

A recent survey conducted with residents in the State of Styria, Austria, has shown a very low level of health competency. The most affected group with a very low level of health literacy according to the studies is the socially disadvantaged people. That means they do not understand the health system, they do not understand the doctors' instructions properly and do not know how to promote or assist their own primary health issues. Residents with migration backgrounds are referred to as "hard to reach" group when it comes to health care promotion and disease prevention. There is always a misunderstanding when they visit medical professionals or institutions, not only because of the language difficulty or differences but also because of "cultural differences" in the conceptions of health and illness but also the methods of treatments that add to the difficulties. There are also structural barriers such as the non-availability of medical insurances for some group of people, different forms of discriminatory practices, stereotype behaviours or lack of intercultural competence among the healthcare personnel. Many of the employees in the primary healthcare sector are overwhelmed with and feel unable to cope with this group of clients. Moreover the health-system is based on the middle class ideology and coping strategy.

This project – HEL4everyone – approaches these problems on four different levels with the goals to improve the health literacy on the individual level, on the community level and also to support and encourage the intercultural opening of the health institutions.

The project activities are focused on four target groups. Through the outreach work method, it is intended to reach the so called "hard to reach" group (here as target group 1) within their environs. The outreach workers, who in this case have migration backgrounds would work together with community-leaders (target group 2). Information and Workshops to promote health literacy would take place in the target communities and excursions with the project-multiplicators to healthcare institutions (target group 3) would be carried out. On the other side healthcare institutions are very important co-operation partners in this project. The healthcare workers would have the chance to attend trainings to improve their intercultural competences. Health literacy experts from the healthcare services would in turn offer workshops on chosen health care issues at the community level.

Young migrants as the 4th target group in this project would be informed on the job opportunities in the health service sector, so as to enable them gain an impression over the job opportunities available in this area.

The primary aim of this project is to empower all the residents in the state of Styria, that means to enable them to get access to primary healthcare services and to feel competent and responsible for their personal primary health care.

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