

Detailed Project description for "SOZIALMARIE":

Problem:

The „refugee crisis“ is currently one of the biggest challenges Europe faces. In 2015 alone, over 1,3 million people applied for asylum in the European Union and almost 90.000 of those people did so in Austria. We believe that the key to successful integration is work.

Solution:

Refugeeswork.at is an online job platform that connects refugees with employers in Austria. By this we give refugees access to the labour market, while helping employers to find talent and increase their corporate diversity. Our ultimate goal is to create equal chances of refugees (and/or migrants) on the labour market, (measured in wage levels and unemployment rate). Our mission is to make refugees` potential accessible to the labour market and to break down negative stereotypes towards refugees. Our vision is to create a service that streamlines the whole recruiting and onboarding process for people with different cultural and religious backgrounds in order to support long term employment of migrants against the background of big societal challenges to come such as detrimental demographic developments in Europe and migration flows.

Market & Target Group

Our business caters to the specific needs of two distinct target groups: refugees (B2C) and employers (B2B). „Refugees“ are asylum seekers, recognized refugees and people granted subsidiary protection. What we refer to as „employers“ are e.g. companies, NGOs as well as public institutions, cities that want to employ refugees through our platform, since we offer them a simple tool to reach an extensive pool of refugees who are diverse in cultures, education and background.

Goals & Focal Points:

Our main goal is to foster integration by providing a platform that facilitates the placement for companies and refugees where focus on the following areas:

By making refugees potential accessible to the labour market we want to break down negative prejudices and combat discrimination. We do so by raising awareness for the values newcomers bring to our society in terms of talent, commitment and diversity (e.g. via press coverage, social media campaigns, success stories, events, partnerships with acknowledged companies and public institutions, a professional & social brand). One example is our current #changethenarrative-campaign where we spread best practice examples of refugees on the Austrian labour market.

We want to promote fair treatment of and equal opportunities for newcomers in the workplace. To reach that goal we focus on the advantages for companies: Hiring a refugee increases diversity and results in more innovation potential & productivity, improves soft skills

of the staff (e.g. communication & leadership) and employer branding (as companies are perceived as forward thinking, talent oriented and open to change), enhances organisational culture and leads to a better understanding of migrants as a consumer target group.

Giving refugees access to work fosters not only their participation in the economic but also in the social and cultural life: Direct contact with locals supports integration and the learning of the language. The most promising way to establish such interaction is on the workplace, since people spend most time of the day there. Besides, work gives refugees freedom and dignity. It allows them to build their own independent lives as well as to contribute and therefore become a respected member of our society. By opening our platform also to asylum seekers, this integration process starts even earlier.

Outcomes:

So far, we have about 5000 registered refugees as well as 275 companies on our platform. We placed about 70 refugees (excluding pending recruiting processes) into the labour market. Besides, we

- feedbacked the resumes of every registered candidate (often multiple times),
- had more than 100 job interviews scheduled over our platform (not included are job interviews scheduled directly with candidates),
- coached more than 1000 candidates (one-on-one) for their job interviews & several hundred candidates in the course of lectures/events,
- facilitated several placements of candidates for employers who are not our customers by providing advice regarding the legal environment, bureaucracy or subsidies,
- informed our target group (not only users) about promotional and educational programmes e.g. helping many people to go to university or staffing about 50% of the first cohorts of different educational start ups in the asylum sector.
- We have more than 4500 likes on Facebook where we regularly spread best-practice examples and success stories to diminish negative prejudices towards refugees. One example was our #changethenarrative-campaign where we reached more than 50.000 people (incl. Facebook only) or an event series where we connected refugees with high level executives of (inter)nationally leading companies in their industries and best practice employers.

How we involve our beneficiaries:

Refugeeswork.at considers its team diversity as one of its big strengths. One of the founders was born and lived 15 years in Iraq and brings the refugee perspective into every decision. From the very beginning we included refugees – as vital stakeholders – closely into the development of our product (e.g. UI/UX). Our Farsi translator as well as the creative producer of our webinars are refugees from the Middle East; besides, we work closely with volunteers and multipliers that have a refugee background. This “word-of-mouth” is our most successful marketing channel.

Moreover, we regularly invite refugees to “Feedback-Days” where they test the platform and our additional digital services and give us first-hand feedback. In the future, we plan to implement an alumni pool to foster communication among refugees and to share best practice working examples.

How we involve other institutions/organisations

To reach refugees we work closely with different organisations in the asylum sector such as German classes, „Kompetenzcheckanbieter“, „gemeinnützige Überlasser“, NGOs or other private initiatives that deal with refugees on a regular basis. On the one side, we inform them about our offer and give them all necessary information. Together we hold workshops about the Austrian labour market. On the other side, we use our audience to distribute important information.

Business model:

Refugeeswork.at main revenue stream are annual membership fees of employers who want to use the platform. The amount depends on the size of the organisation (in terms of the current number of employees):

Employers with up to 25 employees get free access to the platform. After a successful matching they can decide the price by themselves (usually one month salary). The prices for employers with more than 15 employees range from 500 EUR up to 5.000 EUR for employers with more than 5.000 employees.

We are currently working on other revenue streams such as: additional online services (as “add ons”), “recruiting days”, intercultural workshops/consulting for companies, social franchising / licensing etc.

Social impact

Refugees: We drastically increase the refugees’ chances of entering the labour market and finding jobs according to their core skills and knowledge. Moreover, we help to overcome prejudice towards refugees and the picture of them being not more than welfare cases. By this we help refugees to integrate into our society – socially and economically - and enable them to build independent lives.

Employers: We help employers to find talented refugees and benefit from increased corporate diversity. Beside, some industries deal with a shortage of skilled workers and specialists. We support them by finding new employees.

State: By facilitating the (early) entrance of refugees into the labour market, we help the state to mitigate social expenditures and increase tax income, which is crucial for Austria’s long term development considering Austria’s demography.