

CERTIFICATE COURSE

„Educational Basics for Displaced Teachers“

Application for the Sozialmarie 2018; project description (30b) concerning the evaluation criteria

1. Innovation in Project Idea – Novelty

The two semester certificate course “Educational Basics for Displaced Teachers” is the only ECTS-based study program for teachers with refugee background in Austria, therefore unique and pioneering. Other possibilities for education focus on the preparation for a study program or contain additional qualifications. In contrast, this course qualifies the displaced teachers in their profession; academically accredited with 40 ECTS. It addresses displaced teachers who hold at least a BA or BSc degree and have obtained teaching experience in secondary education. The completion of the course not only offers graduates the possibility to reenter the job market but to do this staying in their profession. In the development of the course three teachers with refugee background participated in the spirit of collaborative research. This projects whole structure and implementation can be seen as pioneering when it comes to inclusion of people with refugee background in the job market. Furthermore, the course runs in close cooperation with the EU-project CORE, the Vienna School Board, the certificate course “Teaching German as second or foreign language” and the Public Employment Service for Vienna and Lower Austria. The synergies created by networking with dedicated institutions set an example for a resource-oriented and sustainable development. In addition, the team is in international exchange to facilitate further development and improvements.

2. Innovation in Accessing Target Groups – Involvement

Our idea: we identify highly skilled teachers and match them with needs in Austrian schools. . In the development of the course three teachers with refugee background participated in the spirit of collaborative research. Over 100 displaced teachers attended the initial event where information about the course was launched for the first time; followed by about 70 applications. On the 4th of September 2017 the certificate course started with 23 well selected and highly qualified participants. These eleven women and twelve men are between 25 and 48 years old and originally from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Chechnya and Tajikistan. Arabic is the mother tongue of the majority, some others are natives in Farsi, Kurdish as well as Chechen and Tadjik. Their fields of expertise (the subjects they have studied and have teaching experience in) are mathematics, physics, informatics, electrical engineering, biology, history, English, Russian, sports, and arts. Besides the theoretical education, the participants are also absolving an internship in Viennese compulsory schools, which is structured in three phases. With the guidance and support of mentors the mentees are accompanied from (1) the observation of several teaching lessons (2) to team-teaching sequences, until the participants are ready for (3) teaching whole lessons on their own. The first semester is almost successfully accomplished! Currently the 23 attendees are in the middle of the fifth out of 8 modules “Inclusive Education and Diversity”, concurrently they are in the second part of their school internship (which means the participants are starting to teach selected sequences in class on their own). With the internship and the comprehensive guidance of the mentors all of our teachers are constantly gaining a lot of experiences. This gives the

mentees the possibility to constantly reflect on their experiences in the internship based on the theoretical input of the course. Above all: The displaced teachers are getting a close view on what being a teacher in Austria encompasses. In addition to theory and internship, the participants are attending a German language course on the level C1 twice a week to provide the teachers with the subject-related vocabulary in their field of expertise.

3. Innovation in the Realisation of the Project – Effectiveness

Participatory exploration of the educational background of displaced teachers led to the development of this certificate course. The aim was to identify a way to use the skills and the know-how of all the highly educated teachers with refugee background and match it with a lack in numbers of teachers. As a result the certificate course, with credits of 40 ECTS to be studied over two semesters, was implemented as a further education program for displaced teachers. The content of the certificate course mainly reflects the curriculum of the Austrian teacher training provided with minor adaptations in specific areas. This includes an internship with an intensive mentoring program to prepare the teachers in the best possible way and to get a close view on the teaching practice in Austria. This certificate course aims to offer qualification for the Austrian job market, provides improvement of the German language level on C1, as well as the direct inclusion of teachers with refugee background in Austrian secondary schools. The two semesters certificate course ends at June 29th, 2018. After completing the course, graduates are entitled to apply for a position as teacher under special contract in schools in Vienna. After studying a second subject (as it is intended in the regular teachers education program), the graduates have the opportunity to get a regular contract for teachers. The demand of further qualifications remains high. There are already a lot of interested parties and stakeholders for a second cycle; depending on the funding, a second round of the certificate course would be possible.

4. Innovation in Public Perception – Serving as an Example

This first cycle is funded by the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, the course runs in close cooperation¹ with the EU-project CORE, the Vienna School Board, the certificate course “Teaching German as second or foreign language” and the Public Employment Service for Vienna and Lower Austria. The synergies created by networking with dedicated institutions set an example for a resource-oriented and sustainable development. In addition, the team is in international exchange to facilitate further development and improvements. Also there we saw that our participatory approach and the focus on staying in the former profession can be seen as pioneering.

¹ This criteria 4 encompasses aspects, which are also already mentioned for criteria 1.