

ASYLUM NEEDS INFORMATION

Information videos for refugees and asylum seekers in their first languages

Project name: Asylum needs information – Information videos for refugees and asylum seekers in their first languages

URL: <http://asyl.at/de/information/infovideos/> bzw.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAun2a-bDmeQtNg8_2J32QfkmmiYlfsQx

Description: The videos offer easy to access information about life in Austria in the most common languages spoken by the majority of refugees and asylum seekers in Austria

Funded by: Raiffeisenbank, Erste Bank, Fonds Gesundes Österreich

Target group: recently arrived refugees speaking Dari, Arabic or Somali

Organisation(s): asylkoordination österreich in cooperation with: *Startquartier Baden, Fonds Gesundes Österreich, Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Gesundheitskompetenz*

During the last months there is one specific group of people which is constructed as especially troublesome within parts of Austrian politics and the media: young male Afghan refugees. Time and again young men from Afghanistan are confronted with collective prejudices as well as personal hostility. These issues not only concern people who arrived in Austria recently but also those, who managed to obtain a relatively stable situation within Austrian society.

The young men are well aware of the difficulties involved in arriving in a new country, which is sought to become a new homeland for them. They are eager to share their experiences made with newcomers who just arrived in Austria. For several years now asylkoordination österreich is supporting initiatives by refugee communities to pass on lessons learnt by already well integrated men and women.

The project “asylum needs information” is an innovative attempt in this regard. In cooperation with a group of young Afghan actors and the film producer Erich C. Schlager five info videos were produced. During the first phase of the project young people from Afghanistan were the designated target group, because more than 60% of all unaccompanied minors in Austria are from Afghanistan. The videos are in Dari, German subtitles allow the responsible persons in the accommodations to watch the videos together with the refugees and discuss about the contents.

To facilitate an easier start in Austria for recently arrived refugees the videos are about five different topics. The eight to fifteen minutes long clips cover the issues “rights in Austria” (children’s- women’s- and homosexual’s rights), “living together in Austria”, love & family”, “time to asylum” and “ways to obtain work and education”.

The videos were developed in a participatory manner with young (former) unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan. Contents of the video were determined on the basis of interviews and workshops carried out by asylkoordination. The actors themselves created the dialogues occurring in the videos. The aim of the project is not only to facilitate support for young Afghans in Austria but also to offer a contrasting image to they predominantly negative depiction of refugees in the media.

Financial support to produce the videos in the first phase of the project was provided by Raiffeisenbank.

After the great success of the initial project asylkoordination österreich tried to gain further partners to produce additional videos in different languages. It was decided to create 12 more videos in Arabic and Somali in cooperation with Startquartier and Erste Bank. The created footage is planned to be reused in shorter versions to develop new concepts for workshops within an educational context in schools.

In cooperation with Startquartier, the Fonds Gesundes Österreich and the österreichischesn Gesellschaft für Gesundheitskompetenz in 2017 further videos about the health care system in Austria were produced in Dari, Arabic and Farsi. These clips will be released in February 2018.

With these videos an easy distribution of useful information to the targeted group through internet and social media is realized. Many young refugees have smartphones and therefore informal access to the information provided. The videos were developed especially for this group of people, who is used to watch videos on the internet and are addressed specifically through the use of new media. Transfer of information is carried out through dialogues and on an equal footing with the refugees. Another advantage of presenting the information via video is that spoken language is also accessible for illiterates.

SozialMarie – Criteria for social innovation

Innovative ideas of the project

- Is the project dealing with new possible solutions for social problems?

Info sheets or other forms of distributing information usually only receive low attention or are ignored among the target group. There are also certain barriers to understand written texts. Smartphones are very important for refugees and the distribution of information via videos which can be accessed easily through social media are an innovative way suitable to address the target group.

- Is the project dealing with new social problems?

Through workshops and interviews relevant issues for the target group were identified and addressed in the videos. Additionally, experts contributed with their knowledge and experiences with these issues.

- Is the project dealing with a usually neglected target group?

Young refugees are an especially vulnerable target group, for whom information about live in Austria is of crucial importance. The information is transmitted verbally which means that it is also understandable for illiterates and no interaction with advisors and care takers is necessary.

Innovation in access to the target group – participatory approach

- Which concrete and sustainable benefits are created for the target group?

One of the primary sources for information for refugees are other refugees. The information that they can pass on are often incomplete or partially incorrect. In the videos relevant facts are presented which are essential for living in Austria.

- In which way are capabilities of the target group encouraged through the project?

The videos were developed with young refugees, they were included in a participatory manner in every step of the production. Young people were involved as actors or interpreters and able to gain useful experiences through this process.

- Does the project contribute to more appreciation of the target group in society?

The project not only supports young Afghans in Austria but also offers alternative images to the bad press coverage and common prejudices against the target group.

Innovation in the implementation – Effectiveness

- Is the implementation of the project creative, inventive and courageous?

The videos were created in an inventive and creative way. Young refugees themselves developed the dialogues and the filmmaker was able to present them in videos worth watching. It is also very challenging for young people to speak publicly about issues such as love and sexuality in front of the camera.

- Which effects can be observed through this innovative project?

Refugees can watch the videos easily and get important information about life in Austria.

- Does the project react to recent challenges regarding the target group, problem or context?

Social media is a very important tool for a rather young target group. Refugees and asylum seekers spend a lot of time using their smartphones which is why we identified the distribution of information in this way as particularly appropriate.

- Is there a cooperation of different disciplines/competences/professions?

Problems were identified by young people and discussed with experts of different fields (medicine, law, health care, work, education) There were different institutions (Startquartier, Fonds Gesundes Österreich und österreichische Gesellschaft für Gesundheitskompetenz) involved in the production of the videos thereby uniting competences from various areas and disciplines

Innovation for the public image

- How is the project embedded in local and regional contexts?

The problems addressed are important ones in the life-worlds of refugees who recently arrived in Austria but are equally useful for all refugees and asylum seekers who speak the respective languages.

- Does the project foster dialogue/cooperation with other institutions/organizations?

The development of the videos was carried out with different partners which also allows for a widespread distribution of the product in various channels.

- How does the project attract attention of other organisations, media, sponsors and politicians?

The first videos were promoted in a press conference. There was significant media interest resulting in numerous radio-, tv- and newspaper reports. Decision makers and other institutions were impressed. For the release of the new videos another press conference is planned.

- Are there any new ways in addressing the issues covered in the project?

This project is the first one to create online videos which have not existed in this way in Austria before. Institutions in other European countries also are interested in the project.

Projektverantwortliche:
Lisa Wolfsegger
asylkoordination österreich
T: 01 532 1 91-16
wolfsegger@asyl.at