

Press release

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First year of courses for refugees comes to a successful close at WU



In the fall of 2015, WU launched special German courses for refugees as part of the “*Lernen macht Schule*” initiative, a program co-organized by WU, the REWE Group, and Caritas Vienna. Last week marked the end of the initiative’s successful first year.

A total of four German courses for refugees were taught at WU during the past academic year, thanks to financial support provided by the REWE Group. 50 participants successfully completed the courses and were awarded certificates. Most of them come from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. After a total of 254 hours taught, the participants had significantly improved their communication skills in German and were able to participate fully in the end-of-course celebration held in German.

Courses taught by faculty volunteers

Faculty members from the Department of Foreign Language Business Communication showed particular dedication over the past semester, volunteering their time to hold over 30 conversation classes. Practicing German in a small group setting helped the learners to overcome their initial reluctance to speak the new language. Working with language learners from different countries was also a rewarding experience for the faculty members involved (see WU Blog article “[Integrationshilfe = Ehrensache](#)”). Faculty members from the Department of Information Systems and Operations and students from the master’s programs in Supply Chain Management and Business Education also volunteered to teach IT skills courses for refugees aged 15 to 21 last semester, teaching them how to work with a computer and how to use basic software.

WU’s activities in support of refugees

In addition to the “[Lernen macht Schule](#)” program launched in 2010 and the German courses for refugees, WU also awarded [eight internships to refugees](#) and last year implemented the [POWER2Help](#) initiative, which was driven by the volunteer work of two WU researchers and offered workshops to provide volunteer helpers with the skills and resources they need for working with asylum seekers in primary support and integration projects.

WU plans to continue the German courses in the fall and integrate them more closely into the [MORE program](#) for refugees. Refugees interested in studying at WU will receive special support to make it easier for them to take up a regular degree program. Conversation groups, various MORE program courses, and the IT skills courses will also be continued in the fall, in addition to the German classes.

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