

ENGLISH

SUPPLEMENT

Centre of Competence

for the accomodation and integration of refugees and migrants

Despite the difficult time during the corona pandemic Integrationshaus was able to successfully implement all projects for the people we look after 2020.

Due to the situation and at the request of the Management Board, Andrea Eraslan-Weninger continued to manage the business until February 2021. Alexandra Jachim as CFO and Martin Wurzenrainer as COO are now leading the Integrationshaus into the future.

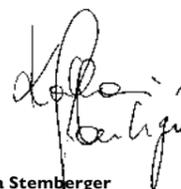
PREFACE

"HUMAN RIGHTS DO NOT TAKE A BREAK!
WE DEMONSTRATE HOW TO DO THINGS: WITH DECENCY,
KNOW-HOW AND NEIGHBOURLY LOVE."

The past year was an extra exercise in resilience. We all experienced how the pandemic massively interfered with our lives and still does today – at all levels. However, people are not equally resilient. In particular, when a life has been enormously disrupted by persecution, war, violence and, eventually, flight, many things are much more difficult. The pandemic has reopened old sores, the balance re-established with great efforts in many cases is destabilised again and fear and insecurity rear their ugly heads.

It is a mammoth task to ensure highly professional standards of protection and individual support for our residents, course participants and clients. On behalf of the Executive Board, I want to thank the entire team of Integrationshaus for accomplishing this task. Last year, however, it was not only the pandemic that took our breath away as the Austrian federal government apparently also imposed a lockdown on human rights! It allowed that people were deported again in these difficult times and refuses to take part in rescuing desperate people from camps at the EU's external borders.

For 25 years, Integrationshaus has supported fleeing people and their integration in line with highest standards. In these efforts, we have been assisted by numerous donors and partners who are reliably by our side. Thank you for also helping us provide stability and security to refugees and accompanying them towards self-determined lives also in times of crisis!



Katharina Stemberger
Chairwoman of the Executive Board

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Andrea Eraslan-Weninger, CEO until February 2021

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC STRETCHED PEOPLE SEEKING PROTECTION AND CARE WORKERS TO THE LIMIT IN 2020!

Integrationshaus based in Vienna's Leopoldstadt district is a best-practice example of active solidarity, a humane attitude and mutual respect. It is a centre of competence for the accommodation and integration of refugees that serves as a role model internationally. Together with volunteers, more than 150 employees speaking 41 different languages demonstrate how to make the accommodation and integration of refugees work well while taking special account of the needs of people requiring a higher level of care, such as traumatised people, single parents as well as unaccompanied or accompanied minor refugees.

Integrationshaus is a showcase for Europe and understands itself as the alternative to the accommodation of refugees in inhumane large camps!

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic raised special challenges for Integrationshaus. Without the great solidarity of refugees, dedicated employees, volunteers, our important donors and grantors we would not have been able to make it through this difficult year.

"I want to thank everybody for this active solidarity in my capacity as managing director. This year stretched everybody to the limit, but together we made it!"

All over the world, more than 80 million people are fleeing. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic additionally contribute to further aggravating social inequalities, the scarcity of resources and the situation of people fleeing from war, persecution and hunger. European policy-makers are called upon to finally put an end to the inhumane closed-doors policy and to ensure fair asylum procedures and decent reception conditions.

In 2020, in particular, it became obvious that this militarisation and closed-doors policy results in more and more suffering and many innocent casualties. Therefore, Integrationshaus stands up for European reception mechanisms that give people seeking protection safe access to a fair and sustainable asylum system. The militarisation and externalisation of the EU borders as well as push-backs have to be stopped at last and the non-refoulement principle must finally be taken seriously!

Unfortunately, the Austrian federal government does not make any efforts to bring about this urgently needed change in the orientation of refugee policy. The opposite is true. In 2020, even well-integrated children were deported and emergency measures for admitting vulnerable people from the large Kara Tepe camp in Greece were denied – in spite of comprehensive support offered in Austria.

Deportations to countries where people are not safe, such as Afghanistan, were not stopped either! Integrationshaus calls for giving people who have made their homes in Austria access to rights of residence. To prevent a lack of rights, we need a real right of abode that deserves this name.

In 2020, Integrationshaus particularly advocated for giving people granted subsidiary protection the same rights under social law as refugees recognised under the Geneva Refugee Convention, for example with regard to family reunification, securing of a livelihood, education and work as well as housing. However, Integrationshaus also stood up against the isolation of people seeking protection, for independent legal advice and for a better support system for vulnerable refugees.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF INTEGRATIONSHAUS

We originally intended to celebrate our 25th anniversary with a music festival, an international conference and the publication of the monitoring report "Flüchten – Ankommen – Bleiben!?" (Fleeing – arriving – staying!?).

Regrettably, COVID-19 also thwarted some of these plans. The two-day **expert conference** "Wider die soziale Spaltung" (Against social division) had to be cancelled for the time being.

The **Arena Open Air** originally scheduled for June 2020 also had to be postponed and will now only take place in June 2022.

With great pleasure, however, we were able to prepare and publish the **monitoring report**. In this report, Integrationshaus took sides with people seeking protection. The objective was to draw a comprehensive picture and offer a critical analysis of current events and developments in the intertwined fields of flight, migration and asylum from the perspective of Integrationshaus. This analysis also gave rise to a series of recommendations for actions to deal with people seeking protection in a just and responsible manner.

available in German at
www.integrationshaus.at/monitoringbericht

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: MAJOR CHALLENGES FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to implement successfully all our projects for the people supported by us at Integrationshaus. We even were able to expand our programme by including two new projects aimed at integrating women in the labour market and one digitisation project within the framework of labour market participation.

All the five departments of Integrationshaus, however, had to find solutions quickly in order to continue supporting course participants, people seeking advice in the counselling centres and residents of the residential facility, the homes supported by mobile staff and the socio-pedagogical residential groups in a way appropriate to the new situation. Processes were quickly re-designed, many activities had to be switched to telework and a health management concept adjusted to the pandemic had to be drawn up.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

CHAIRMANS OF THE BOARD

Katharina Stemberger,
Chairwoman of the Executive Board
Wilhelm Resetarits, Honorary Chairman
Georg Dimitz, Vice-Chairman
Sepp Stranig, Vice-Chairman

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Zoreh Ali-Pahlavani, Member (until 2020)
Maximilian Eberl, Member
Daneta Memišević, Member
Beatrix Neundlinger, Member
Werner Rosinak, Member
Ferdinand Sator, Member (until 2020)
Christian Schmaus, Member
Terezija Stoisits, Member
Marko Szucsich, Member

At the management level, a central crisis management team continuously dealt with current developments, regulations issued by national and regional governments as well as requirements and conditions implemented by various grantors, but also with COVID grants and the organisation of protective equipment and testing. Internally, we communicated important requirements and developments, answered numerous questions, made decisions, and externally, we also engaged in subject-specific networks and co-operated well with public authorities and other institutions, such as the crisis management team of the City of Vienna.

Tracking and tracing suspected and confirmed cases, managing and reporting contact persons, obtaining test results, ensuring quarantine and test management, personnel management and related administrative tasks, the introduction of teleworking, providing the technical equipment and submitting cost reimbursement and grant applications as well as consultations between the management and grantors were extremely time-consuming and had major consequences for the workload in our organisation in 2020.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to press swiftly ahead with the digital transformation at Integrationshaus. It is fantastic how much the entire team of Integrationshaus achieved in this field within such a short time. The technical equipment was improved continuously, a digitisation prio-

rity was introduced into the future training programme and quality standards were prepared for online counselling. Our online team meetings and the design of the online courses were continuously developed further and made more and more professional. Thus, it was possible to continue working with all the important network partners.

STAFF

At the end of 2020, Integrationshaus had a team of 152 people who speak a total of 41 different languages and have diverse professional backgrounds, such as psychology, social work, technical education, linguistics, socio-pedagogy and law. Fourteen employees were on educational, parental leave or on a sabbatical at the end of the year. One team member worked as a freelancer.

CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT AT THE END OF 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the publication of the management vacancy originally planned for early March was postponed to the end of June and, at the request of the Executive Committee, my contract was extended to February 2021. The Executive Committee resolved to implement a dual leadership with an operative manager and a commercial manager. After the decision was made by the Executive Committee, Alexandra Jachim was employed as the commercial manager on 17 November 2020 and Martin Wurzenrainer was appointed operative manager on 1 December 2020.

Asylum applications in Austria

In Austria, the arrival of refugees has sharply declined for many years because of the European and Austrian policy of turning away refugees. Whereas almost 90,000 asylum proceedings were launched in 2015, applications have continuously decreased ever since. In 2020, asylum applications totalled 14,192, with 77% of applicants being male and 23% female. Most applications were filed by people from Syria, Afghanistan, Morocco, Iraq and Somalia.

Asylum applications filed by unaccompanied minor refugees (UMRs)

Asylum applications filed by unaccompanied minor refugees also changed much during recent years. In 2015, more than 9,300 asylum applications were submitted by unaccompanied minor refugees. After a low of just 488 applications in 2018, their number again rose slightly in the last two years. Thus, asylum applications by UMRs totalled 1,467, including 108 by underage applicants, in 2020. Most UMRs come from Syria and Afghanistan.

People receiving basic welfare support in Vienna

In line with those developments, the number of people receiving basic welfare support changed as well. While this group totalled 15,000 people in Vienna in 2019, it declined to 10,690 people in 2020. 75% of the people receiving basic welfare support lived in private accommodation and 25% in organised accommodation in Vienna in 2020.

Persons registered with the Public Employment Service (AMS) and having access to the labour market

At the end of 2020, a total of 36,464 people granted asylum or subsidiary protection were registered as job seekers or training participants with the AMS. Out of them, almost 60%, i.e. 22,356 people, lived in Vienna. Special funding for this group of persons continues to be inadequate – a disastrous situation that is detrimental not only to the refugees, but also for society at large.

Sources:

Asylstatistik 12/2020 of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), https://www.bmi.gv.at/301/Statistiken/files/2020/Asylstatistik_Dezember2020.pdf
Vienna Social Fund: Refugees, asylum and basic welfare support – graphs and data for Vienna, Austria and the EU, December 2020

4,218 PEOPLE BENEFITTED

from accommodation, counselling and training offered by Integrationshaus.

Residents residential facility in total:	237	MAMA LERNT DEUTSCH – F.U.T.U.R.E.-Train:	71
Residential facility:	143	JAWA ^{Next 11:}	60
First Flat:	63	Volunteer training:	59
Caravan:	22	A2+ Integration Course:	13
einewelt-wg:	9	Participatory project "Frauenstimmen":	10
Education in total:	442	FAVoritIN:	24
Course participants	353	Childcare places (for course participants)	69
BAJU:	34	Kindergarten:	20
AK_Jug:	13	Persons counselled in total:	3,539

WITH DUAL LEADERSHIP INTO THE FUTURE

On 1 February 2021, Alexandra Jachim (CFO) and Martin Wurzenrainer (COO) took over the helm at Integrationshaus.

The steady expansion in recent years and the growth of Integrationshaus have clearly demonstrated that a dual leadership is necessary for facing the challenges of the future. By dividing the responsibilities we can now focus more on the tasks of the future and are able to continue to advance professional standards at Integrationshaus. An organisational development process, the further development of digitisation and the expansion

of corporate co-operation are just a few new fields of activities to strengthen Integrationshaus – at the highest possible level in order to accompany refugees towards self-determined lives together with our team!

From the perspective of operative management, the first months clearly showed that our work have changed substantially because of the psychological pressures exerted by the COVID-19 pandemic on our clients: for example, by the switch to online counselling and distance learning. After all, for instance, the security offered by a well-structured day is particularly important especially for these vulnerable groups. However, we also need to be highly vigilant with regard to policy: the existential situation for people granted subsi-



STAFF 2020

**Total 152 employees,
14 on parent leave/sabbatical**

1 freelancer and 137 active staff members

THANK YOU!

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a major challenge, but its consequences will also have strong impacts in the fields of flight, migration and integration and will influence the future of Integrationshaus.

“I am grateful for having been able to use my know-how for refugees day by day and to make a big contribution to improving professionalism in the work with refugees.”

Andrea Eraslan-Weninger, CEO until February 2021

FINANCIAL REPORT

SOURCES OF FUNDS 2020

	Amount	%
Earmarked donations		
e.g. psychological child care, legal advice, etc.	170.175,15	
Total earmarked donations	170.175,15	2,01
Non-earmarked donations		
Total non-earmarked donations*	1.202.062,17	14,20
* The major share of non-earmarked donations was used for the psycho-social care and socio-pedagogics in 2020; further, a donation reserve has been set up for 2021.		
Total donations	1.372.237,32	16,22
Public subsidies and grants		
Public Employment Service	59.505,63	0,70
Chamber of Labour	169.343,87	2,00
Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection	16.000,00	0,19
Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research	95.600,00	1,13
Federal Chancellery	20.200,00	0,24
Federal Ministry of the Interior for civilian servants	50.840,00	0,60
ESF	191.200,00	2,26
Vienna Social Fund	2.729.897,07	32,26
Municipal Department 11	1.384.732,22	16,36
Municipal Department 17	146.054,43	1,73
Service Agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs	1.607.394,00	18,99
Vienna Employee Promotion Fund	375.445,87	4,44
Total public subsidies and grants	6.846.213,09	80,90
Other income		
Events	139.784,66	1,65
Other income	104.116,31	1,23
Total other income	243.900,97	2,88
Release of donation reserves	0,00	0,00
Total sources of funds	8.462.351,38	100,00

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS 2020

Total expenditure on purposes defined in the by-laws				
Field	Personnel expenditure	Material expenditure	Total	%
Labour market, education, co-operation projects	872.192,66	143.783,42	1.015.976,08	12,01
Counselling Centre & independent legal advice	887.953,01	145.420,04	1.033.373,05	12,21
Educational counselling	1.430.828,96	178.953,90	1.609.782,86	19,02
Psycho-social care	1.179.376,27	831.264,93	2.010.641,20	23,76
Socio-pedagogics	1.557.483,54	345.507,14	1.902.990,68	22,46
Organisation of events (Refugee Ball, Lachen hilft!)	59.417,12	85.895,70	145.312,83	1,72
Total expenditure on purposes defined in the by-laws			7.718.076,70	91,20
II. Fundraising				
Fundraising	22.576,36	10.906,16	33.482,52	
Total funds raised			33.482,52	0,40
III. Administrative expenditure				
General administration	154.466,06	219.993,58	374.459,64	4,43
Donation management	81.306,66	9.907,68	91.214,34	1,08
Total administrative expenditure			465.673,98	5,50
IV. Unused, earmarked donations and subsidies				
Allocation of donations reserve not yet used, not dedicated and dedicated donations			245.118,19	2,90
Total amount of donations and subsidies not yet used			245.118,19	2,90
Total fund allocation			8.462.351,38	100,00

Responsible for fundraising are Mag. Alexandra Jachim, MAS (CFO) and Mag. Gabi Ecker (Public Relations).
Responsible for donation management are Mag. Alexandra Jachim, MAS (CFO) and Mag. Susanne Lettner (accounting).
The persons responsible for data protection are Mag. Lisa Alluri and our external data protection officer, Dr. Werner Pilgermair.

FUNDRAISING, PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

We thank all our donors for giving refugees a future!

Not all projects implemented at Integrationshaus are fully funded by public grantors, such as the provision of independent legal advice, services specifically needed in psychosocial care and special childcare projects. They are particularly important in order to empower refugees, develop their skills and support them in making a fresh start. Therefore, the frequently long-standing solidarity of individuals, enterprises and organisations with refugees is a particularly important source of support for Integrationshaus.

It is only because of this help that we can maintain the necessary services in line with our usual quality standards and implement the projects for asylum seekers and migrants also in the longer term.

In particular, many individual donors have demonstrated their solidarity and helped us reliably and loyally over many years. Thank you very much!
Each donation also means that the supporters place trust in our work. We are aware of the responsibility that comes along with this trust and use the funds economically for the purpose intended. This has earned us the donation certificate that evidences stringent quality standards, transparency and continuous auditing.

COMPANIES PROVIDE HELP

We are looking forward to co-operating also with more enterprise partners in future. Therefore, the year 2020 was dominated by improving professionalism in the field of corporate fundraising.

A folder presents the entire range of co-operation opportunities: from classic monetary donations to donations of time and know-how and on to long-term individual co-operation. We take particular pleasure in support provided by enterprises wishing to send a strong signal for integration and pursuing an honest sustainability strategy through their engagement.

WE THANK ALL COMPANIES WHICH HAVE SUPPORTED US FOR YEARS

We owe special thanks to

- the Viennese weekly FALTER. Its committed team raised the incredibly fan-

tastic amount of EUR 217,652 for Integrationshaus in their Christmas campaign "Hilfe, Geschenke!" (Help, gifts!).

- the winery of Heike and Gernot Heinrich. It again supported Integrationshaus with a total amount of EUR 40,000 from the sale of Cherub wines in all SPAR supermarkets.
- BILLA for the donation of EUR 10,000.

We also thank very much all the companies and organisations which placed ads in Gute Zeitung in 2020 and thereby helped us distribute the "tabloid for a good cause" all over Austria and raising awareness of Integrationshaus. Furthermore, we are pleased to co-operate with our new banking partner Raiffeisenlandesbank NÖ-Wien.

In the field of donations in kind, we especially want to highlight the following activities carried out in 2020: The law firm Konrad & Partner Rechtsanwälte GmbH fulfilled the Christmas wishes indicated in letters written by the children supported by the Socio-Pedagogical Department. In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, Penta Hotel again surprised the children living in the residential facility with Christmas presents.

GIVING TUESDAY WITH THE CORPORATE PARTNER SEELLENBAND

On Giving Tuesday 2020, the worldwide day of giving, we were also able to create a special win-win situation together with our corporate partner Seellenband. Within the framework of an online campaign organised around 1 December 2020, the start-up donated 10% of all earnings to Integrationshaus. The campaign was accompanied and supported through appropriate awareness raising activities by Integrationshaus.

SUPPORT BY A CHARITABLE PRIVATE FOUNDATION

The charitable private foundation RD Foundation Vienna stands for research, development and human rights. Fully in line with these priority areas, the foundation supported the independent legal advice unit for asylum seekers and refugees of Integrationshaus with EUR 10,000. Integrationshaus thanks for this eminently important donation!

GUTE ZEITUNG JOURNAL THE TABLOID FOR A GOOD CAUSE

The Gute Zeitung journal has the self-imposed task of contributing to a better understanding of refugees and the improvement of the tight financial situation of Integrationshaus. Moreover, the donations flowing to Integrationshaus owing to Gute Zeitung play a special role in funding projects. For the first time in its 25-year history, the Gute Zeitung carrying stories about successes, challenges and difficulties of refugees from Integrationshaus was distributed to 2.4 million households all over Austria.

The articles were written by the journalists Edith Meinhart, Katharina Nagele and others. Furthermore, Nikolaus Heinelt, managing editor of Gute Zeitung, again asked public figures to call for more humanity and respect in testimonials: Austria's Federal President Alexander van der Bellen, President Renate Anderl of the Chamber of Labour, Vienna's Executive City Councilor Ulli Sima, Dancing Stars' anchorwoman Kristina Inhof and soccer player Andreas Ogris. Gottfried Moritz and Mario Simon shared the work of art directors. Distribution was organised and supported by Feibra. Thus, advertisers had the opportunity to place ads in a Gute Zeitung issue published nation-wide for the first time.

In parallel to the distribution of Gute Zeitung, ads using a disturbing cartoon by Gerhard Haderer were placed in the daily Die Presse, in the weekly FALTER and the GEWINN magazine to request donations for Integrationshaus - here we also have to thank Y&R Vienna very much for their free support.

Thanks to numerous long-standing partners an additional anniversary issue was published and distributed to 1.4 million households in eastern Austria to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Integrationshaus. In three smaller issues for donors of Integrationshaus, we reported on education and language acquisition, isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic and on our projects specifically dedicated to the promotion of women.

EVENTS

In organising cultural events, Integrationshaus pursues two key goals: creating opportunities for dialogue between different cultures and/or giving impulses for reflecting on political developments in the field of integration and migration. It is also necessary to generate financial resources safeguarding the work of Integrationshaus. In 2020, however, many things turned out quite differently.

As one of the last big live events, the traditional **Viennese Refugee Ball** still took place at the sold-out Vienna City Hall on 22 February 2020. It was already for the 26th time that a top-class musical line-up was at the heart of this ball: internationally acclaimed hip hop and soul singer Nneka, Austrian stars such as EsRAP, Birgit Denk, Madame Baheux, Luca Bassanese & Piccola Orchestra Popolare and many more. Every year, the Refugee Ball sends a loud signal for diversity, solidarity and human rights. The entire net revenue of the Ball is used to fund the work of Integrationshaus.

The satirical gala "**Lachen hilft!**" (Laughing helps!) already has a long tradition, too. It takes place twice a year - on 1 May and 26 October - at Stadtsaal in Vienna. The event scheduled for 1 May 2020 at which Alfred Dorfer and Josef Hader were to read their classic INDIEN had to be postponed to late summer because of COVID-19.

On 26 October 2020, four of the best known Austrian artists - Manuel Rubey, Gunkl, Flüs-terzweieck and Kollegium Kalksburg - were able to perform again as planned. Regrettably, another gala planned for 28 December had to be cancelled. Many thanks to Stadtsaal and all artists for their long-standing support as well as to the many guests who additionally donate to Integrationshaus at numerous satirical evenings.

The **24th wine auction** for the benefit of Integrationshaus was held online for the first time. Wines donated by renowned Austrian and international wineries were auctioned off with the help of Dorotheum. Numerous vintners opened their treasure vaults and supplied a selection of many large bottles and rare wines. As usual, the project was supported by a big group of vintners and friends: Heike Heinrich of the winery Heike & Gernot Heinrich organised the wine donations for the auction, wine journalist Helmut Knall of wine-times.com compiled the catalogue and Sylvia Petz provided support by additionally promoting the auction.

The big open-air event to celebrate the 25th anniversary at Arena had to be postponed to June 2022 because of COVID-19.

THANK YOU !

Great solidarity with refugees is a prerequisite for us to continue the services required in line with our usual quality standards. Whether made by individuals, enterprises or organisations - each donation also means for us that the donors place trust in our work.

We are aware of the responsibility that comes along with this trust and strictly use the funds for the purpose intended. This has earned us the donation certificate that evidences stringent quality standards, transparency and continuous auditing.

DEPARTMENT FOR PSYCHO-SOCIAL CARE

PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE IN THE TIMES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Psychosocial Care Department consists of two residential projects for asylum seekers, persons granted asylum and subsidiary protection who receive basic welfare support. The residential facility and the residential project First Flat.

In 2020, work in psychosocial care was mainly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a switch to working from home was not easily possible in the residential facility and in the assisted residential groups of First Flat, all the work was re-organised within no time. To protect residents, clients and employees, precautions had to be taken, e.g. wearing masks, using Plexiglas walls between clients and care workers/psychologists, observing minimum distances and a maximum number of persons in counselling and break rooms. In this process, digitisation increased: A part of counselling sessions was held via telephone conferences, the weekly meetings with the residential groups of First Flat were carried out via chat functions on mobile phones and team meetings took place online only.

Ongoing communication with clients on current COVID-19 information was particularly important. To counter untruths spreading on social media, it was essential to provide fact-based information, especially on subjects such as protective measures, testing and vaccination. While there were suspected cases and direct contact persons again and again in the residential facility and residential groups of First Flat, only very few persons were actually infected with COVID-19.

Another challenge was homeschooling. Both children and parents had to be intensively supported. For the residents, the situation was particularly difficult because of their

partly limited language skills. To avoid that the children and young people fall behind at school, tuition and tablets were organised. Living in confined space, reduced social contacts and the absence of relieving activities, such as sports, had a negative impact on the mental health of the clients. As a result, the need for psychological, therapeutic as well as psychiatric treatment considerably rose.

Moreover, capacity utilisation became a problem in the residential facility for the first time. Due to the lower number of people receiving basic welfare support in Vienna, not all the vacancies arising were filled. Thanks to our expertise in supporting people with mental conditions, this development was countered quickly and the residential offering was expanded by five new stabilisation places. They benefit people who need intensive care because of an acute crisis or a particularly severe mental disorder – these places were filled immediately.

In the field of activities for children and young people, the projects “Learning assistance” for refugee children living in the residential facility and “Education first” for the First Flat residents put the focus on personalised support. “Education first”, for example, supported young adults in shaping their general and vocational education in an autonomous and goal-oriented way, in strengthening their self-esteem and in developing perspectives for their own future. Personal strengthening was also given priority in the psychological project “Strong as a Bear” for children in which the children’s feeling of powerlessness that arose from traumatic experiences in the past was to be replaced by a feeling of capability and self-effectiveness.

ving room and listening to the individual wishes and needs of the children. Thus each child can use the service offered by the study group in her/his own way. This requires a high level of creativity, flexibility and perseverance from us as a team. All the more, we experience our work with the children and young people and, in particular, shared successes as extremely enriching and instructive.

The COVID-19 pandemic puts a very special challenge on the children. For this reason, it was very important to us to maintain the study group also during the pandemic. Thanks to a well-conceived hygiene concept and strict safety measures, we were able to continue the study group which is a weekly fixture for many children in a COVID-19-compliant way.

Funded by
FSW – Fonds Soziales Wien, Fachbereich Betreutes Wohnen, Wiener Flüchtlingshilfe
Bundeskantleramt Wien Abteilung III/2 (Frauenprojektförderung)
BMSGPK – Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz
AK Wien – Arbeiterkammer Wien

RESIDENTIAL FACILITY

Asylum seekers:	36%
Convention refugees:	22%
Persons granted subsidiary protection:	18%
Holders of a “red-white-red card plus”:	3%
Others:	21%

Persons supported: 143 (73 women, 70 men)
 With special needs: 37 (21 women, 15 men, 1 boy)
 Countries of origin: 17
 Children: 57 (32 boys, 25 girls)



Number of employees:
14 + 4 civilian servants



Languages spoken
by the team: 13

FIRST FLAT

Asylum seekers:	73%
Convention refugees:	3%
Persons granted subsidiary protection:	12%
Others:	12%

Persons supported: 63
 Countries of origin: 7



Number of employees:
5 + 1 civilian servant



Languages spoken
by the team: 6

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIO-PEDAGOGICS

WE CAN DO THIS TOGETHER!

In the Socio-Pedagogical Department there are three residential groups for unaccompanied minor refugees as well as children and young people who cannot live with their families for various reasons. In total, 26 children and teenagers aged 3 to 18 years can be accommodated. They are admitted to the socio-pedagogical residential groups within the framework of the “full education” scheme under a contract with the Vienna Child and Youth Welfare Service.

In the socio-pedagogical residential groups, work is always characterised by changes. In spite of this highly varied everyday happenings and the constant need for flexibility, the COVID-19 pandemic raised many challenges for the children and young people as well as the team members.

After all, the pandemic-related measures and impacts turned many processes and structures upside down so that they had to be re-considered and quickly adapted again and again.

In a first step, the children and young people had to be informed about the disease and its impacts. The hygiene measures and other precautions also had to be explained to them in line with their age so that they would be able to comply with them. It was not easy to pass on continually updated information to the children and young people because many of them experienced the situation as a burden and also expressed fears and worries.

Moreover, many habitual daily routines disappeared as they were not able to attend school or courses. Additionally, homeschooling was a major challenge and burden for the social pedagogues.

Contacts with visitors and visits to and by their families had to be restricted, which was a great shock especially for younger children – the pedagogues often did not find it easy to console the children and handle their emotions. At least therapy sessions could be held by means of video telephony and regular telephone calls so that the relations between children/young people and therapists were not completely interrupted.

For the entire team of care workers and pedagogues, this resulted in big organisational changes and the constant need to adapt to the current pandemic situation. Thus, all team meetings were switched to digital media in this field, too.

On a positive note, we can say in retrospect that this great number of challenges also resulted in increased cohesion among the

children, young people and pedagogues and strengthened mutual trust.

It was also possible to achieve many successes and development steps, which made us particularly happy in such a difficult time: Two young people started their apprenticeships, a young Afghan received his positive asylum decision and a family was reunified. And with the joint summer vacation, there was also a special highlight for the children and young people in 2020.

Funded by
MA 11 – Wiener Kinder- und Jugendhilfe
FSW – Fonds Soziales Wien
AK Wien – Arbeiterkammer Wien

GUEST COMMENTARY

BY PHILIPP WOLF

Co-ordinator and social pedagogue, einewelt-wg

From one day to the next, the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down not only for the international community on a large scale but also the everyday lives of families, friends and colleagues on a small scale.

In particular, the “little ones” and their families who face additional challenges in their frequently precarious living conditions are unfortunately left aside in public discourse much too often.

In view of the sense of urgency demonstrated, policy makers consider it much more important to plan vaccine supply, to pursue partisan interests and to take new social solidarity measures that, in addition to further closures of schools and kindergartens, result in restrictions on family visits and the cancellation of recreational activities, celebrations and festivities and further aggravate inequalities that already exist.

After this period of ever-changing rules that has felt like eternity for many as well as more and more frequent frustrated questions on what was currently permitted or forbidden and what actually made sense, one of the “little ones” – an eight-year-old resident of our residential group – may have the answer: “I also think it’s pretty dreadful that I can’t see my friends that often, but hey – we’ve got each other and this, at least, is nice!” That is an attitude that also reflects the spirit in the department in dealing with the pandemic, namely to make it possible for everyone to experience a feeling of community, solidarity and safety in spite of all the adverse circumstances.

CARAVAN 1 AND 2



Number of residents:
22 (20 boys, 2 girls)



Age of persons supported:
5 – 18 years



Number of employees: 15
+ 2 civilian servants

einewelt-wg



Number of residents:
9 (5 boys, 4 girls)



Age of persons supported:
3 – 16 years



Number of employees: 8
+ 1 civilian servant

DEPARTMENT FOR COUNSELLING

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RAISES NEW CHALLENGES IN COUNSELLING

The Counselling Centre of Integrationshaus offers advice for people receiving basic welfare support in Vienna. It provides general psychosocial counselling and special services. With regard to complex legal issues, clients are referred to the independent legal advice unit.

When the stay-at-home orders were introduced on 16 March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Counselling Centre had to re-organise its services. In spite of the lockdown, a minimum on-site presence was maintained and additional communication channels were offered quickly, such as mobile phone chat functionality, Zoom meetings and e-mail. Communication with public authorities and agencies, in particular law courts, required even more counselling resources because almost all public authorities were only accessible, if at all, with fixed appointments. For many clients, getting in contact with public authorities by phone was a big hurdle so that the team of the Counselling Centre supported them appropriately.

The issues raised in counselling also strongly focused on the challenges of the pandemic: In housing counselling, for example, the need for bigger homes was increasingly voiced as families had to live in too cramped conditions over a long time due to lockdowns and closed schools. In education counselling, the demand for strategies providing a daily structure was a big issue due to cancelled courses. Among youths and young adults, an additional issue was subsistence as Municipal Department 40 reduces payments to young adults who do not take part in any training courses. And in counselling for people suffering from severe mental stress, it was noticeable that some clients were extremely difficult to reach. Others, however, were pleased to use the additional options for getting in contact with us.

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FSW – Fonds Soziales Wien

INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE

The legal advice unit also faced special challenges on account of the COVID-19 pandemic: Clients were disproportionately often fined under the (unconstitutional) COVID-19 Regulation during the first lockdown. In many cases, the legal advice unit successfully supported them in appealing against these fines. In 2020, proceedings were frequently initiated to withdraw subsidiary protection,

which concerned not only young men from Afghanistan but often also clients from the Russian Federation. Moreover, many people granted subsidiary protection lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic so that they faced the risk of losing their protected status and, hence, of being deported. Thus, legal representation was particularly important in courts of all instances.

Above all, the legal advice team tried to make it possible for older and severely ill persons to switch from subsidiary protection to permanent residency, even if requirements such as a B1 language exam could not be met due to illness. The aim was to bring about more favourable court decisions for certain clients in spite of unfulfilled conditions.

In 2020, the legal representation of clients pursuing a switch to permanent residency in the EU was one of the main fields of activities of the legal advice team, and clients were successfully represented also before the Federal Administrative Court.

GUEST COMMENTARY

BY MARTINA LEBBIHIAT-MÜLLER
Member of the Counselling Centre team

Threat scenarios for women and children increased during the second, extended lockdown from November 2020 on. Job losses and the further crumbling of perspectives and livelihoods also gave rise to or aggravated conflicts in families, marriages and partnerships. Other exacerbating factors were the withdrawal of subsidiary protection and the issue of residence permits for families, single parents and single women by the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum resulting in the loss of entitlements under the Viennese Minimum Income Act (WMG).

The tight situation on the labour market and the need to support school children at home turned out to be a major additional burden especially for single mothers. Thus, they needed much support in communicating with schools and other education institutions. During the second lockdown, however, distribution of laptops and/or tables for distance learning by education institutions worked better.

Many schools also made it possible for parents to send their children to school even if they did not have a job and this option was used by many. With regard to affordable housing, the situation of single mothers that had been precarious anyway deteriorated further, especially for refugees and migrants.



COUNSELLING CENTRE

Employees:	18 + 2 civilian servants
Languages spoken by the team:	14
Persons counselled: (565 men, 386 women, 11 n.a.)	962
Counselling contacts in total:	9,372

COUNSELLING THEMES

General social counselling and personal clarification of perspectives:	3,797
Counselling contacts related to public authorities and agencies:	2,121
Counselling contacts related to work and training:	1,205
Counselling contacts related to housing: Finding flats for families/individuals:	964 33/9
Counselling contacts related to youths and young adults:	166
Counselling contacts related to women-specific issues/protection against violence:	220
Counselling contacts related to mental health:	899



INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE

Persons counselled: (328 men, 121 women) dependant family members (children):	449 342
Employees:	2
Number of services rendered:	1,217

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

DIGITISATION IN A RUSH

In the field of education we offer services for young people and women focusing on the labour market, integration and basic education. The main priority is to support the acquisition of the German language. In addition, more specific objectives are pursued in individual projects, such as the development of basic competences (mathematics, digital literacy and English), labour-market-relevant language skills and other specific competences that allow for labour market entry.

In view of the change of government at the federal level, work started cautiously optimistic in the Education Department in the beginning of 2020. But very soon, COVID-19 and the measures taken to contain the pandemic dominated day-to-day work. Even though digital learning platforms had already been used in the courses, it still was a jump in at the deep end and a period of very intensive learning for all trainers and counsellors.

Digital application and teaching skills grew sharply. At the same time, it quickly became obvious that the course participants faced special challenges with regard to their learning spaces, technical equipment and their everyday lives. Especially for young people, this sudden change was a big shock and a psychological burden. Above all those who had not achieved much confidence in using German as a written language, needed all the more orientation and tasks broken down into

BAJU
Participants: 34
13 women, 21 men
Age: 16 – 24 years
Employees: 3

MAMA LERNT DEUTSCH – F.U.T.U.R.E. TRAIN
Participants: 71 women
Age: 20 – 52 years
Children taken care of: 44
Employees: 7

JAWA^{NEXT 11}
Participants: 60
26 women, 34 men
Age: 16 – 21 years
Placement in traineeships, apprenticeships and jobs: 91
Employees: 6 + 1 civilian servant

small steps in digital lessons. This also affected the speed of progress in learning.

In the projects, many things were tried out, such as a photo competition and intervision in the teams in order to exchange information on good teaching methods and get motivation from colleagues.

After the first lockdown, there was a gradual return to the usual ways of working and it was ultimately possible to launch new projects and course groups in face-to-face settings. However, things did not fully return to normal. JAWA^{NEXT 11}, for example, only took place in small groups in classrooms and regulations, such as mandatory masks and separating walls, naturally also changed tuition. Projects requiring traineeships faced more difficult conditions. Nevertheless, much was achieved also in the times of the pandemic. One participant already found an apprenticeship in a pharmacy -and the young people were successfully prepared for online information days and job interviews. Furthermore, new learning formats were continuously developed. Clients and team members were better prepared for the second lockdown in November – the online learning setting was well established and Integrationshaus was able to lend technical devices. It was also possible to maintain support by volunteers, such as education partners and mentors, in a modified form throughout this time. The participants of MAMA LERNT DEUTSCH – F.U.T.U.R.E.-TRAIN demonstrated particular

FAVORITIN
Participants: 24 women
Age: 22 – 46 years
Employees: 3

AK JUG
Participants: 13
1 women, 12 men
Age: 15 – 26 years
Employees: 4

A2+ INTEGRATION COURSE
Participants: 13
9 women, 4 men
Age: 20 – 54 years
Employees: 2

perseverance: all of a sudden, they faced the triple burden of homeschooling, caring for little children and learning German themselves. In spite of several involuntary postponements of exam dates, there were hardly any drop-outs from courses and participants were highly motivated.

Given a high rate of labour market placements of 80% in the JAWA^{NEXT 11} project, successful transfers from BAJU to courses preparing for the basic education exam and positive clearings for the next year, 2020 was also marked by successes.

Funded by:
ESF – Europäischer Sozialfonds
BMBWF – Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung
MA 17 – Stadt Wien, Integration und Diversität
waff – Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfond
AMS Wien – Arbeitsmarktservice Wien
AK Wien – Arbeiterkammer Wien
FSW – Fonds Soziales Wien

GUEST COMMENTARY

ANDREA SCHOBERLEITNER
Trainer in the project MAMA LERNT DEUTSCH – F.U.T.U.R.E.-TRAIN

A week or so into the lockdown, the course participants had more or less happily landed on the digital learning platform with the help of colleagues.

The pandemic situation was and is completely new for us, triggered many fears and/or resulted in re-traumatisation. We talked in videoconferences and chatted a lot about what we could do so that we would be fine. I noted that one participant was particularly bad and offered her counselling by phone.

During that call, we collected the things that still were positive in this difficult situation: We have enough food, a secure place to live, income, peace, we are able and allowed to move around, we have very good healthcare in case of illness, we have media for staying in touch with our family and friends and much more. At the end, she thanked me for talking with her and was happy simply about the fact that she had succeeded in speaking with me on the phone for so long – she had not thought herself capable of doing that before.

One day, the course participants surprised me with a pin wall they had produced themselves about the pros and cons of learning with digital media. I had only shown them briefly how we would do that together the next time, but they presented the completed Jamboards to me during the videoconference – I was enormously proud of them!

YOUTH COACHING WENT DIGITAL

m.o.v.e. on youth coaching forms part of the Network of Occupational Assistance (NEBA) and supports young people aged 15 to 19 years. If certain conditions are met, young adults up to the age of 24 are also assisted through professional counselling at the interface between school and work. Counselling is directly provided at the public compulsory schools and selected higher secondary schools in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 20th districts. Young people who do not attend school receive support in counselling centres.

Upon the sudden start of the first lockdown, the concept had to be adapted in technical, content-related and methodological terms. The switch from on-site counselling to telephone, video, e-mail or messenger services was challenging not only for the team members but also for many participants attending or not attending school. Important work priorities, such as professional orientation, planning of perspectives and assistance during application processes, were very time consuming with young people having insufficient technical resources and lacking digital skills. As the variety of methods was very limited and physical counselling materials could not be used, many counselling contents required significantly more time. Among many young people, the cancellation of trial days in companies and the postponement of agreed application interviews was very disconcerting.

When schools re-opened in May, it was possible to resume on-site counselling. The system of split shifts in schools made it enormously more difficult to contact young people so that virtual counselling was continued in addition to face-to-face counselling. It was particularly encouraging that many young people not in education reliably kept their counselling appointments. The rest of the year was characterised by efforts to make up for lost time and support young people in finding suitable apprenticeships. In summer, we were able to offer two workshops on practicing job interviews for young people interested.

The (partial) lockdown starting in mid-November 2020 resulted in further massive restrictions for youth coaching. In spite of the schools being open, face-to-face counselling was only permitted in exceptional situations on site. This impaired, in particular, the building of trust between the young people and the youth coaches, which is an important basis for counselling. Because of lacking perspectives, many young people suffered a loss of motivation and the youth coaches were increasingly faced with psychological stress.

Overall, the year was very difficult for the target group and particularly dire for those who are disadvantaged in society, such as young people with disabilities, young people having a poor command of German and young people not in education. Nevertheless, there were also positive aspects. On the one hand, digitisation also gave rise to new competences among both participants and youth coaches. On the other hand, the use of virtual counselling made young people less reluctant to contact youth coaches by phone or messenger services.

Funded by:
ESF – European Social Fund
SMS – Service Agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs



CASE EXAMPLE NEW PERSPECTIVES THROUGH YOUTH COACHING

In the autumn of 2019, a student attending a vocational middle school was referred to youth coaching by her head teacher. She was taught under the curriculum for special-needs schools and therefore considered eligible for special support.

During the first counselling sessions, she was very reserved so that it was difficult to find out which occupational objectives she had. After a few sessions, she revealed that she wanted to become a medical doctor. As she was taught under the curriculum for special-needs schools it was important to develop occupational alternatives without de-motivating her. A conversation with the head teacher showed that the young girl was covered by the special-needs curriculum mainly because she made an insecure impression. Head teacher and youth coach shared the view that the youth had the potential to eliminate her special educational needs, which indeed happened. The fact that her certificate for the eighth grade was issued under the rules for special educational needs, however, limited the options for her further education. Therefore, the girl closed her knowledge gaps in a course and, thus, was able to successfully complete the eighth grade under regular requirements.

After counselling on alternative occupational options in the social field, the young woman registered with a school for early childhood educators with the help of youth coaching. She was prepared for the aptitude tests and fortunately was accepted by the school.

M.O.V.E. ON YOUTH COACHING



Age of participants:
 14 – 25 years



Number of employees: 26



Languages spoken by the team: 14

FRAUENSTIMMEN PARTICIPATORY PROJECT



Participants from Integrationshaus: 10 women



Age: 28 – 43



Employees: 3

DIGIDAZU DIGITAL SKILLS IN GERMAN



Participants in the pilot run: 37



Trainers for the pilot run: 4



Trainers of partner organisations
 (trial run and multipliers): 4



Project team: 3

BROADENING HORIZONS TOGETHER

“FRAUENSTIMMEN” PARTICIPATORY PROJECT

Women who self-confidently stand up for their own interests are not heard very often in public discourse: women with care obligations do so more seldom and women who immigrated or fled, have children and speak with a recognisable accent only in exceptional cases. The picture of “weak, voiceless and passive migrant women” persists. In the Women’s Voices project, participants therefore addressed key issues of socio-political participation, namely education, work, health, housing and citizenship. They reflected on personal experiences and voiced related concerns. The outcome was a short video that gave voice to the diverse challenges faced by the participants, their way of handling them and their concerns.

The participants came from the “Mum learns German – F.U.T.U.R.E.-TRAIN” courses and met in ten workshops. The youngest one was aged 28, the oldest one 43. The women came from China, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Turkey, the Russian Federation and Syria and had been in Austria for 3 to 14 years. Starting from their personal experiences, they put together what they wanted to pass on to other women and the improvements needed to facilitate participation for other women coming to Austria. They produced pictures, collages, health flowers, hurdle races towards entry into the labour market and concrete statements. The big challenges faced by our participants materialised when they tried to make a “good life” in Austria. Apart from barriers to finding a job and language skills, these challenges concerned issues that also concern native Austrian women: “Where do I find adequate childcare services? How do I avoid precarious working conditions? Where do I get good medical care?”

Women as pioneers

Women often break new ground: They recounted that they had been the first ones in their families who had left their country of origin in most cases. They seldom had role models for learning a new language in adulthood or for the recognition of qualifications obtained elsewhere. At the same time, they are exposed to a high level of stress. E.g. when they try to secure a residence title, they experience discrimination and have to prove their worth in multiple ways to get an interesting job and not to be labelled as having no interest in participating in life in Austria.

For the video, they summed up concrete wishes, such as training places with childcare, computer courses, medical doctors with more empathy, easier access to citizenship and many more. At an event held at the Chamber of Labour on 9 February 2021, their wishes were also presented to a wider public.

Funded by:
AK Wien – Arbeiterkammer Wien

DIGIDAZU – DIGITAL SKILLS IN GERMAN AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

In the past few years, Integrationshaus has developed broad expertise in the transfer of basic digital skills in combination with German as a second language in the course of the MIKAprof co-operation project based on the assumption that this integrated approach enables people to become active quickly in society. Even people who already have diverse qualifications relevant for the labour market, including a good oral command of German, often still have difficulties with written language (for special purposes) that become manifest particularly when they use digital tools. The digital transformation of the world of work is an especially big obstacle for them. Therefore, future-oriented training programmes are needed that can be used, in particular, by people having a poor command of written German.

The COVID-19 pandemic additionally intensified the digital transformation in many fields of work. Therefore, a specific training programme was developed for those needs within the framework “Digitalisierungsfonds Work 4.0” of Arbeiterkammer Wien in 2020. Within the framework of “digidazu”, online-based (self-) study materials were developed for acquiring digital user skills for the world of work and the required (written) German language skills together with co-operation partners. These study materials cover activities relevant across economic sectors in the skill areas of information and data handling, communication and co-operation as well as creation of digital content that usually have to be performed by means of digital tools in day-to-day work. Building on concrete descriptions provided by employees and employers in interviews, online-based 360° scenarios were developed in which these activities were illustrated by the examples of a hairdresser, a childcare

group and a nursing home. The immersion into these scenarios as well as interactive videos and other training formats are to support students in improving their digital skills in parallel with their command of German step by step. First learning materials were published on www.digidazu.at in 2020. The project was presented together with the co-operation partner LEFÖ at the end of 2020. The complete learning platform will be provided for free in 2021.

In co-operations with:
Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH, Interface Wien GmbH and LEFÖ – Beratung, Bildung und Begleitung für Migrantinnen, association Pyramidops/Frauentreff

Funded by:
AK Wien – Digifonds „Work 4.0“ der Arbeiterkammer Wien

KINDERFREUNDE KINDERGARTEN

The kindergarten managed by Kinderfreunde Vienna at Integrationshaus offers multilingual pedagogical child care for children living at Integrationshaus and in its neighbourhood. Special attention is given to learning German as a second language and on raising intercultural awareness.

The kindergarten can accommodate 20 children aged one to six years. In a mixed-age “family group”, special attention is placed on providing role models for social competences, such as appreciation, acceptance, tolerance and helpfulness. Linguistic diversity is particularly great: eleven different nations meet, and nine first languages are spoken. The kindergarten team is made up of three qualified kindergarten teachers and one assistant. The common language spoken in the kindergarten is German. Thanks to linguistic diversity, parents and children can also be supported in the Romanian, English and French languages. All the children who have major difficulties in using the German language are supported in small groups.

The targeted promotion of language skills in elementary education is therefore of great importance for the development of children. Many simple language exercises, such as games, nursery rhymes and songs, systematically expand the vocabulary and verbal skills. Playing is the basis of learning by children.

The infrastructure of the kindergarten is co-funded by donations received by Integrationshaus.

VOLUNTEERS

MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER: VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT IN THE TIMES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since the very beginning, volunteers have been important contributors to our work with refugees and migrants. Currently, volunteers are mainly active as buddies, sponsors, mentors, education partners, tutors and helpers at events and are supported by training, professional guidance and reflexion groups as well as a central co-ordination unit. The restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic also shaped the work of volunteers in 2020. Owing to the good network of Integrationshaus and the intensive promotion of our volunteer projects, we were able to find enough people for volunteer work. Even though some volunteers left due to COVID-19, others stepped in as they decided to personally support residents, course participants or clients because of personal changes and free time resources.

The implementation of training was severely hampered and schedule changes were the order of the day. Getting to know each other, networking and exchanges were not possible in the usual enriching form online. Still, 44 training evenings were organised to prepare volunteers for their diverse activities: for buddies of residents, for volunteers accompanying clients of the counselling centre, for sponsors of unaccompanied minor refugees, for education partners and mentors.

The online training sessions were well attended, and in the final evaluation, participants gave predominantly positive feedback. The expert-led reflection rounds were also seen as helpful support.

Thus, it was possible to establish numerous buddyships and other exchange relations. Moreover, several volunteers were motivated to take on additional tasks, such as translations, tutoring and project planning at the Atelier VIA.

The lockdowns and other restrictions especially made regular personal encounters much more difficult. Nevertheless, the support provided to refugees by volunteers covered an extremely broad range in spite of COVID-19 in 2020: assistance in finding a flat or a job, mentoring for youth and young adult refugees, sponsorships for unaccompanied minor refugees, assistance in studying, support in language acquisition, assistance for women-specific issues and joint leisure activities. Volunteers were also sought for home-schooling and, fortunately, many committed people were quickly found, which indeed had a very positive impact.

Many thanks to all volunteers for their important support! Without their help, many projects of Integrationshaus could not be implemented.

ATELIER VIA – A VOLUNTEERS' CLUB FOR ALL COMMITTED PEOPLE

The Atelier VIA, the open volunteers' club at Integrationshaus, was expanded further. VIA stands for "Vernetzt – Ideenreich – Aktiv" (networked – inventive – active) and addresses all those interested or already active in working with refugees as volunteers and seeking exchanges or advice as well as support in the development of their own projects with refugees. As the Atelier VIA had to partly suspend activities due to the COVID-19 measures in 2020, the project meetings held already generated first ideas by volunteers that will be implemented in 2021.

Funded by:

AK Wien – Arbeiterkammer Wien
waff – Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds
MA 11 – Wiener Kinder- und Jugendhilfe
MA 17 – Stadt Wien, Integration und Diversität
BMSGPK – Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz
AMS Wien – Arbeitsmarktservice Wien
BMBWF – Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung
ESF – Europäischer Sozialfonds

"VOLUNTEERS ARE PART OF THE BIGGER PICTURE RIGHT FROM THE START"

BY CLAUDIA STEINACHER
Editor, learning coach, linguistic development expert and volunteer

In 2017, I got in touch with two unaccompanied young people when I gave extra lessons in a Caravan group and quickly realised that learning assistance is much more and also much more exciting than working through school-related contents. The extra lessons provided the framework for encounters, listening and getting to know each other. If this works out well, everything else happens by itself.

As a volunteer, you are part of the bigger picture right from the start – this is important! There is always a competent contact, no matter where concerns arise. And concerns will definitely arise because growing up is so tremendously exciting. And this is what makes support in everyday life thrilling.

So, I took the education partner training and became a sponsor last year – another important point. As a volunteer you continually learn, you discover your own strengths and talents and, all the while, you are supported well.

In conclusion, an important aspect: In my case,

voluntary commitment is not to provide "help". Based on my biography, I have gathered a lot of orientation know-how in fields such as learning, education system, organisation, work, etc., which I like to share privately and professionally anyway.

However, what is wonderful and inspiring for me is what the people I spend time with give back to me. I experience so much appreciation and attention, we have fun, we spur us on, we have heated discussions, we eagerly look forward to elections, we support each other when there are difficulties and much more. People learn from each other. And I always want to stay curious and open for new things.

OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTEERS



Number of volunteers:
about 200



Migration background:
about 2/5



New inquiries for volunteer work:
about 150



Clearing interviews:
about 70



Information and training events:
50



TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

Buddy course – residential facility:
20 persons

Buddy course – counselling centre:
14 persons

Mentor training – JAWA^{Next11}:
13 persons

Buddy course – BAJU:
12 persons