

DORF-PLATZ

St. Andrä-Wördern

Location

Josef-Karner-Platz 1
3423 St. Andrä-Wördern, AT

Building Type

former stud farm & agricultural courtyard

Reuse

multifunctional building (*co-working, workshops, gastronomy, usw.*)

Usable Area

~ 2,500 m² (total site: 6,800 m²)

Investment Costs

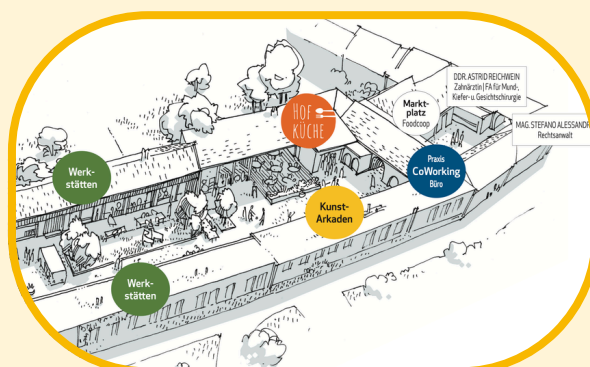
~ 440,000 €

Governance Model

FlexCo. (*previously GmbH*) & association

Time until Opening

3 years (*1 year intensive development, 2 years gradual implementation*) -
Opening in 2015



Initial Situation

- Desire to create a **communal village square & meeting place**
- **Demand for spaces** for initiatives, self-employed professionals, crafts & cultural activities
- Accidental discovery of a **centrally located, partly underused courtyard**
- Purchase was not possible - reuse was **deliberately** realised through a **rental model**

Reuse Strategy

Strategy: Gradual, participatory development with use-oriented planning

Spatial Programme:

- Community office & co-working spaces
- Practice rooms (e.g. *massage, midwifery, dentist*)
- Workshops & studios (e.g. *carpentry, saddlery*)
- Gastronomy ("*Hofküche*")
- Cultural & event spaces
- Publicly accessible courtyard with play, recreation & interaction areas

Key Decisions:

- Combination of fixed & flexible uses
- Production, services & social interaction intentionally co-located
- Rental instead of ownership
- Strong user participation

Objectives

- Creation of a **"third place"** without obligation to consume
- Connection of **work, craftsmanship, culture & social interaction**
- **Revitalisation of the village centre & visibility of local skills & competences**
- Inclusive place for all **generations** - low-threshold, open & suitable for everyday use

Financing & Costs

- **Total renovation** ~ 440,000 €
- A high level of **self-construction** (*reduced construction costs*)
- **Investments** were consciously realised **despite the rental model**

Financial Components:

- Private subordinated loans
- Public funding programmes (AWS "*Gründer am Land*", LEADER and others)
- Bank loan (*small*)
- Crowdfunding (*project-based*)
- Prize money

Income Sources: Subletting, gastronomy revenues (*+ income from events & celebrations*), membership fees (*association*), donations (*events*)

Operating Concept

- **Operator:** Jointly & professionally organised by FlexCo. & the association
- **Association** = shareholder of **FlexCo.**
- **Use Concept:** Combination of working, cultural & social functions (*long-term user involvement & co-responsibility*)
- **Hybrid everyday place** for diverse user groups
- **Volunteer engagement** remains **central**, but is supported by clear organisational structures
- **Goal:** Long-term stable community space with economic viability
- **Marketing:** Social media (*Instagram, Facebook*), website, newsletter, cultural programme announcements, municipal publications, print media (*posters, flyers, etc.*)

Challenges & Solutions

- **Challenge: Permits & regulatory procedures** (major challenge)
 - *Solution: Intensive communication, creative solutions, persistence*
- **Challenge: Political resistance**
 - *Solution: Focus on implementation instead of confrontation, strong civil society engagement*
- **Challenge: Renovation during ongoing operation**
 - *Solution: Gradual, step-by-step implementation*

Key Actors

- **Main Operators:** FlexCo. & association
- **The association** acts as the ideational carrier (*social component*)
- **FlexCo.** responsible for economic operations
- **Property Owner:** Private landlord
- **Users:** Actively involved community members
- Organisational structure partly **sociocratic**, with clearly defined roles

Transferability

What makes this example particularly instructive?

- Demonstrates **successful activation** of vacant buildings **without ownership**
- Shows the impact of **participatory planning processes**
- Highlights the advantages of **gradual project development**
- Demonstrates the importance of **early involvement of potential users**
- Shows how realistically organised volunteer structures can **enable intergenerational participation**

For whom is this model suitable?

- Municipalities with large courtyard or farm structures
- Civil society initiatives
- Projects with strong long-term social objectives
- Situations where ownership is not possible but rental agreements are negotiable

Tips

- ✓ Build a **diverse core team**
- ✓ Combine **visionary thinking with implementation competence**
- ✓ Pay attention to **personal & team resources**
- ✓ **Communicate transparently** from the beginning
- ✓ **Respect & complement existing local structures**
- ✓ Actively promote a **diverse mix of uses**
- ✗ Start **projects alone**
- ✗ Ignore signs of **volunteer overload**
- ✗ Present new concepts as **competition** to existing local offers
- ✗ Develop **one-sided or mono-functional use concepts**



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