

Association „Rettet das Kind“  
Vienna

# Mission Statement



If you wish to lead the way for the  
youth, you must follow straight paths.

Jean Cocteau, 1889-1963, French poet, painter and film director

# Mission Statement of the Association „Rettet das Kind“ – Vienna

Since 1957, the association „Rettet das Kind“ - Vienna, one of the nine state organisations of „Rettet das Kind“ – Austria, has been engaged in the work for the welfare of children and youth.

„Rettet das Kind“ – Vienna has made it its mission to improve the individual life situation of our youth in sustainable way.

## Our association

The association „Rettet das Kind“ is a private, non-party and not denominationally affiliated non-profit organisation whose work is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. „Rettet das Kind“ – which operates worldwide under the name „Save the children“ – is organised according to federal principles in Austria. This results in a wide range of activities for „Rettet das Kind“ – Austria and the state organisations of „Rettet das Kind“.

The work of „Rettet das Kind“ – Vienna is funded mainly by subsidies from the public sector and from funds of Austrian Children's Aid.

## Our field of work

is the extracurricular youth work. In scientific literature, this is defined as the part of the socialisation and education offer for children, youth and young adults that takes place outside the family, school or training and employment. It is especially important that the youth participate voluntarily, since youth work cannot be „ordered“.

## Our mission

We see our mission in supporting disadvantaged youth whose life situation could be improved by social and educational work, however, who are not adequately reached – or do not wish to be reached – by the existing youth work facilities.

## Our goals

- We are committed to improving the individual life situation of these youth.
- We empower the young people so that they can recognise and realise their own potential.
- We teach the youth social competences and support their ability to help themselves.
- We are committed to gender equality through differentiated work with girls and boys.
- We regard political participation and involvement of young people in the shaping of society as an opportunity for eliminating structure-related shortcomings.
- We work towards social acceptance of marginalised youth and their integration into society.

To achieve these goals, we follow different approaches: **Streetwork** and **Open Youth Work** are means for fulfilling the purpose of our association.

# Streetwork

Streetwork is a social work method and originated in the USA in the 1920s. Social and educational programmes were implemented in major cities, for instance Chicago, as a result of increasing juvenile delinquency. Youth gangs were the typical target groups of this work approach, which was organised separately from social institutions. Via England, this method also came to Germany, where it has been used approximately from 1970.

Since 1979, the association „Rettet das Kind“ - Vienna has been engaged in the field of streetwork, and, according to the official notification of the state government of Vienna,

„ ... is, as an establishment of independent youth welfare, is suited for fulfilling non-sovereign tasks of public youth welfare.“

Accordingly, the „Bundes-Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz“ is applicable to the training of our staff. This means that all employees of Streetwork are qualified female and male social workers.

At present, the Vienna state organisation, on behalf of the state of Vienna, is operating four streetwork facilities in different districts of Vienna. The teams consist of three to six employees who work in certain city districts and are thus the contact persons for young people in the surrounding district. A fifth team works supra-regionally in all of Vienna as needed due to changed locations of its target group.

## The target groups

The target group are young people between 12 and 22 years of age who live within the catchment area of the meeting point or spend their spare time there and who do not have the financial or social means for organising their spare time according to the normal consumer patterns.



# Open Youth Work

Since May 2001, the association „Rettet das Kind“ – Vienna has organised venues where young people can meet. At present, there are three meeting points for young people that are operated throughout the year and are supported by four to five members. A meeting point for young people is a protected room that offers spare time facilities that the youth can access freely. They can visit the meeting point anonymously and may play with the facilities free of charge and also anonymously.

Characteristically, the rules to be observed at such meeting points are set together with the youngsters. They are the basis for ensuring peaceful coexistence at the meeting point.

## The target groups

The target group are young people between 12 and 22 years of age who live within the catchment area of the meeting point or spend their spare time there and who do not have the financial or social means for organising their spare time according to the normal consumer patterns.



## The work principles

The following work principles and working methods apply in the operational area – for Streetwork and in Open Youth Work:

- Voluntariness
- Anonymity
- Acceptance
- Critical partiality
- Low threshold
- Need-driven focus
- Transparency
- Gender-sensitive basic attitude

Our most important working principles are voluntariness of the contact between the youth and the street worker, the assurance of anonymity in respect of all information confided in us and our critical partiality for the youth. Support offers are provided in the environment of the youth and are not tied to conditions. Our work is based on the professional implementation of technical standards. Our work is need-driven, transparent, holistic and accepting. The high skill requirement that goes with it is reflected in the required training in the area of social work for all staff members and the strong focus on advice and casework.

On principle, we understand ourselves as a mobile organisation and are therefore able to respond very flexibly to changed requirements of the environment. However, the desired effects in a concrete project situation can only be achieved with a minimum of continuity in the work with the target groups.

## The working methods

- Streetwork: Streetwork is a low-threshold, approaching social work provided in the environment of the youth in the form of a continuous contact offer. Help is not forced on the young people but they determine the extent and the pace of the help themselves. Formation of trust and work on the relationship are pivotal parts of streetwork.
- Casework: Helping youth to help themselves based on a relationship of trust in the form of advice, support, guidance, referral and crisis intervention.
- Group work/cliue work: Recognising and respecting internal structures of existing groups, promoting of social competences and a constructive handling of conflicts. Certain topics are discussed in depth within the framework of gender-specific group work.
- Gender-specific group work: We believe that it is important to work in more depth on certain topics in gender-homogeneous groups, as part of the work with girls and with boys.
- Intercultural work: This is about the acceptance of different values and cultures and the promotion of tolerance, openness and respect for a form of relationship and communication as equal partners; this is possible through the model effect of the staff in daily interaction.
- Community focus: Support for the youth for maintaining their meeting points in the district, moderation of conflicts between different stakeholders, cooperation with other social institutions and politicians in the district, focus on the needs of the youth and the options in the respective district.
- Educational activities
- Public relations: Creation of more understanding and sensitivity for youth in society by active transport of youth-relevant topics, effective representation of the environments and problems of youth without additional stigmatising.

## What we deliver for our target groups

With Streetwork, Open Youth Work and Socio-Cultural Animation, „Rettet das Kind“ – Vienna can achieve the following:

- Continuous, professional offer of a relationship;
- Support with the handling of problems of everyday life and crisis situations;
- Promotion of and reflection on a positive gender identity;
- Gender Mainstreaming: Integration of a gender-sensitive perspective in all areas of life and thus gender equality;
- Support during the process of becoming independent and finding one's own identity;
- Promotion and strengthening of resources and potentials of the youth according to their skills and interests;
- Developing of new conflict management models and strategies together with the youth;
- Lobbying for the interests of the youth.

We understand our work as a contribution to a non-violent, tolerant and intercultural coexistence of youth, children and adults.

Continuous quality assurance, the required training in the field of social work or social pedagogy and efficient utilisation of existing resources make it possible for us to provide the defined services for our target groups in an optimal manner.



### **Imprint and contact**

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