"I come from Afghanistan where women are not allowed to work but have to look after the children. I spent eight years with my three children in Iran and worked there as a hairdresser, but also as a kitchen assistant for a year. I participated in the competence check of ABZ * Austria and now work in a canteen and prepare the lunch menu for around 600 employees a day."

There is no common system for the validation of informal skills and competences across Europe. ABZ helps women from a migrant background to document their education, professional experience, informal skills and competences to identify employment opportunities. To do this a competence check is carried out to evaluate existing skills and identify any potential need for further training. At the end of the process, each participant has a completed CV, an overview of their qualifications and, in the best case scenario, an internship or job offer.

The 7-week programme consists of 10 hours of workshops on various topics each week (e.g. IT skills, Austrian labour market) and one hour of individual coaching, focusing on the individual’s skill set, career options and personal empowerment. All 1,155 women participating in the project have found employment in the Austrian labour market or in social enterprises.