

Press Release LUTA

Civic Education on Asylum Policy – Adult Education and active citizenship

The Learning Partnership <LUTA> stands for to **Learn** – to **Understand** – to **Trust** – and to **Act**

The civic EU-wide partnership <LUTA> gives an example of active citizenship in the year of the European Parliamentary Elections. Educational institutions and refugee aid institution cooperate ambitiously across seven European countries, from the northern Norrköping in Sweden until Malta and Sicily. All of them follow a common principle: "Learn-Understand-Trust-Act" <LUTA>, a motto that accompanies us during the two-year partnership and – hopefully – beyond. Around the world, people of various social backgrounds are forced to leave their country of birth as a result of economic, political or life-threatening reasons. Many of those who decided to take that desperate step are minors. After making it to the Schengen zone - often under dangerous, life-threatening circumstances - bureaucratic hardship and broad [public] rejection awaits them.

We hold the opinion that the respond on that development should be solidarity instead of demarcation and national isolation. The learning partnership LUTA stands for "Learn-Understand-Trust-Act" and intends to contribute to a transnational civic education process focusing on asylum policy in Europe. "We want to equip adult learners of the majority societies with profound knowledge of, on the one hand, EU asylum directives and national asylum legislation in the partner countries, and – on the other hand, biographies of refugees and their individual experiences. The expectable gap between these individual experiences and the national legislative levels will be subject of discussion panels with local and regional politicians in our partner countries", elucidates Dr.in Angelika Brechelmacher the aim of the project and the partners in seven European countries. "National politics negotiates quotas; people in need of protection become 'allocated contingents'. This project intends to raise awareness among European citizens that refugees are not merely numbers. They have faces and stories and the right to express themselves creatively and publicly."

The participating states include countries of first reception on the Schengen borders as well as states in the centre of the Schengen zone. The project intends to raise solidarity among EU member-states in hosting refugees. It aims to deliver a sustainable contribution to public discourse by the partner institutions. Project participants' experiences and insights will be disseminated via various media. Political decision-makers will be invited to discussion panels. Institutions for adult education as well as refugee relief organisations are involved in this joint learning process. Excerpts of biographical interviews with refugees in all partner countries will be published in form of a multilingual video documentary. The documented material will be discussed with and made available to a broad audience as well as political decision-makers in the participating countries via press, video and social media. In all these project steps adult learners, refugees and staff are involved. Together, we get the opportunity to reflect on our individual learning process. Let Us Talk About! <LUTA>

Project lead: Universität Klagenfurt, Institut für Wissenschaftskommunikation und Hochschulforschung, Austria

Project partners:

Verein Integrationshaus, Austria
Organization for Aid to Refugees, Czech Republic
Sprachendienst Konstanz, Germany
Associazione ASHRAM, Italy
Write Deal, Malta
Instytut Tolerancji w Łodzi, Poland
Marieborgs Folkhögskola, Sweden