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## General information

Vienna has approximately 1.9 million inhabitants, 37% of which are of other EU- (~250.000) or third-country background (~446.000), meaning nationality and/or place of birth outside of Austria. By August 2018, nationals from outside the EU/Europe are mostly from Afghanistan (5.200), Iraq, Syria, the Russian Federation (meaning mostly Chechnya) and Somalia. Approx. 5000 persons are from various other countries. For further information please take a look at <http://www.fluechtlinge.wien/downloads/FSW-FaktenFluechtlinge.pdf>.

## MA 17, Department for Integration and Diversity

Vienna has an entire department (MA17) fully dedicated to the management and promotion of integration and diversity. As such, many of Vienna's integration programs and projects are either established and run by the department itself or by other community- or cultural organizations, often times also funded by the MA17. The Department for Integration and Diversity

- Monitors developments and activities in the field of integration and diversity
- Conducts trainings for staff from municipal and other public departments and programs
- Monitors and evaluates the diversity management of public offices
- Creates and funds a large number of programs and projects, including language measures, basic education, advice on legal issues for immigrants
- Established and runs "Start Wien. Integration from Day 1".

The Program "Start Wien" is an Initiative of MA 17 and was peer-reviewed by the FAB-Team.

## Stop 1: Start Wien – Integration from Day 1

After the presentation of the city's approach to integration and diversity by Dr. Eltayeb from MA17, we took a closer look at one of its recently established and successful projects, Start Wien.

It is based on the idea that Vienna is a city of immigration and therefore needs a proactive approach to the integration of newly arrived and immigrants in general.

Both immigrants and receiving society are considered responsible for the success of the individual integration process. Last but not least, Start Wien is based on the experience that the first years after arrival are decisive for the personal and professional future of each immigrant/refugee.

#### Goals of Start Wien

- One-stop-shop for all questions referring to integration in many different languages: Living together, residence matters, education system, healthcare system, job market, business start-ups
- Preventing de-qualification of higher qualified persons through individual assessment, support with the recognition of qualifications
- Support people with a low level of education

#### PEER REVIEW RESULTS. START WIEN

Please note that most questions referred to the general situation for asylum seekers. This was partly due to the earlier in-depth presentation of policies affecting integration and the general frame in which the department works.

Q: In which way does MA17 monitor and shape or influence the diversity management in other public offices?

A: MA17 is working on exporting their diversity management to other municipal departments which was met with scepticism at the beginning. By now we have convinced approx. 50 departments to be part of the diversity strategy.

Q: How long does it take for applicants to get a residence permit?

Answer: On average 1-2 years. But in some cases, even up to 10 years. In recent years, it has been much easier for Syrian asylum seekers than for people from various African countries but also from Afghanistan or Iraq, of course due to political decisions that we cannot influence at city level.

Q: How do asylum seekers manage to support themselves while they are not allowed to work? Especially how do they pay their language courses?

Answer: It is very difficult. Vienna social fund (FSW) provides basic services such as a place to sleep food, clothes, health care and EUR 40 pocket money per month. For a maximum of EUR 200 per month asylum seekers can be hired for social community work.

Asylum seekers do not have to pay for German courses up to level B2. Courses funded by the MA17 (10.000 course places) are free of charge.

People who were granted asylum get registered by the labour market office. Recently the federal government introduced a 50% budget cut. At the moment, it is not clear how this affects the running of trainings and courses.

Q: 70% of asylum seekers live in private accommodation: Please tell us more about it. Does it work the same way all over Austria?

Answer: It is difficult to find an apartment due to the high-priced housing-market in Vienna. The general political goal is to prevent the development of Ghettos. Charity organisations allow people to stay in the refugee homes of their institutions as long as they do not find an apartment. The problem increases as Vienna keeps growing, also as many immigrants tend to move to Vienna as soon as they are granted asylum.

Q: What are the experiences with the *Bildungspass* (a small booklet showing courses completed by each individual asylum seeker)?

Answer: Most people like it. Asylum seekers feel very welcomed through such offers, especially after having had a lot of stress when going through the bureaucratic procedure before. Native language information about courses/seminars is especially appreciated.

Q: Are the multi-language employees in MA17 specifically hired because of their language skills or national background? Is it part of your recruitment strategy?

Answer: The teams of our regional offices have always been multi-lingual and multi-cultural. For the refugee issue, people with skills in languages in high demand (currently Arabic, Farsi) were recruited from the local communities. Apart from the language skills, multi-cultural competences and experiences are important too.

Q: How many percent complete the German courses?

Answer: In general, most people are very keen to learn German. Still, many are failed at the first exam of German level A2 (including value and orientation course) which they usually decide to attend a second time then.

Q: Are integration agreements and information talks compulsory? Is it a system of incentives and duties?

Answer: The integration agreement installed in 2007 is obligatory for all immigrants besides asylum seekers, it is indeed a system of incentives but also of duties and sanctions.

Q: Why does the application process take so long? And what are people allowed to do during waiting time?

Answer: Asylum and migration are managed at federal level, Vienna is not in charge of the application process. Apart from social community work they are not allowed to work. They can attend German courses, go to school and in specific cases attend university or start their own business.

Q: Are there also language courses for specific professions?

Answer: Some do exist but we still need to establish many more. Professional German course are especially important for people with high qualifications no to end up in low qualification jobs.

Q: After the professional orientation: Is it possible to do an internship or to learn in a work environment?

Answer: Internships are only accessible for people with granted status. Social and public institutions are always trying to find companies ready to provide work.

2.6) Are the trainers employed with the city or are they freelancers, volunteers etc.?

Answer: In case of courses financed by the MA17 the trainers are employed. The courses provided by the labour market office are held by organizations that are profit-oriented or free-lancers. The approval of a course provider depends on the decision of the labour market office.

### Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT):

#### Strengths

- MA17's concept is based on a positive approach to migration
- seems to be a strong unit with good offers and staff
- "Start Wien" is a strong programme
- Service in 26 languages
- Good reputation
- First contact and orientation for immigrants literally "from day 1"
- Special offers for children and young people (Youth college, summer school)
- Training and awareness-raising of staff (Diversity Management)
- Inclusion of always new and more target groups adapted to current needs
- Wiener 'Bildungspass' (education booklet)

## Weaknesses (most points referring to Austria's migration legislation, not to MA 17)

- Missing link between language courses and job market, missing access facilitation to the job market for immigrants
- Long waiting time for recognition
- No or only small working experience possible for asylum seekers
- No affordable apartments available
- Only four months to find housing and job causes stress

## Opportunities

- Connecting "Start Wien" with CORE, *Integration im Zentrum*
- Success rate of language courses would be higher if the completion would be connected to the next step, f.e. the recognition of foreign diploma, assistance with accessing the job market
- General strong and committed politics and administration in Vienna, good counselling structure (Start Wien, CORE, MA17, Integration funds, NGO projects)

## Threats (caused by Austria's migration legislation, not MA 17; threats mostly affect the target group of MA17, not the office itself)

- High psychological and financial pressure on asylum seekers, loss of motivation among immigrants because of the long application process
- Growing hostility of the federal government against immigrants
- Growing number of restrictions for asylum seekers and their opportunities
- Rigid system with sanctions and incentives can lead to inhuman policies

## Stop 2: SINDBAD (excluded from peer-review)

Next to „Start Wien“, „Youth College“ and „Spacelab“ that were peer-reviewed by the FAB-Team, we had the chance to visit three other institutions involved in labor market access facilitation for young refugees.

Sindbad, a private job-mentoring initiative founded by three young professionals, targets young persons during their last year of compulsory education. The organisation matches them with young professional volunteers who are ready to coach, support and somewhat guide the respective student for 12 months in order to find together with him a place to continue education or to work.

The initiative tackles a well-known challenge which is how not to lose students after compulsory education in a job environment unknown to them and sometimes also to

their families. Refugees in the school system have access to the programme albeit without being a specific target group.

The well-connected founders of Sindbad can boast of a large professional network including companies ready to hire young persons after the pre-coaching through Sindbad.

### **Stop 3: Work:In (excluded from peer-review)**

Work: in is part of the larger organisation „Much More for Everyone“ (German: Vielmehr für alle) which is committed to assisting refugees in fully establishing themselves in Austria and making Vienna their home. Therefore, their activities involve school-coaching, job-coaching and housing. Work:in supports young refugees through job orientation courses as well as through internships in different companies. So-called Work-Buddies share their work experience with the newcomers and assist them in identifying the right professional path for themselves.

### **Stop 4: Bildungsdrehscheibe (excluded from peer-review)**

The ‚education turntable‘ is the primary education and job assessment point for asylum seekers. The Bildungsdrehscheibe assesses language and professional skills and documents the results. Based on the results, the coaches and psychologists within their office can advise on further education or professional training courses necessary to enter the job market.

### **Stop 5: Jugendcollege**

The target group of the Youth College are young persons between 15 and 21 years of age. Refugees of this age group usually are not admitted to regular schools nor can they immediately enter university or the job market. In order to support this group of young refugees in this difficult limbo, the youth college offers very flexible training modules, each lasting eight weeks. They have the opportunity to improve their skills in English, Mathematics, German and other fields and to get support from social workers coaching them during the whole process. By this means, the student refugees also get the chance to prepare themselves for the next step in education or the job market and generally to an independent life in Austria.

## PEER-REVIEW. JUGENDCOLLEGE

Q: Can you please explain a bit more about why the students cannot receive certificates for courses completed?

A: We are not registered as a school, also not a language school. We help students to take the next step in their education by completing grade 8 or 9, by organising internships for them, by cooperating with schools to get them admitted to official exams – a request that schools often find difficult to fulfil due to their limited resources.

Q: Do you witness conflicts between students who were granted asylum and the others who were not? If yes, how do you handle it?

A: Of course, the rejection of their application for asylum (mostly boys from Afghanistan) has a very bad effect on the motivation of our students. If at least some in the class are still motivated and/or were granted asylum, the class usually continues to work successfully.

Q: Why does the youth college today accept less students than before? Are you constrained to reject applicants? Would there still be a need for the 1000 places that had been initially promoted?

A: We admit less students as a result of political decisions that led to the AMS having a smaller budget. We are partly beneficiaries of the employment service.

Q: How do you plan the next year?

A: We are waiting to learn the budget for the next period, starting in Mid-2019. The budget cut is a challenge to the whole organisation.

Q: How does the screening you conduct differ from the one that the *Bildungsdrehscheibe* (s. above) is in charge of?

A: They do a valuable preselection for us. The more fine-tuned assessment has to be conducted by us according to the specific programs we offer.

Q: How many dropouts occurred?

A: 500 persons quit the courses in the past two years. Some of them had to be excluded from attendance because of their behaviour or too many missed hours.

Q: How many students are in one class?

A: 15. Each group needs to include at least three girls. Alphabetization classes consist of 10 students.

Q: Do you cooperate with other partners, NGOs?

A: The Youth College itself is the product of a cooperation between nine large organisations. Additionally, we have a large and still growing network which is increasingly difficult to manage, considering the high number of founding partners. We also conduct workshops on conflict management and de-escalation together with the local police. We also organise debates on ethical questions, gender issues, any topic you can think of.

## SWOT. JUGENDCOLLEGE

### Strength

- Fast and efficient establishment of Youth College
- Scale of 1000 people means strong backup from stakeholders
- Strong network
- City committed to the institution and its goals
- Professional teachers, social workers
- Cooperation companies – schools
- Good initiative for integration
- Flexible schedule adapted to specific requirements

### Weakness

- High Drop-Out rate
- Lack of completion certificate or clear qualification for next steps
- Lack of B2 level courses
- Dependence on asylum status of applicants

### Opportunities

- Strong network of professionals
- Studying German Language A1 – B1

### Threats

- “vulnerable” project depending on political decisions

## Stop 6: Spacelab Gestaltung (eng. Design and Creativity)

spacelab is the institution with the lowest threshold among all projects of Vienna's Vocational Training Guarantee which includes all kinds of measures to enable young persons to finish training or education beyond the compulsory secondary school education. Its target group are therefore persons from 14 to 21 years of age that have finished 9 years of compulsory education. The guarantee wants to provide a system of assistance to young people at the transition from school to work, specifically to so-called NEETs (persons neither in education, employment nor training). Experts recommend the establishment of the term SEEDs instead, replacing the "Not in.." with "Searching for...".

### Training at Spacelab

- Continuous training from
- Monday to Friday
- 25 hours/week, up to 6 months
- High level of personal commitment
- Daily routine
- Comeback after dropout is possible
- Training benefits paid by the Public Employment Service
- 10 to 12 participants per group

In addition to the professional training, attendees receive also personal coaching. All offers are based on the youth work approach.

## PEER REVIEW. SPACELAB DESIGN AND CREATIVITY

Q: How many persons attend the daily training and the production school?

A: On an average 110 persons per day, 24% of which are in vocational training, 76% in daily training. In total, we have 900-1.000 participants per year.

Q: What can Spacelab offer to young people in search of a job perspective?

A: 95% of the participants have gained personal stability and a professional perspective after having spent three months or more with spacelab programmes.

37% have even already decided for a specific training, apprenticeship or job when leaving spacelab.

Q: In which way does Spacelab expose its participants to “real” work life, the job market, companies?

A: As soon as the participants feel and seem to be ready they do practical trainings in companies. Two Spacelab trainers support participants and stay in touch with the companies in the meantime. We also have external cooperation partners such as farmers where our students can develop skills hands-on. We are now planning a cooperation with retirement homes.

Challenge in general for Spacelab: Our target group are children with a multi-problem situation. We are not able to guarantee anything to potential employers.

Q: What happens if a young person after six months in your programme does still not have any idea what to do with his/her life or at least what could be the next concrete step?

A: Further counselling at Spacelab is possible. Additionally, the public employment service will take charge again of the case and will try to develop new perspectives.

Q: How much can your participants influence the contents of Spacelab’s programmes?

A: Of course, they are invited to share their ideas with us. We will consider and sometimes implement them, this is an integral part of our youth work approach.

Q: Is language training included if needed?

A: Through daily conversation and other activities participants can exercise their language skills at Spacelab. If language skills are very insufficient, we rather ask them to complete a German course before registering with us.

Q: It seems that there are more boys in the program. How can you reach out to more girls?

A: The numbers of Spacelab match the official statistics: Remarkably more boys are registered as unemployed. As for the girls, we do intend to focus more on gender sensitive issues with both groups. On the other hand, girls are not that often to meet in public places where we usually recruit our students from. They rather visit school instead of trying to access the labour market. Young girls are more protected by their families. Spacelab is trying to reach their parents. Spacelab notices a crucial point for girls at the age of 16: They consider pregnancy an option in case they have no other perspectives, as no compulsory schooling until 18 exists. These girls are “lost”, the system does no longer reach out to them (A/N: the last point concerning pregnancy might be a personal observation; I am not sure this is based on statistics, we need to verify this).

## SWOT. SPACELAB DESIGN

### Strengths

- Efficient recruiting system: Street work to find vulnerable young persons
- Invitation to info talks means initially low threshold
- Participative and socio-pedagogical approach
- The Space itself had been renovated and designed by clients
- Efficiency of 37% is a good result compared to similar European institutions
- Up to 1.000 people per year is a high number
- Offers a safe place where everyone is accepted as who he/she is
- Opportunity to find motivation for the future
- Network: Different partners with different strengths – specialists in their field

### Weaknesses

- Not enough cooperation with companies
- Not closely enough connected to labour market requirements
- Spacelab is more social-oriented than employment-oriented
- Large Network (also of founders) needs a lot of coordination work

### Opportunities

- The possible impact of this project given the high number of 1.000 participants per year
- Innovative project, having a look at youth and their situation from several different perspectives

### Threats

- Not enough special programmes addressed at girls (beside *Spacelab girls*)
- Due to the current legal frame, an apprentice receives approx. 400 Euros per month whereas the same apprentice receives up to 800 Euros as long as they work with Spacelab
- Due to the current political situation, long-term planning is impossible