



INTERACT

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INTRODUCTION

Current migrant situation focusing on the situation of female migrants

Austria is a country of immigrants; migrants are an essential element of the society. In the last 30 years many initiatives, services and organisations were established in order to improve the situation for the new arrivals. Despite the precarious financial situation, the relationship with the political system was rather good and as a highlight the State of Styria agreed upon a common position regarding diversity in 2011 and the “Anti-discrimination Office Styria” was founded. Nevertheless, migration is still regarded as something “special” and discrimination and a latent racism is widespread. Many state institutions are still not adapted to the needs of a migration society. The current right-wing government on the national (Austria) and city (Graz) level reacts to the current challenges faced because of the politics of assimilation. It has increased the pressure to integrate through appropriate laws and penalties. The neo-liberal tendency is linked with nationalism – spirit and the effort for a stronger state and media control.

19% of all women living in Austria were born in foreign countries. Overall women are clearly represented in the area of family migration, but significantly under-represented in the area of qualified migration. Women face complex and intersectional challenges, barriers and problems. In order to understand the specific phenomena, there is further need to analyse the gender hierarchy and the relevant political and societal framework and dynamics– especially in the field of migration, work, education, media and social welfare.

Potential group

We mostly had contact with qualified women (6 persons). They are either studying or have finished their studies. The students are between 20 and 30 years old and the others are between 40 and 50. The University graduates have children who are already 16+, one woman is divorced and the other is married with an Austrian man. They are all well integrated and confident, their German skills are very good and they are highly motivated to get a good job in their field of interest. Nevertheless they are facing discrimination and several barriers in order to integrate in the labour market. These two groups are very interesting for the FemTalks Project. The second biggest group (3 persons) are asylum seeking women. They have no or very low level education and are between 20 and 50 years old. All of them are married and two of them have children. Their language skills are basic and they are mostly focused on ensuring their legal status, health, education and family issues. The situation of asylum seekers is very specific and insecure and may not be appropriate for the FemTalks Project. **Who is missing?** Except for one woman in the success interviews we couldn't reach the lower or non-educated women with legal status and working permission. There is a need for a special framework and procedure to integrate this interesting group. There is a lack of self-confidence which could be a potential big topic.

Strategies, skills and attitudes from the success - interviews

A strong will is needed: to find a job, to fight to get permission to stay, to learn German, to understand the culture, to cope with challenging times and situations, to find the right information (school-, social- and healthsystem, etc.) and get support from administration, NGO's, therapists offices – Overall NEVER GIVE UP! **A Supportive network, community and friends are very important and essential for integration and finding employability:** This could include migrant communities and networks as well as 'local' networks and communities („Leave the flat and communicate with others!"). Mental support and feeling secure is important. **Furthermore:** German language skills; a clear and strong perspective is essential; to be capable to cope with racism and discrimination; to be well informed about working contracts and conditions. Related to work, digital and social medias are used.

Desk Research

Part A – General Data and brief history of immigration in Austria

Regarding Austria's geographic position and its history, the country has a long tradition of immigration. Especially Vienna – centre of the Habsburg monarchy – was the central European melting pot in the **19th century**. The most important regions of origin of migrants were: Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia and Bukovina. Assimilation was the dominant policy towards the new immigrants.¹

In the **20th century** there have been basically 5 types of migration^{2 3}

1. After World War II more than 1 million foreigners, the so called “displaced persons” (war refugees, liberated prisoners from KZs, etc.), among them 300.000 ethnic Germans from central and eastern Europe, have lived on the Austrian territory. Most of them left the country and there is no reliable data how many of them settled.

2. In the following decades Austria became one of the most important transit countries for refugees from Eastern Europe. Between 1945 and 1990 around 650.000 people moved to the west because of uprisings and political crises especially in Hungary (1956/57), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland (1981/82). Approx. 5 % (33.000 people) started a new life in Austria.

3. In the 50s and 60s Austria had a labour shortage and therefore a guest worker system was established. The goal was the permanent rotation of men without families between the guest worker's - home countries and Austria.

But things didn't go according to the plan. In the 70s the guest workers brought their families and started to settle down. This development was even strengthened after the new employment law for foreigners in 1975 (recruitment stop and employment disadvantages for migrants). Between 1961 and 1974 round 265.000 people mostly from former Yugoslavia and Turkey immigrated to Austria and the proportion of women increased up to 44,4 % and the proportion of children and youth up to 22,5 % in 1981.

4. Asylum-seekers because of refugee movements (Romania 1989, former Yugoslavia 1991, war in Kosovo, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, etc.). From 1999 on there is a significant change in the composition of the refugee population. From this year on asylum seekers from outside Europe are the majority.

5. EU – Migration to Austria since Schengen 1997.

Policies towards migration

From 1945 to 1975 Austria can be considered as an exemplary asylum country. Refugee policy and the claim of being an asylum country got part of the basic principles and of the Austrian self - conception. The turning point came in 1975 with the international fuel crises and the increasing competition in the labour market. Relating to the refugee movements in the 80s and 90s the debates on foreigners got more and more heated and the right of asylum was dismantled step by step. Restrictive laws should

¹ See Michael John und Albert Lichtblau, Schmelztegel Wien – einst und jetzt, Wien 1992. Heinz Faßmann und Rainer Münz, Einwanderungsland Österreich? Historische Muster, aktuelle Trends und politische Maßnahmen, Wien 1995.

² See Rainer Münz, Peter Zuser und Josef Kytir, Grenzüberschreitende Wanderungen und ausländische Wohnbevölkerung: Struktur und Entwicklung. In: Heinz Faßmann und Irene Stacher (Hsg.) Österreichische Migrations- und Integrationsbericht. Demographische Entwicklungen – sozio-ökonomische Strukturen – rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen, Wien 2003.

³ See Study „Immigration to Austria“ (in German: “Zuwanderung nach Österreich“)

http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/zuwanderung_nach_oesterreich_studie2008_oegpp.pdf

have dissuasive effects on potential asylum seekers. The paradox is that more liberties on the EU level go hand in hand with further tightening of the alien's and asylum law. Since 2011, Austria has a flexible immigration model. The Red-White-Red Card offers qualified third-country workers and their family members a single permit for working and settling permanently in Austria. The different legal status of foreigners led to discriminations in many fields and has caused a new social segregation. Not surprising that in terms of integration third-country nationals (except for the R-W-R Card owners) are the most important group.⁴ This tendency is increasing after the great refugee movement in 2015 and the political coalition between the conservative 'Austrian People's Party' (ÖVP) with the populist right wing 'Austrian Freedom Party' (FPÖ) in 2017.

Current situation

Since 2001, more than 100,000 people have migrated annually to Austria every year. In the majority of cases, these were foreign nationals. The year with the highest gross immigration was 2015 with 214,000 people. On the one hand, the above-average immigration from EU and non-EU countries reflects the considerable influx of asylum seekers, in the years 2014-2016 clearly visible by the immigration of people of Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi origin. On the other, it reflects the considerable EU immigration to Austria from Germany as well as from neighbouring states in Eastern and South-eastern Europe which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Their EU citizens acquired full access to the Austrian labour market in 2011 and 2014, which boosted the influx.⁵ The main EU countries of origin for immigration to Austria in 2017 were Romania (17,900), Germany (16,200) and Hungary (13,100). The list of non-EU states was topped by Serbia (7,200) and Syria (6,700).⁶

All in all, the Migration gain since 1961 is round 1.264.000 people, which means that the total population of Austria has raised in this size number. Total population Austria: 8.645.000⁷

Inclusion and challenges

- Language and Education
- (Un)employment
- Health and social issues
- Living conditions and segregation
- Security

Apart from third-country nationals with unsecure or even illegal status, the most vulnerable groups are refugees. Currently the labour market is almost completely closed for refugees. Asylum procedures sometimes take longer than 3 years and refugees are hosted without a real possibility to follow a structured daily life. The current shortcut of German classes during asylum procedures leads to desperation. Many psycho-social problems are occurring in this waiting period.

⁴ See Study „Immigration to Austria“ (in German: “Zuwanderung nach Österreich“)

http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/zuwanderung_nach_oesterreich_studie2008_oegpp.pdf

⁵ Integration Report 2018 Figures, trends and analyses – A focus on the integration of women

https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Integration/Integrationsbericht_2018/Integration_Report_2018_English_.pdf

⁶ Statistik Austria (2018), Migration

⁷https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Integration/Integrationsbericht_2018/Statistical_Yearbook_2018_Z-Cards_English.pdf

Part B – Current situation of migration strongly focusing on female migrants

The „Österreichische Integrationsfonds“ (ÖIF; Austrian Integrations Funds) provides yearly the actual data about **migration and integration of women in Austria**. The topics are migration, language, education, work, family and health, specific challenges and chances of integration. The report for 2017 shows, that at the beginning of the year 19% of all women living in Austria were born in foreign countries, this means 842.200 women. Most of them are originally from Germany, nearly one half are coming from outside of the European Union. In 2017 4400 women came from Syria, 3400 from Romania, 3200 from Hungary and 2900 from Afghanistan.

There are substantial differences between the sexes in the age structure of the asylum seekers. In 2017, 54% of female asylum seekers were minors, but only 45% of male asylum seekers. At the same time, a slightly higher proportion of the female asylum seekers is between 35 and 65 years of age. Overall, the group of asylum seekers newly arrived in Austria is much younger than the average of the population without a migrant background. Overall women are clearly over-represented in the area of family migration, but significantly under-represented in the area of qualified migration.

Regarding the labour market situation, the rate of unemployed female migrants is much higher than the average rate (8,5%). 13,7% of them are unemployed, especially women from Syria (84%) and from Afghanistan (57%). And there is a very diverse situation regarding the level of education: Female migrants from Eastern Europe are educated/qualified on a higher level than the jobs they are currently employed. Most of migration women work in business services (46,6%) and in the accommodation and catering industry (39,2%). Around 40 % of female women from Romania, Ex – Yugoslavia and other new European countries are “overqualified” for their jobs. The lack of “nostrification/ recognition” of foreign degrees means lower incomes. Most of the women coming from countries outside the European Union don’t have high levels of qualifications for the labour market. Very often they are focused on their households and families. The birth-rate of women from these countries is high: Syrian women have around 5,3 children and Afghan women 3,8. This means, that a big number of female migrants who don’t come from EU-countries are not contributing to labour market well as the “society”.

The “Division for the Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs/ United Nations”⁸ determine that there is still a lack of understanding and awareness of the situation of migrant women. More detailed investigations should provide the basis for the formulation of policies and programmes that promote their equality with migrant men and that safeguard their well-being.

Mary Kwar⁹ stresses the following specific challenges, focusing primary on the working field¹⁰ – in principle most of them are also very relevant for female migrants in Austrian:

- During the decision to migrate, many women may have unrealistic expectations, lack of proper information on the migration process and procedures and on employment opportunities. They may also lack the know-how and ability to cover expenses. Thus, they may end up in irregular and exploitative situations.
- In comparison to men, women migrant workers tend to be concentrated in a more limited number of jobs.
- The migration of women is mostly unrelated to career advancement and skill acquisition. There is enough evidence to suggest that a significant number of migrant women possess skills and qualifications often not recognised or unneeded in the types of work that they perform. In fact, many studies indicate that migration involves deskilling for some groups of women.

⁸ http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/3/docs/P01_DAW.pdf

⁹ Senior specialist on gender and employment, International Labour Organization.

¹⁰ http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/genre/shared/Genre_docs/2865_Actes2004/10-m.kwar.pdf

- In comparison to men, most migrant women end up performing the 3D (dirty, dangerous, demanding) jobs (to which domestic jobs belong¹¹), where women are left in isolated situations with limited opportunities to build networks. Therefore, they have limited access to information and social support.
- Women more than men tend to occupy jobs within the informal sector which is not covered by any labour legislation or social protection.
- Women migrants themselves lack knowledge of their rights, fear the authorities and usually they are not organized.
- From an individual perspective, most women migrate to overcome poverty and limited viable employment opportunities in their home country. Most see their employment as temporary to achieve certain personal / family objectives (e. g. saving to establish a business, build a house, pay debts or for the education of the children). However, these objectives are difficult to achieve in the short term or over a single contract period due to a variety of reasons: problems with debt bondage, withholding of wages, receiving less wages than originally stated in the contract, lack of knowledge on money management and savings, among many others. This means that the women stay longer than anticipated or go back and forth in migration cycles between source and destination countries.
- The return and reintegration process of migrant workers can also be more problematic for women than men (e.g. socio-psychological effects, family relationships, financial difficulties and employment related problems).
- Women migrants are facing specific forms of discrimination, exploitation and abuse.¹²

In order to enhance the situation of migrants and to break down barriers on different levels and in different fields of society Styria has a very rich NGO – scene (especially in the provincial capital Graz), furthermore the **State of Styria agreed upon a common position regarding diversity in 2011**¹³. One very important step was the foundation of the “**Antidiscrimination Office Styria**”¹⁴

The integration report from 2018 describes the following recommendations in terms of women’s integration¹⁵:

“Special attention must be paid to family reunification with people entitled to asylum who are already resident in Austria. Women, and in particular women entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection who come to Austria for the purpose of family reunification, are faced with different challenges from other groups of migrants. For this target group, the goal must be to continue the targeted expansion of integration measures aimed specifically at women (e.g. advanced courses for women within the scope of the values and orientation courses held by the Austrian Integration Fund, special qualification and mentoring programmes for women, etc.)”¹⁶.

¹¹ Note from the authors of this desk research. As written in the article of Samia Dinkelaker <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/223157/migrantinnen?p=all> care work, like domestic jobs are a symbol of the female migration in the 21st century in Germany and therefore also in Austria.

¹²In the research of the “European Training Centre for Human Rights”, which is located in Graz: In 2016 more than 4100 cases of “hate crimes” in the public space have been documented during one year in Styria (a regional state in Austria). 40 % of this “hate crimes” have been related to the colour of the skin, religion and/ or

origin.http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/12583161_137267669/0717841f/2bericht.pdf

¹³http://www.soziales.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/11562700_103650128/21cd6a2e/Charta%20Kurzfassung_EN.pdf

¹⁴ www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.steiermark.at

¹⁵[https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Integration/Integrationsbericht_2018/Integration_Report_2018_English .pdf](https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Integration/Integrationsbericht_2018/Integration_Report_2018_English.pdf)

¹⁶ See integration report p. 31

Part C – Existing trainings and services

In Austria, there are a lot of different projects and organisations covering the integration of female migrants. These projects and initiatives are helping female migrants by offering **language and/or communication courses** (German) and/or **basic education, guidance and counselling on different issues** (like jobs and labour market, education, health, rights, anti-discrimination, family issues, violence and abuse) or special **job and employment trainings** (e.g. support for job seeking and application, courses for special job skills) and **temporary employment contracts** in the so-called second or third labour market. Women (and men), who are unemployed for more than 12 months get a chance to learn skills for several jobs and they receive support in finding a job in the 1st labour-market as well. Interestingly these projects also are 'laboratories' for integration, because the participants are coming from different social-cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the projects at the 2nd labour-market are only for women, who are permanently unemployed.

Most of these trainings and initiatives are offered by NGOs and financed by the state on a local, regional or national level, the European Union and very rarely by donation. Because of the plurality and diversity, we concentrate on some of them, which are in Graz and Styria. This variety shows different approaches to disadvantaged female migrant and their life situations, sometime one organisation covers some of these aspects, sometimes they are related to one specific problem. Some of them are also 'open' for the autochthonous population, men and/or male migrants in challenging life situations. All of them could be interesting partners for "FemTalks":

"Portobella – Begleitende Integration" / "Portobella – Attendant Integration"

Organizer: Omega - Transkulturelles Zentrum für psychische und physische Gesundheit und Integration/ Transcultural center for mental and physical health and integration, Graz, Austria.

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Finding answers to basic needs; reflection on present and future life.

Location: City of Graz

Summary: "Portobella" has implemented for many years the support of female asylum seekers and migrants, who have just arrived in Austria to support them in the challenging arrival phase. Although the basic needs of the women are supplied, they don't feel perceived as single persons. They are interested and motivated, but they need support to develop their self-reliance. "Portobella" offers a space, where the participants can think/reflect about their present and future life, which includes aims of social integrations and integration at the labour market as well as orientation in the Austrian educational system.

„Portobella“- courses take place three times a week for three hours and contain language training, communication, information about the Austrian Health, Education, Social and employment system etc. it also includes cultural education and excursions.

Source (link, EN if possible): <https://www.omega-graz.at/integrationsprojekte/portobella/>

“Frauenwege zu Empowerment”/ “Female Ways to Empowerment”

Organizer: Omega - Transkulturelles Zentrum für psychische und physische Gesundheit und Integration/ Transcultural centre for mental and physical health and integration, Graz, Austria.

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Find help and support for different problems of female migrant

Location: City of Graz and region around Graz

Summary: Migrant girls and women (from third states with different cultural traditions, shortly arrived in Austria), who are challenged in their life's situation because of violent experience, cultural uprooting, difficult social and economic situations are supported to fulfil their special and specific needs, which are identified by client-focused talks. Part 1 includes information and guidance on health, family planning, role models, communication, FGM etc., Part 2 offers trainings for multiplayers, who run workshops in their cultural communities.

Source: <https://www.omega-graz.at/integrationsprojekte/frauenwege-zu-empowerment/>

Frauenspezifische Beratungsstelle für Migrantinnen – DIVAN/ Helpline for female migrants

Organizer: Caritas Steiermark/ Caritas Styria, NGO

Skills to develop and aim of the training: The aim is to support (young) female migrants, to live a self-determined life without violence and constraint.

Location: Graz, Styria

Summary: DIVAN offers guidance for female migrants to support them in multidimensional problems and challenges of integration. One specific focus is on the issue of domestic violence in the name of “honour” and/or forced marriage. The guidance provided is about empowerment within the family and society, which means information, education and encouragement to get out from traditional cultural limitations, which prohibit emancipation and equalisation of women.

Source: <https://www.caritas-steiermark.at/hilfe-angebote/migrantinnen-fluechtlinge/beratung-betreuung/divan/>

Promotion of Social Integration and Empowerment

Organizer: IKEMBA, NGO

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Empowerment, community-related on participatory and on a low threshold level.

Location: Graz and Styria

Summary: IKEMBA offers various support and projects for migrants (male and female) in disadvantaged social situations. The projects focus on barriers related to discrimination and racism, which can lead to isolation and retreat. Outreach-Work, Empowerment-Guidance, intermediation and cultural translation should promote the everyday and orientation knowledge. Therefore IKEMBA combines the detached, peripatetic, domiciliary und satellite („one stop shop“) model. The collaboration with leaders of ethnic communities is essential. IKEMBA also gives support for the integration into the labour-market, especially for those, who have multi-dimensional problems and disadvantages.

Source: <http://www.ikemba.at/schwerpunkte/foerderung-sozialer-integration/>

DANAIDA - Bildung und Treffpunkt für Frauen/ DANAIDA – Education and meeting place for women.

Organizer: DANAIDA - Bildung und Treffpunkt für Frauen

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Improvement of German language and basic knowledge and skills with low learning experience to improve their chances for participation and integration in Austria. Promoting self-confidence and social skills and to prepare the women to join a course, where they can make up their compulsory education to improve their chances at the labour market.

Location: Graz, Styria

Summary: DANAIDA has been offering different guidance, courses and trainings for many years especially for female migrants. One focus is on basic literacy and alphabetisation, the trainings are combined with E-learning tools, to promote digital competencies from the very beginning. Beside these trainings and courses DANAIDA offers possibilities to meet women from Austria and to do things together like cooking, cycling or visiting cultural events.

Source: <http://www.danaida.at/>

Projekt UMIBERA - Umfassende multiprofessionelle Beratung für Migrantinnen in besonders belastenden Lebenssituationen/ Project UMIBERA – comprehensive, multi-professional Guidance/Counselling for female migrants in highly problematic situations of life.

Organizer: Verein Frauenservice/ Association Service for Women

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Is it mostly not a training but guidance and counselling for female migrants in challenging situation, to support, to relieve and to strengthen, that the women can get more clarity about their personal situation and develop coping strategies.

Location: Graz, Austria

Summary: The project addresses female migrants in difficult life situations/circumstances like social isolation, unemployment, violence, divorce, financial problems, emotional or health problems. It offers juridical, social and intercultural guidance, groups meeting to develop solutions, connection with other women groups, support with public offices etc. UMIBERA is also linked with regular women's breakfast, access to internet and support in writing job applications at the so called "CAFÉ Palaver".

Source: <https://frauenservice.at/forschung-und-projekte/umibera>

SOMM – Multicultural initiative for Guidance and Education.

Organizer: Verein SOMM/ Association SOMM

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Strengthening of one's identity, Encouragement and Empowerment; Knowledge about rights as female migrant, self-determination and solidarity.

Location: Graz, Styria

Summary: SOMM is a self-organised initiative from female migrants (mostly Muslim) for migrant girls and women. SOMM offers different guidance for various issues and problems, self-organised language, basic education, alphabetisation, and computer courses. SOMM helps to inform about courses and trainings, which are offered somewhere else. Sometime Empowerment-Workshops and special workshops on health issues are organised.

Source: <http://www.somm.at/index.php/ueber-uns>

Qualifizierung und Beschäftigung für Arbeit suchende Frauen in den Bereichen Gastronomie und Reinigung/ Qualification and employment für women, who are looking for a job in catering and cleaning companies.

Organizer: SAsT GmbH – Soziale Arbeit Steiermark/ Social Work Styria

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Stabilisation, qualification and sustainable employment for disadvantaged women in catering and cleaning companies.

Location: Graz

Summary: SAsT offers temporary employment contracts for disadvantaged women, they can learn specific skills for their jobs in catering and cleaning companies. During the limited time of this job under realistic employment conditions, the women get various support and skills, which can improve their employability combined with social-pedagogical guidance and internships.

Source: <http://www.sast.at/> and http://www.sast.at/projekte_beschaeftigung.html

Neue Wege – Basisbildung für Erwachsene/ New ways – Basic education for adults

Organizer: ISOP – Innovative Sozialprojekte/ ISOP Innovative Social Projects

Skills to develop and aim of the training: German, Mathematics, PC skills and English.

Location: Graz, Feldbach and Bruck, Styria

Summary: “New Ways” is a free opportunity for adults (jobseekers, migrants with good German basis knowledge etc.) who want to improve, refresh or learn some basic skills like German, Mathematics, Basic PC Competencies, English. Participants learn in small groups (6 persons) and in individual instruction, twice a week for two years.

Source: <http://www.isop.at/tatigkeitsfelder/qualifizierung-bildung/basisbildung-fur-erwachsene-in-graz-und-bruck/>

ARIS (Arbeits-Integrations-Service)/ ARIS (Employment-Integration-Service)

Organizer: ISOP – Innovative Sozialprojekte/ ISOP Innovative Social Projects

Skills to develop and aim of the training: 12 months assistance and counselling for men and women, who are getting social services and/or are unemployed for more than one year. The aim is the re-integration in the first or second labour market.

Location: Bruck an der Mur/ Styria

Summary: The assistance and guidance consist of different aspects like qualifications, devilment of perspectives for the labour market, reduction of barriers, coaching for job applications, employment by the hour; reduction of barriers

Source: <http://www.isop.at/tatigkeitsfelder/beratung/aris-arbeits-integrations-service/>

Integrationsmodell und Interkulturelles Forum und IKU/ Model of Integration and intercultural Forum

Organizer: ISOP – Innovative Sozialprojekte/ ISOP Innovative Social Projects

Skills to develop and aim of the training: Basic skills, qualifications and competencies for different working fields in the labour market (improvement of German, basic IT knowledge, social competencies)

Location: Graz and other Styrian towns

Summary: People, who are ‘far away’ from the labour-market like female migrants, asylees, permanently unemployed persons are supported in their re-entry in the first labour-market by a temporary working contract. The participants get support for their individual development and learning processes as well. And they are also supported to cope with different familiar, financial or health problems, job-seeking, empowerment etc.

Source: <http://www.isop.at/tatigkeitsfelder/beschaeftigung/integrationsmodell-und-interkulturelles-forum-und-iku/>

Basisqualifizierung für Migrantinnen/ Basic education for female migrants

Organizer: ZAM – Zentren für Ausbildungs-Management Steiermark im Auftrag vom AMS / centers for trainings management in Styria on behalf of the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)

Skills to develop and aim of the training: German intensive, general school knowledge, explore different fields of work, introductions in topics of IT, labour market research, personality development, writing applications, internships in companies

Location: Gleisdorf

Summary: With this basic education for female migrants the chances on the labour market are increased

Source: <https://www.zam-steiermark.at/regionalstellen/oststeiermark/aktuelle-ausbildungen.html>

I - Connect

Organizer: NOWA Training, Beratung, Projektmanagement / trainings, consultation, project management for gender equality

Skills to develop and aim of the project: Building bridges between migrant communities and the local educational landscape. The projects address migrant communities as well as the different players in the education sector

Location: Graz

Summary: Special skilled education coordinators offer different instruments, projects, etc. in order to
* improve the knowledge about the educational system in Austria * accompany female migrants to education institutions * analyse the educational opportunities * translation * improve the welcoming culture of educational institutes * build networks, enable/facilitate exchanges between migrant communities with educational institutions * etc.

Source: <http://www.nowa.at/projekte/i-connect-2017/>

Part D – Existing artistic methods of integration

There are several initiatives and organisations in Austria, which have a focus on artistic and/or creative methods for integrations, inclusion and participation for people in disadvantaged situations.

Some of them are working with theatre methods, music and dance, others with visual arts; some of them combine different methods of art or combine them with non-artistic methods.

Below we have compiled some examples from Graz:

KUNSTLABOR Graz/ ART-LABORATORY Graz

Aims/Focus: To promote participation and education by artistic and pedagogical activities; Art offers the possibilities to encourage people to break routines and gain new perspectives. People can experience, that change, emancipation and self-determined actions are possible.

Method/ Art Form: The ART-LABORATORY Graz connects everyday life with artistic activities and education. It offers possibilities for creative and artistic activities especially for older people, refugees and female migrants. All the projects offer collaboration and participation from artists and non-artists, following the trinity of production, opus and reception. This becomes the foundation for developing different skills and competencies and to explore new spaces of play and action. In case of “basic skills and education” learning, language, mathematic and digital competencies are crucial. The “ART OF LEARNING” is open for everybody, who wants to learn, it offers holistic, integral, unusual processes of learning, that can surprise and thrill.

Organizer: uniT GbmH Graz

Source: https://www.kunstlabor-graz.at/kunstlabor_graz/ueber_uns

InterACT – Werkstatt für Theater und Soziokultur/ InterACT - Laboratory for Theatre and Socio-Culture

Aims/Focus: InterACT is a non-profit, professional theatre group and cultural initiative that uses theatre and drama to help create a culture of dialogue, to help diverse people find ways to live together, to empower people and encourage them to participate in society, as well as promote personal, social and political processes of change. InterACT has a long and broad expertise in working with different communities and groups in socially and/or economically disadvantaged situations.

Method/ Art Form: InterACT mostly uses interactive, participatory theatre forms and methodologies like Forum Theatre and Legislative Theatre drawing inspiration from Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, David Diamond’s Theatre for Living and Jonathan Fox’ Playback Theatre. Depending on the specific project, InterACT works at the interdisciplinary interface between art, political pedagogic practice and research. InterACT considers theatrical processes to be political, participatory, social and aesthetic research processes. During recent years, InterACT has developed a broad level of expertise that allows them to bridge the gap between political/ administrative decision-makers and people who are affected by certain social problems using political-participatory theatre methods. InterACT has worked with different groups and communities of people like the homeless, unemployed, those living under conditions of poverty, refugees, migrants, people with (dis-)abilities, young people, young adults in disadvantageous situations and elderly people living in social isolation, as well as many others. All these projects are linked to issues of social inclusion, human rights, empowerment and diversity.

Organizer: InterACT – Werkstatt für Theater und Soziokultur

Source: www.interact-online.org

“Kunstraum NIL” (Kunstverein BAODO) / “Art Space NIL” (Association BAODO)

Aims/Focus: Kunstraum NIL/ BAODO offers possibilities for migrants (specifically from African states) to realise different artistic and cultural activities and projects as well as to support them to find self-determined lives, at the same time it opens up space for intercultural encounters and meetings.

Method/ Art Form: NIL is a space for art, discourse and for intercultural encounter and cultural learning, it is also space for guidance for migrants as well as a centre for youth, communication and culture, where exhibitions, lectures, readings, workshops, concerts, performances, discussions, presentations, video-screenings etc take place. NIL is also an African Restaurant with free Internet access, where African dishes are cooked.

Organizer: Kunstverein BAODO, Graz

Source: <http://nil.mur.at/> and <http://baodo.mur.at/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/249471966670/>

“SoSamma” (= Styrian dialect “We are like this”) – Multicultural Female Chorus

Method/ Art Form: Since 2002 the project has been focusing on singing together in a chorus for female migrants and women from Austria. Women from 20 nations take part at regular rehearsals and public concerts.

Aims/Focus: To support the social integration of female migrants by offering a regular space for cultural and creative activities to strengthen integration, social cohesion, participation, equalisation. It is also an aim to contribute positive and mutual perspectives on integration and to reflect integration processes through cultural experience.

Organizer: Omega - Transkulturelles Zentrum für psychische und physische Gesundheit und Integration/ Transcultural centre for mental and physical health and integration, Graz, Austria.

Source: <https://www.omega-graz.at/transkulturelles-zentrum-omega-graz-und-hartberg/kunst-und-kultur-bei-omega/>

Kulturpilot_innen Graz /Cultural Pilots Graz

Aims/Focus: Migrants in disadvantaged life situation get access to manifold cultural and artistic offers in Graz, which they normally would not attend. Through this project subjective cultural concepts can be reflected and understood, people from different cultural world get links with each other

Method/ Art Form: The participants get to know local artist and take part at workshops with artist and try out different disciplines like painting, sculpting, music, ‘expressive’ theatre.

Organizer: Verein IKEMBA/ Association IKEMBA

Source: <http://www.ikemba.at/schwerpunkte/foerderung-von-bildung-kultur-und-sprache/>

Die Muslimin: Gestern, Heute und Morgen/ The Muslim woman: yesterday, today and tomorrow

Aims/Focus: The main focus is to present Muslim women in a way most local people in Graz might not expect: Women, who are engaged in society, educated mothers, working women, female students with high expectations for the future, etc.

Method/ Art Form: exhibition with public tours, catalogue,

Organizer: Islamisches Kulturzentrum Graz – Frauenreferat/ Islami culture center Graz/ women’s group

Source: <https://islamgraz.org/category/frauen>

AAI - Afro-Asiatisches Institut Graz/ Communication centre for Students from Africa, Asia and Latin America

Aims/Focus: A particular strength of the AAI (Afro-Asian Institute) is to promptly tackle explosive global political topics and to enable confrontation with topical issues. Thus, AAI invites experts for speeches and discussions who convey authentic information about the current trouble spots in the countries of the developing world and to report on resulting changes in society and repercussions on everyday culture. National or global gender-topics are often addressed in cooperation with the woman's group of the Catholic Church.

Method/ Art Form: The Afro-Asian Institute (AAI) tries to define intercultural and development policy key topics through numerous events (discourses, disputations, lectures, exhibitions, creative and artistic workshops, concerts etc.) and thus, in the sense of sustainability, to allow insight into highly diverse living conditions and situations. Beside long-term projects which are nourished by the participation of students from all over the world, an essential role of the AAI is individual consultation and "tutoring" for students and scholars from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Consultation comprises every possible support in social, studies-related and legal matters.

Organizer: AAI Graz

Source: <http://aai-en.graz-seckau.at/>

Part E – Challenges and opportunities of FemTalks Forum in Graz/Austria

Challenges

The complexity and intersectionality of the challenges, barriers, and problems of our target group is clear:

- Stereotypes, racism and discrimination
- Insecure working, residential and social-welfare status
- Missing or bad legal and financial recognition of women's working sectors (e.g. care work)
- Missing recognition of education (nostrification)
- Difficulty starting/entry level positions in the labour market (low qualification, language problems, etc.)
- Conflictual emancipation from traditional values and rules
- etc.

In order to understand the specific phenomena, there is a further need to analyse the gender hierarchy and the relevant political and societal framework and dynamics– especially in the field of migration, work, education, media and social welfare.

It will be very important finding the right frame conditions, so that women in different life-situations (in trainings, work, family-engagement, etc.) can take part. How can we adequately address possible participants (gender, language, socio-culture, etc.)?

Opportunities

FemTalks Forum can relate to a lot of different offers and projects – and it must! Otherwise it cannot reach possible participants. On the other hand, it is important to document, where the FemTalks participants can go to find specific support. (Perhaps we can make a collection and design a 'map') It must be designed as an addition to existing programs – in cooperation not in competition.

It seems to be clear, that the other projects in Graz are not using the same methods and/or combining it in the same way as FemTalks. In this sense we'll have a unique proposition. On the other hand, it can be difficult to understand the value of it.

The research strengthened the need for projects like FemTalks:

- The project can offer creative and empowering spaces where persons affected can exchange their specific experiences, strategies and perspectives.
- Stereotypes shape the image of female migration and therefore it is a necessity to offer professional platforms, where women are active and speak for themselves.
- The compounding narrative of the powerless migrant woman, which is a victim of her traditional culture, must be questioned. Instead of othering and exclusion the specific life-conditions, limitations and power of acting of migrant women must be taken into consideration.
- The creative and holistic method can contribute to the development of different personal and social skills and it can become a good base for the digital storytelling.
- Beside social and artistic engagement there is a need for collaboration and political action. Possibly FemTalks/InterACT can give inspiring impulses in Styria.

INTERVIEWS

Summary with „key words“ and „key message“

1.Strategies, skills and attitudes – success interview E.:

For E., the biggest challenge **was to learn and understand the German language, to understand the people and the culture and how they interact with each other.**

Strategies to overcome the difficulties were for her **to be curious, to have a group of friends, to know colleagues** from the home country. Also, that there was **no discrimination on Sociology Institute**, where she was studying.

A big challenge was to get a working license. She got it little by little and did **a lot of different part time jobs**. This helped her **to meet and build relationships with a lot of different and international people.**

Through her marriage she got the Austrian citizenship and the working license.

Suggestions/Advice: Learn German, invest in your education, use offers, use network, look for information, connect with people from outside of your community.

Looking for information is the most important thing. **To know how the school/education, health and the social system** at the new country **function**. At lot of the **institutions** here in Austria **can give support.**

The private/**personal support of an elderly lady**, where she lived at the beginning, helped her a lot to **overcome home sickness.**

E. uses digital and social medias mostly for her work.

2.Strategies, skills and attitudes – Success interview F.:

For F. it was **clear to leave her home country** after leaving school at the age of 16. Her goal was to **escape poverty**, to work for enough money in a politically correct stable? country, and **to build a more secure future.**

Part of her family lived and worked in Austria at this time, so **it was relatively easy to make this change in her life.**

Over many years **she had fights to get working license and to prolong her visa.**

She had to be careful with the content of working contracts.

Her suggestion for other is: **„Will“ is important, to have a strong perspective, to have strong connections to community networks, work hard and to get support** from the employment agencies and bosses. **Adapt the lifestyle and work right from the start, even for less money.** Without work, you are lost, she means. **And you must fight for it.** Never stop fighting, she means. You need a strong will.

After 25 years they acquired Austrian citizenship after an examination in German language.

She is very satisfied with her situation and her satisfying family life.

At the current moment, **she is too shy to go a step further to get a better job** as a social assistant.

3.Strategies, skills and attitudes – Success interview K.:

K. had to flee two times from her home country.

The **second time they fled** together was with her husband and her one-year old son to Austria, it **was very traumatizing**.

From this experience **she gives the advice that people who had to flee from war need time to recover upon arriving in the foreign country**. First, they need **mental support and a good community**, where they can feel secure and supported. **The second is to learn the language and try to get recognition for the education you got in your country**.

For Muslim women it is very important to gather together, **to have meetups in their native language to avoid home sickness**. **It is bad to spread them out** in different cities and villages.

She experienced a lot of discrimination because of her headscarf. **She always had to work “backstage”**.

A change happened, when she got a call from “Somm”, an association for Muslim women. Now she is the head of this association. She does advocacy work and guides projects for young Muslim women, which she enjoys very much. There she is using digital and social medias.

The fight for funding never stopped. Parts of the local administration don't like to support Muslim associations.

But she never gave up and was persistent, she brought in two new projects for young Muslims with the hope to secure funding for it.

In September **she will start a training program to care for handicapped people** with the goal **to get a secure and fulltime job**.

The career of her son is very important, he will start to study medicine like his grandfather and father did.

Advice and suggestions: **Contact organizations, look for local people as a bridge to society**. Get outside **the flat, go out and communicate**. **Look for opportunities to get support from therapists**.

She is proud that she never gave up.

FOCUS GROUP

Summary

1. Strategies of integration

There is accordance that everybody wants to integrate – in the sense of being part of Austrian society. In general, the term integration is positively received and especially women's rights are valued by the participants. The mentioned strategies can be categorized into different categories where some may overlap personal, networking and political. On the personal level there is accordance that learning the domestic language, education and finding a job are very important. Nevertheless, the personal integration strategies are very diverse and depending on the legal and family status. Mothers of young children focus very much on the children's needs and are very much engaged with educational topics of their children. Young women without children are very motivated to succeed in university to secure a good job afterwards. The well-educated women in the focus group see themselves as well integrated – nevertheless, they want to keep some parts of their personal identity like their religions and related symbols like the headscarf. One woman (asylum-seeker) decided to take off the scarf in order to have easier access to jobs. Networking seems to be a common strategy: Especially local friends and networks are valued very much. But often it seems much easier to rely on their family network (if there is one) and community networks (Islamic communities, ethnic communities, etc.). In order to fight islamophobia, racism, xenophobia concrete contact points like the police and the anti-discrimination office are very important but also medias, which are sensitive towards diversity. One participant proposes a quota system for female-migrants to ensure accessibility on the labour market.

2. Challenges at integration

The participants in the focus group experience xenophobia and several barriers to actively participate in society – especially in the labour market. It is said that the actual right-wing government and the segregating and competitive school system is making the situation worse. Especially for Muslim women wearing the headscarf, they have faced a lot of rejection in their lives - even in the university context it is sometimes hard to integrate. The knowledge and acceptance of Islam is rather low and therefore prejudices are omnipresent. On the other hand, low self-esteem, fear, excessive demand, psychological problems and low language skills (especially among refugees) are big challenges for the integration process.

3. Strategies for labour market integration

Most of the mentioned strategies for integration relate to the labour market: learning the local language, achieving higher education, adapting to the local culture, networking, defending oneself against xenophobia. Moreover, the participants tried to do internships, attended labour integration programs and special courses (e.g. in the technical field) in order to have better chances at finding a job. Labour integration programs are a good chance to get self-esteem, recognition and application of the already existing knowledge, qualifications and abilities. Two women are trying to become independent and have started to create new jobs for themselves.

4. Challenges at labour market integration

As previously states in number 2. the participants in the focus group experience xenophobia and several barriers to actively participate in the labour market. Especially higher qualified jobs seemed to be reserved for the local population and therefore qualifications don't ensure a good job. Not only for Muslim women with the headscarf but also for coloured women who face a lot of rejection, this also included women with a foreign accent. The participants describe exclusion-dynamics in the sense of the intersectionality-theory: exclusion is even stronger if the person is female, older and/or has little working experience. One woman in the group faces a challenge to finish her studies because it is not possible to secure a position as a trainee lawyer. Two Muslim women face a barrier to find an internship. Two other women are starting to become freelancers, they face bureaucratic obstacles and their financial situation is quite uncertain.

ANNEXES

Success interviews in essay format

Success – Interview 1: F.

Time: 18/02/2019, 14 – 15.30

Place: Kopernikusgasse 9, 8010 Graz

Guidance: Marianne Köberl-Wrentschur/InterACT, Graz

IO1: FemTalks Forum – Project/ Erasmus + Program

Introduction:

F. was born in 1974 in Bosnia. Since 1990 she has been living in Austria. She is married with a Bosnian; they have two daughters and one son. Her parents are still living in her hometown in Bosnia. She has one brother and one sister – they are also still living there. Every month she sends money to her parents and her brother.

Reason to leave her country:

She left school at the age of 16 and after that she went directly to Austria to visit her uncle, the brother of her mother, who had a job in a small touristic town in Salzburg/Austria. He was already living there for some years.

For her it was clear to leave Bosnia after school, because she wanted to find a well-paying job, that way she could support her family. She wanted to live in a good and politically correct (stable?) country.

Three months after she left, the war in the former Yugoslavia started therefore, she could not see her family for more than 5 years.

Labour market/ overcoming difficulties:

Her uncle managed to secure a seasonal job for her in the kitchen of the castle he was working for. Between December and April, when she was unemployed, she received money from the state. After one year in this restaurant, she found a job in a pizzeria in her neighbourhood where she was working for 13 years.

It was during this time that she married a Bosnian man (arranged by her aunt) and they had two children.

She experienced many years of battling to get her working license and get the prolongation for the visa. She had this seasonal job, but to prolong the working license, she needed a full-time job. It was necessary to be very careful with the content of working contracts, also to get the maternity allowance for 2,5 years.

The woman from the employment office helped her and her boss.

To find a better future for their children: more schools, more jobs, closer to Bosnia, the young family went to Graz (250.000 inhabitants). Through the support of the Bosnian community her husband found a firm, which needed a truck driver. The state payed for the conductor's license and some friends helped them to find a flat.

The youngest son was born in Graz. Through the support of the employment office she found a part-time job (30 hours) in the geriatric hospital as a custodial staff. To make more money, she also did private housekeeping.

The chief in the geriatric hospital, where she has a part time job, has been very supportive for many years, he gives good support for all the employees.

Integration and Networks:

Right from the start, the network of the Bosnian community in Austria gave a good support in finding jobs and flats.

The whole family feels very comfortable in Austria. They have good connections in the neighbourhood, in the summer evenings they all sit together in her garden. Her relationship with local Austrians varies between her special friendship with one neighbour and a sour one with a racist one she does not feel comfortable with.

After 25 years of living in Austria, they received the Austrian citizenship, she and her husband had to do a preparation course by „Deutsch and more“ and a certification in German language. She also knows of ISOP, an NGO for migrants, but she has never needed support from them.

Her life now:

She and her family have been living in Graz for 16 years. They have their jobs; the two daughters have finished high school, and both found interesting and well-paying jobs. They all live together in their own, freehold flat. Twice or three times a year, they visit their relatives in Bosnia. She is always shocked by the situation there. Her father only gets 150 € of pension every month. She likes that she can support them with money.

Success:

For F. success means that she reached a settled social situation, a satisfying family life and perspectives for her children for a good life. They are all well, and she never had doubts about her decision.

Advice: Adapt to the lifestyle and work right from the start, even for less money. Without work, you are lost. You must fight for it. Never stop fighting. You need to have a strong will.

Future/Plans:

She has problems with back pain from the cleaning work she has done over many years. She is hoping that she can switch from the cleaning job to the laundry job in the hospital. This job is easier to handle, and she thinks, that her boss will help her with that.

She is also dreaming about a job as a social assistant. For this, she must fill out an application, but she feels too shy to do that. It will take her 6 months of training and she is scared, that she will not be able to make it or to lose her stable job.

Her daughters and her husband are pushing her to pursue her dream.

Success – Interview 2: E.

Time: 18/03/2019 10.30 – 12.00

Place: Frauenservice Lendplatz, 8020 Graz

Guidance: Marianne Köberl-Wrentschur/InterACT, Graz

IO1: Femtalks Forum – Project/ Erasmus + Program

Introduction:

E. was born in a village in Rwanda with a population of 5000 in 1971. For the last 22 years she has been living in Austria. She is married with a German/Austrian. They have no children. Her parents are living in Belgium and her four brothers and sisters are living in different countries all over the world.

Reason to leave her country:

The reason was the civil war in Rwanda in 1994. The whole family had to flee from their country. During the escape, they lost two children. E. didn't want to talk about this. It took them three years to find a new secure place, she settled in Kenya alone. There she received a visa for students to go to Austria, where one of her sisters had already been living. Her brother-in-law was an architect in Austria, he could help her. First, he helped her sister and 1,5 years later, they could support E. for the student visa for Austria.

Labour market/ overcoming difficulties:

In Austria she was awarded a small stipend from the Afro-Asian Institute. Her sister found out about this opportunity.

She started to learn German, completed the certificate after one year and began to study Sociology at the University of Graz.

The big challenge for her was to learn and understand the language, to understand the people and the culture and how they deal with each other. She felt very alone; it was hard for her to make friends. On the campus in Rwanda, where she had been studying before she had to leave, all the students had been a community, they knew each other, she could meet friends daily.

What helped her to overcome the challenges was to be adventurous, a small group of friends (two other students from Rwanda) and the fact that there was no discrimination at the university, specifically at the Institute for Sociology.

After finishing her studies, a big challenge was to get a working license. This was and is quite hard for people from outside of Europe.

She started with a part-time job with Zebra and did a cleaning job at a vegetarian restaurant.

These jobs helped her to meet and network with people, they could help her in the future. She started working with Chiala Africa as a part time job.

During this time, she married - not only but also - to get the Austrian citizenship and the work permit.

She worked in a project for Erfa and for the Migrant's Council in Graz.

Advice:

Learn German! Invest in your education, use offers, use network, look for information, connect with new people outside of your community.

Information is the most important thing: To understand the school system, the health system and the social system in the new country.

In Graz, there are a lot of institutions who are giving support: Women Service, ISOP, Zebra, Danaida, Caritas – they have good education possibilities, Omega and so on.

She is using Facebook privately and professionally; it helps a lot. And she is sorry about, that she cannot use „WhatsApp “professionally since the new privacy rules.

Integration and Networks:

When she first moved to Graz, she lived in one room in a house with a garden with an older lady. She helped her in the house and the garden, in exchange for rent. This lady became like a mother for her, her sister and her sisters' husband. This relationship helped her a lot, because for a long time she could not have contact with her parents when they lived in Kongo.

This woman passed away one year ago.

Over the course of her different jobs, she created a huge network of international people. Her primary job is to give support to migrant women.

She knows what discrimination means to herself, she's felt it in words and physically. She did not want to discuss this topic.

Her life now:

She lives with her husband in their own flat. She has a part time job for 30 hours a week in

Frauenservice. There she leads the Women Café shop with lots of different events and coaching for (migrant) women.

She is disappointed that her part time job was reduced by 5 hours because of lack of funding.

Success:

She does not feel successful. She realizes that the political situation has changed a lot in the last 4 years.

The aggressive people have become louder now, the reduction of funding? in the social system creates issues/problems in her job.

Future:

E. and her husband are making plans to relocate to another country. If the political situation does not change or become better, they will leave Austria. They have some ideas now where they want to go, but nothing concrete.

Success – Interview 3: K.

Time: 11/03/2019 14 – 16 .00

Place: InterACT Büro, Neubaugasse 94, 8020 Graz

Guidance: Marianne Köberl-Wrentschur/InterACT, Graz

IO1: FemTalks Forum – Project/ Erasmus + Program

Introduction:

K. was born in 1976 in Afghanistan. She is married with an Afghan; he is a doctor in medical science. They have one son; he is 19 years old. They lost their second child during the time period they lived in the asylum centre in Bruck/Mur, Austria.

She studied Literature in Iran, where she and her family had been living for a long period of time. She also got married in Iran.

Her grandfather, father and uncle were professors at a university. One of her four siblings is living in Afghanistan, all the others live in different countries all over the world.

Since 2013, they have Austrian citizenship.

Reason to leave her country:

She had to flee two times, first when she was 10 years old. Her family had to leave when the Russians occupied Afghanistan. Her grandfather was left behind, so they fled to Iran.

After her marriage, she and her husband went back to Afghanistan. When the Taliban came, they had to flee a second time. Her son was one year old at the time and it took them 3,5 months to reach Austria.

Labour market/ overcoming difficulties:

They had been living two and half year in the asylum centrum in Bruck/Mur, before they were granted asylum.

The chief of the centre was like a mother for her. They felt well and supported. During this time, they learned German and her husband was able to get his diploma as doctor accepted.

The employment office helped him to find a job in a hospital, it worked out well, but after a while the consortium of medicine ordered a medical language examination. He failed and had to leave the hospital. He's become shy and isolated, a few months ago, he was diagnosed with cancer. She is optimistic that he has a 96% chance to survive.

When her son was 4 years old, they relocated to Graz. She completed different courses, she wanted to work with children.

She really likes to socialize, so she met a woman on the train, who helped her get a one-year job for ISOP in childcare. After that she worked in a private kindergarten. One father of a child was racist,

and her chief was very arrogant, so she suffered and had to leave her job after a while. With the children and her colleagues, she felt very comfortable. After that she started working at a Burger King and three times in different supermarkets.

In all these jobs she experienced discrimination because of her headscarf. She had to work in the back, where nobody can see her. Cleaning jobs made her very tired.

The last time she worked in a warehouse, it was better than the minimum social support, it was a good opportunity for her. She wanted to succeed and not fail. But one day, she felt intense pain in her ankle joint and wanted to go to a hospital. Her boss denied her request because he did not believe her, and she decided to quit.

In the end, she suffered a rupture of a ligament - this was the deepest pain she experienced.

She had no support in this case, she felt alone and depressive, she had no energy to ask somebody for help. The family lived on welfare from the state.

In 2008 she got a call from Somm, an association for Muslims. They were seeking to hire someone for childcare and translation. She started a new foundation: In this association they work against discrimination and advocate for equal treatment. She created new concepts and different projects, including young women. Being able to support young women made her happy. By Doing this she has a lot to do with digital and social media affairs.

Since 2011, she is responsible for this association facing a lot of struggles to get (financial) support from the administration.

A piece of advice she gives new people: Contact organizations, look for and socialize with people – use them as a bridge to society. Leave your flat, go outside and communicate. Look for opportunities to get support from therapists.

She is proud that she never gave up.

Integration and Networks:

For her, there is always something good and something bad. In the asylum centre in Bruck/Mur they felt very comfortable with the person in charge, but they felt isolated. They had no contact to local people. Only Jehovah's Witnesses and Mission people came in the centre to visit them.

They felt supported by doctors and nurses in the hospitals, where she went when she lost the baby and now for her husband's cancer treatment.

Also, the Waldorf school, her son attended for 4 years, gave them a welcoming feeling.

ISOP, the association for integration, where she got her first job for a one-year period was good and bad for her. She missed a further support in job-finding after she left the one-year job there.

In her experience it is very important to have time, if you arrive in a foreign country. If you are suffering from trauma, it is more important to get mental support and to find a supportive community. The second step is to learn the language.

For Muslims, it is very important and helpful to have women-led talks in their native language to avoid and counter home sickness.

The people live all over the country, therefore they are too isolated.

Her life now:

For many years now she is the person who brings the money home, this is hard for her. She wanted to study at university, but this was not possible because she had to work and bring money. She is very sad, that her husband failed at integrating and that he is sick now.

She works 19 hours a week for Alpha Nova and 3 hours a week for Somm. She teaches basic educational achievement and works as an interpreter at the university.

The family lives in a welfare housing on the 4th floor without an elevator. They have a car and a good neighbourhood. Migrants and Austrians live there. The caretaker does a good job.

For one year she is close to a burnout.

Success:

She is proud, that she never gave up and that her son follows a very successful way.

Future/Plans:

She hopes, that her husband will recover.

In September, she will start a training to care for handicapped people with the goal to get a fulltime job.

Her son was in school very successful, will start to study medicine. This is her hope and she is hopeful about that. He will follow the path his grandfather and father started.

With Somm she brought in two new projects and she hopes that she will get financial compensation for this.

Focus group discussion

NAME OF THE PARTNER ORGANIZATION: INTERACT

DATE AND PLACE OF THE INTERVIEW: (20/03/2019, GRAZ, AUSTRIA)

Duration	Started: 14:30	Ended: 17:00
Venue	InterACT-office	
Name of the interviewer	Mioara Girusu	
Language of the interview	German	

PARTICIPANTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP

	Country of origin	Year of arrival	Age	Level of education	Currently employed (Y/N)
1	Egypt	2004	20	Bachelor Pharmacy	no
2	Afghanistan	2003	22	Bachelor Pharmacy	Part-time as an interpreter/ community-networker
3	Romania	20012	49	Master	Self-employed
4	Iran	2015	29	-	household -(married since she was 15) Asylum-seeker; voluntary work with children
5	Ecuador	2005	45	Master	Self-employed
6	Afghanistan	2015	27	-	household (3 children, one handicapped) Asylum-seeker
7	Afghanistan	2015	45	-	household (2 children) Asylum-seeker

Integration, discrimination	
Main challenges of integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rejection of the Headscarf in most of the society and in specific fields of work (kindergarten, restaurant, etc.). ▪ The government doesn't want real integration – they mean integration as assimilation. Right-wing Politicians want to split the society – there are many debates on that. The actual situation for migrants and the whole society is difficult. ▪ Psychological problems of refugees (experiences in the home-country, flight, etc.) ▪ Fear, being overwhelmed by the new culture (language, school, etc.) ▪ Selective school system in Austria ▪ Frustrated and overwhelmed teachers ▪ Acceptance of Islamic beliefs
Positive findings regarding integration programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It gave a possibility to work. I could support people in difficult situations. ▪ I got new qualifications for the labour market. ▪ Recognition and application of the already existing knowledge, qualifications and abilities.
Negative experiences regarding integration programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too short (6 o.a. 7 months) The end of the program, meant to be unemployed again. ▪ After the special technical course for women, only the Austrian women got a job in a company. ▪ Most of the migrant women left the technical course – only me and the Austrians managed to do the whole course.
Missing programs/trainings etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good accessible language courses, where also mothers with young children are welcomed
Experiences in connection with discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some people think I'm not integrated or even radical, because I'm wearing a headscarf. ▪ Attacks of right-wing extremists (2017 and 2018) in the tram and from a car ▪ I was automatically classified worse at school because I wore the headscarf ▪ Bullying at school (high school) because I hid my body more than the other girls
Conflict solving strategies (exclusion, discrimination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removing the headscarf ▪ learning the domestic language ▪ adapting to the domestic culture ▪ having local friends ▪ finding jobs – even non-paid ▪ produce evidence for the police report ▪ report the anti-discrimination office ▪ build a community network ▪ healthy family relations ▪ quota models for migrants ▪ to work for less money than men in order to work ▪ good publicity for migrants, especially for migrant women ▪ intercultural sensitive media – showing and writing about the already normal diversity in the country

Work life	
Reasons of being unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ wrong accent/nationality ▪ Wearing the headscarf (no access to qualified jobs and internships) ▪ missing work experience ▪ age? ▪ gender? ▪ unfinished study (no chance to get a place as a trainee lawyer) ▪ Skin-colour
Main difficulties when entering the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suspicion towards the headscarf. ▪ unfinished study (no chance to get a place as a trainee lawyer), so I am a freelancer and I need a lawyer who subscribes my cases.
Main challenges during work (conflicts, salary etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bureaucratic obstacles and financial uncertainty as a freelancer
Skills they have (education, experience etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secondary technical school and special technical course for women in Austria ▪ Technical study in Romania ▪ School leaving examination/ high school diploma ▪ Law studies ▪ Work experience in the social field in Austria and in South-America ▪ Evaluator/project manager for EU-programs (Erasmus+) ▪ Training as beautician
Most needed skills on the labor market / or for them to improve- (What training would they join?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to internships (especially for young Muslim woman) ▪ Access for trainee lawyer with migration background
The atmosphere of the interview: most exciting questions, difficult or sensitive topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The atmosphere in the group was respectful and concentrated. A very sensitive and emotional topic was the headscarf. Rejections in the working field and the aggressive atmosphere against foreigners are important topics for most of the participants.
Surprisingly interesting during the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Missing or prevented access to intern- and traineeships

QUOTES

“I’m very qualified but they always say:” No, we’re sorry.”

„I’m wearing a headscarf and I would consider myself as integrated.”

„In Austria women are allowed to do everything alone – that’s what I really like.”

„As a cleaning lady or in the laundry you get a job everywhere. The access to high qualified jobs is almost closed.”

„I lived in Austria for 15 years, now it is different compared to former times. Now it is more legitimate to attack foreigners.”

„Where can people read in the medias that migrant women study law or medicine?”

„While studying it is better than in school. At the university one is only a matriculation number.”

„Maybe it's better to develop projects on the internet – so nobody can see the headscarf.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The “FemTalks Forum” - training and platform has to address the complexity and intersectionality of the challenges, barriers, and problems of female migrants like stereotypes, racism and discrimination; insecure working conditions, residential and social-welfare status; missing or bad legal and financial recognition of women’s working sectors (e.g. care/social work); lack of recognition of education (nostrification), difficulty starting positions into the labour market (low qualification, language problems, etc.), conflictual emancipation from traditional values and rules.
- Stereotypes shape the image of female migration and therefore it is necessary to offer professional platforms, where women are active and speak for themselves. In this way the project can offer creative and empowering spaces where persons affected can exchange their specific experiences, strategies and perspectives.
- The compounding narrative of the “powerless migrant woman”, which is often defined as a victim of her traditional culture, must be questioned. Instead of othering and excluding the specific life-conditions, limitations and power of acting of migrant women must be in consideration.
- In order to understand the specific phenomena, there is a further need to analyse the gender hierarchy and the relevant political and societal framework – especially in the field of migration, work, education, media and social welfare.
- It will be very important finding the right frame conditions, so that women in different life-situations (in trainings, work, family-engagement, etc.) can take part. How can we adequately address possible participants (gender, language, socio-culture, etc.)? There should be a good cooperation with the AMS (Austrian Employment Office).
- FemTalks Forum can relate to a lot of different offers and projects – and it must! Otherwise it cannot reach the target participants. It is important for the FemTalks participants to know where they can go to find specific support. It must be designed as an addition to existing programs – in cooperation not in competition!
- Beside social and artistic engagement there is a need for collaboration and political action. Possibly FemTalks/ InterACT can give inspiring advice in Styria.
- Except for one woman in the success interview we couldn’t reach the lower or non-educated women with legal status and permission to work. It needs a special framework and procedure to integrate this interesting group. The lack of self-confidence could be a potential big topic.