



MultiPLUS+ Final Event in Graz

Migrants Mental Health: Pending Political Decisions

On September 27, 2022, Austria officially closed the Multiplus Project. The final event took place at the Media Center of the Municipality of Graz. Austria decided to combine the political momentum gained in the third phase of Multiplus' expertise and field of work: the mental health of immigrants

„Crazy Migrants“: With a deliberately provocative title, a podium of mental health experts critically summarized the current offer of mental health available to immigrants in the city and pointed out deficits and inconsistencies and summarized which concrete actions are necessary for an egalitarian and dignified mental health service.

Podium participants: Dr. Günter Klug, Head of GFSG Psychosocial Services in Graz; Nora Tödtling-Musenbichler, Director of Caritas in Styria; Dr. Katharina Purtscher, long-standing head of child and adolescent psychiatry, Scientific Director of KIT-Land Steiermark and MMag. Dr. Christian Lagger, MBA, Managing Director of the Graz Elisabethinen Hospital, President of Internationales Forschungszentrum für soziale und ethische Fragen (International Research Center for Social and Ethical Issues).

Project Framework

With this Newsletter we are proud to present advances of our project:

**MultiPLUS+
Migrant
Multipliers
build
Bridges**

Duration:
Oct. 2020-Nov2022

Funding: European
Commission, Erasmus+
Programme

***Let us tell you what
we have achieved!***

***Our project has been
extended!***





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Migrant Multipliers Build Bridges

Dr. Heidrun Primas, Human Rights Award Winner of the City of Graz 2021 and coordinator of the “Cultural Strategy 2030” of the Province of Styria, moderated the evening event.

Among the members of the public - in addition to the multipliers! – were Mag. Robert Krotzer, Councillor of the City of Graz, responsible for health and integration, and Dr. Elke Lujansky-Lammer the Head of the Ombud for Equal Treatment in the Province of Styria.

Before the podium panelists made their presentations, MSc. Nayari Castillo - Rutz and Mag. Virginia Argarate, Multiplus coordinators in Austria, presented the project and summarized the main experiences and conclusions.

This was a very timely moment to present a multiplier concept, which we have further defined in the last two years in Multiplus. The figure of the multiplier as an indispensable agent of change in the settlement and integration process was underlined when presenting the Multiplus Project and repeated during the podium discussion.

„A multiplier is a person who can voice ideas/ strategies of a certain group of people. He/she has this talent consciously or unconsciously; he/she exercises this role to benefit the entire group so that the group gets stronger and the collective voice come across. This role does not necessarily have to do with a hierarchical position, but primarily with trust“



We presented the results of the entire project MultiPLUS+ and the lessons learned





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Dr. Purtscher advocated equality for refugee children, particularly in regard to the right to school and education as well as appropriate medical and social care.

MMag.Dr. Lagger complained about a general shortage of staff in psychiatry and emphasized, that mental health is important for good cohesion in a society. „Mental illnesses are not recognized as such in some cultures, but even in Austria it has only recently been possible to receive psychotherapy on sick leave. Migrants need “guides” who help through the thicket of the health system.“

Tödting-Musenbichler pointed out that, people from war zones in particular need much more than the current basic services being offered. The Caritas director emphasized the importance of advice and support being offered in mother-tongue. She sees deficits, for example, in the lack of availability of special accommodations for mental health patients and in too long waiting times for psychotherapy places.

Dr. Klug highlighted the urgency of addressing the mental health of immigrants not only palliative but preventively. “The pressure in the form of stress increases for many migrants due to additional burdens such as fleeing, war and integrating in a foreign country.”

It was an intense evening of discussion and networking in which there was also space to rethink the role of multipliers in the work of prevention in mental health in their communities.

The event was attended by 50 people. In the audience were colleagues from other NGOs and multipliers. The event lasted until 9:30 p.m. After closing the presentation and discussions, attendees were invited to a toast and a buffet.

The Österreichische Gesellschaft für Politische Bildung (The Austrian Society for Political Education) considered the activity of the multipliers and this particular event to be of relevance and decided to co-fund it.



A distinguished panel accompany us!

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An Erasmus+ project of organisations from Austria, Denmark, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain.

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