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Integration Council

Intercultural Week 2023 finds "New Spaces



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This year and next year, the motto of the annual Intercultural Week, in which more than 600 cities and municipalities across Germany participate, is **"New Spaces"**.

This is also the case in Bocholt. "And we found these new spaces this year," reports Bruno Wansing, Integration Officer of the City of Bocholt and part of the four-member organising team. The team includes Caroline Blenker from the Caritas Association Bocholt, Fatma Boland from the Adult Education Centre Bocholt-Rhede-Isselburg and Ulrik Störzer from the Family Education Centre Bocholt.

With a diverse programme from 22-29 September, the organisers succeeded in creating "new spaces" together with the **almost 20 cultural associations and organisations involved**. "The motto can be understood in many ways," reduces Annette Grümer-Weyers, one of the two patrons of the Intercultural Week 2023. "New spaces in the heart, in the mind, but also literally new spaces in a building," adds Zeyneb Mohammady, the second

patron. "The **motto is meant to invite people to gain new ideas and impressions, to open, design, use or enter " new spaces" in the figurative sense**, and we succeeded in doing so in the **total of 10 events**," reports Wansing.

Below is a short review of the intercultural week 2023 in Bocholt.

World Children's Day

The World Children's Day Festival at St.-Josef Gymnasium, Kapu, opens the intercultural week every year. Bocholt's first deputy mayor Elisabeth Kroesen, headmaster Klaus Schepp as well as Grümer-Weyers and Mohammady welcomed the numerous children with their parents, who were offered an extensive programme of games, handicrafts and creative activities. "On this day, we created a banner with the children on which the motto "New Rooms" was written in many languages. The children could colour it in and get to know other languages at the same time," reports Caroline Blenker. The organisers used the banner for each of the new events in connection with the Intercultural Week 2023.

Sport at midnight

The teams "Jusina", "Gleis 24", "Team Wahdat", "Ahmadiyya", "Euregio" and "Internationale Fußballakademie" competed against each other in the intercultural football tournament in the sports hall at the St.-Georg-Gymnasium. Fun and togetherness were in the foreground for the teams, even if one or the other approached the sport with a little too much ambition. Organiser Bruno Wansing, who together with the team of "Jusina" (Youth and Social Integration e.V.) under the leadership of Ina Ludwig and the Afghan cultural association and the Ahmadiyya community had pulled the strings and also picked up the whistle himself, thanked referee Ismail Kuru for the sovereign management of the games.

Gallery





Intercultural flea market

Julia Nakotte and her team from Tür an Tür e.V. organised an intercultural flea market. They were supported by the German-Chinese Society, the International Mesopotamian Cultural Association, the Ahmadiyya community and many other volunteers. The area in the Fildeken/Rosenberg neighbourhood was perfectly suited, and if the weather had been better, the response would certainly have been even greater. "The feedback from the visitors was great," said Julia Nakotte. Many had come into contact with Kurdish, Lebanese or Ghanaian hospitality for the first time. "Everyone was enthusiastic about the exchange with the people," says Nakotte.

In the evening, the Centro Cultural Espanol organised a German-Spanish encounter evening in and with FABI. Paella and flamenco and many good conversations made for interesting encounters. "I'm totally surprised, I didn't expect such a big offer," said one participant, for whom the time went by far too quickly. "The conversations were great, but I would have liked to talk to one or the other for longer."

International cuisine

"We cook for you" was the motto when the Afghan Cultural Association, the Ahmadiyya Community, the German-Chinese Society of Bocholt and the German-Syrian Association, together with the Integration Office, served up Chinese, Afghan, Pakistani and Syrian food on a long table in the break hall at the Mariengymnasium. Gabriele Büning, one of over 60 guests, put it in a nutshell: "It was a great evening with likeable people who made this beautiful evening possible in the first place. Happy to repeat!"

"When you take a tour of our beautiful city and at the same time take a journey through the different cuisines of this world, then it is intercultural week," said Agnes Wellkamp from the association "Leben im Alter e.V." (LiA) at the intercultural city tour, which was held on Tuesday as part of the project Generations-Cultures-Diversity of the Federal Working Group of Senior Citizens' Advisory Councils. Senior citizens and young people with and without international family histories took part in the city walk and got into conversation over food and drink at the total of five stops.



"It was a great evening with likeable people who made this beautiful evening possible. Happy to repeat!"

Gabriele Büning

Six clubs active

What a sight it was to see at the "Tea and Coffee Festival (with compote)" in the Mensa Benölkenplatz when six cultural associations from Bocholt offered their different kinds of tea and coffee and also the Eastern European compote in several variations with many small delicacies served with it. The taste buds of the people of Bocholt had their problems with the red tea of the Chinese, prepared and presented by a tea ceremony master, because the aroma was too smoky, but there were also supporters of the red tea.

Syrian coffee, Afghan tea with saffron, Pakistani tea with sugar and milk, English tea with scones, clotted cream and lemon curd - there was something for everyone and the variations were as varied and colourful as the guests. "It was a great event that we would like to hold again next year," said Bruno Wansing, Integration Officer of the City of Bocholt.

"All people smile in the same language," said Firat Alshater, a Syrian who fled to Germany to escape the war. This was the end of Lutz Jäkel's lecture in the media centre in front of a good 50 pupils, some of whom also came from Syria. When the technology jammed, they had to improvise - and that is what Lutz Jäkel, Danuzza Mendonza-Leuters, Reinhard Schlusemann, Bruno Wansing, Muaiad Abd Alrahman, Khaled Aidy and Carmen Wessels did, setting up the screen, the technology, the loudspeakers and rearranging the entire room in no time at all so that the lecture could take place as planned.

Intercultural, joint work. And so, in keeping with the motto of the Intercultural Week 2023, a "new space" was created. The guests were impressed, moved and got to know a Syria as it will perhaps never be again.

Closing event at the "Alte Molkerei" cultural venue

At the end of the Intercultural Week, the participating associations, the organising team and many guests met in the cultural hall "Alte Molkerei", which was filled to capacity.

Ulrik Störzer, who had planned the programme with artists from Bocholt with and without an international family history and who had actually wanted to take over the moderation, had to drop out at short notice due to illness. Bruno Wansing took his place as moderator. At the beginning, Wansing thanked Annette Grümer-Weyers and Zeyneb Mohammady, who as a team had taken over the patronage of the Intercultural Week 2023. "You did a great job throughout the week and represented the Intercultural Week to the outside world," said Wansing.

Together with Muaiad Abd Alrahman from the German-Syrian Association, Wansing then read the story "How I took Papa's fear of strangers" by Rafik Schami and Ole Könnecke. The numerous young people also listened attentively. With expressive piano playing and a distinctive voice, Mi, a young artist with Asian roots, captivated the audience.

Gina's Ballerinas" did the same afterwards. The young ladies trained by Gina Cirjak, who have Croatian, French, Chinese, Albanian and Spanish roots, greeted the arriving guests in the entrance area of the "Alte Molkerei" to the sounds of the "Nutcracker Suite" and then showed a small world tour on stage, which led through France, Egypt, Africa, North America and back to Gina Cirjak's homeland in Greece.

During the break, the guests had the opportunity to talk to each other over snacks. Songs from the 60s, 70s and 80s were then performed by "Plain Old Three", Benedikt Winkler (guitar), Edlira Harapi (vocals) and Elton Harapi (drums, guitar, vocals).