



**BECAUSE
EDUCATION
SHOULD NOT BE
A PRIVILEGE**

**ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT
2019**

teachforaustria.at

A PIONEERING SPIRIT



Since autumn 2019, 12 fellows have been placed in Viennese kindergartens for the first time.

Our TFA Fellows Can't Wait To Get Started

REPORT BY AADILAH AMIN



Linz, 30 June 2019. It is a bright, sunny day and the temperature has risen to a scorching 37°C. When I reach the student dorms on Julius-Raab-Strasse at 2pm, I see a large group of people chatting and laughing. The atmosphere is upbeat and lively. Two young women are waiting near the entrance with their large suitcases. "We're from Teach for Austria," one of them says confidently. The two men at the reception need no further explanation. They have been expecting the large group of over 70 people.

These two young ladies belong to the group I had observed earlier. They are the 2019 Teach for Austria (TFA) fellows, university graduates who have made it through the programme's multi-stage selection process and – in a change of career direction – will start teaching in kindergartens or at challenging lower secondary and vocational schools in the coming autumn. Before they join their schools and kindergartens, they must complete an intensive six-week summer programme in preparation for the next two years. Today is the first day of the summer academy and everyone is getting ready for the joint hike to the nearby Lake Pleschinger, a perfect way to get to know each other and cool off in the lake on this hot summer's day.

I want to make a difference.

On the hike, I had a chat with **Marwa El-Roumy**. At 21, she is the youngest participant in the TFA fellows programme. She submitted her bachelor thesis to complete her degree in sociology just a week ago. When I ask her why she wanted to become a TFA fellow, she immediately and assuredly replies that she wanted to make a positive difference in society: "Vienna is one of the most liveable cities in the world. But we still have to fight against social inequality.



Marwa El-Roumy, Özgür Catikkas and Christian Sonnenleitner



REPORT

Social class has a bearing on children's educational opportunities. I want to help create a situation where what matters is how talented you are, and not your background. I want to make a difference and bring about change." During my conversation with Marwa, it becomes clear how passionately she feels about educational equality. Marwa has recently been visiting upper secondary schools and career fairs as a representative of the Austrian National Union of Students, offering advice to pupils who are taking their final exams and giving talks on choosing the right degree course.

Marwa is Austrian with Egyptian roots. She received top grades on her final school exams. Marwa tells me how lucky she has been from the very start of her school career. After finishing primary school she was accepted at an academic secondary school. This came as a great relief to her family: "But I had a hard time from the beginning. Fortunately, I was lucky enough to have a head teacher who treated me kindly, considerately and with respect. She made me realise what an impact a teacher can have. She made school a lot easier for me, and was much more than just a teacher." When she starts teaching in her own classroom this autumn, Marwa wants her pupils to develop self-confidence and recognise their potential. Her objective is to get her pupils to start thinking big and to set ambitious goals for themselves.



FROM SCHOOLS TO KINDERGARTENS



Karin Benoni and Gebhard Ottacher

We arrive at Lake Pleschinger, and I spot **Karin Benoni** talking to a few of the TFA fellows. You can see the enthusiasm in her eyes. Karin is the director of the kindergarten teaching programme. I can imagine that today is a particularly exciting day for her. Karin has been preparing for this day for a long time. And now they have arrived: the pioneers of READY, TFA's new fellows programme for kindergarten teachers. I want to find out from Karin why Teach for Austria decided to go into kindergartens:

"The feedback we've received from many of our fellows is that it's important we start engaging at an even earlier stage. As a qualified Kindergarten teacher, I've been dreaming about bringing the concept of Teach for Austria into kindergartens for a long time. And thanks to the Kahane Foundation and Accenture, we're now in a position to actually to do it."

Özgür Catikkas is one of TFA's kindergarten pioneers, and will start work in a Viennese kindergarten this autumn. It is an honour for him to be the READY programme's first male participant. He would like there to be more male teachers in kindergartens and schools. Just like Marwa, he thinks that every child has potential that needs to be nurtured from the outset.

"I'm excited about Teach for Austria because it is trying to create the same opportunities for everyone,"

says Özgür, who has a teaching degree in German, German philology and

psychology/philosophy from the University of Vienna. He goes on to explain that he comes from a working class family with a migrant background, so school was rather challenging for him:

"But because I received the proper support from a variety of people, I made it to university. I'd like to do the same for others."

Özgür wants to spend two years helping and nurturing children in whatever ways he can, to ensure they get off to a good start at school.



TFA's Kindergarten Fellows Programme

Since autumn 2019, Teach for Austria's first 12 READY fellows have been teaching at kindergartens in Vienna.

The target group is children aged between three and six from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The objective is to ensure that the children get off to a good start at school.

The programme focuses on:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Language development
- Communication and cooperation with parents
- Pre-school teaching techniques and principles, individualised competency development

CONTINUOUS REGIONAL EXPANSION IN AUSTRIA

In 2018, TFA fellows were placed in Linz, Wels and Steyr for the first time. During that year, 11 fellows taught at seven different schools in Upper Austria. One year on, regional director Bernhard Reingruber takes stock of the past 12 months: “The fellows in Upper Austria settled in very well. They’ve been receiving outstanding feedback.” Bernhard is pleased that 11 new fellows will be placed in Upper Austria in 2019. He wants to strengthen the sense of community: “We are an educational movement. We need a good sense of community to achieve our vision that by 2050 every child has a chance at a fulfilling life.”

Christian Sonnleitner from Wels is one of the 2019 fellows who will be placed in Upper Austria. He became a TFA fellow because he wanted to give something back. Christian is aware of the privileged upbringing he had. He has been teaching less privileged children since September:

“I want to show these kids that their futures lie in their own hands. If they work hard, then they can do it.”

He realises that this is going to be a challenging task which will require him step to out of his comfort zone.

Christian has a degree in gemstone and jewellery design. After finishing university, he took over the family jewellery design business in Wels and managed a bar in an arts centre in Linz:

“I was living in a socio-cultural bubble. At a certain point, I thought to myself that my work didn’t really reflect the social realities of life. I wanted to get out of this bubble and find out about the realities of other people’s lives.”




The Upper Austrian community’s new office in the Tabak Factory in Linz.

In the **7** years since our founding, we’ve placed more than **325** fellows in challenging schools

By the end of the day, I had gotten to know quite a few of the new and diverse group of TFA fellows. I would love to be able to tell every one of their stories

because each of them has a fascinating and inspiring background. During my conversions with the fellows, I could tell how much they were looking forward to their placements, and how deeply motivated and keen they were to take to precipitate change.

Teach for Austria’s CEO **Gebhard Ottacher** has also come along on the hike to get to know the new fellows, too. At the end of the event he tells them all: “In the seven years since our founding, we’ve placed more than 325 fellows at challenging schools. It’s amazing how we’ve grown and how much enthusiasm there still is seven years on. This shows that we’re on the right track. And now you’re joining us on our journey.” 

LEVERAGING CHANGE WITH THE RIGHT MOTIVATION

Fellows develop competencies

The Teach for Austria fellows have changed careers to become inspiring teachers and pre-school educators who are committed to supporting children from underprivileged backgrounds. They work at kindergartens, lower secondary schools and vocational secondary schools, teaching children and young people from socially and economically disadvantaged families, a group which is at high risk of dropping out of education.

According to their self-assessment survey, the fellows develop more than

24

different competencies during their first year of teaching. Most notably: reflection skills, teaching skills and the ability to appreciate the realities of other people's lives.

(Fellow Survey, 2019)

Clemens Zulehner

has a degree in social and cultural anthropology, and is a football coach for 13 and 14-year-olds in his spare time. He has been a Teach for Austria fellow in Upper Austria since 2018, teaching English, physical education, geography and economics at a lower secondary school in Haid, where he is also the joint form teacher of a fourth-year class.

“I WANT TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE CHILDREN ON A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY – A JOURNEY TO UNCOVERING THEIR ABILITIES AND STRENGTHS.

IN DOING SO I CAN HELP TO MOULD THE FUTURE – RIGHT WHERE IT'S TAKING SHAPE.”

Within a year of starting
teaching, fellows'
self-efficacy increases by

12.5%

University of Duisburg-Essen,
NEWTT project evaluation, 2019)



IMPACT LEVEL: FELLOW



CHANGING LIVES

Fellows enable successful education paths

The fellows' goal is to ensure that every pupil achieves educational success – a prerequisite for leading a fulfilling and self-determined life. They support the children and young people so they can successfully progress to the next stage of their education– from kindergarten to primary school, and from compulsory secondary education to upper secondary school or an apprenticeship.



7 OUT OF 10

pupils said they had learned a great deal in their lessons with a fellow.

(Pupil Survey, 2019)

73%

of pupils successfully progressed into upper secondary education within a year of graduating from their NMS lower secondary school.


(internal sample of 51 pupils, 2017)

Edward

Edward is 13 years old and wants to go to a vocational school next year, to train as an electrical engineer. This is an occupation which he feels has a very bright future. Marcus Weissengruber, a 2018 Teach for Austria fellow, provided Edward with the inspiration and motivation that helped him to become a model student: he always participated well in lessons, completed the classwork with care, and handed in his homework on time.

Edward's feedback demonstrates just how much of a positive effect a fellow can have on an individual pupil.

"I'M VERY GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD MR WEISSENGRUBER AS A TEACHER IN MY FINAL YEAR. HE HAS MOTIVATED ME TO IMPROVE IN ENGLISH, AND ABOVE ALL, I REALLY ENJOYED HIS LESSONS. YOU LEARN MORE EASILY WHEN IT'S FUN, AND I WAS ABLE TO IMPROVE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. I THINK ENGLISH IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT IF YOU WANT TO BECOME AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER. I DISCOVERED MY SPORTY SIDE AS WELL IN THE SPORTS CLASSES WITH MR WEISSENGRUBER, AND NOW EXERCISE MORE REGULARLY, WHICH DOES ME A LOT OF GOOD."

A portrait of Bianca Köck, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and black-rimmed glasses, smiling. She is wearing a white V-neck shirt and a black backpack. The background is a blurred green vine-covered wall.

Bianca Köck

studied environment and bio-resources management at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, choosing energy as her specialist topic. She was a Teach for Austria fellow from 2014-16, promoting educational equality and equal opportunities by teaching pupils at the Neue Mittelschule Stromstrasse, a lower secondary school in Vienna. Bianca implemented projects including a pupil-run natural cosmetics company and certifying the school to ÖKOLOG environmental education standards. After briefly returning to her roots and working as a sales and quality manager in organic cereal production, she set up Umblick in 2017. At Umblick she can combine her two areas of special expertise: environmental protection and education. Bianca and her team spend most of their time working on a variety of national and international projects and holding environmentally-themed workshops for target groups that include children, teachers, senior citizens and job seekers.

“WORKING WITH MY STUDENTS WHEN ON THE TEACH FOR AUSTRIA PROGRAMME, I SAW HOW MUCH YOU CAN POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THE LIVES OF OTHER PEOPLE, AND IN TURN I DISCOVERED MY PASSION.”

AMBASSADORS FOR EDUCATION BEYOND THE PROGRAMME

Alumni continue to work towards our vision for educational equality

IMPACT LEVEL: ALUMNI

After completing our two-year programme, fellows take a range of different career directions: whether they decide to work directly in the education system, for an NGO or in politics, public administration or at different levels in the private sector, they are making a contribution to creating educational opportunities.

87%

of alumni say that TFA significantly influenced their choice of subsequent career.

(Alumni Survey, 2019)

85.9%

are making a direct contribution to TFA's Vision 2050 through their work or voluntary activities.

(Alumni Survey, 2019)

LONG-TERM SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Working together for the benefit of the children

In Vienna, TFA has
already reached

60 OUT OF 94
target schools.

76%

of school directors gave specific
examples of the change that fellows
brought about at their school.

(Survey of School Directors, 2018)

TFA places teachers in

10 CITIES

Helga Reisinger

is the director of Musikmittelschule Dr. Theodor Körner II, a lower secondary school in St. Pölten. Teach for Austria fellow Manuela Putz has been teaching at her school since autumn 2018. "New to the profession, Manuela Putz settled into our motivated team very well. She was eager to take on duties for musical performances. Manuela completed the projects assigned to her conscientiously and on her own initiative."

"OUR COLLEAGUE BROUGHT WITH HER LOTS OF ENTHUSIASM, MOTIVATION AND TEAMWORK SKILLS WHEN SHE JOINED THE SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2018.

SUPPORTED BY HER TEACH FOR AUSTRIA TRAINING, SHE HELPED TO BROADEN OUR RANGE OF TEACHING APPROACHES AND GAVE US FRESH IMPETUS BY PROVIDING A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL AS A 'LIVING SPACE'. THANKS TO HER UNDERSTANDING NATURE, SHE'S HUGEY POPULAR AMONG THE PUPILS."

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