

## **“With every show I learn something!” Educational services and contributions to lifelong learning by community radio and TV in Austria (2016)**

Original title: „Ich lerne mit jeder Sendung!“ Bildungsleistungen und Beiträge zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen des nichtkommerziellen Rundfunks in Österreich

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This study examines learning opportunities and contributions towards lifelong learning, which some 130 employees and around 3,000 volunteer radio station staff as well as school pupils, students, trainees and other individuals are able to access both in the form of organised training courses and on an informal basis in the non-profit community radio sector in Austria. To this end, the training programmes from 2013 from 11 out of a total of 17 non-profit radio stations were examined and additional data was generated in the period 2013-2015 in an online survey of all radio station participants, in interviews with 10 experts as well as in a research workshop and a focus group.

The results were split into six topic areas in which learning processes take place in a concentrated form both in workshops and in informal settings. The topic area *Using Technology* (1) is the most immediately identifiable acquirable skills area, which is used the most and also has a strongly demystifying effect; the microphone plays a particularly significant role due to the corroborative effects on self-perception and perception of others it has on presenters (*Speech and Language*, 2). Significantly increased *Participation and Discussion* (3) of social and cultural offerings as well as increased amounts of reading and writing result from such media work. This is also connected with the wide-ranging area of *Making Contact* (4) with other people in the studio, on training courses, for programmes etc., in particular also in the context of meeting public figures, and involves the strengthening of social capital and enhanced development of social skills. *Dealing with Media*

*Audiences* (5) focuses on dealing professionally with external as well as in-house broadcasting products with *Courage and Spontaneity* (6) very often cited as constituting elements of radio work, and which themselves also enable enjoyable learning. The most favourable conditions for training cited (individually and varying in extent) include convenience of the location or being able to train on the job or “learning-by-doing” at the radio station, having personal contacts at the radio station, being able to decide for oneself and in accordance with personal interests if and what is to be learned and having freedom in terms of content and design with regard to radio broadcasting.

The skills that can be acquired in the non-profit community radio sector clearly reflect all of the eight EU key competencies and demonstrate the sector’s potential as a training provider, as is indeed already recognised in the form of traineeships and apprenticeships and cooperative ventures with educational institutions and the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS).

On an international level, experience of working with the relevant accreditation systems varies as the heterogeneity among radio broadcasters means there is a wide-ranging, partly contradictory initial situation. While for some portfolios or certificates may help with self-assurance, for others they can be off-putting as they tend to associate them with an educational institution involving all the traditional mechanisms (and constraints). For the radio station itself, delivery of accredited training can also mean increased bureaucracy, which increases complexity and can result in alienation and lead to dependencies. If, however, personal contact, freedom, unconventionality and flexibility remain as key prerequisites for the development of self-directed interest in training and education, which is not solely promoted with a view to deriving economic benefit, that training in the non-profit radio sector can be provided on a larger scale and in the long term.

Based on the results of the study, proposals were developed, which are directed both at those who hold positions of responsibility within education policy-making as well as those working in the non-profit community radio sector.