

Career Centre for Young Women

emma - Berufszentrum für junge Frauen

Date of creation

2021

Description

emma is a career and counselling centre for young women aged 14 or 15 to 25, based in Innsbruck, Austria. It provides individual career and educational counselling, a six-week modular workshop programme, and, if necessary, psychological assessments.

The programme focuses on empowering young women to successfully enter or re-enter the labour market, particularly those facing multiple barriers such as school dropouts, migration backgrounds, caregiving responsibilities, or lack of qualifications. Women can join via referral by the Austrian Public Employment Service AMS or on a voluntary basis.

The project emma primarily addresses young women who are NEETs (young people not in employment, education or training), especially those with complex challenges:

- Early leavers from education and training
- Young women who have not completed compulsory education
- Young mothers or women returning to employment, education or training after pregnancy or illness
- Migrant women needing orientation on qualifications and individual rights
- Students and university dropouts seeking new directions
- Young women in need of additional support

Beneficiaries

NEETs, young women, school dropouts, young mothers, young women with migration background, young women re-entering the labour market, students seeking orientation, young women needing extra support beyond standard PES measures.

Countries

 **Austria**

Education level and sector

 **Adult education**

Vocational education and training (VET), career orientation, transition phase from school to work, adult education – basic skills and empowerment

Level of implementation / Scope

 **Provider level**  **Local level**  **Regional level**

Since 2021

Aims of policy/initiative

The aim of emma is to improve young women's chances for a sustainable and independent future. It provides tools and guidance for equal participation in the labour market, supports upskilling, and addresses structural inequalities. Through individual coaching, workshops, and empowerment, emma helps young women build realistic career perspectives, gain access to further education or apprenticeships, and helps overcome barriers caused by social, economic, or personal circumstances.

Features and types of activities implemented

- Individual counselling for career and education planning (6 months, with optional extension)
- Six-week workshop modules on personal, social, digital, and career skills (e.g. self-confidence, digital applications, goal setting)
- Psychological assessments to support career orientation
- Optional trial internships
- Optional aftercare to prevent dropouts or relapses
- Peer exchange and networking (Workspace, currently paused)
- Cooperation with schools, youth services, and social work providers

Target group

The practice benefits young women who face disadvantages in accessing education, training or employment by supporting more sustainable transitions into education and the labour market. In addition, education and training providers, public employment services and local employers benefit indirectly from improved coordination, reduced risks of early disengagement and strengthened labour market inclusion outcomes.

Resources

Funded by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS)

The project team consists of qualified counsellors, workshop trainers, and administrative staff.

Evaluation of the measure

The project is evaluated annually by AMS Tirol as part of their internal monitoring and reporting process.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

Evidence on the effectiveness of the practice is drawn from annual monitoring and reporting to the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS Tirol). Monitoring data indicate that participants regularly progress into employment, education or training following their participation in emma. In addition, administrative data show a stable level of demand and intensive use of counselling services.

In 2024, emma provided individual counselling to 135 young women and delivered more than 1 200 counselling sessions, reflecting both sustained outreach and the intensity of support required by the target group. These results suggest that the practice effectively supports young women with complex barriers in developing realistic career perspectives and progressing towards labour market integration.

Success factors

Young women and girls are fully integrated into the organisation's overall service offer. For many years, the association has been advising women in different life situations and, through the Women's Career Centre on behalf of the Public Employment Service (AMS), has also been providing targeted career guidance. emma was created to respond as closely as possible to the specific needs and challenges of young women.

A key success factor lies in this consistent focus on the target group, combined with the association's long-standing experience.

- Tailored, long-term, and voluntary support approach
- Focus on empowerment and gender equality
- Close cooperation with Austrian PES, schools, and social services
- Addressing multiple barriers simultaneously (career, personal, social)
- Safe and supportive environment specifically for young women

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