

Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna (mdw): Quality Characteristics of a Modern University

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1. My presentation deals with the socially high relevant issues of inclusion and diversity at a European art university, the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna in Austria. I would like to show the form in which these two areas have now become quality features of our modern university. How did that happen? What can we show? After long deliberation, the topic was illustrated in 2019 by a film project preceded by a call from our university. We'll watch this film together later.

2. Inclusion and Diversity, also participation, have not only played an important role, but above all for music pedagogical teaching and research at our University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna for several years. The socio-political framework for this were that Austria committed itself in 2008 with the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from the UN in 2006 with the aim to create an inclusive education system at all levels.¹

The observance of the requirements of diversity awareness and social inclusion as well as the social responsibility of the universities is also laid down in the specifications of the overall Austrian university development plan until 2021, which is just as mandatory for our music university as the national strategy for the social dimension in higher education.²

Early, in 2002, the Austrian University Law defined in Section 59 that deviating examinations could be made possible for students with a disability. It is therefore the task of the universities to meet the needs of students with disabilities.³

¹ Learn more at this link:

<https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Soziales/Menschen-mit-Behinderungen/UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention.html>

² Learn more at this link: Link:

<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/Hochschule-und-Universitaet/Hochschulgovernance/Steuerungsinstrumente/GUEP.html>

³ Learn more at this link: Link:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/NormDokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20002128&Artikel=&Paragraf=59&Anlage=&Uebergangsrecht>

By setting up specific contact points for organizational development and anti-discrimination as well as through projects and initiatives in research, teaching and practice, including the Senats AG Barrierefrei, of which I am allowed to be the speaker, signs have been and are set for equal opportunity and inclusive cooperation. We members of this Senate Working Group advise everyone at the university, ensure free web access, to compensate for possible disadvantages, for example through different examination methods, and regularly attend internal and external training courses in order to develop a wide range of skills.⁴

These are the political frameworks.

3. When it comes to learning and research at our university, students in various course formats have the opportunity to acquire theoretical and practical didactic knowledge about inclusive music making and teaching and to gain initial social and educational experience for professional work in schools, music schools or other professional areas collect. It was very important that we were allowed to found an inclusive music-making band at the music university in 2010. This was then awarded in 2016 by the State Prize for Diversity Management of the Republic of Austria, Diversitas 2016.⁵

The criteria were based on the strategic goals of the Federal Ministry for promoting diversity, including the factors resource orientation, sustainability, innovation as well as internal and external impact.

The jury was particularly impressed by this aspect of linking teaching and research, between theory and practice.

Our Vice Rector Gerda Müller stated in retrospect with reference to the presentation of the State Prize for Diversity to the mdw: "With winning the main prize, the structural anchoring of the question of diversity at the mdw has changed significantly. The award made a significant contribution to our decision to adopt a comprehensive diversity strategy in the 2019-2024 development plan, which was a great challenge, but also a huge opportunity. "

4. This ensures that most of our employees and colleagues have an inclusive, diversity-sensitive society of tomorrow in mind and try to prepare our students for it.

⁴ Learn more at this link: <https://www.mdw.ac.at/barrierefrei/>

⁵ Learn more at this link: <https://www.mdw.ac.at/796/>

By developing and testing new technologies and manners, for example, inclusion and research are to be dove-tailed, for example through research projects in master's theses or dissertation projects. There is an exchange with other colleges and universities about best practice examples in the areas of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and imparting social skills. In this respect, the university, which is financed with public money, takes on social responsibility.

5. This band All Stars inclusive, which has existed since 2010, has set new standards in teaching and research at the university. This new field of practice encourages students to deal theoretically, scientifically and didactically with the topic of inclusion and making music in heterogeneous groups. The band is a meeting point for around 30 musicians with and without disabilities, they rehearse weekly. Together they create their own texts, create melodies for a song or arrange favorite hits and play them live at events and concerts. This work is being researched by Beate Hennenberg. It is about questions of a democratic coexistence of all people in their diversity and difference. At the same time, the band represents an important area of training for the professional future of our students.

6. The short documentary, All Stars inclusive Band - inclusive teaching, learning and research at the mdw - University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna' was part of the GenderIQeerIDiversität-Call 2018 of the Vice Rector for Organizational Development, Gender & Diversity at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna in cooperation with the Department for Music Education Research, Music Didactics and Elementary Music-Making (IMP) and the Institute for Music - and movement pedagogy / rhythm and music physiology (MBM) created.

It is an artistic short film that deals with inclusive music / school pedagogy and is intended to encourage students to engage theoretically, scientifically and to deal with the topic in a didactic manner.

For this film we received an award for the Short Cut Festival in Graz in 2019.

Related Literature:

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