



**Vielmehr für Alle! - Verein für Bildung, Wohnen und
Teilhabe**
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[HOME] is where your heart ist safe! (Projekt-ID: 1021)

The aim of [HOME] is the promotion of mental and physical health of young refugees with a holistic approach as well as a multiprofessional team of psychologists, midwives, doctors and voluntary Buddies. Principles of work are low-threshold offers, encounters and exchanges at eye level as well as social participation. By a wide range we want to achieve a better psychosocial supply for young refugees and gain a stabilization of social relationships and networks. In terms of the idea of inclusion we enable encounters at eye level, we create orientation and perspectives, we support the young refugees' development of identity and role-enhancement and promote the creation of a social network.

We consider a holistic health approach, a social network, education or rather the exchange of knowledge as well as active social participation essential for the process of inner and outer stabilization. Hence result three concepts of [HOME]:

- **INGA - Initiative Gesundheit für Alle! (= initiative health for everyone!)**
- **Buddy project**
- **#openschool**

Due to direct contact with the target group of young refugees and volunteers the offer and the processes are currently evaluated and expanded as well as adapted to the needs of persons with and without the experience of being a refugee.

INGA

INGA is an initiative of psychologists, social workers, doctors and midwives for facilitation and maintenance of mental and physical health of adolescents and young adults. The psychologists coordinate the participants. INGA is focused on offering a low-threshold access to healthcare for refugees and at the same time supporting volunteers and employees of the organization „Vielmehr für Alle! - Verein für Bildung, Wohnen und Teilhabe“ in their work with the target group of young refugees. Thus in

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the last year the psychological supply was extended and is besides „PROSA - Projekt Schule für Alle!“ and „Flüchtlinge Willkommen“ (= „Refugees Welcome“) accessible for all other initiatives of the organization (Jugendcollege, work:in and Beratungszentrum).

A team of eight voluntary doctors provides consultation hours once a month at the school locations of PROSA in Kandlgasse and Brünner Straße in Vienna. The consultation hours are attended regularly by 10-20 students. Topics are the clarifications of symptoms, questions about medication, information and educational work. There are referrals to specialists, to psychological counselling and to other psychosocial supplies.

The voluntary midwives offer maternity care in refugee accommodations and inform in individual consultation and groups about pregnancy and birth.

There is a close network between two psychologists and the teachers of „Health and Social Issues“ at PROSA. In the winter term 2016 there is a monthly joint lesson to make the psychological supply known, to offer psycho-education, to create a relationship of trust and to identify the needs of the students. Those lessons are about subjects such as healthy nutrition, strengthening of resources, addictive substances, team and conflict, communication, depression and trauma. Further there is a psychologist at every location of PROSA once a week to provide a low-threshold first point of contact for the students. With the teachers and social workers intervision and case conferences take place.

For (following) individual consultation we rent a consultation room in a psychological practice for three half-days a week. There is space for

- Strengthening of resources
- Psycho-education
- Clarification of depressive symptoms, posttraumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric disorders
- Consultation in concentration and learning difficulties or sleep disturbance
- Support in the process of change and the development of new life plans

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- Conflicts with classmates, buddies, etc.
- Assistance in finding a psychotherapy and other psychosocial offers etc.

The first contact happens via teachers, social workers or the students themselves. Following appointments are arranged directly with the clients. The consultations take place in the confident environment of the psychological practice.

Everybody can use the services for free and regardless of the status in the asylum procedures or the social respective health insurance.

Starting with summer term 2016 we accompanied ca. 45 clients in individual consultations and ca. 120 in a group setting.

All members of the shared flats of „Flüchtlinge Willkommen“ can analyse situations and conflicts in psychological counselling and together we can work out how to best handle the situation. The contact persons of „Flüchtlinge Willkommen“ can arrange meetings with the psychologists as required.

For the refugees the whole psychological assistance is available also for other stressful situations and subjects even if those are not linked to the housing situation.

To ensure professional work from the employees and volunteers of „Vielmehr für Alle!“ we established an external network of more than 50 supervisors which we can contact as required. We consider the own mental hygiene, the regular reflection about challenges and the ongoing training about asylum policy and psychological subjects as well as a critical analysis of racism as essential components of the work with refugees. For this reason [HOME] organizes a training programme for all volunteers and employees. In the last year ca. 20 workshops and lectures took place.

Buddyproject

The Buddyproject is about building stable relationships as well as exchange and encounter on eye level. For the volunteers it works as a way to expand their horizons as well as a chance to involve themselves for a more involved society. They too are motivated to attend the Workshops made available (topics include Asylum law, Psychological effects of escape, as well as Racism-critical competences). For the

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young refugees a Buddy is an extension of their social network as well as support in finding their way in a to them new country.

As the organisation “Vielmehr für Alle!” continues to grow and improve, since the summer the work:in Buddies have replaced the “Bedarfs Buddies” (who were called in irregularly when there was a specific need). Work:in buddies support young refugees in the professional world, helping, with their own work experience, the orientation of the various interests and work-competences, with research, qualification possibilities, advice as well as support in the application process.



Within the last year we had 54 “Vertrauens-Buddy” (Trust buddy) Couples, 92 “Lern-Buddy” (Study buddy) couples, and since summer 2016 we have 15 work:in buddy couples. All volunteers attended “get to know” meetings, where their motivation to become a buddy was discussed and their interests and time as well as personal resources were cleared. Workshops were held with the over 100 PROSA students to introduce the Buddyprojekt and the various different buddy types. All students filled out a profile stating their desires and expectations, as well as important facts such as their contact details as well as their availability.

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A documentation system, where volunteer buddies document how often they meet their buddy and add a small reflection of their meetings, serves as quality control as well as a way to hear back about how the buddy relationship is going. Monthly we offer “Buddymeetings”, separately for the volunteers as well as for the young refugees, which serve as a chance for them to have an exchange with others as well as to discuss worries or concerns with us. When there are singled out issues or conflicts we offer one on one meetings with our psychologists.

#openschoool

#openschoool offers a meeting space in which people have the possibility to learn from each other regardless of their educational background, age or origin. We are convinced that every person brings along talents that enrich others. Within the framework of short-term workshops or long-term courses, an exchange of knowledge takes place. #openschoool workshops are open to everyone. We like to have a colorful composition of participants and those who conduct workshops from all corners of society.

#openschoool is now based on two principles, which we call the campus and the empowerment program, which was developed during the last year.

Campus

The "campus" is the open workshop program of #openschoool. Everyone can request a workshop or offer one themselves. This happens via the website www.openschoool.org or the "Wunschbörse", which takes place once a month at Café PROSA. In addition, "Speakout Mondays" are held at irregular intervals on specific topics. So far, there have been more than 30 campus workshops and five "Speakout Monday" events. Over the year, we also added our empowerment program, which is aimed at socially disadvantaged groups, in particular refugees.

Empowerment-program

#openschoool workshops are for everyone! However, social barriers make it difficult for certain groups to participate, so special emphasis was placed on creating an empowerment program for those individuals as well as groups of people in addition to our "campus". So far, there have been more than 20 empowerment workshops. In total there were more than 400 participants attending #openschoool workshops.



What socio-political purpose does this project support?

Adolescent and young adult refugees are a highly marginalised group. Traumatic experiences in their home country and on their dangerous escape to Austria, lack of safety and a sense of security, discrimination as well as a non-existent social network are just some of the burdens that many of these young people are dealing with.

Young refugees are limited in many areas of life. Migrants, those who were granted asylum and those who are still awaiting it oftentimes find themselves in situations trademarked by:

- uncertainty about their future due to the uncertainty about their legal permission to stay
- completely missing or difficult access to academic and/or professional education and training, as well as to the job market (for example due to limited German skills, lack of degrees, as well as political decisions)
- Trauma as well as posttraumatic stress disorders due to violent experiences
- Isolation due to lack of support and lack of orientation possibilities within their new society
- uncertain living conditions (for example having to move due to their age or change in their asylum status, limited shared living places, lack of financial possibilities)
- Discrimination as well as racism

With various approaches [HOME] tries, on one hand, to relieve some of these stresses for the young refugees, and on the other hand, tries to create contact possibilities between the refugees and the Viennese society to dismantle prejudices and fears.

The psychological offer aims to, for example, assist the members of the new flat shares of “Flüchtlinge Willkommen” (Refugees Welcome) in a harmonious and sustainable cohabitation. Though the interests and expectations of all the inhabitants of the flat are discussed primarily, oftentimes after living together and reaching a daily routine raises issues. Often both the young refugees as well as the other flat-inhabitants have a need for support in communication issues or conflict solving. In that case anyone can reach out to the Psychologists.

The long term goal of [HOME] is the build-up of a long-term psychosocial contact point for young refugees, independent of their asylum status that is specifically formed with their needs in mind. At meetings and networking events with other organisations the large need for specific psychosocial offers for refugees keeps coming up. Existing organisations that specifically work with refugees, such as Hemayat, have long waiting lists (Hemayat has 350-400 people on their waiting list, as sourced by “Stand Tagung Flucht aus Frauenperspektive”, Barbara Preitler, September 2016).

There is a need for low-threshold offers for individual one on one counselling, for trauma, for group settings, psycho-education, offers that are gender specific, etc. Essential is the possibility for translators to be of aid during the sessions, to be able to rightfully assess the emotions. An accompanying evaluation should secure the quality and development of the project.

With the buddyproject and #openschoool, social contacts, relationships, as well as access to educational and free-time activities as well as a medical and psychological health supply promote the feeling of independence for the refugees. The volunteers get to know the reality of the young refugees lives and receive a concrete and personal access to the themes “refuge” and “asylum politics”.

For #openschoool, the key concern is to reach socially disadvantaged people with the empowerment program. In addition, those people should be encouraged to act as instructors, who are usually not allowed to take these positions. In particular, refugees are rarely able to pass on their experience and knowledge in an institutionalized framework. #openschoool is strongly committed to the topic of education and it encourages the active shaping of this topic. In the school of the future knowledge is no longer exclusively taught by a teacher, but by the relationships between people. Learning from each other is only possible when students relate to teachers. The workshops are intended to enable encounters on an equal footing, which result in a knowledge exchange and - in the best case - networks and long relationships.

#openschoool eliminates barriers, helps reserved people make contact (regarding knowledge, specific cultures, etc.) and makes valuable exchange possible.

In the beginning of the experiment we discussed the definition of education and the direction in which it could develop in the next decades. From this discussion we developed a small #openschoool manifest:

1. **O censity counts**, not knowledge. What would your knowledge be good for if you cannot share it with others? At #openschoool, we want to create a space to share knowledge.
2. **O rienation is better than certification**. At #openschoool, no certificates are issued & no titles are given, but we want to give orientation.
3. **O rthogravie is overrated** - relationships are everything. Often, the form is more important than the content. This for example can be hard for people with diffiulties in literacy and numeracy. We want to focus on the strengths of people to show what is possible when you can trust a network.

Since the beginning, the following points have been our greatest challenges:

- low threshold (organization wise as well as the workshops itself)
- languages
- easy access for everyone (especially for disadvantaged groups).

That's why, last year, we have repeatedly devised and tested various strategies to meet these challenges. One of these will be a new #openschoool app.

How have others reacted to this project?

The highlight of the year was when we entered the "Ideegration" competition. It is a project that was looking for the most effective social initiative in the theme of integration. [HOME] with Prosa was one of 15 initiatives that were chosen and invited to the Ideegration conference from over 100 others. There we were able to introduce ourselves and our project in front of a large circle of stakeholders, as well as mobilise supporters and cooperating organizations using an interactive format. As the only health initiative we were able to convince the jury and were, together with PROSA,

chosen as one of the 5 best solutions. The conference showed large interest as well as constructive exchange with engaged persons, but also with large institutions like the “Rotes Kreuz” (the Red Cross), the Volkshilfe, etc.

Since the interest in voluntary engagement strongly decreased throughout the year, we started a buddy campaign over the summer, to spread the project at universities. Existing buddy couples were asked to participate in a video shoot, where they shortly speak about their buddy relationship. The videos can be found on our website www.vielmehr.at/buddy. The campaign was able to motivate many new volunteers, and since the summer we are able to match approximately four new buddies per week.

In order to reach different groups of people and individuals with our #openschoool program, we work with different formats: our facebook page, a monthly newsletter with our program, a printed monthly program we send to partners and our #openschoool-ambassadors as well as our website, which is our primary tool for organising workshops. As of now we have an online community with more than 350 users and more than 50 workshops. #openschoool has experienced positive reactions, which is why, among others, the TU Vienna - Faculty of Architecture & Planning, UniClub, OPENmarx, future.lab and KO - Alte Burse are among our cooperations. There is also a close collaboration with the initiatives from our organisation “Vielmehr für Alle! - Verein für Bildung, Wohnen und Teilhabe”.

What have the donations been used for?

Accordingly to our application donations were used mostly for personell costs (one psychologist and one coordinator). As budgeted, a substantial amount went towards rental fees. Also there were expenditures for material and printing, but not nearly as much as originally planned. We did not spend money for “Beitrag Psychotherapie Stunden” as there were no vacant spots available for our clients, instead we rebudgeted for “Supervision” for the core team of psychologists. Less than budgeted we spent on “Eintritte und Aktivitäten” as we often got the opportunity to use free offers. A detailed composition of costs covered by the funds of [HOME] is where your heart is safe is available in the supplemental sheet of accountings.