

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Youth policy aimed at social inclusion

The **Federal Act on the Promotion of Education and Upbringing outside of schools and the Promotion of Youth Work** ([Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der außerschulischen Jugenderziehung und Jugendarbeit](#), 2001), which regulates the financial support of extracurricular youth work by defining principles required for the work of promoted organisations (further depicted in [Chapter 10.1](#)), **inter alia promotes social inclusion**. Among the **promoted principles of youth work** are the promotion of

- the attending to **matters of concern for young people**
- responsibility, **independence** and **democracy**
- **personal**, physical, emotional and intellectual **development** of young people
- young people's **tolerance**, communication and peaceful coexistence
- community and **human rights oriented education**
- **political- and citizenship** education
- **lifestyle- and health-related** education
- **vocational- and career-related** education
- the development of the **creative powers** of young people
- **equality of the sexes**
- **integration of people with disabilities**

Main inclusive Youth Work programmes and target groups

Children and youth work in youth organisations targets all young people. Depending on the kind of association, it may target a specific group. The broad range of organizations enables a catering to diverse target groups, including socially disadvantaged youth.

Youth information targets all young people. Its work of strengthening young people and their competences as well as providing them with comprehensible, target-group oriented information promotes social inclusion.

Professional Open Children and Youth Work targets all young people. Per definition, open youth work supports young people on their way to independence, enables the acquisition of

educational content and social skills through low threshold offers and thus contributes to social integration and participation, particularly for educationally and socially disadvantaged young people.

Youth organisations, youth information, and open child and youth work organisations run **a large variety of programmes to foster the social inclusion of vulnerable young people**, such as projects against discrimination, projects enhancing life skills and supporting active citizenship as well as outreach and street work youth work programmes. Figures of public funding allocated to these programmes are not available. Exemplary projects and programmes:

- The Austrian Youth Information Centres have cooperated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to inform young people about the topics of **flight and asylum** by developing the brochure 'My New Neighbour' („[Mein neuer Nachbar](#)"). Another **brochure**, entitled 'I won't be a part of it!' („[Da mach' ich nicht mit!](#)") **informs on racism and discrimination** with funny illustrations and provides answers and arguments against common discriminatory sayings. It is a joint project of the association "Land der Menschen - Aufeinander Zugehen OO" and the Viennese youth information wienXtra-jugendinfo.
- **Across Austria, different local organisations provide youth social work, outreach work, streetwork**, school social work and intensive care for young people. An example is the Youth Initiative Triestingtal ([Jugendinitiative Triestingtal](#)) located within the province of Lower Austria (Niederösterreich) and the association for initiatives of social integration ([Verein I.S.I. - Initiativen für soziale Integration](#)) active in parts of the province of Upper Austria (Oberösterreich).
- In a time of information overload and fake news, knowing how to deal with information has become more important than ever – the critical and competent use of information has to be learned. The Austrian Youth Information Centres therefore offer **free and digital-interactive workshops to promote the information and media competence** of young people, particularly those aged 12 to 15. The exercises are available as free learning and teaching materials ([Förderung der Informationskompetenz: Lost in information?](#)).
- 'Together on the road' ([Miteinander unterwegs](#)) is the motto under which the Austrian Alpine Club (Österreichischer Alpenverein), with over 601,000 members both the largest alpine association and the largest **youth organisation** in Austria, is committing itself to the topic of integration. **People with different cultural backgrounds are invited to come together for a tour** and to experience hospitality and make new friends while hiking and climbing.
- The Centre for Open Youth Work in Dornbirn (province of Vorarlberg) has launched the **programme 'refuge'** ("[zuflucht](#)"), which includes projects such as **tandem meetings to break down prejudices and create community**, actions in public space, intercultural cemetery visits, shared festivities, and joint landscape and riverbank cleaning.