



ZAMm on the move

Supporting rural women's entrepreneurship.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Austria (country-wide)

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P1 - Knowledge transfer and innovation

Focus Area: Lifelong learning & vocational training

Measures: M01 - Knowledge transfer & information actions

Funding:	Total budget	377 683.30 (EUR)
	EAFRD	149 240.62 (EUR)
	National/Regional	149 240.62 (EUR)
	Private/Own funds	80 165.90 (EUR)

Timeframe: 2023 to 2024

Project promoter: LFI, Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut

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Summary

The ZAMm on the move project aims to promote gender equality in Austrian agriculture and forestry, where existing gender differences often put women at a disadvantage.

Targeted project activities were implemented to improve this situation, including various educational products such as courses on the capacity to act in political processes and agricultural organisations, special programmes for young female farmers and field trips to political institutions and network meetings.

Participants developed a variety of skills, including resilience to stress, negotiation, empathy, listening, legal awareness, financial literacy and increased economic self-reliance and resilience.

The project helped to strengthen the role of women in agriculture and forestry and increase their visibility and participation in the sector. It raised society's awareness about gender issues and contributed to the sustainable development of agriculture. It served



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as a model for other initiatives and cross-sector best practices for promoting gender equality and also social inclusion for women in minority communities.

Project results

Creation and dissemination of a significant number of resources:

- Handbook for professional representation work (5 000 copies distributed)
- 32 press reports about women farmers
- 'Women's rights in agriculture' campaign (autumn 2023), set to reach over 80 000 women

Successful advanced education courses:

- 60 women trained via 'Women farmers and politics' workshop
- 450+ graduates Austria-wide from 'Professional representative work in rural areas' course
- 600 graduates from 'From beginner to insider' course
- Five 'Talking to Women Farmers' online information events

Other results:

- 'Start-up - how to go about it?' roadshow: September 2023, throughout Austria, reaching 1 500+ women.
- Charter for partnership-based representation of interests in agriculture and forestry: 60+ partners.



- Raising awareness about gender equality, role models and gender-based discrimination in agriculture and in the forestry industry.
- More equitable participation of women in agriculture helps make the industry more sustainable overall. Croatian and Slovenian minorities were actively involved in the project to promote diversity and variety in agriculture.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Need to adapt to new circumstances (due to COVID-19). No face-to-face events allowed, but this highlighted the flexibility of the project team.
- Digital formats for education and networking used for training and continued exchange during the pandemic proved crucial and will be used for future projects to develop innovative solutions to challenges in rural areas.
- Importance of resilience and crisis management in rural areas.
- Need for economic self-reliance and financial literacy.
- Importance of relying on local resources and increasing awareness of sustainability.

Context

ZAMm on the move (or ZAMm unterwegs in German) is an Austria-wide educational project that was implemented in 2010 by the LFI (Austrian Rural Training Institute), one of the largest educational institutions in rural areas and which offers a comprehensive range of education and training opportunities across the sector.

The name ZAMm comes from the acronym ZAM, which stands for 'Zukunftsorientierte Agrarwirtschaftliche Motivation' (future-oriented agricultural development) with an extra 'm' to make ZAMm, which sounds like the Austrian dialect word for 'together'.

A modern, efficient agricultural policy needs women and ZAMm on the move is designed to promote active female participation in agricultural and municipal committees, associations and societies. The LFI advocates partnership-based farm management on Austrian farms and motivates women to take an interest in the politics of agriculture and play an active role in shaping it.

In 2017, the 'Charter for partnership-based advocacy' was launched in Austria, advocating a minimum of 30% female representation in agricultural organisations. All ten regional cham-

bers of agriculture and many other agricultural organisations have so far signed the charter. Figures show that female representation in the general assemblies of the chambers of agriculture rose from 15% in 2009 to 21% in 2018 and had gone up to 23% by 2022.



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Objectives

ZAMm on the move focuses on promoting female farmers. The first aim of the project is to get young women excited about farming and make it easier for them to start a career in agriculture, as well as teaching them about diversification so that they can both develop their main agricultural focus and also create added value.

On the political side, the project looks to attract women to take up political functions and encourage agricultural organisations to sign up to the charter for partnership-based advocacy, to give more women the chance to take on leadership and decision-making functions.

ZAMm on the move also stresses the importance of women farmers fully understanding their legal and financial situations and, where necessary, taking active measures to improve them.

Activities

The ZAMm on the move project provides a host of different initiatives in various formats, involving stakeholders from around the country.

A handbook for professional representation work has been developed to support female leaders in farming and agrarian organisations as well as in community (mayoral and municipal) committees. It provides guidance and advice to encourage women to take on public responsibilities and actively participate in decision-making processes.



The 'Women Farmers and Politics' workshop provides women with the opportunity to be trained as facilitators for political discussions, with the aim of empowering them to represent their concerns and interests effectively and to take an active role in political processes.

The 'Women's Rights in Agriculture' campaign focuses on improving social protection for women farmers, addressing outstanding social protection issues in the agricultural sector, such as social security coverage for unmarried couples in the event of separation, divorce and death, as well as maternity leave and pension-sharing. By raising awareness about these issues and providing information, women are empowered to make informed decisions about their social security coverage.

The 'Start-up - how to go about it' road show is a series of lectures presenting positive role models and examples of entrepreneurship and innovation in agriculture, designed to mobilise the innovative power of women farmers and to give them the tools to implement their own ideas. It creates a platform for the exchange of experiences and knowledge to promote the sustainable development of Austrian agriculture.

A certificated course entitled 'Professional Representation Work in Rural Areas' aims to inspire and qualify women farmers to carry out agricultural functionary activities. The various modules include personality development, leadership skills and public relations, as well as a winter conference and technical excursions. Through these continuing education measures, women are strengthened in their role as representatives and decision-makers.

The 'From beginner to insider' blended learning course is aimed at women looking to enter family farms. It provides comprehensive training for them to expand their knowledge, feel more confident and actively participate in farm operations.



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The charter for partnership-based 'Advocacy in Agriculture and Forestry' scheme encourages partner organisations to work together to strengthen the position and rights of women farmers and to represent their concerns better, while the 'Talking to Women Farmers' series offers online information events on various topics to enable knowledge transfer for women farmers.

All these further training, networking and information events help women farmers achieve their personal goals while making agriculture fit for the future.

Main results

Since its inception, the project has had a significant output of resources created, including a handbook for professional representation work (5 000 copies distributed at various events) and 32 reports about women farmers published in the press. A campaign entitled 'Women's rights in agriculture' will be carried out in autumn 2023 and is set to reach over 80 000 women.

The advanced education courses have also been a great success, with over 1 000 women trained and many more reached via online information events and roadshows.

The ZAMM on the move project has helped ensure that women in agriculture have equal access to education, information and networks, reducing existing gender gaps and giving women better opportunities to fulfil their potential. It also serves as a role model and best practice example for other industries and initiatives and can easily be transferred to other sectors to advance gender equality in general society.

Perhaps the greatest benefit has been in raising awareness. With the project addressing issues of gender equality, role models and discrimination, male participants have been sensitised about the value of gender equality in the agriculture and forestry industry.

More equitable participation of women in agriculture helps to make the industry more sustainable overall. Women bring a different perspective and values to agricultural decisions that can lead to more sustainable management of resources and more responsible treatment of the environment.

Furthermore, Croatian and Slovenian minorities were actively involved in the project to promote diversity, awareness and acceptance in Austrian agriculture.

Key lessons and recommendations

Previously, the project had faced challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adapt to the new circumstances. As no face-to-face events were feasible, alternative solutions had to be found. The flexibility of the project team became apparent, successfully switching to digital formats to continue the exchange and training of participants.

The pandemic also highlighted the importance of resilience and crisis management in rural areas. The project showed how strengthening participants' economic self-reliance and financial literacy helped increase their resilience in times of crisis, demonstrating that, in difficult times, it is even more important to rely on local resources and increase awareness about sustainability.

COVID-19 also provided new insights into the effectiveness of digital formats for education and networking, which can be used for future projects to develop innovative solutions to challenges in rural areas and continue to support participants effectively.

Additional information:

ZAMm website: www.zamm-unterwegs.at

Farmers' wives Austria website: www.baeuerinnen.at

Rural training institute Austria website: www.lfi.at

Quality of Farm Life website: www.lebensqualitaet-bauernhof.at

