

is an information and advice centre for immigration and integration issues in the Austrian province Vorarlberg. The Aktion Mitarbeit society is responsible for the centre. It was founded in the autumn of 2001. The majority of the funding is provided by the Vorarlberg Province Government.

Vorarlberg has experienced decades of immigration. Today, it is the Austrian province with the second highest proportion of foreigners after the Federal capital Vienna. 13 % of its inhabitants hold a foreign passport. Approximately 24 % of the primary school students in Vorarlberg's 96 local authorities do not speak German as their mother tongue. This figure can rise to 40 % in the cities and larger towns. This situation is primarily due to the economic development of the province. Vorarlberg was already heavily industrialised by the beginning of the 20th century. Immigrants to Vorarlberg do not only live in the few cities, but – in line with the even distribution of industrial production sites – throughout the state in numerous (including smaller) communities and towns. This means that questions of integration policy face not only the province government and the five cities but also many smaller communities.

The view that immigration and the related pluralisation of our society are not transitional phenomena, but will indeed characterise western industrial societies in the coming decades, demands a new policy of structuring the social processes involved. Integration should be understood as a socio-political theme that cuts across all levels and sub-systems of our society that demands awareness, expertise and the implementation of a range of measures. Such a policy is no longer solely concerned with the administration of people of foreign nationality as aliens in one country but is aimed at providing all long term residents in a country with the opportunity to participate in social and political life at the highest possible level. Such a policy is to be seen as the best possible use of human potential in society aimed at achieving a sustainable guarantee of its social cohesion.

With this in mind, “okay. zusammen leben” sees itself as the motor and trustee of a “learning region” which puts itself to the fore in dealing with the socio-political challenges of immigration and integration.

#### Our aims are:

- making the Vorarlberg society aware of the significance of immigration and integration issues as key questions for the future,
- running an information and advice centre on these inter-related themes,
- the development, guiding and support of concrete integration measures for migrants in Vorarlberg,
- the involvement of the province in an international exchange of experiences and knowledge,
- the networking of people and organisations involved in integration and
- the establishment of a platform for exchanging experiences between the decision makers and people and organisations involved in integration in Vorarlberg.

#### Programmes, projects and products in the information centre:

- Internet site [www.okay-line.at](http://www.okay-line.at) for integration in Vorarlberg
- okay-News newsletter (quarterly), okay-Events (monthly)
- Specialist integration advice for integration activists (politics, administration, social institutions, migrant organisations, campaigns etc.)
- Talks and publicity work
- “okay.zusammen lernen” for setting up and supporting German language and orientation courses for migrants in Vorarlberg's communities
- Community-wide learning support project
- Building bridges (“Brückenbauerinnen”): Migrants on duty for integration (interpreters for parent involvement in nurseries and schools)
- listen (“zuhören”): A theatre-project for young people on the issue of living together in a diverse society
- and much more.

A detailed description of the project centre's programmes, projects and activities can be found on [www.okay-line.at](http://www.okay-line.at) / module “Projektträger”

#### Internal Team

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The project centre is a member of a network of experts from Vorarlberg, Vienna and Basel.

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