
Get to know: moveurope! Osnabrück



This text is part of an interview series carried out by moveurope! local groups in different European countries. In the German city of Osnabrück five young people are working on a unique project. They have told us what it is about. Read their own inspiring words.

Find out about the team and their story

The Osnabrück group consists of Zohra, Touqueer, Lena, Parwana and Katharina. They are all studying their masters in Democratic Governance and Civil Society which is how they got to know each other. It quickly became apparent that many group members share the experience of having to start over somewhere. *“And then we also had this insider joke: we counted the number or the amount of cities, the number of times we had to check out of our place and move out and then just start somewhere fresh. Not knowing many people, not knowing the language, not knowing anything about the city.”* (Zohra) Touqueer told us that he is basically from Pakistan. He is currently working on his thesis and got to know about the group because of Parwana, born in Afghanistan, who told him about it. *“She has also faced a lot of issues in the city, you know, getting settled here, which also relates to our project. So we decided to join it together.”* Another member is Zohra. She was born in Tehran and grew up in Afghanistan. Now she is studying in Osnabrück and is trying to learn the guitar, as she says. And then there is Lena, who is really active in society, as Zohra tells us: *“She is basically a badass and I really admire her for that.”* Katharina, who has been teaching integration classes and orientation projects for migrants, is also crucial to the group. Having experienced first hand how much impact a feeling of belonging can have, by supporting the project ‘Dear Osnabrück,’ she hopes to allow more people to express their often ambiguous and ever-changing feelings towards their new home.

Here is about their link to moveurope!

One of their members, Parwana, originally wanted to do an internship at moveurope before the pandemic started. This is why she already knew about the project and thought of creating a local group in Osnabrück.

What is a Wander Kammer Museum?

The main project of moveurope! Osnabrück is called Wander Kammer Museum, which is a digital museum where people can share their experience about arriving, living and making a home in a city. The campaign contains different components: *“One of them is a workshop that is going to basically be the in-person experience, that we are going to meet people and listen to their stories and hopefully be able to produce some stories with them. The other component is the digital museum that is going to be like the last activity of the project where we are going to put everything that we have, all the footage and all the stories.”* (Zohra) The idea of the project is that people can share their unique experiences and stories in the workshop and the museum. In addition to the personal exchange, moveurope! Osnabrück will also offer some trainings to the participants during the workshop:

"And also we are planning to give them some training sessions and some other interactive sessions about mobilityrights and maybe some other topics, things we have not decided yet." (Touqueer) The third component of their project will be letterboxes distributed in the city of Osnabrück where people can drop their written letters or postcards addressed to the city. Through these different activities, the group wants to reach a broad target group. *"We are hoping actually to be able to talk to different people. But our main target audience would be divided in two groups, if I can actually do that: people who are established in Osnabrück, who may have been born and raised there. And people like us, who are maybe international students, who have not lived there for a while. And other people who had to move there for different reasons."* (Zohra) If the Wander Kammer Museum is successful in Osnabrück, the group would be happy to move to other cities and do the same project there. Maybe there will be projects like "Dear Leipzig", "Dear Berlin" or "Dear Islamabad" in the future, following the example of "Dear Osnabrück".

About the group's motivation

Although the pandemic situating is hindering in terms of planning the future, they felt monotony in their everyday activities. Especially as a student, learning online can initiate the spark to try something new, as Touqueer tells us: *"I was looking for some internship like Parwana, then she presented to me the idea of the digital museum."* After two years of living in Osnabrück without the opportunity of getting to know many people, the project seemed like the perfect idea to learn and do something for one's own as well as benefiting the society: *"I thought it would be a nice opportunity to connect with the local people here. How they think about the people who are coming from outside and settling in the city and what is their approach towards them."* Also, it would be interesting to reflect with other people who are not local to Osnabrück – coming from abroad or other cities of Germany – about the place where they now live. The chance to get engaged in a practical way when *"learning a lot about theoretical stuff"* in university gave additional motivation: *"I just wanted to do something, go somewhere out, connect with the people and talk to them. So that is why I decided to jump in"*, describes Touqueer his motivation to join the project.

Activism in midst of a pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly had an impact on moveurope! Osnabrück's activism. Touqueer points out how bizarre it is that three of the group members live very close to each other and still they have been meeting online. He admits: *"It was not a good experience."* Nevertheless, by using helpful online tools, they still managed to share and put together their ideas. Right now they are slightly concerned about the implementation of their workshop, as they are not prepared to do it online.

Here is what they have learned so far

As of skills they gained and things they learned in the duration of the project, Touqueer mentioned that he got acquainted with online communication tools and even though they come across challenges while working together, they were always able to build a consensus in the end. It was also mentioned that the lack of hierarchy in their project is seen as something they quite enjoy, since it is not something they are used to. Consequently, everything becomes more flexible but also slow-paced. Zohra also mentioned that she learned to focus on quality instead of quantity which came hand in hand with trusting the other members of the group in their ability to get the work done under their own conditions.



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