

Project Description:

WIEN LEBT... AUF DER WOHNSTRASSE

1. Innovation

The project "WIEN LEBT...auf der Wohnstraße" is a novelty. We've been working in the city for ten years but never thought about activating and working with this legally useable public space. Here, people of different ages and different social and cultural backgrounds can move and exchange informally. Our residential street tests show how diverse this forgotten or underestimated space can be used. 179 residential streets in Vienna – which equals 56 international soccer fields can be used by everyone without any permission - for having a coffee, chatting, playing, sports and exploring new ideas. A previously unused social space will be democratically negotiated. Every residential street can be an oasis for itself.

2. Target Group and Participation

Our WOHNSTRASSENLEBEN tests, the Residential Street Quiz, and our research on residential streets exemplify a variety of uses for this underrated public space. Our activities, realized for the first time in cooperation with local residents and local initiatives, are simple, positive and imitable. It only takes the effort of a single neighbor, a resident, who places his/her chair on the residential street to enjoy the city and to socialize with others. While we want to give new impulses and empower local residents to take their space, we also engage with city decision-makers who, at best, can use their power to make residential streets even more attractive. We interact with the city administration, urban planning experts and decision-makers in various committees. We open up new perspectives on the city and draw attention to this equally shared space for all. On the residential street, city consumers quickly become city producers - co-creators of their own city.

3. Implementation & Effectiveness

It takes courage to fully explore the residential street for the first time using all your senses and it also takes courage to use it for the first time: it looks like any other road - not just for us. But we took the attempt and set up a shared flat on the first residential street by inviting people to live with us in our rooms. Residents have their coat hung in the dressing room

and sat down with us at a table. Some have even tried our bathtub. Teenagers made themselves comfy on the couch and schoolchildren have even set up their own playroom. We were surprised. So, we started walking in the middle of the residential street - in spite of the cars, which always drive faster than the speed limit. Suddenly they slowed down. A car driver even parked her car and joined us. And so, we continued. We played, built furniture, held office meetings, chatted and researched. The greatest effects we could recognize were the ones in ourselves: what once seemed forbidden is now possible. The residential street is open to all. We get positive feedback from all sides. The project "WIEN LEBT...auf der Wohnstraße" can continue to develop and "WOHNSTRASSENLEBEN" can become a normal thing. The project was initiated by space and place and realized together with creative and local resident initiatives or local venues in cooperation with organizations such as "geht.doch-wien" or "Raumstation Wien". Our team includes people with expertise in the field of cultural and social anthropology, geography, architecture and urban planning, social design, art and more. And all have life experiences that flow into the project.

4. External Effect

The project was realized as a first test run in 2018 in the focus area of the 15th and 16th district of Vienna and will be extended to other regions in 2019. Depending on the funding opportunities, it is also possible to think outside the box looking at other countries and their residential street life. When designing activities, space and place always cooperates with local initiatives and associations and with people and institutions that enjoy the conquest of new social spaces. It also presents the results of its own research at national and international congresses and events. The project was also taken up by the media. We appeared on television and gave interviews for radio shows and our activities have been described in various print media (<http://spaceandplace.at/medien/wien-lebt-2018/>) Multiple District leaders, schools and other creative initiatives have responded to our work. Some districts even asked for our expertise to realize WOHNSTRASSENLEBEN in their districts. Furthermore residents have shown interest in even initiating different activities on residential streets. In 2019, we will also be taking the project abroad - among other things, we will be presenting and discussing our creative research at an interdisciplinary conference in Bordeaux. A multi-year project financing would make it possible to make residential streets in Vienna the living room for everyone – as an example for other countries.