

*WUK is an open cultural space, a space for lived interaction between art, politics, and social issues. Here an expanded notion of culture manifests, which transcends the everyday meaning of the word.*  
(WUK Guiding Principles, 1994)

12,000-square-metre premises from the early industrial age accommodate one of the largest sociocultural centres in Europe. Erected in 1855 as a locomotive factory, the building was peacefully squatted in 1981 by the *Verein zur Schaffung offener Kultur- und Werkstättenhäuser* (Association for the Creation of Open Culture and Workshop Houses). At that time a decisive driving force was the need and ideas for a space where an understanding of culture that comprises all areas of life could manifest.

Today WUK houses a cultural centre consisting of four programmatic areas (WUK Cultural Production and Administration: Music, performing arts, Culture for Kids, Kunsthalle Exnergasse) and runs 13 labour market policy educational and counselling facilities (WUK Counselling and Education). Additionally, there are 150 autonomous groups and individual initiatives organised into seven autonomous sectors (referred to as Self-Management / Sociocultural Centre). A total of 200,000 people visit and use WUK every year.

## **WUK Cultural Production and Administration**

### **WUK performing arts**

WUK performing arts acts as a cooperation partner and co-producer for freelance artists active in the field of performance and offers professional support in all realms and phases of a production: for example, application procedures, financing, technical help, dramaturgy, or publicity work. In addition to a precise selection of international positions, above all it is the laboratory and workshop idea – that WUK was assigned in the structural framework of the Viennese dance and performance landscape at the very beginning – which should be further pursued. This should not only manifest in new, young (local) artists but also in the initiation of new formats. Risk and experiment constitute the repertoire.

### **WUK Music**

It is hard to imagine the local and international music scene without WUK as a venue. Especially for younger urban visitors WUK is synonymous for one of the most popular music stages in Vienna. WUK Music presents a dense monthly event programme including live concerts, DJ acts, readings, various one-off events (FM4 EM/WM-Quartier, JazzFest Wien, RUN VIE) as well as regular clubbings, which enjoy continuous and growing popularity. The musical spectrum is broad – from guitar music, indie and singer-songwriter to hip-hop, dubstep, electro and house.

### **WUK Culture for Kids**

WUK Culture for Kids has a multifaceted programmatic profile. Besides national and international guest theatre performances, the programme consists of various formats such as literature readings, family matinees, storytelling, baby clubs and workshops. WUK Culture for Kids is, among other things, a cooperation partner of *Szene Bunte Wäbne* dance festival for a young audience and is open to innovative ideas that lead to a high-quality and dynamic children's programme.

### **Kunsthalle Exnergasse**

The Kunsthalle Exnergasse (KEX) defines itself as an open platform and exhibition space for the production and presentation of exhibitions and projects belonging to innovative, experimental, and contemporary art in its most different formats and forms. KEX is not commercially oriented and is dedicated to making and fostering contacts with art and artist organisations in Austria and abroad. The exhibition programme is selected by an advisory panel in cooperation with KEX via an annual call for proposals. Interdisciplinary events are held within the programme of exhibitions in the 400-square-metre space, such as symposiums, lectures, readings, concerts, and catalogue presentations.

## **WUK Education and Counselling**

Since 1983 WUK has initiated and operated innovative educational and counselling facilities for the disadvantaged in the labour market. At 12 locations in Vienna and Lower Austria, 12 facilities and projects support more than 4000 women and men with their entry into the labour market every year. A wide range of services – including counselling, professional orientation, qualification and job opportunities – are available for people with different types of disadvantages.

### **Counselling and Information**

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#### **WUK Monopoli**

WUK Monopoli provides job-hunting youth with counselling and guidance customised to their needs. From choice of profession to application training, they receive the necessary support along the difficult path to a place in the educational or work world.

#### **Educational Guidance in Vienna (Bildungsberatung in Wien)**

Several organisations teamed up under the umbrella trademark “Educational Guidance in Vienna” in order to offer provider-neutral and mobile educational guidance. Besides WUK, the participants include abz\*austria – competent for women and business, bfi Wien – Vocational Training Institute Vienna, biv integrativ – Academy of Integrative Education, the Adult Education Centres in Vienna GmbH, and WIFI Wien – Vienna Institute for Economic Promotion.

### **Coaching and Job Assistance for Youth**

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#### **WUK Job Assistance (WUK Arbeitsassistenz)**

WUK Job Assistance helps the disabled and disadvantaged to find a job and with problems in their current work positions. Advice is offered to companies on the development of internal support structures and financial support benefits. Cooperation partners are assisted in the development of CSR measures.

#### **WUK CoachingPlus**

WUK CoachingPlus offers coaching for youth and young adults with psychic impairments or Autism Spectrum Disorder as well as students in “Kooperationsklassen” up to the age of 24 years. Additionally, young people can choose from different group programmes, and we provide social worker support and therapeutic assistance. WUK CoachingPlus is also partner for regional youth coaching projects.

#### **WUK faktor.c**

WUK faktor.c provides youth coaching and assistance to disabled youth and students of special needs education centres in Vienna on their personal and job related way after secondary school. WUK faktor.c is also partner for other projects working with disabled youth.

#### **WUK Youth Coaching West (WUK Jugendcoaching West)**

WUK Youth Coaching West is the regional youth coaching project for the Viennese districts 5-9 and 16-19. WUK Youth Coaching West offers advice and support for students above the 9<sup>th</sup> compulsory school year and youth up to the age of 19 who are not in apprenticeship/education. With the 3-step offer participants can get individual support.

## **Education, Qualification and Employment**

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### **WUK bio.pflanzen**

Social agriculture creates jobs for long-term unemployed people aged 19 to 58 in the biological production of ornamental plants and herbs and in the cultivation of green spaces. WUK bio.pflanzen provides 17 age and performance-based transitional jobs, professional guidance and support, as well as targeted further education and social work support.

### **WUK m.power**

The WUK m.power course for secondary school completion exams offers youth aged 15 to 25 the opportunity to conclude the examination. Participation is open to youth who must complete the entire eighth grade as well as to those who only require examinations in individual subjects.

### **spacelab**

spacelab is a low-threshold labour market political project for youth who have a greater need for supervised support in active life planning and the development of professional perspectives. The project is run in a cooperation between The Association of Viennese Youth Centres, Peoples Aid Austria, and WUK.

## **Legal entities in charge**

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### **Federal Coordination Office for School to Work Transition**

#### **(BundesKOST – Bundesweite Koordinationsstelle Übergang Schule – Beruf)**

On behalf of the Federal Social Welfare Office the Federal Coordination Office for School to Work Transition (Bundes KOST) coordinates activities for youth dealing with the transition from school to professional life with the aim of increased national cooperations.

### **Coordination Unit Youth – Education – Employment**

#### **(Koordinationsstelle Jugend – Bildung – Beschäftigung)**

The Coordination Unit Youth – Education – Employment coordinates activities related to the transition from school to professional life for the professional integration of disabled, disadvantaged, and potential socially excluded youth in Vienna up to the age of 24 years.

### **Self-Empowerment Centre for Persons with Learning Disabilities**

#### **(Selbstvertretungszentrum für Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten)**

The Self-Empowerment Centre offers persons with learning disabilities opportunities to enhance their self-empowerment. Participants can speak about their interests and concerns at consultations and networking meetings or attend vocational training courses. The centre communicates its interests through the organisation of events and participation in political forums. It is cooperatively run by persons with learning disabilities and supporting staff.

## **The Sociocultural Centre WUK**

The WUK Sociocultural Centre comprises around 150 house groups, initiatives, and individuals. They work in seven autonomous sectors. They have in common a basic democratic decision-making structure and organise internal issues via monthly plenary meetings. The allocation of rooms, the admission of

new members, and the organisation of events are carried out under self-management. The related tasks are accomplished on a voluntary basis, which contributes to cost reduction for the association and sponsors. The activities of the self-managed sectors are complemented by two in-house media platforms (WUK Radio on Orange 94.0 and the magazine WUK Info-Intern) and by four public spaces. This unique structure and the cultural diversity of the WUK Sociocultural Centre are facilitated and supported by the infrastructure of a well-functioning house, general services, and professional publicity work.

### **Sociopolitical Initiatives**

All of the twenty-nine groups in this sector – as the name says it – are socially and politically active. They range from organisations for cultural mediation, disabled people, and environmental protection to self-help and human rights initiatives and four different seniors groups.

### **Children and Youth**

Three children groups, a primary and a grammar school, a work college, and an after school care centre offer a high-quality living and learning environment for 130 children and youth. The focus of all groups is placed on the balanced advancement of intellectual, emotional, and manual skills, a self-determined life and education, as well as the development of emancipated and partner-like relationships between children, teachers, supervisors, and parents.

### **Intercultural Sector**

The work of the intercultural initiatives in WUK is based on the principles of openness and tolerance. These groups, which consist of different nationalities, cultures, and languages, share a commitment to democracy and the advocacy of emancipation. Their engagement ranges from supporting and representing the interests of migrants and asylum seekers or standing up against racism and xenophobia to the practice and mediation of art and culture.

### **dancetheatreperformance WUK**

dancetheatreperformance WUK (ttp WUK) presently consists of 44 artists and guests from the independent performance and dance scene. It provides space for production, training, research, and performances. ttp WUK is a unique artistic and sociopolitical laboratory in Vienna.

### **Workshops**

The Workshops Sector unifies design, handcraft, and art and is conceived as a field of experiment and site of production for traditional craft techniques and skills and for innovative interdisciplinary projects in arts and crafts. It provides workshop and production spaces (17 workshops/studios, 3 guest studios) for artists, craftspeople, and interested individuals.

### **Visual Art**

Eleven studios and two guest studios combine to form the spatial framework for the work of sixteen artists and five guests. The scope of artistic production spans from painting, graphics, and installation to photographic and cinematic works. This sector also includes the Fotogalerie Wien – Association for the Promotion of Photography and New Media and the International Action Group of Visual Artists – IntAkt.

### **Music**

In the WUK Music Association or the Music Sector (MUS) 17 rehearsal rooms are densely occupied by about 40 different music groups and solo musicians from all types of musical styles. The self-managed structure leads to networks and the realisation of collective projects such as concert series. The Open Sound Studio is also a part of the Music Sector, which offers low-threshold and affordable production possibilities.