

## AUSTRIA

### Socially inclusive futures

#### Location

Kaindorf

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

#### Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 80 000

EAFRD 51 200

National/Regional 12 800

Private/own funds 16 000

#### Project duration

2019 – 2021

#### Project promoter

Work group: Chance B &  
Regionaleentwicklungsagentur  
Oststeirisches Kernland

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#### Website

[www.zeitkultur.at](http://www.zeitkultur.at)

The project converted a mobile container into a spectacular learning and meeting space to cooperate with companies and young people and improve job opportunities.

### Summary

The work group between the Local Action Group Zeitkultur Oststeirisches Kernland and the Chance B Group under the RDP, provides an original approach to combatting increasing youth unemployment for underprivileged young people and a lack of apprentices in handicrafts. The project uses technological and social innovations to increase employability.



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A container has been converted into a spectacular learning and meeting space, designed to generate curiosity and establish contact between young people and companies. As a 'mobile chance', it encourages positive changes in disadvantaged adolescents and promotes technology, talent and tolerance.

### Results

A new educational infrastructure and career orientation service.

The project involves cooperation with 40 schools, the regional offices of the Austrian economic chamber and public employment service, school quality management, as well as educational organisations and professional associations.

Over 30 small, medium, and large firms within the Oststeiermark Region offer internship positions. In addition, teachers and expert supervisors work with the adolescents.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The project integrates adolescents with less chances of entering the job market. A more active regional workforce and increased youth employment improve the economy's sustainability and relieve the social security system.
- ❑ The mobile container, equipped with a workshop, workspace and communication area, is a spectacular learning and meeting space.
- ❑ Three phases encourage participation from young people: 1) The container is parked near places of residence to maximise participation, 2) Young people investigate their individual talents through practical exercises in the workroom, 3) Those interested are offered internships and individual support.
- ❑ The workspace introduces new technologies and highlights the substantial technological shift happening in all trades. New occupational profiles are introduced without traditional gender stereotypes and adolescents become familiar with technical professions.
- ❑ Career orientation is improved by including the young people in a pilot phase combining technological and social innovation.
- ❑ The project shows great potential for being transferred across Austria and Europe.

## Context

Businesses, especially handicraft enterprises, are urgently looking for apprentices but youth unemployment is still increasing. In November 2020, more than 60 000 people under the age of 25 in Austria were seeking employment. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation has become even more dire, especially for disadvantaged youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

In addition, some students between the ages of 14 and 18 still attend school but might discontinue. Moreover, there is often no further education after graduation. In Austria, more than 150 000 young people are considered to be in these groups and have a heightened risk of not entering the job market in the long-term.

Transition into the working world presents a complex challenge since this is the first time individual skills are matched with opportunities on the jobs market. This challenge is even greater for underprivileged young people. They are frequently affected by multiple problems, which complicate the search for apprenticeships, including a lack of family and social support, learning difficulties and disappointment in the educational system. In rural areas, long commutes further hinder access to educational and job opportunities.

The lack of apprentices has considerable economic consequences. Increasing youth unemployment means limited future prospects for adolescents and resultant social problems. Because of the pandemic, the number of underprivileged adolescents is rising even further. Distance learning impedes access for this group. Poorer educational results, greater difficulties entering the job market and a significant rise in early school leaving are likely.

## Objectives

- Preventative work with adolescents by offering coaching visits.

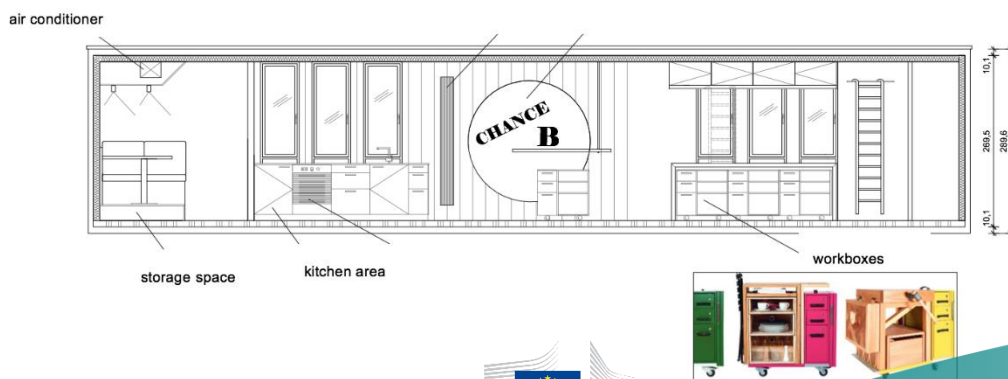
- Establishing an infrastructure for practical career orientation to demonstrate that a handicraft requires mental and manual labour, especially concerning digitalisation in handicrafts.
- Improved image of handicrafts to combat cross-industry shortage of skilled workers.

## Activities

Establishing a career orientation infrastructure and interface through active organisation, especially for disadvantaged adolescents requires a professional infrastructure.

This is a technological as well as a social process of innovation. As a first step, the container was converted into a spectacular learning and meeting space. It is taken to youth centres, schools and companies, serving as a meeting place for students, adolescents, teachers, instructors, youth coaches, and parents. It targets young people whose access to further educational opportunities is otherwise limited. The Mobile Workroom enables a focus on getting to know young people and scouting their talents.

Equipment in the container reflects youth culture and is sectioned into three parts: a workshop, a flexible work area with a bar and kitchen, and a lounge area which is a communication hub. The interior design encourages curiosity and participation. The workshop has small mobile work benches (workboxes), allowing young people to explore up to 25 skilled trades hands-on and without gender stereotypes. Job-related tools and work materials (e.g. wood and metal) are provided. Since the workboxes are mobile, working outside is also possible. The workshop enables up-to-date experimentation with digitalised tools. The kitchen and bar area are a meeting space and the separate lounge area is a secluded place for one-on-one talks. An integrated elevator ensures accessibility. The flexible interior can be used for workshops and educational events, including for career orientation, creative techniques, self- and job-competences.



After getting acquainted, discerning interests and exploring skills, the adolescents are given internships in a local business. There, they are functionally and personally accompanied and supported by a company specialist youth coach. From working in the container and the company, the adolescents get to know their skills and interests and establish contact with regional teaching operations, instructors and youth coaches. This strengthens self-confidence and self-efficacy. The most important goal is to provide positive work and learning experiences that promote self-confidence and reveal hidden talents.

Business owners and associates receive training for working with young people in specialised workshops. The aim is to raise awareness among business owners of the strengths and developmental potential of these young people. During implementation, the project established a broad interconnected network of small, medium and large firms that offer internships in Oststeiermark Region.

## Main results

A new and creativity-oriented structure for practical career orientation with 25 mobile workbenches and a Mobile Workroom was created in a remodelled mobile container.

All 15 LEADER regions in Styria are in regular communication concerning career orientation. 40 schools are currently involved as are the regional offices of the Austrian economic chamber and public employment service, school quality management, as well as educational organisations and professional associations.

Over 30 small, medium, and large firms within the Oststeiermark Region with internship positions, teaching operations and expert supervisors are working with the adolescents.

## Key lessons

The established network which offers job placements benefits greatly from interconnected regions, organisations and businesses.

The project shows great potential for being transferred across Austria and Europe. As a social franchising system, the container can be rebuilt or rented in other LEADER regions, reaching even more adolescents and businesses. As project sponsor, the LAG provides contacts to other European sponsors – there is concrete interest in a transfer to Luxembourg.

Digitalised handicrafts are introduced and the workroom with new technologies gives an understanding of the substantial technological shift in all handicrafts.

The project integrates adolescents with less chances of entering the job market. Society benefits from a more active regional workforce and increased youth employment.

New occupational profiles are introduced without traditional gender stereotypes. The adolescents become familiar with technical professions.

Career orientation is improved by including the affected groups in a pilot phase combining technological and social innovation. These are new forms of organisation and career orientation.

*‘The project constitutes a technological as well as social innovation: The technical-digitalised equipment in every container results in a mobile and flexible communication space for improved career orientation of adolescents in rural areas.’* - Dr. Wolfgang Berger, managing director Regionalentwicklungsagentur Ostteirisches Kernland

*‘Integrating adolescents with limited opportunities into the job market is now more important than ever!’* - Erika Reisenegger, MA, project management

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## Additional sources of information

[www.lehrlingswelten.at](http://www.lehrlingswelten.at)

\*This project has been categorised under ‘Socially inclusive futures futures’ by the nominating National Rural Network