

# Results of the interim evaluation of the development-partnership drugaddicts@work

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## Summary of results

The development partnership drugaddicts@work aims at (re-)integrating (former) drug addicts in the labour market and at combating their marginalisation on the labour market. *Development Partnership* suggests that the notion of development is central to the project, and obviously development involves learning. The evaluation of the development partnership (DP) is an essential part of the learning process as it provides the DP and its partners with a fact-based and reliable feedback on the cooperation and performance achieved so far. An additional benefit of this interim evaluation lies in the fact that it allows e.g. possible future funders to obtain fact-based and relevant information at an early stage.

The evaluation method used is of responsive nature. This means that it takes into account the interests of all parties involved whenever possible. Accordingly, the partners of the project participate actively in the evaluation process. This evaluation model is advantageous for several reasons: it offers comprehensive and reliable information for the evaluation of the effects of specific DP measures and features. In addition, it allows to initiate long-term measures in the field of quality development and optimisation. Moreover, the experience gathered in drugaddicts@work can be used to illustrate the basis for the development of a best-practice model.

The development partnership complements the existing service of the drug abuse support systems of the city of Vienna. It attended to 227 (former) drug addicts in 2003. The DP networks the relevant players of the Vienna drug abuse support systems. Thus, it offers for the first time a coherent and coordinated service system that is based on the needs of the target group. The development partnership encompasses 50% of the organisations offering intermediate employment opportunities to the target group and two thirds of the organisations offering qualification and training programmes.

The financial structure and the overall organisation and coordination of the DP as performed by @work and by the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund GmbH function well. The following facts illustrate that this partnership is successful and displays an encouraging ratio up to this date (apart from the required self-financing ratio for social economy enterprises):

- 41 persons received further training by @kurse (e.g. exam preparation, virtual company, sales training, specific training programmes for women wishing to re-enter the labour market). Thus, 43% of the target figure for the period until September 2005 was already achieved in 2003.
- 180 persons received long-term counselling<sup>1</sup> by the DP module *job assistance* (e.g. debt counselling, working out realistic job perspectives, job finding, reducing obstacles to employability, psycho-social and aftercare support). 50% of the target figure (360 clients by the end of the partnership in September 2005) has been reached so far.
- The development partnership created intermediate jobs for 46 persons in 2003. Thus, 58% of the final target figure has been realized so far. The revenue generated from these jobs amounts to app. 21.000€ (that is 19% of the target figure for 2003). With the help of the DP, 17% (8 persons) of the 46 clients have found a job on the labour market outside the project.
- In total, 24 persons found jobs outside the project (7 female, 14 male clients). Of these, 19 persons (5 female, 14 male clients) found a job in the labour market that is open to all and 5 persons (2 female, 3 male clients) on the intermediate labour market.

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<sup>1</sup> more than 2 counselling sessions

The development partnership has demonstrated its willingness to learn through the active participation of its operative partners in the setting of targets, in self-assessment procedures and in the surveys carried out in the context of the evaluation process. The operative partners developed new types of cooperation (e.g. "Round Tables") and they have modified the concept (relapse management, centralised client acquisition and job placement centre). Another positive effect of the project lies in the fact that the development partners are more inclined to face conflicts and to make compromises. In addition, the requirements and needs of the target group are considered as top priority in the development of all policies (clients are integrated in the policy-making process, e.g. through client interviews).

It is not only the drug abuse support systems of Vienna as a whole that benefits from the development partnership, but also the individual organisations who can also benefit from it, e.g. through a transfer of know-how: Two of the three social economy enterprises were established by organisations that until then had not offered such employment opportunities to the target group. However, the different project operators represent their own interests and ideologies. In some instances, this has resulted in a difficult "sandwich" position of the modules between the interests of an individual organisation and the interests of the DP. This can make it hard, or even impossible, to reach a consensus among the partners.

The development partnership compiled, among others, the following insights about the target group:

- Female clients take a more critical position than male clients concerning their own abilities, their future (opportunities) and the service offered by the development partnership.
- Both female and male clients have unrealistic job expectations and a distorted self-image concerning their own abilities. The clients' readiness to assume responsibility for their lives is lower than expected, and they find it difficult to recognize and formulate their own requirements and needs.
- We observed marginalisation tendencies within the target group: in some cases, clients from abstinence-oriented rehabilitation programmes showed reluctance to cooperate with clients from substitution-oriented rehabilitation programmes.

The clients acknowledge the value of the service offered by the DP for their professional future. They report a noticeable increase in their know-how and in their ability to work, a higher level of frustration tolerance, more self-confidence and more psychological stability as a result of the employment projects and the training and counselling programmes. Hence, they feel more "fit" for the labour market.

The clients show interest in the contents of the qualification programmes and they appreciate the professional atmosphere in the courses as well as in the didactical approach used. The same goes for the counselling approach and for the contents of the counselling provided.

The obstacles or challenges in the context of development partnership are:

- difficult but unchangeable circumstances and how to handle them
- partly unrealistic targets from the very beginning: see self-financing ratio for social economy enterprises
- high costs incurred by the financial and administrative procedure
- longer development phase for the social economy enterprises than expected
- differences in the role understanding of important partners

Different ideologies (abstinence-oriented vs. substitution-oriented) and (not always transparent) self-interests of the participating organisations result in a clash of interests between the operators of the DP and, to some extent, also in a clash of interests within individual modules (between the interests of the DP and those of the individual organisations). Naturally, this has had repercussions on the creation of a common line (e.g. in PR) of the DP.