



3.6 PROJECTS

Rückenwind: towards future employment

Rebuilding a century-old fishing boat in a Cornish fishing village provided a new sense of achievement and confidence for three young men from Austria who had difficult employment histories and disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2011, they spent up to a year living in the community in Cawsand, Cornwall (UK) with support from a youth worker and local people, including a traditional fisherman and boat builder. As well as learning technical skills in woodworking and improving their command of English, they also acquired a sense of teamwork by working together in an environment that at first they did not know. The project was run by the Rückenwind strategy, which specialises in strengthening the competences of young people with difficulties in the job market. It works with young people who have been unemployed for lengthy periods, or who have educational or health difficulties.

Rückenwind projects always have strong links to the local community, and have a local project coordinator as an intermediary to social workers, unemployment offices and other advisory organisations.

An initial interview process explores each young person's interests and skills in relation to possible fields of employment, and young people are then assigned to a local project (mostly non-profit making) to develop their strengths through concrete work experience. Participation in a youth exchange or a European Voluntary Service programme extends the experience to another country. The process helps develop the long-term motivation of participants, who frequently find work after their involvement, go back to school or participate in other projects. The project was hosted by Point Europa, a UK training and education charity, in collaboration with Cubic (Cultur and Bildung im Context) from Austria, which aims to help young people integrate into society and the world of work through international projects.⁵⁰

50. From http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/youth_employment_brochure_2012.pdf, pp. 8-9, accessed 26 October 2016.