Talents for Austria“ combines three core areas of successful integration (primary care, education, job placement) under one roof, which is unparalleled in Austria. One of our staff members serves as “job integration coach” and is responsible for identifying and contacting companies that wish to recruit UMA as well as providing support for both the company and the UMA during the entire recruiting process and beyond. We cooperate with national and international enterprises as well as entire economic sectors, since we can develop a tailor-made approach for each client. Our school in Niklasdorf specifically prepares the students for the construction industry and all UMA residing there were only accepted after a casting process at the building academy Steiermark (“Bauakademie”), in order for the most talented youths to be selected for the programme. Our school in Trofaiach prepares the students for an apprenticeship in gastronomy, also under the supervision and training by experts.

Category 7, Transferability

Our concept of combining various steps that facilitate integration is highly transferable. We can adapt our training content depending on the target group and/or client, and thus provide tailored solutions to successfully handle the integration of immigrants (minors and of age), to countermeasure the shortage of junior staff/skilled workers as well as a high youth unemployment rate, which many countries currently face. It can be adapted to other target groups like adult refugees, migrants or the so-called NEETs (not in education, employment or training). Recently, a pioneering project has been approved in Austria, for Nigerians currently living here but wanting to return to their

home country (“returnees”). In cooperation with national/international businesses in Nigeria, they will receive a job training in Austria, then return to Nigeria to work. We will do the training in Austria, in cooperation with a school/university in Nigeria.

Further Information



Our student and now apprentice Reza with his boss (Isabel Munoz, our colleague and cook) in action, as they prepare the daily 100 meals for our two schools in Trofaiach and Niklasdorf.

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 [3 Handout aktuell EN UMA.PDF — 729Kb](#)

Project description in English