

# FluEqual:

## Integration of refugees in Salzburg/Austria

The name emphasises it: the project FluEqual is an EQUAL project that is financed by the appropriately named “Community Initiative EQUAL”, by funds from the European Social Fund ESF, and by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour.

The aim of this European support programme is the fight against discrimination and inequalities related to the labour market. In the foreground stands the support of human resources, especially the occupational integration of fringe groups that are discriminated from the labour market, as well as the improvement of life-long-learning and the creation of new jobs. The conception, planning and implementation of projects in the frame of the EQUAL programme are carried out by organisational networks, called “development partnerships”.

### The regional development partnership FluEqual

The development partnership FluEqual is a regional network limited to the state of Salzburg. Institutions of Salzburg such as Caritas, Diakonie refugee service, Woman & Work as well as BiBER, formation consulting for adults, form the base of FluEqual. The state of Salzburg has accepted the responsible role in financial matters. Also involved in the development partnership, are “strategic partners”, are the chamber of employees and the chamber of economy as well as the regional associations of Oberpinzgau and Lungau. FluEqual has a focus regarding its area of influence: Next to the city of Salzburg, project activities took place in three regions; those are Tennengau, Oberpinzgau and Lungau.

### Target group asylum seekers

Amongst the earlier mentioned fringe groups that suffer from discrimination, whose integration in the labour market wants to be achieved by FluEqual, are also asylum seekers. People entitled with the status of asylum seekers are people who (in the case of FluEqual Austria) have applied for asylum, but whose asylum process de facto is not concluded. Those people formed the target group of FluEqual. However, as soon as their status changed, they slipped out of the project, it could possibly be because they became confirmed refugees, that is, into people who get granted a temporary residential status or it could possibly be because they had to leave Austria.

### Gender Mainstreaming: promoting of equality for men and women

The equal treatment of men and women is one of the main aims of the European Social Fund, therefore it is a requirement to consider the gender perspective in all measures co-financed by the ESP. Hereby, Gender Mainstreaming gets the status of an actual commitment as well as a criteria. Gender Mainstreaming means the systematic consideration of the different conditions, situations and needs of men and women in organisation, conception and implementation of all activities.

### Empowerment as a cross-sectional task of FluEqual

An empowerment of a discriminated target group should be as sustainable as possible, consequently an enabling to “do-it-yourself”, is a further, principal task of all FluEqual projects. The project activities also had the aim to help increase self-motivation, self-determination and self-responsibility in all its participants. The question, if and until which point empowerment can be applied to the current life conditions of asylum seekers in Salzburg or Austria, had also been discussed in the frame of the Austrian development-partnerships.

Further central cross-sectional tasks of FluEqual are the use of Information Technology as well as the support of the ability and the willingness to life-long-learning.

### The project activities of FluEqual

The starting position of FluEqual as a project aiming at labour market integration was a paradox: the development partnership stood in front of the difficult task to approximate a target group to the labour

market, but without having the permission of also placing them there. That is to say, asylum seekers are only being allowed to work on basis of an “occupational allowance”, which however, due to designation in state- and land-wide maxims, hardly gets granted. People seeking asylum that are receiving primary care from Salzburg have to spend their first six months at least living in organised community-housing-facilities, in so-called “refugees quarter”, many times they will end up spending one or more years in one of those quarters. There were 19 such quarters existing in the state of Salzburg at the beginning of the project. Four sites or regions with quarters were chosen by FluEqual; the city of Salzburg with one quarter, also relatively easy to access by public transport from the quarter of Flachgau, Neumarkt and Attersee. Further, Tennengau with three quarters, one in Puch, two in Hallein. Lungau with two quarters; St. Michael and Ramingstein, and ultimately Oberpinzgau also with two quarters in Neukirchen and Mittersill.

### Language courses

In order to create the linguistic premises as a base for the asylum seeker's participation in the project, altogether ten language courses have started at the beginning of FluEqual's mission. Four of them were held in the city of Salzburg, while the other six ones took place in the three regions Tennengau/Puch, Pinzgau and Lungau.

### Internetproject Work iT!

The use of Information Technologies and the orientation alongside the concept of life-long-learning are special concerns in the concept of the EQUAL projects. In the context of FluEqual, the Diakonie refugee service has realised a project in Salzburg that runs under the title “Work iT!”. It has as the aim of a co-operative creation of a homepage from and for refugees. Through integration of the target group in the project design itself, the idea of empowerment and the ability to life-long-learning was to be promoted.

### Public Service Employment

In the context of the FluEqual project, Caritas has organised and supervised possibilities for public service employment in the project regions Tennengau/Puch, Pinzgau and Lungau. Additionally, measures for qualification and orientation in the shape of “learning factories” and supplementary occupational coaching were on offer. The demand on the side of the municipalities as the institutions where public service work gets carried out, as well as on the side of the asylum seekers topped all expectations.

### Dialogue processes

FluEqual's self-perception right from the start contained a holistic approach: by means of a systematic embedding of measures supporting the integration in the labour market in activities aimed at a societal integration, major synergy effects were achieved. Woman & Work has been complementary to public service employment, initiated and supported dialogue processes in the three rural project regions, which put to discussion the issues of asylum seekers in the context of migration and intercultural dialogue. Aims were for the sensitising for asylum seeker's concerns, the boost of communication through networking of structures and persons, the creation of a space for encounters (as well as their joint composition), and the focusing on and resolving of potential conflicts.

### Gender Mainstreaming

Societal integration requires a special focus on women. In order to support participation of woman seeking asylum and grant admission to as many woman as possible, their special conditions and needs were integrated in the project conception right from the start, for example by offering language courses specifically for women or by making childcare available as a basic feature of the project activities. The needs and the situation of women seeking asylum have been continuously evaluated, which also led to conceptual adjustments of the project.