



Cross-Cultural Mentoring at the University of Stuttgart



QuaLiKiSS

Qualitätspakt Lehre – Individualität
und Kooperation im Stuttgarter Studium

GEFÖRDERT VOM



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung



University of Stuttgart

- clear emphasis on *natural sciences* and *engineering*
- currently 21,000 students enrolled
- about 4,000 international full-time students
- dropout rate among international students up to 50%



Aims and Purposes of the Cross-Cultural Mentoring

- reducing the relatively high number of drop-outs among the international students
- improving the counseling and guidance of the students in their early studies
- establishing a „culture of understanding“ and a “culture of diversity” at the university campus
- giving the students the opportunity to accept voluntary commitment and responsibility



Contents and Measures of the Program

- one-to-one-mentoring; regular meetings of the tandem
- specialist courses, exercise groups, conversation classes, workshops, seminars, coachings for mentees
- trainings for mentors (intercultural communication, train-the-trainer workshops, coaching)
- a diverse social program (regular meetings, cultural evenings, excursions)
- social media network



Who are the Mentees?

International students enrolled in full-time study...

- who are new to the University of Stuttgart
- who need support in their studies
- who are interested in getting to know Germans and other international students



Who are the Mentors?

Students from different academic backgrounds...

- who are enrolled in their third semester or higher
- who are interested in other people and cultures
- who are willing to attend a two-days introductory workshop and at least two tandem-meetings per month



Direct or Indirect Measures towards Structural Change

- The Cross-Cultural Mentoring program intends to change the way international students are being cared for.
- Indirect structural change is caused by the activation of the students in taking over responsibility and commitment, trying out a new role as a teacher, counselor, friend and the combination of teaching and learning.



Which Structures can be changed?

International students often stick to their national groups; they rarely take part in students' societies or other committees, they have little contact to German students and they sometimes have difficulties to find working-groups.



1. Establishing a “Culture of Diversity”

- The Cross-Cultural Mentoring program promotes the intercultural exchange between German and international students.
- The Cross-Cultural Mentoring program strengthens the participation of international students in university life.



Which Structures can be changed?

International students face challenges deriving from language problems or different ways of learning that teachers and professors cannot or are unwilling to handle.



2. Establishing a “Culture of Understanding”

- In the non-hierarchical mentoring-relationship the mentees overcome their inhibitions to ask for help, because the mentors are on a par with them.
- The program encourages the exchange between German and international students. The "learning from each other" is a key aspect of the program.



Partners for Change

- The counselors of the Department of International Affairs advise the participating foreign students. This is especially the case when it comes to legal issues, financial difficulties or health problems.
- The Cross-Culture Mentoring Program cooperates closely with the Language Centre, the Center for Teaching and Training (ZLW) and the Student Advisory (ZSB), as well as the MINT-Program of the University of Stuttgart.



Why Mentoring?

- Give & Take
- Learning together and from each other
- Demand-oriented counseling
- Culture and language exchange
- Hierarchy-free, trustworthy relationship
- Liability, responsibility
- New perspectives and insights

