

Digital pioneers - voluntary digital year for women

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** AUSTRIA

Timeline

**ID number 29888**

Background

Digital change is progressing faster and faster. Many young people who complete their training today will work in professions and with technologies that do not even exist today. In this context, it is particularly important to inspire young women for professions in Industry 4.0. Digitalisation brings numerous advantages - especially for women: a rapidly growing field of work, mobile working models and a better work-life balance. The idea is inspired by the voluntary social year.

Objectives

The objective of the Digital pioneer project is, to:

- (a) get young women interested in digitalisation;
- (b) give young people the opportunity to get to know digital and technical fields of work;
- (c) work, thereby, simultaneously in the interest of the common good;
- (d) acquire digital skills in practice.

Description

The Digital pioneers project is being designed and piloted by the Association Industry 4.0 Austria together with the Digital Campus Vorarlberg and the Chamber of Labour on behalf of the digitalisation fund of the Chamber of Labour. The project is being implemented together with central stakeholders and members of the network.

The first two pilot projects will start in the federal provinces of Vorarlberg and Upper Austria. These will be carried out at the Digital Campus Vorarlberg and in Upper Austria at the BFI Tobacco Factory (Tabakfabrik/Codersbay). An eight-week basic training programme covers topics such as business innovation (15%), project management (20%), digital skills (15%) and programming (50%).

Afterwards, participants complete a paid internship of at least 8 months in a partner company or a scientific institution. The main focus of the practical training is on digital literacy, process and system competences, multidisciplinary thinking and acting,

interdisciplinary social skills, personality and self-competence development, modern collaboration forms and tools and getting to know digitalisation projects in companies and research.

In total, this offer covers a minimum duration of 10 months. The target group is young women between 18 and 28 years of age (Digital Campus Vorarlberg) and young persons between 17 and 25 years of age (BFI Upper Austria). The conditions of the collective agreement apply to the internship. Throughout the entire duration of the training and the internship, the participants are covered by health, accident and pension insurance.

At the end of the programme, participants receive a certificate issued by the organisation in which they have been placed.

2019 Design

In 2019, the Digital pioneers programme was developed as part of the digitalisation fund of the Vienna Chamber of Labour.

2020 Pilot

At the beginning of 2020, the programme was launched as a pilot project in two federal provinces. Applications have been possible since then.

The requirements for participation have been specified again. The programme is now explicitly aimed at girls and women between the ages of 17 and 27.

By the summer of 2020, 12 candidates were selected to participate in an 8-week training programme at the digiCampus and the Upper Austrian BFI Tobacco Factory.

2021 Pilot

The federal province of Tyrol was added as the pilot region at the beginning of 2021. The partner in the Tyrol province is the BFI Tyrol (Vocational Training Institute, Tyrol).

29 young women have been working in 18 different companies since the beginning of December 2021 and can continue to use what they have learned in practice and also get to know many other areas of the company. Their use is diverse: whether UX/UI design, business analysis, software development, online marketing, e-commerce, corporate development, product development, information systems or other digital areas.

2022 Implementation

The pilot phase of the project was completed at the end of September 2022. 29 young women completed the first year of the programme in three federal provinces (Länder) (Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Upper Austria). In autumn 2022, preparations were made for the rollout to other federal provinces from 2023.

Additional funds from the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) and the province of Upper Austria were obtained to finance the programme for 2023.

2023 Implementation

The project was continued in three Länder (Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Upper Austria). The rollout to other *Länder* was postponed.

2024 Implementation

The project was continued in 2024 without further changes. There is still no rollout to other *Länder*.

Bodies responsible

- Association Industry 4.0 Austria
- Vienna Chamber of Labour
- Digital Campus Vorarlberg
- Chamber of Labour (AK)

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)

Other

Young
Women

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Project website \(in German only\)](#)

Related policy developments

2017 **Completed**

Revising qualifications for industry 4.0

In 2017, an expert group within the Association Industry 4.0 Austria started to reflect on how the qualifications and competences required for industry in the digital age could be developed in initial and continuing education and training.

 AUSTRIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

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