

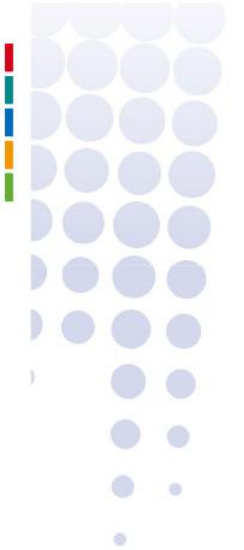
What is happening behind the walls?

Living and studying between arguing neighbours, psychological stress, and locked fridges.

Experiences from social work in Student Dormitories.

Content of presentation

- Overview
 - Who are the residents?
 - What kind of problems are they facing?
- Social work in student dormitories
 - Counselling
 - Challenges Social Work is facing
 - Network
 - „Digital Streetwork“ – social work in digital realms (a concept idea)
 - From students for students - The Tutorsproject and dorm council

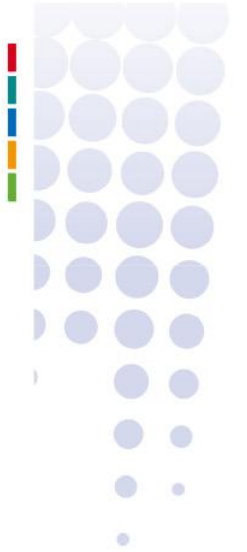




Overview

A glimpse on the current situation

The residents in our dormitories



- The Studierendenwerk Münster runs **23 Dormitories**.
- Around **5.360 residential areas** (around 60.000 students in Münster).
- **26,2%** of them are **international** students
- **In Germany**, ca. **42,4%** of the **internationals** are living in dormitories.(2025)*

What problems do they face

Financial Problems:

- increasing living costs
- Health insurance
- loss of jobs

Social Problems:

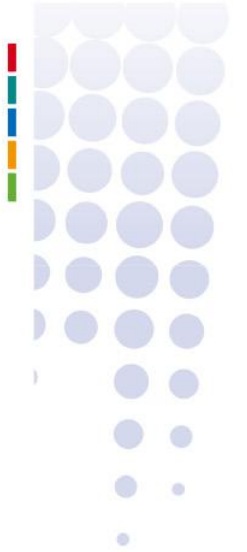
- isolation
- language barriers
- cultural differences
- communication skills (e.g. with neighbours)

Structural Problems:

- no or not enough community spaces
- small common kitchen
- location in the suburbs

Isolation & social anxieties

- 16% of the students report about health issues. (*best3, 2023*)
- Of these, 65% have psychological issues. (*best3, 2023*)
- Student Dormitories are often anonymous places.
- The isolation of the (Corona)pandemic has had a great impact on social behaviour.
 - Increasing psychological issues (depressions, anxiety,..)*
- Lack of “face-to-face” conversations, living and communicate via digital channels.

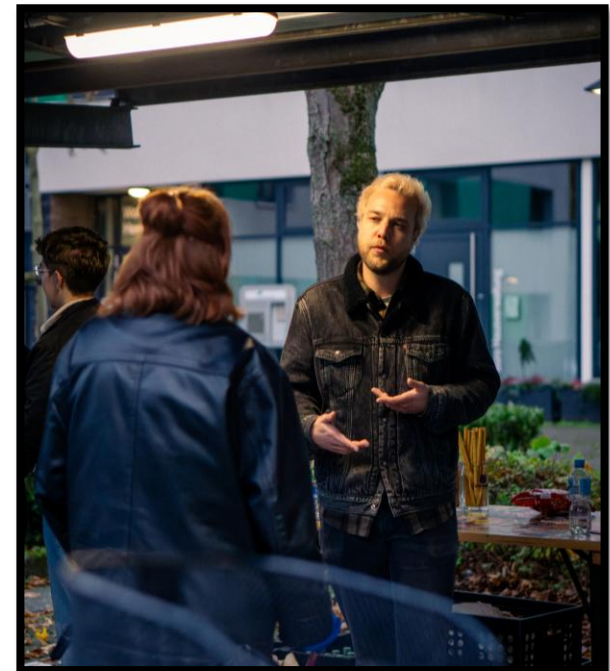




Social Work inside the dormitories

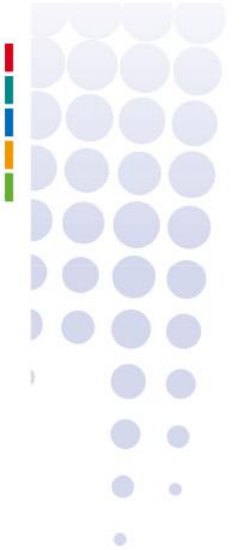
Counselling and social work on-site

- Bring the offer to the clients → better accessibility.
- Specialized topics like: e.g. arguing with neighbours/roommates, orientation inside the dormitory
- Mediation in shared apartments.
- Events with content about social coexistence.
- Being the link to the Studierendenwerk.



Challenges of social work in/around dormitories

- Big buildings and many closed doors
- Decentralization
- Big amount of potential clients
- The targeting group is very heterogenic



Built up and use a good network

The internal Network

- Student housing
- Facility management

The student Network

- Dorm council
- Tutors

The external Network

- University and university for applied science
- Other social counseling services in the local area
- Colleagues from other Student Services
- Institutions that offer financial support for students



Get to know the students, be visible

- Social activity's and events inside the dormitories
- Welcoming the new students at semester start
- Know about, what concerns the students – and react
- Plan Events (e.g. “ADHD in the studies”)



Events at the Dorms

- Welcome Events
- International & cultural Events
- Information sessions
- Events to current topics



Our “Tutorsproject”

- 5 Tutors in 5 different dormitories
- Regular (social) events inside the dorms
- They’re helping the international residents with many concerns

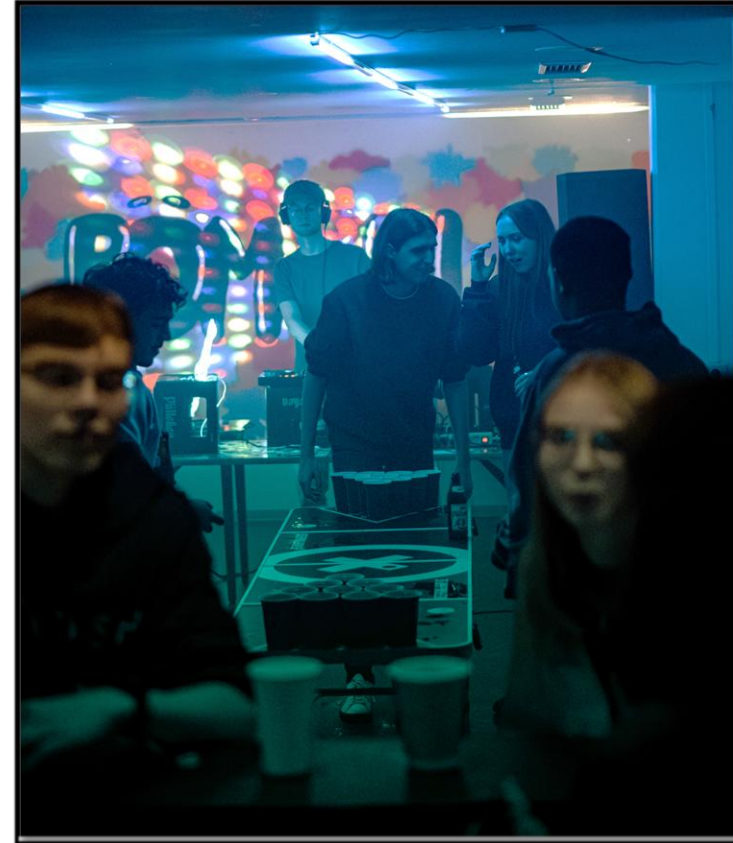
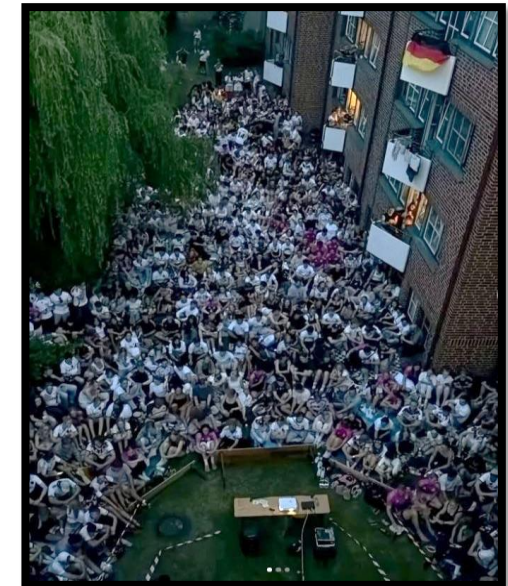


Photo: J. Wolter

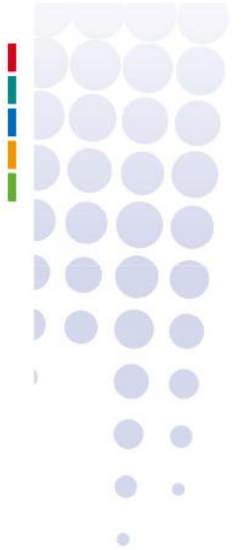
The Dorm council

- Independent groups of students (residents of the dormitory)
- Often organized in clubs
- Do many kind of events (parties or “get-together” like game nights, etc.)
- Develop ideas, what their dormitory may need (e.g. a sports place)
- Members also listen to other residents problems
- Moderate the WhatsApp community of their dormitory
- Manage the student bar in their dormitory
- Regular member meetings



“Digital Streetwork” - on Instagram

- New concept of reaching the clients
- Clients communicate via social media, so shall we
- Better accessibility for students e.g. with social anxiety
- Sharing information about (“Serviceposts”):
 - Mental health during studies
 - Sharing contacts who can help in certain situations
 - What is happening in the dormitory, who are important contacts
 - Explain content of counselling to break down barriers



Sources

- *Die Studierendenbefragung in Deutschland: best3 / Studieren mit einer gesundheitlichen Beeinträchtigung (2023)*
- *MLP Studentenwohnreport (2025)*
- *Statistik über Bewohnende der Wohnanlagen des Studierendenwerk Münster (2026)*
- *„Auswirkungen der Corona-Pandemie auf die psychische Gesundheit Studierender“ – Eine Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse von Anfragen in der Psychosozialen Beratungsstelle (PSB)*

Thank you for your attention.



Studierendenwerk Münster



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