



Nt-Great

Great projects for
integrating great people

Impressum

International Office
Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Umwelt
Nürtingen-Geislingen

Email intoffice@hfwu.de
Internet www.english.hfwu.de

Campus Nürtingen
Uhlandstraße 3, 72622 Nürtingen
Phone +49 7022 308492 and 71940-21
Fax +49 7022 309354

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Nt-Great

Integration of foreign students into the society of the city of Nürtingen

What is Nt-Great?

Nt-Great is a project for integrating foreign students into the society of Nürtingen, coordinated by Nürtingen Geislingen University (NGU) and the University of Art Therapy. The framework of the project is provided by the nationwide programme "PROFIN" (Programme to promote integration of international students) run by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). As a part of this programme, the international office of NGU is realising a number of individual projects helping international students to integrate successfully into their new environment in Nürtingen, encompassing the university, society and the working world. The various projects enable the students to meet local people outside of the classroom and to build up many contacts with German families, schools, social institutions, companies and interested citizens in general.

This brochure is aimed at giving you an overview of the NT-Great project and at presenting the individual project parts. Should you have any questions or suggestions or be interested in cooperating, please get in touch with us.

Your contact persons

Project Coordinator: Andrea Heißler
Tel.: 07022 / 308 492
E-Mail: andrea.heissler@hfwu.de

Project Manager: Lydia Rambold
Tel.: 07022 / 719 40 21
E-Mail: lydia.rambold@hfwu.de

Table of Contents:

I	About the Project Name „Nt-Great“	05
01	Study Programme: Social Sciences and Voluntary Work (VolWo)	06
02	School Programme: Ask a Foreign Student (AFoS)	10
03	Host Family Programme: Join a Family (JaFa)	12
04	Tandem Programme: Partner with a Foreign Student (PaFoS)	13
05	Theme Night Programme: Present a Foreign Country (PaFoC)	14
06	Internship Programme: Employ a Foreign Student (EFoS)	15
07	Tutoring Programme: Support a Foreign Student (SuFoS)	16
08	Long Term Effects	17
09	What Students Say About the Projects	18

About the Project Name “Nt-Great”

In May 2011, the International Office was searching for an innovative name for its new PROFIN integration project. In a competition launched by the international office, students, teachers and staff members of NGU were asked to bring forward their ideas for a new project name. “Nt-Great” was the suggestion of a student and won the first prize in the competition because of its creativity and complexity. Pronounced almost the same way as the English word “in-te-grate”, the title represents first and foremost the common goal of all the diverse project activities: the integration of foreign students. Due to the extra-particular spelling, the title even incorporates two further aspects: on the one hand, it stands for the two locations of the university: Nürtingen (Nt) and Geislingen (G), which stresses the importance of integrating and cooperating with the inhabitants of these two towns in our integration project. On the other hand, the spelling includes the English word “great”, which may stand both for the project itself, and even more for all participating people in it: **Nt-Great** – Great projects for great people.



Award presentation at the NGU summer party



1. Study Programme: Social Sciences and Voluntary Work (VolWo)

(1) Project idea: Voluntary work as a way of integration

Many foreign students who are new to Nürtingen have no trouble to find international friends at the university or the students' dormitory. However, getting in touch with local people and truly immersing in the German culture can turn out to be challenging. That is why Nürtingen Geislingen University (NGU) wants to promote integration by having international students engage in voluntary work. Volunteering offers many opportunities to young people from abroad: they are able to get in touch with society and meet local people, they can make experienc-

es which go far beyond their normal studies and they can contribute something positive to the society they are momentarily living in.

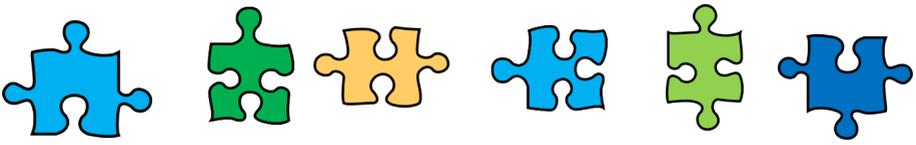


Inclusion into town events

Social commitment has a big tradition in Nürtingen. The town labelled as the "Capital of Civil Social Commitment" has already been awarded several prizes for the outstanding social engagement of its citizens, such as the "Bertelsmann Preis" in 1999 (a prize awarded for innovative concepts and creative solutions to social problem areas) and the "Deutscher Engagement Preis" (German Volunteering Prize)

in 2009.

Social community work therefore has a high significance in Nürtingen – and the town also provides an excellent infrastructure for a voluntary work project. Since 1991, the *Bürgertreff* (City Volunteer Centre) has been coordinating voluntary work in town and has become a central contact point for local initiatives, clubs, or special interest groups. Its goals are to be intercultural, integrative and open to people of all



ages and backgrounds. These are the resources Nürtingen Geislingen University wants to make available to foreign students, too.

(2) Combining voluntary work and university education

International students who are studying in Nürtingen for one or two exchange semesters can combine their participation in the voluntary work programme with a lecture at the university, thereby obtaining academic credit points for their work. In the frame of the project, a new module in English language was launched in April 2011. Within this module, students can visit a lecture in Social Sciences for 4 contact hours per week and have to do 2 additional contact hours of voluntary work per week in the community (in total: 40 hours in the course of one semester). For the combination of the lecture and the voluntary work, the students receive 8 ECTS points as well as a certificate for their social work. Foreign students who are not enrolled as exchange students but within a specific BA or MA programme in Nürtingen, usually cannot obtain credits for the lecture, but have the chance to get involved in the project on a voluntary basis.

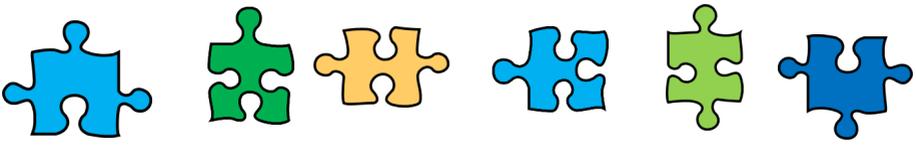
(3) About the voluntary work

Students are free to choose any activity which matches their skills and interests. For instance, they can get involved in charities or social institutions, such as old-age homes, kindergartens, youth clubs, workshops for disabled people, the food bank in Nürtingen, a fair trade shop, and many more. Other possibilities for them to get engaged are at big town events or intercultural activities coordinated by the intercultural forum of the Bürgertreff (City



Experiencing the realities of fair trade

Experiencing the realities of fair trade



Volunteer Centre). Here, the students' activities may range from organising sports competitions ("Mission Olympics"), animating and supervising children during town events ("Family Day"), planning activities for an Intercultural Week or working as mentors in the "FIT project", where they can coordinate activities with high-school students who have an immigration background. Through their voluntary work the students can acquire key competences for the future, gain an intense insight into their host country, and have the possibility to become an active and integrated part of the community they are living in.



Korean students volunteering at the City Volunteer Centre

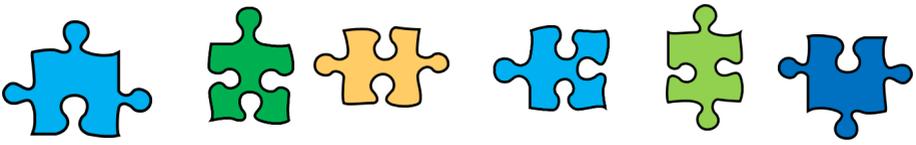
(4) The Social Sciences Lecture

The "Social Sciences lecture" is based on the fields of economic, cultural and social sciences. One main emphasis in the first half of the lecture is intercultural differences and cultural dimensions of various countries. In this context, the lecture also compares different concepts and forms of voluntary work. Another focus lies on fair trade and corporate social responsibility. The second part of the lecture deals more explicitly with sociological topics, such as changes in society or global social imbalance.

In order to pass the lecture, the students have to do two graded presentations in class. The voluntary work is counted as additional workload which is necessary to obtain the credits for this class. In addition to this, the students have to hand in a written report about their voluntary work and participate in a compulsory introduction and evaluation seminar. For the entire module, the students receive 8 ECTS credit points.

(5) Further development and cooperation

The project is fostered by the city of Nürtingen, the *Bürgertreff* (City Volunteer Center) as well as by the faculty of economics of NGU and



the university administration.

In order to further develop the project, a cooperation with the IBIS project of NGU is intended, which focuses on supporting German students during their first university years. IBIS stands for “Individual Assistance for Individual Studies”. The central aim of this project is to support German students in background knowledge they need for their studies, such as mathematics, English, academic writing as well as general skills, such as time management. English native speakers can assist in the individual support of German students by offering English language tuition or a language tandem for German students as their voluntary work project. While the German students will benefit from interacting with a native speaker, the exchange students will enjoy the chance to get to know more German fellow students.

In the long run, the voluntary work programme and the “Social Sciences” lecture are also going to be opened up for German students, in order to intensify the integration and cooperation between German and international students. One German and one foreign student can be placed together in one organization and, if possible, even realize a small project of their own at their workplace. That way, a close cooperation between students of different countries is reached on the one hand, and on the other hand, the organizations benefit from the German students’ ability to translate or provide assistance to their international fellow students. The permanent incorporation of the programme into a study course would furthermore secure that social commitment plays a more important role within business study courses at university.



Social projects: students volunteering at charities



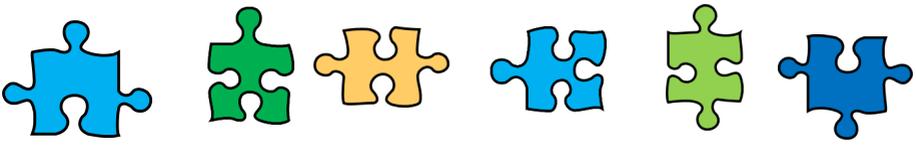
2. School Programme: Ask a Foreign Student (AFoS)

The idea of the school programme is to bring teachers, school children and international students of NGU together and initiate an interesting intercultural exchange. The way is simple: teachers invite an international student to one of their classes and prepare a lesson together. That way, the teachers can use the high international potential Nürtingen has to offer through its students from all over the world for the intercultural education of their pupils. The student can support German teachers when they are covering international topics in class, such as specific countries (geography), religions and moral concepts (ethics / philosophy) or, of course, go to a foreign languages class. That way, German teenagers can practise their language skills with a native speaker and get new motivation for their studies.

For the international students, this is an ideal opportunity to represent their country and answer questions about their culture. They get in touch with a target group that is completely independent of their university environment and gain a vivid impression of the German school system.



Belorussian student visiting 5th graders



At the same time, teachers have the chance to offer an exciting lesson to their students and to profit from the expert knowledge an international student can provide about his or her home country.



Authentic communication

All school types addressed

The school programme is open for any type of school and any age-group of students. While senior high schools may seek more sophisticated discussions about politics, history or economy as well as opportunities for their students to practise their foreign language skills, primary schools will have different needs and goals. Here, the students might prepare songs or games and provide a playful and interactive approach towards their culture for the school children.

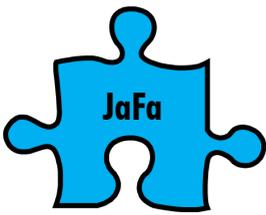
What the teacher and the international student decide to prepare for their class is completely up to them and discussed individually for each lesson. Project work, interviews, presentations or games are only a few possibilities, and both teachers and students are welcome to bring in their own interests and ideas.



Secondary school in Nürtingen



Interacting with teachers



3. Host Family Programme: Join a Family (JaFa)

In the Host Family Programme, foreign students have the chance to meet German families that are interested in spending some free time with an international student. This does not mean that the internation-



Free-time activities with German families

als are staying with the families but they join them from time to time for particular activities, such as visiting cultural events, going on day trips at the weekends or simply having a cup of tea together. For the families, this is a good way to build up contacts with young people from far-away countries and to make their every day lives more colourful and international. The students can benefit from getting to know people outside of the university campus and from gaining a personal insight into the German way of life.

Typical activities include short trips to the Swabian Alps, going to festivals or town events within the region, visiting museums, inviting the students to dinner or spending public holidays together.

The Host Family Programme welcomes all types of families, old and young, with children or without. The goal of the programme is to foster intercultural understanding and friendship between people from different countries.



Korean student with her host family at the Chocolate Museum



4. Tandem Programme: Partner with a Foreign Student (PaFoS)

A “tandem” is a language exchange between Germans who want to study a particular foreign language and international students who would like to improve their German. By talking to each other in both languages, the two tandem partners support each other in learning their respective native languages while gaining an intensive insight into their partner’s cultural background.



International Friendship

Since a lot of international students often spend time with other foreigners and are lacking opportunities to practise their German, the tandem programme is an ideal way to meet locals and improve their language skills. At the same time, Germans can interact with a native speaker and refresh or learn a foreign language without having to travel to the country where it is spoken.

However, language does not have to remain the only focus of a tandem partnership. Even if foreign students do not speak German yet and just want to meet locals – or if citizens from Nürtingen are simply keen to meet people from other countries without having a specific interest in their language – a tandem can be very enriching. You can exchange sightseeing tips, get to know more about foreign traditions, or simply spend some free time with each other.



Tandem Germany: South Africa

Any citizen from Nürtingen who is interested in the programme is invited to join. The tandem programme is open to everyone - not only students.



5. Theme Night Programme: Present a Foreign Country (PaFoC)

Theme nights at which international students present their home countries have already been organised for a long time by the ecumenical community of NGU. In a new cooperation with the International Office, this interesting programme is going to be further enhanced.

International students usually look for creative ways to present their country to other people at the theme nights. Apart from doing a presentation with the most important information about the history, geography, and culture of their country, they offer typical local food for everybody to taste. Very often, folk music, costumes, dances, quizzes, games or personal anecdotes turn the theme nights into a vivid and colourful introduction to a foreign country. The authentic and personal view of a native and the relaxed atmosphere create the special charm of the university theme nights.

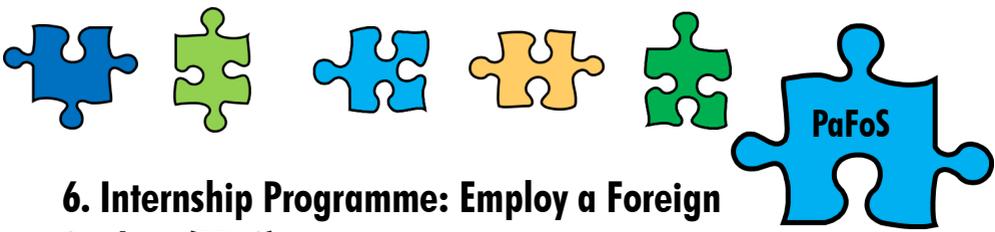
In addition to that, the International Office and the ecumenical community offer a Christmas gathering where the international students can experience classical Swabian Christmas food and traditions and learn more about the meaning of Christmas. At the same time, the foreigners are invited to share their own national Christmas traditions or other similarly important holidays with the group, too, thus actively contributing to the event.



Many visitors at the Eastern European Night



Mexican cuisine



6. Internship Programme: Employ a Foreign Student (EFoS)

In order to gain first-hand experience on the German job market, international students are offered special internships at various local companies to gain practical experience in a German working environment. Students can apply for these internships on a voluntary basis – the internship programme does not replace the official internships required by individual study courses of NGU. The International Office provides support for the international interns and evaluates the internships together with them and with the involved companies at the end.

This programme enables companies to benefit from the expert knowledge of their international interns with regards to a particular country, culture, and language. A company can delegate particular tasks to their international interns which cannot be accomplished on the same quality level by a German intern. On the other hand, international students benefit from their internship by learning more about the German working culture.



Gaining work experience at internationally renowned companies

New interested companies within the Stuttgart region are always invited to participate in the programme.



7. Tutoring Programme: Support a Foreign Student (SuFoS)

A new project at NGU, "IBIS", supports freshmen students during their first years at university and provides individual support and special courses for them in subjects which are important for their study programme, such as mathematics or academic writing skills.

The cooperation with IBIS furthermore enables students of different countries to meet and to learn more about each other's mentalities as well as diverse working and learning techniques.



Cooperation between German and international students



Long Term Effects

NGU has a strong interest in promoting these projects on a long-term basis, both as an indication of the university's international orientation and as a way of advertising its vision for the future. The study courses of Nürtingen Geislingen university have been standing for economy and environment for generations. Therefore, the university administration aims at aligning itself along the principles of the **"triple P"** – **people, planet, profit** – in order to contribute to a new balancing of social, ecological and economic challenges. As an institution of higher education, the university considers itself significantly responsible towards social developments and matters of education policy.

Nt-Great

Great projects for integrating great people



What Students Say About the Projects:

VOLUNTARY WORK PROGRAMME

“My voluntary work helped me integrate with the society, because every day when I went to work I was relating with locals. I really felt like I was part of the community. I guess I have nothing else to say, except that this project for me was magnificent. I totally recommend you to take a part of this incredible project!” (Jorge, Mexico)

SCHOOL PROGRAMME

„I think it’s a good opportunity to learn more about the German culture, especially how the school children are studying in the beginning and the process how they are learning. It is very different from China.” (Yang, China)

HOST FAMILY PROGRAMME

“Meeting my host family was really a nice experience. The couple with their two kids invited me for coffee and we discussed many interesting issues relating to social and community life in Nürtingen. We separated on the promise of continuous communication and contact.” (Ombaks, Cameroon)

TANDEM PROGRAMME

“The tandem is a great opportunity for practicing what you are learning at the university. You are sharing knowledge, improving your vocabulary, your understanding and speaking at the same time. It’s also a good way to meet people and have a good time.” (Laetitia, France)

THEME NIGHT PROGRAMME

“It was a great success to share my culture with other people. I had many positive emotions.” (Agunda, Russia)