SELBSTÄNDIGKEIT UND ICH
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TRAININGS QUALIFICATIONS

LABOR MARKET INTEGRATION

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE
SIforREF
European Union
European Regional Development Fund

AIM
To support Arabic and Farsi speaking women (35+ years) with a refugee background to explore self-employment to meaningfully access the labour market and secure self-sufficiency.

APPROACH OF THE PILOT
Selbständigkeit und ich delivered 10 (x2) creative workshops in Arabic and Farsi on empowerment, resilience, orientation on self-employment, designing thinking led ideation, and technical information regarding job centre and legal requirements. Professional trainers who share similar languages and cultures, refresh the women's motivation to learn from one another. New social networks are formed.

ACHIEVEMENTS / OUTCOMES
- Development of Arabic, Farsi and English content for 10 workshops, plus resource materials
- 12 Arabic speaking participants from 4 countries (100% retention)
- 12 Farsi-speaking participants from 2 countries (66% retention)
- 4 trainers
- 2 participant Liaisons / Mentors
- 9 Expert speakers
- 10 laptops and hardware procured, 10 internet sticks.
- 2 new partnerships (Singa Deutschland and Frauen Computer Zentrum Berlin)

THE PROJECT
Social Innovation for Refugees (SIforREF) examines and tests solutions with the aim to support societal and labour market integration of refugees after their arrival in five Central European cities. The team consists of researchers, representatives of local government and actors from civil society.

THE PILOT ACTION
The Pilots are concrete actions for the inclusion of refugees into society and labour market. Seven pilots were conducted from April 2021 until September 2021. Each of them adresses a specific challenge, target group, goal and working approach in respect to refugee inclusion.

PARTICIPANTING REGIONS
Berlin, Germany (2)
Bologna, Italy (1)
Ljubljana, Slovenia (1)
Parma, Italy (1)
Vienna, Austria (2)

AIM
The findings from each Pilot contribute to develop social innovative and inclusive practices and policies that are mainstream and institutionalised.

PILOT RESPONSIBILITY BY:

ISI Initiative Selbständiger Immigrantinnen e.V.

PILOT VIDEO: Link

KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE PILOT

- All participants desire tobecome financially independent and contribute to society. However the potential of the target group is not being realised. This has a negative influence on both the women and the local society
- Access to information is an ongoing concern for the target group.
- Without available childcare, women cannot access the labour market.
- Women who reside over 3+ years in Germany suffer mental health challenges due to their long-term exclusion from society and economic self-sufficiency. Access to new social networks reduces the mental health burden.
- Follow-up programmes are required to ensure women maintain their pace of progression, stay motivated and connected.
- There are strong preferences for an in-person programme but accessing online training was less of a barrier than anticipated
- Working in the language they master in an orientation period motivates them to learn the local language and access new opportunities.

FACTORS FOR SUCCES

- **Co-creation, agility and humility** was required to ensure we are created a programme that met the target group's actual needs, versus assumed needs. When participants see changes made based on their feedback, they are more likely to continue to steer the programme to their needs.
- **Trusted relationships** supported particiation aquisition and project partnerships
- **Meeting target group on their terms:** Working with grass roots organisations that already had the trust of the target group, and the provision of training and mentorships in their own languages provided trust and furthered their motivation.
- **Digital empowerment:** The digital divide increased during the Corona-19 period. The target group has the capactiy to learn, but requires specific digital training (provided by Frauen Computer Zentrum Berlin) and access to hardware and WIfi.
- **Highly qualified, motivated & empathetic trainers, mentors and participant liaisons.**

STUMBLING BLOCKS

- Covid-19 restricted in person workshops, as well as recruitment & partnership opportunities
- Lack of access to childcare
- Crisis in Afghanistan resulted in reaching fewer Afghan women
- Accessing Arabic- & Farsi-speaking technical experts regarding navigating job centre

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FUTURE POTENTIAL

- Programm with in person training & childcare
- Co-working space, with access to customer facing opportunities
- Additional languages
- Post programme offerings, with further social and entrepreneur network support
- Accreditation by the Job Centre.