



Verein MUNTERwegs

Ein generationenübergreifendes Mentoringprogramm

We interviewed Miriam Hess, co-founder of MUNTERwegs with responsibility for activities in the Zug area to tell us all about her youth mentoring organisation.

MUNTERwegs, founded in 2009, aims to strengthen the bridge between cultures and generations with its mentoring programme. MUNTERwegs links volunteers and children/young people with or without a migration background. Volunteer mentors (aged 18+) agree to spend eight months of their free time with a child or young person from a socially disadvantaged family background and strengthen their personal development in the process. This mentoring programme offers both individuals a variety of opportunities to make fruitful contacts and gain valuable experience, thus contributing to integration, cultural participation, and equal opportunities.

Miriam outlined how MUNTERwegs began, "In 2009, I founded this association together with a friend. The idea came from our professional experience, we both worked as teachers and therapists in integration work. However, we felt we had reached the limits of our work and wanted to find a 'bridge builder' for these children with a migration background - in other words, someone who could mediate between home and school, but also between the cultures, and help the children to feel more comfortable and strengthened in their new environment. We were guided by a mentoring model that I got to know at an international conference in Malmö, Sweden. The head of this programme was at the time also our mentor and supported us with her rich experience in setting up this mentoring programme."



MUNTERwegs is a non-profit association based in the canton of Zug. However, the programme is also organised at various locations in German-speaking Switzerland.

MUNTERwegs only accepts association members who are actively involved as local managers or who are involved in the organisation of the mentoring programme (currently five members). Mentors therefore do not have to pay for association membership, the offer is free of charge. However, they receive a one-time expense allowance of 400 CHF. To date, MUNTERwegs has supported approximately 850 volunteers.

Volunteer mentors must go through a comprehensive application process. This involves getting to know each other personally at an initial information evening followed by; an interview, a written application with references, a review of references by the MUNTERwegs local manager, careful matching according to the preferences/desires of mentor and mentee or families, and a criminal record check of the volunteer.

Regarding the benefits to volunteers of the programme Miriam told us: "It is very important to us that the MUNTERwegs programme is a lively experience for both sides! Many volunteers appreciate the shared encounters with the child/young person and the intercultural exchange. They gain new perspectives and experience a foreign culture. They very often find the experience to be meaningful and enriching. During the MUNTERwegs programme, the mentors gain an exemplary insight into the living environment of these children or young people, broaden their awareness of socio-economic life contexts and learn the consequences of migration. And of course, the interaction with the young mentee also teaches sensitive communication."



All committed mentors of MUNTERwegs association receive:

- a MUNTERwegs certificate
- free further training/coaching on the topics of learning, health promotion, language promotion and trauma education
- a one-time expense allowance of 400 CHF
- 72 hours of credit if they are volunteers with membership of Zeitgut Lucerne or Kiss Cham/City of Zug
- recognition of commitment in the form of ECTS points for social work students of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (practical work in the field of social work, socio-culture, social pedagogy), the University of Basel, the Lucerne University of Teacher Education - Health Promotion and the Zug University of Teacher Education
- credit points within the framework of the relevant CAS subject for students of the ISZL (International School in Zug/Lucerne)



MUNTERwegs holds regular information events and welcomes new volunteers. For more information, see munterwegs.eu or contact Miriam Hess directly on info@munterwegs.eu