

Project Description „Rad-Lern-Stat“

The project Rad-Lern-Stat grew out of the needs of the population of the Upper Austrian city Traun. The project partners, who are social work organisations that use community social work approaches are organising weekly meetings where newly arrived people can learn and practice German and meet with others. During these language-learning cafés, some participating women expressed their need for transportation, which is expensive for them. They had seen men bringing their kids to kindergarden on their bikes and were highly impressed. They wanted to learn how to ride a bike themselves! The project partners then met and developed – in coordination with need of the population – the project Rad-Lern-Stat. Most immigrant women do not have any ties to Austrians, as their main responsibilities focus in and around the house and on childcare duties. This is why, it was one of our main aims to help empower these women and to enable them to move around freely and independently on their bikes, which provides a huge gain in independence for them and also has major health benefits.

We organised two Rad-Lern-Stat practice workshops, where the participants could learn how to ride a bike in a safe environment. Of course, it wasn't as easy as that. The women step by step learned how to hold their balance on a bike, how to ride and how to brake. After these two workshops, we organised another one with a special focus on traffic education, in close cooperation with the local community police. The police officers explained all traffic signs and the basic traffic rules to our participants. It was a lot of hard work, but everybody show a lot of interest and patience! Whilst our participants do not yet feel ready to move in real traffic, we are very happy that the local police is willing to further cooperate in this matter, until everybody feels able to safely manoeuvre around the city – a win-win situation for everyone.

Because our project is all about sustainability too, we are happy to cooperate with other local actors, such as the local bike store. Another workshop with focus on bike parts and mechanics will take place in early spring. Together we will get our bikes ready for the coming season and will learn how to perform easy repairs. Just before the summer, we plan to organise a common bike trip in the local recreation area of the „Trauner Au“, where we also hope to foster connections between Austrians and newly arrived persons.