

## **Discover Diversity**

Empowering young people in their transition from school to working life.

“Discover Diversity” is a 2-year program for students in their last 2 years at school before entering their adult working life. I am talking about the secondary schools in Germany, the so-called “Hauptschulen” – they provide the lowest academic level of education. But if somebody is motivated he or she can come to different schools with a higher level of education and can even get access to the university.

The involved classes I will talk about are having a 95% migration population including up to 18 different nationalities. Besides normal adolescent problems these students are in a very difficult emotional situation: they don't feel to be at home – either in school, nor in society, nor in themselves.

With help of our interdisciplinary team (music therapists, actor, dancer, psychologist, violence-prevention trainer) these young people get the chance to develop their own potential and good relationships. According to the age and dynamic potential of our students, our music and music therapy methods were expanded including articulation speech, voice and body work, presentation techniques, fair fighting, and self-defence. Our results verify that these techniques lead to flexibility in dealing with unfamiliar situations, and to increasing self-esteem and connectedness.

The theoretical foundation is on the impact of music therapy in increasing implicit knowing, further resonance and synchronization as basic factors in building relationships, as well as brain research and improvisation.

By the way: experiences gained by improvisation seem to be stored in the insula. This is connected (weg)

The project was granted by the European Social Fund and the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and some foundations.

The roots of **discover diversity** lie in the past and so I

have to go back in the history: in 2002 for the first time in Germany, a young man ran amok and killed 16 people at his school and then himself. Everybody was shocked in the country. But I have been touched by the personality and the fate of this young man too. He was absolutely isolated, had no good relationships, no emotional regulation. And I thought about a violence prevention concept with music therapy. The program was called beats statt schläge (BSS), this means: beats no beatings... (BNB)

The main goal was to integrate every kid into the class community. we know, that separation from community causes psychological distress and can be felt like physical pain. We started with this program in 2004. We had some amazing changes in the kids after a first week of work together. like a stuttering boy, who spoke fluently after the first week we worked in the class... or a hyperactive boy answered the question: what did you learn in this week? „ to find peace“ ...

In the beginning the BnB was pure music therapy. We had a drummer with us and were supported by students from music therapy trainings. The content was: playing music, improvising, moving, reaction and body control

I will show you some fotos

In 2006 I found a violence prevention trainer to work with me in the project.

He is originally Norwegian and an architect. He was working as directors assistant in a theatre in Oslo and has wide experience with Judo and Tai Chi etc. he created a violence prevention program especially for boys and boys together with their fathers-

He is using elements from Sumo wrestling to train the students in fair fighting.

From this time on boys and girls were separated in 2 groups. As an extra girls have been shown some techniques of self-defence. While talking about molesting situations some girls dared for the first time to speak about their own experiences.

With the time I got the idea, to enlarge the program. I heard the complaints of personal managers: the young people don't have soft skills, they don't know how to behave, how to say good morning... they are not motivated, calculation skills zero....

**And now I want to talk about Discover Diversity.  
Discover Diversity this is the enlarged Program of  
BNB**

In both programs the basis is music and musictherapy as this follows implicit principles of dynamic changes .

The impact of resonance and synchronisation i felt for the first time in the pilot study on interactional disorders between mother and child. Example: excessive screaming babies and their mothers. There were moments when I had the feeling that both had created a completely new world of being together.

They followed the same dynamic interactional flow and ended in an enthusiastic feeling of joy – perfect synchronisation. This was the turning point in the quality of their relationship.

Implicit relational knowing follows dynamic structures- nonverbal and never becomes verbal.

In the program Discover Diversity we worked with more than 200 Students – but not everybody got the full program.

Given the huge scope of this project, I am sure you can all appreciate that we had to overcome quite a number of problems during its implementation.

At this point, however, I don't want to dwell on those but would rather like to invite you to a full tour through

our project. introducing our coaching/training staff, their goals, methods and practices, and illustrating the program with some stories of our students. (Dies lieber Jakob ist natürlich „high English)

There was no single, overarching therapeutic theory that had to be adhered to (which makes a scientific evaluation difficult). What mattered were the individual, authentic access of the training staff to the students and the individual experience of the realization (erkenntnis) of the students' goals and concepts.

. We worked on the basis of a consensus regarding the aspects of resonance and synchronization as well as basic experiences, inner perception, and the need for expression.

In addition we relied on the theories of Daniel Stern, according to whom moments of real change progress in psychotherapy tend to happen when patient and therapist go beyond their assigned roles and connect on a purely inter-personal, intersubjective level. For details on this we recommend the book ' The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and everyday Life'. This title is aptly chosen, as it reflects the idea that such breakthrough changes do not depend exclusively on psycho-therapy but can occur in daily life. I love this connection to „everyday life“.

Now - Let me take you on a journey along the main points of our project. By the way: one question we asked ourselves was whether there will be a noticeable

difference between the results obtained by trainers with therapeutic training and those without.

First I want to present to you 2 Trainers from the Theater Academy August Everding in Munich. Normally they work with students, who are highly motivated to give their best at any time. Now our colleagues came to our project and were confronted with: who are you, what do you want, who is the boss a.s.o. they sometimes felt like being beginners.

The first was a professional actor who was focussing on speech training, articulation, body language breathing techniques and how this can be used to build self confidence.

He was more goal orientated than others but he got very good reactions by the students. Working on a poem over happiness, a muslim girl wanted to add a new verse: **I want to be happy**

Fotos: This are some students performing on our summer party.

This young man was not at all amused in the beginning of our project – but we discovered a wonderful potential in him as director of the boys group.  
Example Jandl poem: falem aleikum

The dancer and motion trainer offered classes on the staging of written texts, stage techniques and synchronized motion sequencing.

An example: F.e. the girls group followed a dance mobile. Goal was to do the movements in absolute synchronisation. While doing this a muslim girl became

so enthusiastic by the new feelings she was exploring, that she started jumping like a foal weeing a lush meadow for the very first time.

For example when the actor had worked on a poem, this poem has been transformed into motion with theater elements. FALEMALEIKUM (Beschreibung)

3The next.

we had an Etiquette expert who conducted a workshop focussing on proper behavior . this means in everyday situations as well in a job interview, to help to improve their soft skills. This was followed by a three course meal. The students had to contribute by setting the table.

In this group we had a student, showing a very lax attitude. An Assistant came to him and said: oh, you know, good behavior means a good sitting position too. He made ...äh? and she said: imagine – your boss will invite you for dinner one day. And he said. My boss will never invite me for dinner... This young man I will name Lucca. We meet him later again

4.Learning to learn. This cours provided basic information about the functioning of the brain. The psychologist offered some tests and discussed with the students how the environment at home could be changed.

5. The next was our private tutoring. At the end of the school period, there is an extra qualification test. If you are successful you will have better chances to get an apprenticeship.

There were only few students who wanted to participate as a permanent support.

But when we had a learning camp in the easter holyday – there was a high number of students coming. We had very nice tutors and one of them told me about Lucca, we already know, that the penny had dropped in maths.

So I said to him, I heard it was a good day for you? And he took my hand, shook it and said: I am so happy, it feels so good... thank you very much.

The teacher in the school said, he was more motivated after this learning camp.

A year after finishing the project we called some students to do an interview.

We asked Lucca, what he is doing now. „I am learning in a hotel...“ big surprise. and do you like it. „Yes, very much and everybody is very nice.“ Whats about your boss? „Oh, he told me, he has never seen a young man to be so competent in the contact with difficult tourists. And he suggested I should try to participate in a special program. I could go for half a year to kanada f.e. and when I come back, he will take me again.“

6.  
all sessions have been documentated by a psychologist and another trainer.

7. job mentors are working in many schools today. They are senior experts and they help building up connections to companies offering apprenticeships, job trainings.... The collaboration was very successful, and they even came into the classes to participate in the music sessions.

8. we had the support of a supervisor, who knew about problems in schools.

Borderline girl.

### **Now i want to show you the result of our questionnaire**

We asked 27 questions in the beginning and at the end of the project.

Position in the class

Self assessment

Tolerance

Level of aggression

Psychosomatic problems

Managment of feelings

Can you show feelings like

- joy
- fear
- grief
- anger
- 
- are you open for new experience

the only question they did not answer was: can you show feelings like anger?

But they had answered the question about their level of

aggressivity

In the interviews **one year after the** students said, they felt well prepared for working life; they learned tolerance and got more self-esteem.

2 moslem girls will study law, 2 girls have been the winners in a family discussion. The fathers didn't want that the daughter want to have a job training.

Some students said, the jobtraining now would be the beginning and they want to continue with training, to become f.e. a social worker aso.

The most challenging student was a girl with a borderline diagnosis. She was a very disturbant factor for a long time. At one moment she was interrupting the actor and asked: can you tell me, why we sometimes are doing something we really dont want to do? this was the turning point.

After 1 year of the project she began to come regularly to the projekt and even to school. At the end, she was able to get the final examination.

As team we have been confronted in the same way as our students did, with unknown situations. F.e. there were 2 girls, hidden under their coats, no eye contact , no action for months. They seemed not to be hostile. But we asked, what's the matter?. Later we learned, that in some regions of the world there is shame part of cultural identity.

The director of the school said at the end, that we have changed the atmosphere even in the school and he was

very impressed by the process the students have shown, as well by our conflict management. He said, like the job mentors you should have an office as soul-mentors in our school

Gisela Lenz is a training music therapist. She worked as a journalist for a youth magazin and the radio. She studied medicine to become a psychoanalyst – but this way was interrupted by experiencing creativity with sound, movement and the contact with the first existing music therapists in Munich. She felt the better way for her was to work with music than with words.