

Toolbox Freiamt



Toolbox-Vehicle in Dottikon
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Location

Wohlen AG

Country

Switzerland

Short summarizing description

"Toolbox" is a measure to support migrants, new inhabitants, locals, volunteers, institutions and public authorities to get along with the social changes. Several tools enable migrants and new inhabitants to get in touch with locals, to get helpful information for their everyday life in the region and to get to know the Swiss framework like school, health system, insurances etc. Local volunteers are supported and encouraged, if they want to initiate a private project to improve the social life in between inhabitants with different backgrounds. Migrants, living for a shorter or longer time in the region, are a strong supporting part of "Toolbox". They translate ordinary consultations, they contact migrants in their first language and they network in between the inhabitant cultures.

Key Terms

Innovative, Low-threshold service, efficient

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

The "Toolbox-Area" is a peri-urban area, the communities are too small to engage in integration themselves. Wohlen, the biggest town (16'000 inhabitants, 39% migrants) and three neighboring communities, Villmergen, Dottikon, Dintikon, decided 2009 to cooperate and start this innovative integration project. In an area of around 30'000 people, about 34 % of them are migrants. Many people are migrating directly from other countries to the region. The fluctuation is high. Both

Switzerland and the canton Aargau have different centralistic information centers. Most migrants will never use these. Because new inhabitants mostly need the support on-site and at once. Toolbox's aim is to support new inhabitants to cope with the Swiss framework and to encourage people to be part of the community.

Which are the key objectives of your measure?

- New inhabitants and migrants are supported while starting their everyday life in the region.
- New inhabitants and migrants get information about their everyday life in the region.
- Institutions and municipality get support for their work with migrants.
- Volunteers and institutions with ideas for improving the living together between different groups of the population are encouraged and supported.

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

New inhabitants – migrants: Information about everyday live, social activities and the swiss system
New inhabitants – Swiss: Information about everyday life, social activities.
Locals: Support and encourage of volunteers.
Public authorities: less effort to inform new inhabitants because of the activity of Toolbox.
Institutions: Support of their work with migrants.

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

Toolbox-Vehicle: It rotates between the communities. It is present on parent-teacher conferences, in front of the municipality halls, on community festivities etc. It contains information about social activities, language courses, culture, helpdesks, swiss system. The staff gets in contact with people who wouldn't actively apply for a consultation. Free Welcome-consultation for new inhabitants and migrants, if necessary with free translation. Support of volunteers: Volunteers who want to organize projects to improve the social contact between the community members are supported by searching financial support, infrastructure, and the conceptual work. With this support, volunteers are encouraged to engage themselves in the communities. Information events: Organization of events in cooperation with culture associations or social groups to inform migrants about specific Swiss topics and the Swiss system. If necessary, the events are translated in several languages.

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

At the beginning, it was difficult to get in contact with the primary target group. They didn't contact "Toolbox", even though they needed information. After the increase of the cooperation with teachers, municipality and culture groups, the number of consultations did increase. The "Toolbox-vehicle" was extremely helpful to be present in all communities and to get in contact with the target group.

Link to website

<http://www.toolbox-freiamt.ch>

Starting date

2010-04-05

Regional scale

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

Other involved partners

Kanton Aargau

Contact person

VJF

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Category 1, Managing social change

Toolbox encourages migrants to get along with everyday life in the region. Locals and migrants are encouraged to take part of the community. Migrants feel respected and part of the community. They participate in the communal life.

Category 5, PR impact and awareness raising

The organization of activities together with newly migrated inhabitants and locals gets high public awareness through the medias.

Category 6, Innovative dimension

The cooperation of several communities enables even small communities to get involved in integration. By using the "Toolbox-Vehicles" the project is low-threshold. The vehicle is usable in all communities and on different occasions and it's visible for all. The close collaboration with "local migrants" enables to get in contact with newly migrated people without any knowledge of German.

Category 7, Transferability

Toolbox was one of the first regional integration projects in Switzerland. As a pilot scheme, Toolbox made many experiences and developed helpful tools, some of which are already used in other areas of Switzerland. All tools can be used in other sections, as long as they are fitted to the specific region

Category 8, Embedment in a comprehensive welcoming strategy

Toolbox welcomes all new inhabitants with a letter and information. By being present on different occasions, Toolbox is part of the community and sooner or later gets in contact with most of the inhabitants. The Toolbox-Vehicle is called the WelcoMobil, to welcome all the people. The participating communities live the welcoming strategy and are proud of supporting Toolbox for their population.

Further Information



Toolbox-Vehicle in front of a school
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