



#1 | APRIL 2021

HEAR US OUT

VOICES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN HALLE

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR LIVES

For over a year now, the pandemic has not only dominated headlines around the world, but has changed most of our lives in one way or another. We have all had to adapt to the new circumstances, but the scope and severity of the consequences have been quite varied. What does this pandemic mean for international students? The very first issue of our new newsletter will address this question.

Our aim is to provide a platform for international students in particular, to share their perspectives, but also to inform bilingually about important developments at the university and student life in general.

We hope that the articles in this issue will challenge, inspire and maybe even make you smile. We would love to hear from you about what you liked and what you wish to see in future issues. Enjoy the read!

- The AK Internationales Team

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OUT OF THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE

- Jamal

When I began writing a text for this newsletter, I was considering talking about how coronavirus affected my research plans last year but in the process of writing I received news that profoundly changed my living situation in Germany as an international student. But before delving into the details of the current moment, let's rewind a bit.

At a personal level, it took me some time to grasp the gravity of the situation as I had not really developed much of a social support system in Halle.

In early 2020, I was in Pakistan conducting my fieldwork when the pandemic hit, and the whole country went into a lockdown that resulted in the suspension of my fieldwork. At that time, I accepted the situation by thinking about how the pandemic had affected millions of lives across the world, and my individual plans could be rescheduled. Yet I faced a tricky situation as I had been in Pakistan for almost four months, and given that most of the flights across the world were suspended I had to find a way to enter Germany before my visa expired. Anyhow, after waiting for some time I was able to enter Germany before the expiry of my visa, and it was a huge relief.

Once back, I quickly realized that getting back to Germany wasn't the biggest issue as I still needed to collect data for my thesis, which I could not do while staying in Germany, and I could not see it happening in near future. Nonetheless, I kept myself busy with whatever data I had, to feel I was moving forward.

At a personal level, it took me some time to grasp the gravity of the situation as I had not really developed much of a social support system in Halle because I had left for my fieldwork quite early on after starting my studies here. The lockdown would mean not having the chance to socialize with fellow students. Over time a feeling developed, of being in a city that I knew well but with no memories. Halle became a place where I moved around, to do all the important things that are necessary to survive, but not to live. I wondered whether there were many more like me?

I asked myself, how did the university come to that conclusion?

Fast forward to the start of 2021. I, along with my colleagues, received the worst news we could imagine: the university had decided not to extend our contracts for the fourth year of doctoral projects as the Graduate

School had informally promised some of us. This news, considering that many of us had had to suspend our fieldwork and archival research, could not have come at a worst time. The university had in fact argued that we were not affected by the coronavirus pandemic in any fundamental way. I asked myself, how did the university come to that conclusion?

When an administration refuses to offer support and recognise a situation where its research community in general and its international members in particular need help then it only betrays its publicly professed goals.

Only then did I realise that like many others we were also the nameless people affected by the pandemic. Not only that our research plans got fundamentally affected, but the university refused to recognize it as such. Besides, now I wonder, what happens once the contract ends in September, will the foreigner's office create an exception for students or will they follow the rules applicable in "normal" times? Or will the logic of the exceptional situation carry any weight when they make decisions?

Obviously, to then continuously receive information on the university's plans for internationalizing itself does not help; rather it reflects badly on the university's ability to

assess its own actions and decisions. When an administration refuses to offer support and recognise a situation where its research community in general and its international members in particular need help then it only betrays its publicly professed goals. If the university is serious about such goals then they should manifest themselves in concrete actions rather than in public relation efforts.

I believe this is not an individual story, there are many more in Halle, across Germany, and surely across the world. But what makes students and researchers so dispensable? The reasoning and logic behind such decisions are to be identified and fought against because the financial burden of lockdowns will not be equally shared by all of us. If anything, coronavirus has shown us that science is where we should invest more and not less.

If anything, coronavirus has shown us that science is where we should invest more and not less.

This is a question that is not only personal, but political and we will assuredly see how this will affect most of the world around us. That is why it becomes important for all of us to share our stories, to exchange our experiences and to show solidarity to each other so that we do not have the disempowering illusion that we are alone in this.

WHEN YOU CAN'T GO HOME

Migrating for life
for education
is taking a huge leap of faith...
with the reassuring knowledge of a backup plan:

"Should things go wrong: I can always pack up.
I can always go home."

Now, for me,
home is everywhere out there in the world.
Home houses in the movement,
in the changing landscapes,
in the breaths of fresh air.
It inhabits the everyday chance to choose:
shall I stay still or move on?

A virus gone global
shuts down the borders
(lines drawn on a map
separating pieces of land,
may I add,)
it traps the traveler's soul,
locks it up, stuck.

I am homesick.



Pictured above are gifts from Jenny's family to ensure she does not forget her roots.

FROM NORWAY TO HALLE: AN INTERVIEW ABOUT ARRIVING AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC

conducted by Maria

Jenny, Age 21, is a Medical Student at the MLU from Norway. She moved here right after finishing school in Norway at age 19 with little to know German language skills. This is her story about setting goals, integrating herself in Germany and finally being an international student during a pandemic.

What was your first impression arriving in Halle?

Jenny: A couple of days after I got accepted, I took a bus for twelve hours, from my language school in Konstanz to here, and obviously I didn't have an apartment. I arrived at night and took a taxi to a hotel that my dad had booked for me. I really quickly found out that I couldn't speak German at all. At the language school everyone speaks slowly and speaks to you knowing that you're not a German. I got here and my first thought was: What have I gotten myself into?

Medical students often receive their acceptance letter near the beginning of the semester, how did this impact your living situation?

J.: I lived in a hotel. At first, it was booked for two weeks, but I ended up living there for two months. It was impossible for me to find somewhere to live. I tried looking for a WG. I wrote people all the time, but I always got answers that it didn't fit, that it wouldn't work out, or that someone else was

ahead of me. That was also in the time where my language was really bad. It made me believe that it was because I wasn't German. It was difficult for a foreigner with very poor language.

What happened after those two months?

J.: I coincidentally met another international student in the tram on the way to one of our lectures. She had a friend that lived in the same building as her who wanted to move out. I moved into that apartment. I lived there for three months until I finally found another WG.

How did you learn German?

J.: I had German in school, and I went to one language school in Aachen for two months. A year after that, right before I moved to Halle, I did a two-month language course in Konstanz.

When I got here, I had very strict rules when it came to the language. I knew that in order to learn German the fastest

way possible I couldn't have any relations with people who spoke my native tongue or English. That was the hardest part for me, that I'm also really proud of. I never spoke English with anyone. Even though in the first semester I couldn't understand anything. I showed up to the lectures and sat there for hours listening, even though I didn't understand anything, because I knew that the brain sort of subconsciously learns the language.

How have you experienced the German culture?

J.: The way I have experienced the German people, the German culture, is that they're a little bit colder and very direct. When it's something that they don't like, they say it immediately, which is a good thing.

How was finding friends here?

J.: In the first six months, I couldn't communicate at all. Some people tried to talk to me, but I really didn't understand what they were saying. I also couldn't say much myself. It was hard to get to know people. I think I was alone for about six months before I met my best friend here. Which was hard, but I learned how to deal with it. There were a lot of times that I wanted to give up because it was so hard to be alone in a different country.

How was your first experience with the university?

J.: I quickly found out while I was applying to the school that [the application process] was really different from Norway and really complicated. I had to fill out many documents and mail them to all the different cities [I was applying to]. There were a lot of things I had to do and not much explanation of how to do it.

When I got here, I had no idea that the ErstiWoche existed.

So, all the information the students got in the first week, I didn't really get. That's how little I knew. It was so difficult to try and figure it out beforehand because all the information was in German.

How was your experience studying during this pandemic?

J.: As Corona broke out, my language had gotten better than it was, and it had gotten a little bit easier during the lectures. When everything went digital, it suddenly got difficult again. It's hard to understand a foreign language during digital lectures when you can't see the person talking, when you can't see their body language or their mouths moving.

Then I thought, just as it went during my years studying medicine, it got easier and it was just something I had to learn. My understanding just got even better. It was hard, but I just learned the language even better.

How has the pandemic affected your relationship with your family?

J.: I haven't seen my family in more than a year, since Christmas 2019, that was the last time I saw any of my friends or family in Norway. It has been difficult and a little bit weird that the entire relationship runs over the phone. We make it work. We knew from the beginning that it would be weird that we would make it... But I miss my dog.

Jenny had a hard time of it in the beginning but has settled in. That does not mean that her life is the same as a student born and raised in Germany, but she has made this country her home for now. If you find yourself smiling because you can relate to some of her experiences, tell us a bit more over Instagram or Email!

EXPERIENCES WITH DIGITAL LEARNING

of international students at the University of Halle

STARTING POINT

As a rule, German is a **new language** and Germany a **new context** for international students, which is why social contacts and support networks are particularly important during their studies. **Access** to these is currently insufficient.

PROPOSALS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- In online lectures, the **quality of audio and video** plays a crucial role in listening comprehension:
 - Lecturers must be clearly audible (distance from microphone) and clearly visible (distance from camera)
 - Lecturers should repeat questions from the audience before responding
 - Automated subtitles should be added where appropriate and/or scripts provided in advance
- Lecturers as seminar instructors must purposefully promote **interaction** with and among students in the online format
- The University of Halle must address the question of how international exchange at the university can also succeed digitally

ERFAHRUNGEN MIT DER DIGITALEN LEHRE

von internationalen Studierenden an der Universität Halle

AUSGANGSPUNKT

In der Regel ist Deutsch für internationale Studierende eine **neue Sprache** und Deutschland ein **neuer Kontext**, weshalb soziale Kontakte und Unterstützungsnetzwerke während des Studiums besonders wichtig sind. Der **Zugang** zu diesen ist aktuell nicht ausreichend gegeben.

VORSCHLÄGE AUS DER SICHT INTERNATIONALER STUDIERENDER

- Bei Online-Vorlesungen spielt die **Qualität von Audio und Video** eine enorm wichtige Rolle fürs Hörverstehen:
 - Dozierende müssen klar zu hören (Distanz zu Mikro) und gut zu sehen sein (Distanz zur Kamera)
 - Dozierende sollten Fragen aus dem Publikum wiederholen, bevor sie antworten
 - Automatisierte Untertitel sollten ggf. hinzugefügt und/oder Skripte vorher bereitgestellt werden
- Dozierende als Seminarleitende müssen **Interaktionen** mit und unter den Studierenden im Online-Format gezielt fördern
- Die Universität Halle muss sich mit der Frage befassen, wie der internationale Austausch auch digital gelingen kann

- The university must arrange for a sufficient number of **interactive introductory activities** for first-year students so that they feel properly welcomed:
 - Buddy program as an automatic offer for all international students
 - Introductions and tutorials for digital platforms and procedures, library usage, etc.

POTENTIAL

Digital learning formats as an additional offer to in-person formats are very **desirable**:

- Studying is **less bound by time and place** (side jobs and visits to the country of origin become easier to organize)
- Video and audio recordings serve as **additional learning aids** (e.g. the possibility to listen to teaching content several times can significantly improve comprehension)

- Die Universität muss für die Erstsemester-Studierenden **interaktive einführende Angebote** in ausreichendem Umfang sichern, damit sie gut ankommen:
 - Buddy-Programm als automatisches Angebot für alle internationalen Studierenden
 - Einführungen zu digitalen Plattformen und Abläufen, Bibliotheken usw.

POTENZIAL

Digitale Lehrformate als Zusatzangebot zu Präsenzveranstaltungen sind sehr **wünschenswert**:

- Studieren ist dadurch **weniger zeit- und ortgebunden** (Nebenjobs und Besuche im Herkunftsland sind dadurch einfacher zu organisieren)
- Video- und Audioaufnahmen dienen als **zusätzliche Lernhilfen** (z.B. kann die Möglichkeit Lehrinhalte mehrfach anzuhören, das Verständnis deutlich verbessern)

We want to hear from you

How do you feel about digital learning so far? Do you agree with the points we have put together? What aspects would you add? Write us!

Wir wollen von euch hören

Wie ist es euch bisher mit der digitalen Lehre gegangen? Stimmt ihr unseren zusammengestellten Punkten zu? Welche Aspekte würdet ihr noch ergänzen? Schreibt uns!

AND STILL...

- Ada

During Covid times, I found myself quite regularly on social media and discovered my passion for memes. When the first quarantine postponed the start of the summer semester 2020, I still believed and expected to return to university by the end of spring for my second semester, after only having lived in Halle for roughly four months prior to the pandemic. Fast forward to a year later: nothing has changed. At the same time a lot has changed. But then again: nothing at all has changed. The summer semester has started again, but I'm still staying at home. I'm still studying from home. It will be my fourth semester and my third digital one. Therefore I'm more used to studying digitally than attending university courses "the normal way".

But as always: what does "normal" mean?

When I now open Instagram, I still laugh at memes, nothing has changed about that. But what has changed is the perception that back in April 2019 I thought the memes were exaggerated and hence funny. Now I see that there is indeed a very realistic chance that I will finish my bachelor degree with very limited student life experience in the "normal" sense.

But as always: what does "normal" mean? My normal may differ from yours. When I talk to students from higher semesters with more experience in "Präsenzlehre", the majority is not content with the changes and want back the university as they knew it before Covid. In this situation I think it comes in handy that I never truly experienced university without Corona. My first semester was during winter time and I was not really taking a lot of courses and when Corona hit I

hadn't the comparison to what university life was like before. I simply don't really know what I'm missing – what others are missing. Of course I'd be glad to "return" to university, but at the same time I also see a lot of advantages thanks to Covid – as strange as it sounds.

In my first and only semester at university I really enjoyed going out and meeting people. Together with my dorm flatmates (we called ourselves "die Wamilie" because we were more than just a WG – we were our own little family in Halle), one of whom was an Erasmus student, we went to bars, to the international evenings, celebrated birthdays together and got ourselves ready for the new chapter of student life. Sadly a lot of my Erasmus friends only stayed for a semester and when they started to leave in February 2020, Halle felt a little bit emptier without them. We stayed in contact via social media and planned our summer together.

Nothing has changed. At the same time a lot has changed. But then again: nothing at all has changed.

Again, fast forward to today: nothing has changed. At the same time a lot has changed. But then again: nothing at all has changed. We still have contact over social media. We are still planning our reunion, since the first trip got cancelled because of the pandemic. What has changed is the fact that we don't really know how to plan or when we will be able to meet again in person. Most of my "Wamilie" I haven't seen in real life in more than a year, so social media became essential in maintaining a relationship.

In direct comparison to real life relations, digital contacts can never replace them, but because of the possibility of digital meetings I got to know a lot of different new people and attended meetings to which I "normally" wouldn't have had access. I have the feeling that because all people are staying more or less at home and have only restricted possibilities to meet people, a lot more are reaching out to alternative ways of communication. I can stay at home in Bavaria and be surrounded by my loved ones, but still am able to connect with people and students from King's College in London in order to take part in short courses.

The next evening I am able to connect with Erasmus students who are staying in Halle. The weekends I can spend playing digital board games with people from Puerto Rico, Egypt and Australia. And thanks to the pandemic I have the chance to attend online dance classes, taught by really cool dancers. My favorite one for example is teaching from Dubai. Just because of the current situation she is offering classes online so that people from everywhere are able to come together in order to dance. And all of that while still staying at home, maybe on a different continent.

I myself planned to take part in Erasmus and do an Auslandssemester. Instead, I am now doing a Hauslandssemester. I didn't expect to be spending it that way back in February 2020, when I went home "just for a few weeks", but life is not about planning everything out. And while I wait to (re-)connect with people in the conventional way, I really enjoy having the possibility to stay with my family longer than expected and to still be able to get to know people from all around the world because a lot of people are spending more time on social media and in cross-cultural online meetings. What I really learnt over the course of the pandemic is that life can't be entirely planned. Or rather:

that you can't expect for all the plans to work out just as intended without any changes. Prior to the pandemic it never crossed my mind that a meeting or vacation might be postponed. When I planned and booked something I was confident about going on that trip. Because of Covid-19 I have postponed and not used already bought tickets more than once. I realized that planning a trip is an unpredictable journey itself. At the same time I still constantly find myself making plans for the future: plans for meeting up again in person when the situation has cooled down, plans for finally meeting my new flatmates of the Studentenwohnheim (funnily enough we have two new ones and both of them are Erasmus students) and plans with a potential pal who is staying for his Erasmus semester in Halle and the same

I realized that planning a trip is an unpredictable journey itself.

Studentenwohnheim. But now I know that these plans are prone to external circumstances. As they always were, just that I was unaware. What is surprising for me is the fact that while there is definitely a lack of meeting (new) people in person "just like that", meaning for example while waiting to receive your kebab after partying, there is no lack in getting in contact with people, even international ones. Because of social media and the wide spread possibilities of online meetings. These meetings are funny - people from all around the world with thousands of kilometers distance between them connect themselves in a virtual room - while still being in the same location back at home.

While Covid-19 mainly deepened social inequities and conflicts and made us aware of them, at the same time it also strengthened and increased the possibilities of international gatherings and connections - in and from an alternative point of view.

YOU ARE IN NEED OF FINANCIAL AID?

DU BENÖTIGST FINANZIELLE UNTERSTÜTZUNG?

Here's an overview* of options for international students, enrolled at the University of Halle
 Hier ist eine Übersicht* der Möglichkeiten für internationale Studierende, die an der Universität Halle immatrikuliert sind

You need financial support...

Du brauchst finanzielle Unterstützung...

for a very specific purpose
 für einen ganz bestimmten Zweck

Assistance for Foreign Students (HauS)

Hilfe für ausländische Studierende e. V. (HauS)



Short notice financial help: temporary payment of rents, health insurance, allowance

Kurzfristige finanzielle Hilfe: vorübergehende Übernahme von Mieten, Krankenversicherung, Beihilfen



Depending on your needs, but linked to a specific purpose

Abhängig von deinem Bedarf, aber an konkreten Zweck gebunden



Application for financial assistance + documents for verification of necessity and student status

Antrag auf Finanzierungshilfe + Dokumente zur Prüfung des Bedarfs und Studierendenstatus

Student Services Halle

Studentenwerk Halle



Financial aid for additional study-related needs, e.g. health insurance

Finanzielle Beihilfen für studienbedingten Zusatzbedarf, z. B. Krankenversicherung



Depending on your needs, but linked to a specific purpose

Abhängig von deinem Bedarf, aber an konkreten Zweck gebunden



Respective application + documents for verification of necessity and student status

Jeweiliger Antrag + Dokumente zur Prüfung des Bedarfs und Studierendenstatus

Grants for books

Buchbeihilfen

max. 50.00 € per semester
 max. 50,00 € pro Semester

Free meals

Freitischessen

Free lunches in canteens worth 1.90 €
 Kostenlose Mittagessen in Mensen im Wert von 1,90 €

in the form of a loan

in Form eines Darlehens

Student Council (StuRa)

Studierendenrat (StuRa)



Student loan: Quick and unproblematic financial support in emergency situations

Sozialdarlehen: Schnell und unproblematische finanzielle Unterstützung in Notsituationen



1000 €, application for increase possible (repayment: 25€/month, starting three months after last loan payment)

1000 €, Aufstockung möglich (Rückzahlung: 25€/Monat, beginnend drei Monate nach letzter Kreditauszahlung)



Informal application + documents for verification of the necessity and student status

Formlose Antrag + Dokumente zur Prüfung des Bedarfs und Studierendenstatus

Graduation loan of the Student Services

Studienabschlussdarlehen des Studentenwerks



Non-interest-bearing loan to secure your degree

Unverzinsliches Darlehen zur Sicherung des Studienabschlusses



Up to 853 € per month for a maximum of 12-months

Bis zu 853 € monatlich für maximal 12 Monate



Certification of the examination office that you will finish your studies within the maximum of 12 months + Admittance to the final examination within 4 semesters after the end of the maximum funding period

Bescheinigung seitens der Prüfungsstelle, dass das Studium innerhalb der maximal 12 Monate beendet wird + Zulassung zur Abschlussprüfung innerhalb von 4 Semestern nach Ende der Förderungshöchstdauer

***Provided by the Referat für Internationales (StuRa Uni Halle) with the support of Dr. Petra Bebert (as of April 2021)**
 Erstellt vom Referat für Internationales (StuRa Uni Halle) mit Unterstützung von Frau Dr. Petra Bebert (Stand: April 2021)

You need financial support...

Du brauchst finanzielle Unterstützung...

repeatedly for several months

mehrfach über mehrere Monate

ESG - Protestant Student and University Community Halle

ESG - Evangelische Studierenden- und Hochschulgemeinde Halle



Financial aid from the Ecumenical Emergency Fund of the Diakonische Werk to foreign students from so-called developing countries

Finanzielle Beihilfen aus dem Ökumenischen Notfond des Diakonischen Werkes an ausländische Studierende aus den sogenannten Entwicklungsländer



Monthly grant, depending on your needs

Monatliche Förderung, abhängig von deinem Bedarf



Application for aid from the emergency fund + verification of necessity and student status

Antrag auf Beihilfe aus dem Notfonds + Dokumente zur Prüfung des Bedarfs und Studierendenstatus

Bridging aid from the Smirnof estate for students from Eastern European countries

Überbrückungshilfe aus dem Smirnof-Nachlass für Studierende aus osteuropäischen Staaten

Monthly grant, depending on your needs

Monatliche Förderung, abhängig von deinem Bedarf

Application for a grant from the Smirnof estate + verification of necessity and student status

Antrag auf eine Beihilfe aus dem Smirnof-Nachlass + Dokumente zur Prüfung des Bedarfs und Studierendenstatus

specifically because of the Corona situation

speziell aufgrund der Corona-Situation

German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) financial aid for students

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF)-
Überbrückungshilfe für Studierende



Financial aid for students who are verifiably in financial emergency due to the corona pandemic, until (including) September 2021

Überbrückungshilfe für Studierende, die wegen der Corona-Pandemie nachweislich in akuter Notlage sind, bis einschließlich September 2021



Between 100 € and 500 €, depending on necessity, non-repayable

Zwischen 100 € und 500 €, je nach
Bedürftigkeit, nicht rückzahlbar



Can only be requested online via the financial aid portal, decision on granting aid is taken by the relevant student services organisation

Kann ausschließlich online über das Portal der Überbrückungshilfe beantragt werden, Studentenwerk entscheidet über die Gewährung

Who to contact for consultation

Wen du für eine Beratung kontaktieren kannst

Torsten Eckert - **Student Services** | Studentenwerk

☎ +49 345 6847520

@ sozialberatung@studentenwerk-halle.de

Gritt Eisenkopf - **International Office Uni Halle**

☎ +49 345 55 21535

@ gritt.eisenkopf@international.uni-halle.de

Student Council | Studierenderat (StuRa)

☎ +49 345 55 21411

@ buero@stura.uni-halle.de



Social counselling | Sozialberatung

Registration via web form

Anmeldung über Webformular

***Provided by the Referat für Internationales (StuRa Uni Halle) with the support of Dr. Petra Bebert (as of April 2021)**

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FOCUS ON

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A comment on the founding of
the working group AK Internationales

- Alina

International students are a heterogeneous group. Some of them came to Germany to study, while others were living here when they took the decision to attend university. They have one thing in common: studying in Germany is a dream, and whilst fulfilling it you will encounter challenges and barriers that other students don't face to the same extent.

The university's interest in internationality has increased in recent years.

Think of the German administrative language of any official letter, authentication process of certificates, visits to the immigration authorities, experiences of discrimination and many more. In addition, international students, especially those who study in German, tend to be poorly networked with one another.

At the same time, the university's interest in internationality and international students has increased in recent years. At the University of Halle, with the new rector, there has been a special **focus on internationalization** since 2018. In the spirit of integration, as they put it, community-based organizations want to work with the university to engage international students in **social service** through the **ASQs**. In this context, a conference on the civic engagement of international students was organized at the beginning of 2019. That is also where the student advisor for international affairs of the student council (StuRa) of the University of Halle and an international student met each other by

IM FOKUS

INTERNATIONALE STUDIERENDE

Ein Kommentar zur Gründung
des Arbeitskreis Internationales

- Alina

Internationale Studierende sind eine heterogene Gruppe. Einige sind fürs Studium nach Deutschland eingereist. Andere haben hier bereits gewohnt, als sie die Entscheidung trafen, die Universität zu besuchen. Eines verbindet sie: Das Studium in Deutschland ist ein Traum, bei dessen Umsetzung sie auf Herausforderungen und Barrieren stoßen, von denen andere Studierende nicht im gleichen Maß betroffen sind. Man denke an das Behördendeutsch, Beglaubigungen der Zeugnisse, Besuche in der Ausländerbehörde, Diskriminierungserfahrungen und vieles mehr. Außerdem sind internationale Studierende in Halle, insbesondere diejenigen, die auf Deutsch studieren, untereinander eher schlecht vernetzt.

Gleichzeitig ist in den letzten Jahren das Interesse seitens der Universität an Internationalität und internationalen Studierenden gestiegen. So setzte der seit 2018 amtierende Rektor der Uni Halle einen seiner **Schwerpunkte auf Internationalisierung**. Im Sinne der Integration wollen zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen gemeinsam mit der Universität internationale Studierende im Rahmen der **ASQs** für **soziales Engagement** gewinnen. In diesem Kontext wurde Anfang des Jahres 2019 eine Tagung über das gesellschaftliche Engagement internationaler Studierender organisiert. Zufällig lernten sich dort auch die studentische Referentin für Internationales des Studierendenrats (StuRa) der Uni Halle und eine internationale Studierende kennen. Da wir während der Veranstaltung auf der Bühne keine internationalen Studierende gesehen hatten, obwohl sie das zentrale Thema der

chance. Since neither of us had seen any international students on stage at the conference, despite being the central topic – we asked ourselves questions such as: who represents the international students in the university committees and in the internationalization process? Who is talking about them and in what contexts? What options are there to include their voices and who is – or should be – listening?

As an international student studying a German-language degree, I lacked contacts for study-specific support and networking with people who have had similar experiences. When I learned more about the student representation structures and the plans of the rectorate, I also realized the

lack of corresponding representation of international students in the university processes. An international university means different things to different people: in the **introductory video**, for example, the rector mainly talks about international networks with foreign partners, especially in the economic field, while international students are only briefly mentioned in

terms of their percentage of the student body. In the meantime, the already existing internationality in Halle and at the university not only has great potential for the university and the city, but it also brings wishes and needs with it, which have not been sufficiently inquired into and considered.

Hence this working group was founded two years ago with the aim of providing international students with multilingual information, a networking opportunity as well as connecting them more closely to university politics and city life. As a group of international students, we want to act as experts of internationality and make our interests audible – and this newsletter is one of the ways to realize just that.



Tagung waren, stellten wir uns Fragen wie: Wer repräsentiert die internationalen Studierende in den universitären Gremien und im Internationalisierungsprozess? Wer redet über sie und in welchen Kontexten? Welche Möglichkeiten gibt es, ihre Stimmen mit einzubeziehen und wer hört da eigentlich zu (oder auch: wer sollte das tun)?

Mir als internationale Studentin in einem deutschsprachigen Studiengang fehlten Anlaufstellen für studienspezifische Unterstützung, sowie Vernetzungsmöglichkeiten mit Menschen, die ähnliche Erfahrungen gemacht haben. Als ich mehr über die studentischen Vertretungsstrukturen und das Vorhaben des Rektorats erfuhr, fehlte mir auch eine entsprechende Repräsentation der internationalen Studierenden in den universitären Pro-

zessen. Eine internationale Universität bedeutet für verschiedene Menschen nämlich Unterschiedliches: So spricht der Rektor im **Vorstellungsvideo** hauptsächlich über internationale Vernetzungsarbeit mit ausländischen Partner*innen insbesondere im wirtschaftlichen Bereich, internationale Studierende werden dagegen nur kurz über ihren prozentualen Anteil an der Studierendenschaft erwähnt. Dabei weist die bereits vorhandene Internationalität in Halle und in der Studierendenschaft nicht nur ein großes Potenzial für die Universität und die Stadt auf, sondern sie bringt auch Wünsche und Bedürfnisse mit sich, die bisher nicht ausreichend erfragt und berücksichtigt worden sind.

So kam es vor zwei Jahren zur Gründung des Arbeitskreises mit dem Ziel, internationale Studierende mehrsprachig zu informieren, sie miteinander zu vernetzen und enger in die Universitätspolitik und das Stadtgeschehen einzubinden. Wir als Gruppe internationaler Studierender wollen als Expert*innen von gelebter Internationalität mitgestalten, sowie unsere Interessen hörbar machen – dieser Newsletter ist einer der Wege, wie wir genau das realisieren.

WHO WE ARE | WER WIR SIND

Our Perspectives on the Pandemic | Unsere Sicht auf die Pandemie

Is the MLU considering the impact of the pandemic on the university as a promoter of internationality in Halle? How can we compensate for the decrease in transcultural academic exchange among the students and the lecturers?

Die Pandemie hat verstärkend gezeigt, welchen zusätzlichen Schwierigkeiten und Belastungen sich internationale Studierende gegenübergestellt sehen. Es ist wichtig, dass die Universität dies nicht nur anerkennt, sondern entsprechende Unterstützung sowie Entlastungen anbietet und für eine hinreichende Kommunikation über die Existenz dieser Angebote sorgt.

The pandemic provided an unwanted opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and has provided new challenges. The university has had a similar experience with the new challenge. It has been admirable in its attempts to adapt to the digital semester but is still coming up too short when it comes to supporting the students mental health and considering the special difficulties that international students encounter.

Not the greatest situation but it is what it is and as always: there are both disadvantages and advantages.



Studying abroad is a struggle under normal circumstances, but at least it was possible for those of us who are international students to be able to look forward to visits in between with family and friends to replenish our strength. This postponement seriously impacts mental health, and for students who are separated from their support system, it would have been appropriate for the university to lend extra assistance and consolation to those affected.

Die Online-Vorlesungen haben Vorteile: so kann ich sie bequem und flexibel Zuhause anschauen und beliebig oft wiederholen. Nichtsdestotrotz hat der fehlende Austausch mit Kommilitonen und Dozenten einen sehr negativen Einfluss auf das Studium. Wenn wir nur sowohl online als auch Präsenz haben könnten.

Any crisis aggravates existing problems in a particular place, which is why it can become a moment of critical reflection on the issues that pre-date the crisis and have been left unaddressed and ignored. International students might have been affected immensely by the pandemic, but the crisis only escalates the pre-existing conditions. Therefore, it serves as a moment to rethink how the university accommodates and facilitates international students in general.

CURRENT ISSUES

The first weeks of this third (mostly) digital semester are already over. As things stand, it doesn't look like much will change in the near future, but the university is still aiming for a **hybrid semester** (i.e. a mix of face-to-face and online formats).

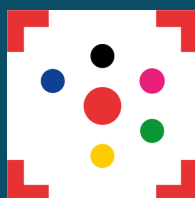
Don't forget: As with the start of every new semester, you should validate your student ID if possible. However, in the summer semester of 2021 the MDV will once again have a **goodwill arrangement** for the ticket check. If the imprint of the old semester (WS 2020/21) is still on your student ID card, you can show the certificate of enrolment for the summer semester 2021 (also via mobile phone). Please note, however, that you must always have an additional identification document with you.

AKTUELLES

Die ersten Wochen dieses nun schon dritten (größtenteils) digitalen Semesters sind bereits vorbei. Nach aktuellem Stand sieht es auch nicht so aus, als ob sich in näherer Zukunft viel daran ändern wird, jedoch strebt die Universität weiterhin ein **Hybridsemester** (also ein Mix aus Präsenz- und Online-Formaten) an.

Nicht vergessen: Wie zum Start jedes neuen Semesters solltet ihr, wenn möglich, euren Studierendenausweis validieren. Allerdings gilt für die Fahrausweiskontrolle im Sommersemester 2021 erneut eine **Kulanzregelung des MDV**. Wenn auf eurem Studierendenausweis also noch der Aufdruck des alten Semesters (WS 2020/21) ist, so könnt ihr parallel die Immatrikulationsbescheinigung des Sommersemesters 2021 vorzeigen (auch übers Handy). Beachtet aber, dass ihr zusätzlich immer ein Ausweisdokument dabei haben müsst.

Are you an international student at the University of Halle and have questions or need help? Contact the:



Bist du ein*e internationale*r Student*in an der Universität Halle und hast Fragen oder brauchst Hilfe? Schreib dem:

Referat für Internationales



internationalesstura.uni-halle.de



@referatinternationalessturahalle

Upcoming | Demnächst

3 May, 6-8 PM



Ringveranstaltung Diversity@University

Katharina Warda: Unsichtbar in der deutschen Hochkultur. (Self-)Empowerment an der Uni zwischen strukturellem Rassismus und Klassismus

3 - 7 May



Virtual International Days 2021

The International Office provides information on topics such as organising and financing a stay abroad, health insurance and residence rights in Germany

6 - 16 May



Freiburger Filmforum - Festival of Transcultural Cinema

30 films + panels and online discussions, all live streamed from the cinema hall to your digital screens at home

7 - 16 June



University Elections | Hochschulwahlen (online)

Election of members of the student council (StuRa), Fachschaftsräte and student representatives in the senate and faculty councils

21 June



Fête de la Musique Halle

Admission-free music celebration with amateur and professional musicians from all musical genres (subject to pandemic-related restrictions)

17 July

End of the lecture period | Ende der Vorlesungszeit

Statutory holidays | Gesetzliche Feiertage (no university lectures on these days)



13 May

Ascension Day | Christi Himmelfahrt

24 May

Whit Monday | Pfingstmontag

HOW CAN WE HELP?

THE SERVICES OF AK INTERNATIONALES

Translation support

We offer a translation service which will help you to master your next appointment at the bank/citizen center or other visits to the authorities.

So far we offer the following languages: German, English, Italian, Polish, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, Kurdish (Kurmanji), Finnish, Spanish, French

! Please note: We are students, not licensed interpreters and do not feel comfortable providing medical/judicial translation attendance

Sprachliche Unterstützung*

Wir bieten individuelle Sprachunterstützung beim Verfassen schriftlicher wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten (z. B. Hausarbeiten, Studienleistungen oder Abschlussarbeiten).

*Mit Dank an die Institutsgruppe Germanistik der Universität Halle

Events | Veranstaltungen

We organise and support events with an international context.

Wir organisieren und unterstützen Veranstaltungen mit internationalem Kontext.

Imprint

The AK Internationales (AKI) is a student working group, bringing together international students in Halle (Saale). We aim to find long-term solutions to study-specific challenges and to actively promote transculturality and multilingualism in student life.

Our working group is open to everyone and enables international students and others who are interested to engage in critical exchange. The indisputable basis for this is respectful communication and unbiased interaction with each other.

In this newsletter, we explore international issues. In particular, it provides a platform for international students to share their perspectives and aims to inform about important developments at the university and in general student life.

Der AK Internationales (AKI) ist ein studentischer Arbeitskreis, der internationale Studierende in Halle (Saale) zusammenbringt. Unser Ziel ist es, langfristige Lösungen für studienspezifische Herausforderungen zu finden und Transkulturalität und Mehrsprachigkeit im studentischen Leben aktiv zu fördern.

Unser Arbeitskreis ist offen für alle und ermöglicht internationalen Studierenden und anderen Interessierten einen kritischen Austausch. Die unumstößliche Grundlage dafür ist eine respektvolle Kommunikation und ein unvoreingenommener Umgang miteinander.

In diesem Newsletter setzen wir uns mit internationalen Themen auseinander. Insbesondere bietet er internationalen Studierenden eine Plattform, ihre Perspektiven zu teilen und soll über wichtige Entwicklungen an der Universität und im allgemeinen Studierendenleben informieren.

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The AK Internationales is a working group of the Student Council of Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg.

Der AK Internationales ist ein Arbeitskreis des Studierendenrats der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg.