

Title of the case

Vienna needs you!
A joint project between the
Municipal Department 17- Integration and Diversity and the Police
for recruiting staff with a migration background

The Municipal Department 17 – Integration and Diversity (MA 17) has started a project with the Viennese Police Department in 2007 to implement tools of Diversity Management within the security forces to meet the challenges of a society, characterized by migration. Because of the consultation of MA 17-experts, the number of applicants as police-students with a migration background has reached 20% within a year.

Quality Improvement issues

The project tries to promote internal change within the police force and improve the relationship between the police and citizens with a migration background. As a strategic objective, the project aims to increase the number of police-officers with a migration background. On the operational side, MA 17 helps the police to strengthen intercultural competences of the staff and build mutual understanding between the security forces and a diverse population. This project should also empower people regardless of their ethnic background to seek job-opportunities in public service. In the long term the staff of Vienna's police should reflect the city's rich diversity and regard this as a matter of professionalism. Prior to the project, no data was collected at the police about applicants or staff of a different ethnic origin or with certain language skills. Now a monitoring system helps to generate data, evaluate the project and shows the progress.

Project Background

Beside the promotion of integration of migrants, the Municipal Department 17 assists other departments within the Viennese City Administration to implement Diversity Management in various fields like customer relations, communication, human resources etc. The police force is an additional partner in Vienna's attempt to optimize all public services to meet the quality needs in a diverse city characterized by migration and rapid demographic change.

The Actors

A specialist for Diversity Management of the MA 17, who had first written a working paper about diversity orientated recruiting, met with the head of the police HR-Department and a fruitful and effective partnership has been established. MA 17 is highly regarded as a diversity consultant and as a source for intercultural know-how, but it is very important that all mayor steps of the project are carried out by the police itself.

The project couldn't have started without strong political support. The Executive City Councillor for Integration and the Chief of Police set an agreement about this project and made it a top priority. In addition to the governing Social Democratic Party, the two

opposition parties i.e. the Austrian Conservative Party and the Green Party also supported the initiative.

In order to reach out to young people with a migration background, posters and flyers were printed. But those printed information were not simply sent by post, but were delivered by the multiethnic and multilingual staff of MA 17 among hundreds of people who were met at various locations like schools, community centres, sport clubs, religious organisations etc. Because the group of interest has been approached directly, the response to the invitation for the kick-off-presentation of the new recruitment initiative was tremendous. About 250 people of various background came for the first public presentation of the project, which was named “Vienna needs you!” Politicians and the police sent out the clear message, that multilingual people and people with a migration background are very much welcomed to apply for a job.

The regular and intensive cooperation between the MA 17 and migrant organizations once again proved as the key to success.

The Work process / the Approach

A diversity manager of the MA 17 and the head of the police’ HR-department worked together as project controllers. Other members of the Police Recruitment Unit gave support as well as seven police officers with a migration background.

The major steps of the project, which were described in the paper were put in practice step by step. In June 2007 the Executive City Councillor for Integration informed the public in a press conference, that the project is on track and that the Viennese City Government will assist the police in the new recruitment initiative. In September the working group, formed of members of the Police Department and the MA 17 started. An agreement about the principals of diversity management was reached quickly and an information campaign was prepared. Thousands of posters, flyers and invitations were delivered by the regional staff of MA 17. The kick-off-presentation was attended by 250 people, mostly by persons of the so-called second generation.

A mix of methods was in place to reach out: first of all the message “Vienna needs you” was sent out directly by staff members of the MA 17 and the police, secondly posters and flyers were printed with the slogan translated in 14 languages. The involvement of the media was also crucial: the state television broadcasted three times about the project, a radio interview was broadcasted and all major newspapers reported about it.

During 2008 mixed teams, so-called “tandems” of MA 17 employees and police-officers, make presentations in migrant organisations, religious institutions and schools to inform the youth at first hand.

The Measure of Success

The first indicator that has been introduced was: how many applicants have a migration background or speak a second language.

Since March 2008 all people who apply for a job, have to fill in a questionnaire, which includes information about a migration background.

Between 22.11.2007 and 18. 9. 2008 the police department received 1096 applications, 228 were sent by people with a migration background.

After the examination test the first classes have started in late 2008 with 7% to 8% of the students having a migration background.

In five years there should be at least one police officer with a migration background in each of the 100 police stations in Vienna.

Lessons learned

- Without strong political support such a project would be more difficult.
- The support of the new Head of the Police Department was crucial (top down !).
- Having good relations with the migrant population is a key factor. Starting with a PR campaign only would not have reached the people.

Project Innovation Content and Adaptability

This project is an example of how a city administration and a department for diversity can co-operate with a federal institution like the police. Vienna's diversity approach is focused on opportunities resulting from the various skills and competences migrants have.

This project also set a milestone in diversity orientated recruitment in civil service in Austria. Once this initiative will have succeeded in Vienna, it should be a role model for police recruiting policies in all nine Austrian federal provinces. In general, this innovative project could be adapted and transferred to any other administration or police department.

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