Intro – #00:18#

Melanie (M): Ein herzliches Willkommen zu der ersten Episode unseres Podcasts #UniStuttgartInternational!

Before we start with our first topic, we would like to introduce you to our language concept. All our episodes will be in German and English. We do not translate every part, but we do either record it in English or in German and will then provide a short summary in the respective other language. We will also provide a table of contents including the minutes, so you can also skip some parts to create your own personal listening experience.

Wenn es also auch mal ein Kapitel gibt, das euch nicht interessiert, könnt ihr einfach zum nächsten weierspringen. So, dann geht’s los mit unserem ersten Thema.

Unsere heutige Folge heißt Gemeinsam Einsam und wir sprechen darüber, wie man an der Uni Stuttgart Kontakte knüpfen kann.

The topic to get connected at a new place, in this case the University of Stuttgart, is something that affects international students as well as local students from Germany. Obviously, when you move here from abroad, you don’t know anyone at first.

Why should I get connected? / Warum sollte ich Kontakte knüpfen? – #02:05#

M: Let’s start this episode with a short talk about why it is worth it to get to know somebody if you move to a new city. It helps you, for example, with the orientation in the city and at the university. And even if you come from Stuttgart and its surroundings and are starting to study at the University of Stuttgart, it’s nice to get to know new people or other cultures as it broadens your horizon. This also applies to those of you who have already been studying for a while. Because the pandemic in particular has made it very difficult to make new contacts. I noticed that myself during my studies as well. When everything is online, you can hardly get to know other people.

But lucky you, there are many opportunities to get to know new people at the University of Stuttgart. The International Office itself offers possibilities for incoming to meet other people. Then you can get to know others at the University in general based on your study field or across study programs and beyond lectures. And of course there are ways to connect with people from the new city independent from the University and your studies. Again the note: The links to all the offers we talk about in the podcast are in the show notes, as well as a few offers that are not presented here.

What is loneliness in general? / Was ist Einsamkeit eigentlich? – #03:36#

Alisa (A): Before we start with the offers, we would like to talk about the topic of loneliness in general, what it is and what you can do about it. We got our information on this topic from the Kompetenzznetz Einsamkeit and the two most important things about this topic are firstly loneliness is very subjective, and secondly, you have to distinguish it from being alone. So while being alone is perceived as rather positive, loneliness is always negative. And as loneliness is subjective no one but yourself knows whether you really feel lonely. Two people in the same social situation may experience loneliness to different degrees. There are also different types of loneliness and in addition to social and emotional loneliness, which concern the number and quality of your social contacts, there is also cultural loneliness. We find this type to be especially interesting given the fact that we are talking about stays and studying abroad. So this type describes the feeling of not being a part of the surrounding society. Now the question might be, why should you do something about this feeling? Which is very easy to answer, because you should do something because loneliness
has a negative impact on your physical and mental health. That’s why today we are talking about ways you can socialize and make contacts at the University of Stuttgart and be gemeinsam einsam.

**Offers by the IO / Was bietet das IO an? – #05:20#**


Let’s start with the offers by the International Office, that help you to get connected. A possibility for international students as well as for local students to meet new people are the events that are offered by the buddy program ready.study.stuttgart and the intercultural mentoring program. The Come Together is another opportunity for incoming and future outgoing students to exchange information about their home countries. And last but not least especially for incoming students, we offer the Get in Touch and Orientation Events in order to help them get connected at the beginning of their stay abroad in Stuttgart.

**Events by the support programs / Events der Betreuungsprogramme – #06:22#**

Okay, these were really a lot of different offers, that we will present to you, so let’s start at the beginning with the events offered by the two support programs.

First of all the Buddy Program ready.study.stuttgart offers events that are open for all students from the University of Stuttgart and everybody who lives in a student dorm that is run by the Studierendenwerk Stuttgart. That means you do not necessarily have to study at the University of Stuttgart in order to be able to participate. The upcoming events, which are organized by students for students, are shared via a newsletter to which you can easily register with your email. Examples for events would be a barbecue, hiking with donkeys or a visit of a museum. The registration for the events is done via email as well, for popular events it will be best to be quick but there is also a waiting list.
And now as our first guest of this episode we’re having Vale from the intercultural Mentoring Program. Thank you for being here.

Vale (V): Thank you for having me today.

M: Would you like to start by introducing yourself and briefly tell us what the Intercultural Mentoring Program is all about?

V: Yes, hello my name is Vale. I’m working as a student assistant at the International Office and I’m part of the mentoring program for 1, 5 years. I’m studying German and Philosophy at the city center. So our program is for exchange students who are doing their master fulltime studies here in Stuttgart. We are matching a mentor from Germany and a mentee from abroad so we basically create tandems, more or less also called one on one mentoring.

M: And besides the one on one mentoring, the program also offers events. What kind of events are those?

V: The mentoring program offers a colorful and very creative program in which students are free to choose. We also call these types of events Stammtische, in English Roundtables. These take place regularly, usually every second week and it can be a relaxed picnic at the tea house, a bar tour, a visit to a popular exhibition or larger day trips such as to Strasbourg.

M: That sounds really cool and it’s also great that they are taking place on a very regular basis. So who can participate in the events and how can they register?

V: All participants of the mentoring program can participate in the events, depending on the scope of the regulars, meeting is limited to the current semester and you can easily sign up via link in our newsletter.

M: And how do you inform the participants about the events?

V: We send the newsletter that I already talked about to our participants and former semesters every two weeks. Through this newsletter, they will be informed about all upcoming events.

M: So that’s an easy way to stay updated. What is the benefit for mentees to participate in the events?
**V**: Well by participating in the roundtables, they have the chance to make new social contacts, for example, if they want to meet new people, if they want to add a little something new to their existing bubble, or if they want to socialize with their tandem partner. You will have the opportunity to make contacts in and around Stuttgart in addition to other international contacts and improve your German language skills. Through the social exchange, they strengthen their personality development and openness towards other cultures, people and in general the intercultural exchange.

**M**: And what is the benefit for the mentors?

**V**: Likewise, the social aspect that applies to the internationals. In addition, the opportunity to get to know other countries and cultures. Participation in the events can not only change and expand ones social environment, but it can also present one with new challenges. In addition, not only will your own self-reflection skills be increased, but also your own understanding of tolerance, acceptance and inclusion will be promoted. Of course, not to forget - lots of fun and a very diverse change from everyday life.

**M**: Sounds like it is really worth to participate in the events. Do you know people who got to know each other through this and have established longer-term contact?

**V**: Yes, that’s true, I think it is very worth it and many of our tandems are still friends or in contact beyond the mentoring semester.

**M**: Aww that’s nice. And that brings me already to my last question. Is there any other nice experience related to this topic that you would like to share?

**V**: Previous highlights at such events were roundtables that went over a weekend. For example, a camping trip to Lake Constance or a hut weekend. And yeah, the way the group grew together after one day was amazing and I will never forget how happy everyone was about these special experiences of intercultural exchange.

**M**: I can imagine that this is a great experience. So is there anything else that you would like to add?

**V**: I definitely recommend the participation at the mentoring program and also I want to encourage more young people to join intercultural exchange.

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*Universität Stuttgart
Dezernat Internationales*
M: I would say that this is a great ending to this interview, so thank you very much for being here.

V: Thank you so much for having me.

**Come Together In and Out – #12:11#**

Fabienne (F): The next offer by the International Office that we want to present to you is an event for incoming and future outgoing students: the Come Together In and Out. Based on where you are coming from or going to, incoming students and future outgoing students are meeting there. You have the possibility to chat about their home countries and to exchange information. And of course you can get to know other people. As an incoming student, you can connect with Stuttgart locals or people that are not from your own university or student dorm. As an outgoing student, you might already get to know someone who will study at your host university and will have contacts there.

**Get in Touch and Orientation Events / Get in Touch und Orientierungsprogramm – #12:53#**

The last offer by the International Office is for incoming students only so if this does not apply to you, you can skip this part. In the course of the arrival of incoming students, we offer some orientation events. Before your arrival, for example we have an event called Get In Touch. It is an online session where you can take part in before you will travel to Stuttgart. You can connect with others who share something with you so for example students from the same University or will stay in the same dorm as you. This is a rare opportunity to get to know and talk to someone even before your arrival in Stuttgart.

After your arrival, however we offer orientation events that provide you with important information, help you to get connected and to get to know Stuttgart and its surroundings. There is an info session where you will get information on formalities, you can go on a campus and shopping tour in Vaihingen and take part in a workshop on sustainability. For those events, you have to register yourself via our website, as many of the info sessions will take place online to ensure, that all students, also those
who are still at home, can take part. For our sightseeing events, you have to register yourself at your arrival at the International Office. You can for example go to the Wilhelma, which is the zoo in Stuttgart, or the Fernsehturm – both are famous sights in Stuttgart.

One important note: The orientation events might differ depending on your time of arrival and on the responsible subdivision at the International Office, so whether you are an exchange or a degree-seeking student. For example for exchange students and students of our International Master’s program, we also offer an intensive German course, prior to the beginning of their semester. This is also a great opportunity to get to know the people who will study with you. And in the future we will also have an episode on our podcast, that will be all about the German courses at the International Office. So if you are interested in that, feel free to come back for this episode.

Summary / Zusammenfassung Kapitel – #15:10#


Gebt uns auch gerne eine Rückmeldung, wie ihr die erste Folge fandet: Was hat euch gefallen und worüber würdet ihr gerne in der Zukunft noch etwas hören? Ihr könnt uns gerne über Instagram oder Facebook schreiben oder eine Mail an die Adresse in den Shownotes schicken.

Wir freuen uns auf euch bei unserer nächsten Folge von unserem Podcast #UniStuttgartInternational!

And again in English: We are now at the end of the first episode of our podcast #UniStuttgartInternational! We hope you enjoyed listening to it and were able to take something out of it. If you feel lonely and don’t know what to do, you are always welcome to drop by the International Office, we’re always happy to help you.

And also feel free let us know you opinion about the first episode: what did you like and what would you like to hear something about in the future? You can write to us via Instagram or Facebook or send an email to the address in the show notes.

We are looking forward to see you on our next episode of our podcast #UniStuttgartInternational!