



Für eine gute Nachbarschaft **Dialog** gemeinschaftlich
Wiener Gemeindebau miteinander Fairness **Mediation**
Verständnis austauschen **Gespräche** freiwillig miteinander
er unterwegs Kommunikation **Willkommen** Nachbar
Hausgemeinschaft **www.wohnpartner-wien.at** Respekt
Zusammenleben **Dialog** Gute Nachbarschaft **Mitein**
Konfliktvermittlung Respekt **wohnpartner** Mediation
Nachbar! **together for a good neighbourhood** freiwillig miteinander
wohnpartner unterwegs Fairness Konfliktvermittlung
Gemeindebauchor Verständnis Für eine gute Nachbarschaft
partnerschaftlich **Guiding Principles** miteinander
Willkommen Nachbar! **Nachbarschaftliche** Schachpartie
Gemeinwesen **Lebensqualität** Nachbarschaftsprojekte

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wohnpartner – together for a good neighbourhood – was initiated by City Councillor for Housing Construction Dr. Michael Ludwig





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Introduction

At the end of 2008 the City of Vienna, the owner of all municipal housing complexes, decided to launch its own city governed organisation to provide all living assistance services rather than to outsource these services to private companies. A project team within Wohnservice Vienna GmbH was established to prepare for the full take-over of all content related questions and organisational issues.

Part of this process was defining the organisation's essential goals, code of ethics and core values as laid out in the brochure "Service Offers". Since January 2010 wohnpartner has been responsible for conflict management, community outreach and networking projects within Vienna's community housing.

The wohnpartner principles are the product of a collaborative effort of all employees emerging from a process of review and reflection on our "Service Offerings".

After almost one and a half years of wohnpartner service, I felt it important to take a moment to collaboratively reflect upon all of the aspects of our activities including the underlying principles that guide our work. In this context it was important to assess whether or not our employees - wohnpartner's most important resource - do in fact know, understand and promote our mission, values and goals.


In April 2011, the entire staff attended a large event to kick-off the process. During this first step we defined goals, presented a process outline and reflected upon our regular operations. Three additional workshops concerning goals, tasks, strategies, basic conditions, common values and their realisation followed in the summer of 2011.

The executive leadership together with the local wohnpartner team leaders, revisited and revised all contents. Following this, an editing team revised the minutes and created a common draft. The report was handed to all employees and discussed in a final workshop where feedback was taken into consideration for a final revision.

The expectations formulated in the brochure "wohnpartner principles" are high and we intend to meet them to the best of our abilities. I am aware, however, that various situations, contextual requirements, responsibilities and client needs turn every encounter into a unique case. Therefore, it might not be possible to meet all of the requirements entirely. However, it is crucial that we are dedicated to a common vision and that every employee contributes their individual strengths to achieving the same goals.

wohnpartner is committed to the principles of participation, self-reliance and empowerment. We make every effort to foster these values in public housing. We can only fulfil our mission if we live by the same principles within our organisation.

I am therefore very proud of this new brochure, since it was developed in a collaborative effort and provides an extraordinary basis for our pioneering work. My heartfelt thanks go out to the editing team Natascha Artner, Azza Diebler-Atig, Lena Göpfrich, Saloni Grover, Rene Selinger, Tove Raiby und Vincent Wohinz.


Mag. Josef Cser
Director wohnpartner

Vienna, December 2011

wohnpartner principles

wohnpartner aims to improve the living conditions of residents and the quality of life within Vienna's public housing by promoting good neighbourly relationships among residents.

For wohnpartner this means to foster, in close co-operation with the residents, a community that lives by the values of respectful treatment, mutual appreciation and openness.

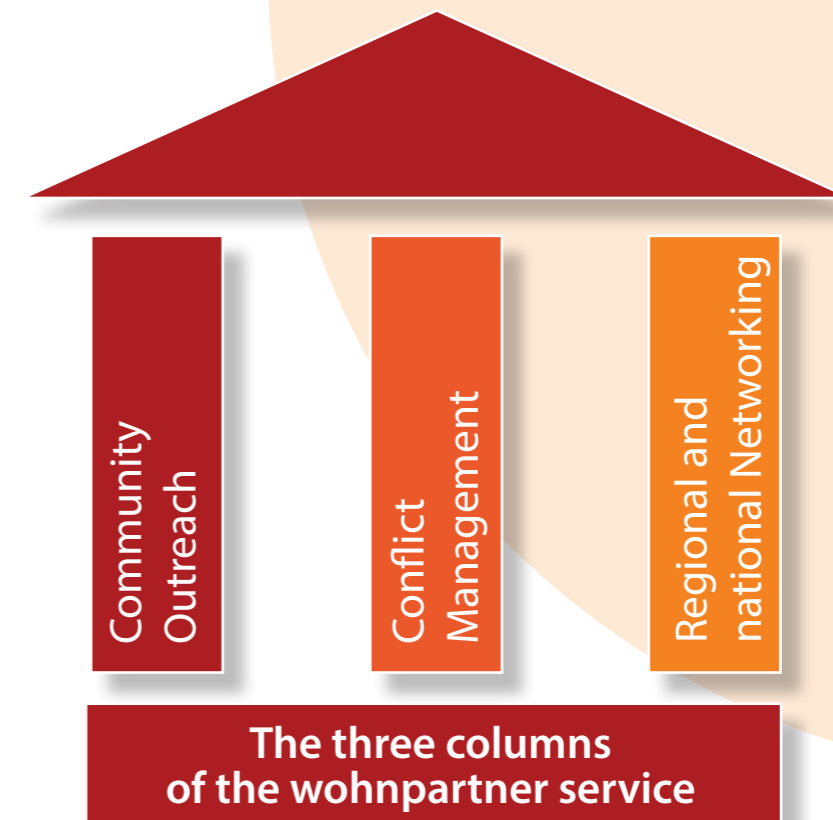
It's essential to our mission that we view residents as experts on their living environment. wohnpartner is committed to meeting their needs.

In addition, wohnpartner promotes democratic consciousness as a basis for social interaction guided by both solidarity and individual responsibility as well as self-reliance. This empowers residents to be active and committed to active participation in the constructive shaping of their living environment.

In order to enable and promote positive relations and open communication among residents, wohnpartner creates on-site opportunities, which foster a sense of belonging and community.

wohnpartner's services are directed toward residents, local communities and organisations as well as institutions and grass-roots initiatives that have expressed interest in improving community life. Voluntarism is the foundation of our services.

The most precious resource to realise our common goals with residents are wohnpartner employees.



Services and Performance - General

wohnpartner services consisting of community outreach, conflict management and networking are defined by the following characteristics:

- ⇒ Activating
- ⇒ Voluntary
- ⇒ Integrative
- ⇒ Free of charge
- ⇒ Multilingual
- ⇒ Methodologically diverse
- ⇒ Sustainable
- ⇒ Accessible (un-bureaucratic and accessible on-site)
- ⇒ Participatory
- ⇒ Process-oriented
- ⇒ Open-ended

The services

- ⇒ are based, on the needs of the residents of community housing, across target groups and appropriate to each situation
- ⇒ are based on the available resources of the neighbourhood or city district
- ⇒ evolve continuously based on the experiences gained from day-to-day work

Community Outreach

wohnpartner is based on the guiding principles of community outreach as defined by Maria Lüttringhaus and should be the foundation of method-based activity in daily work. (Ref. Hinte/Lüttringhaus/Oelschlägel 2001¹):

- ⇒ Cross target group action
- ⇒ Geared toward the issues and needs of people
- ⇒ Fostering self-reliance and self-empowerments
- ⇒ Using available resources
- ⇒ Improving of material circumstances
- ⇒ Networking and co-operation

wohnpartner considers community outreach to be a dynamic process that constantly evolves through continuous work with expert panels, reflection and training and especially through practical, day-to-day work.

wohnpartner Service Offers

- ⇒ wohnpartner accompanies, initiates and supports open-ended processes on site by activating available resources.
- ⇒ wohnpartner fosters participation in order to achieve sustainable solutions developed in co-operation with residents.
- ⇒ wohnpartner fosters democratic awareness by promoting solidarity and socially responsible action, which includes fostering tenant participation by forming and supporting tenant associations as well as other forms of democratic involvement in the shaping of living environments.

¹ See also the report of the expert panel for community outreach 2010. The definition was taken from the report of the expert panel on community outreach 2010.

- ⇒ wohnpartner's decentralised premises and on-site services facilitate social encounters and support the establishment of new and accessible local meeting places.
- ⇒ "wohnpartner unterwegs" visits housing complexes, listens to the concerns and needs of residents and contributes to improving communication, mutual understanding and positive coexistence.
- ⇒ wohnpartner offers training and information sessions for residents and tenant representatives as well as housing supervisors and attendants on subjects that are relevant to community living.
- ⇒ wohnpartner promotes dialogue between tenants as well as tenant groups along with other initiatives for groups within public community housing. This contributes to the strengthening of local neighbourhood networks.

Conflict Management

wohnpartner considers conflicts to be possible indicators of social change and advancement in society. wohnpartner services deal with such conflicts while focusing on finding resources that residents can utilise to resolve their own conflicts on their own. We regard conflicts as starting points for broadened social competence and raised awareness for diverse interests.

wohnpartner Service Offers

- ⇒ wohnpartner offers counselling, mediation and support to successfully resolve conflicts among tenants of community housing.
- ⇒ wohnpartner encourages and empowers tenants to resolve conflicts themselves constructively and responsibly and provides competent staff and professional mediators when required
- ⇒ wohnpartner closely co-operates with other municipal institutions on both the district and city levels. After assessing each situation we function as a referral agency by directing residents to the appropriate city offices. At the same time, our extensive knowledge of community housing allows us to serve as a contact point for city authorities and institutions and a conduit to provide helpful information to residents.

National Networks

wohnpartner is an organisation dedicated to learning. We therefore maintain interdisciplinary, national and international networks to foster co-operation on basic principles and to establish common strategies. In addition, the network serves to enhance continued professional development.

Attitude and Common Values (working principles)

wohnpartner services are multi-partial. Multipartiality means, we actively represent all involved parties in a respective area or neighbourhood. We listen to the needs and interests of every resident and make them visible. wohnpartner services aim to inspire residents to view things from other perspectives in order to develop a comprehensive view of each situation at hand.

Being multi-partial combines necessary objectivity with alternating proper attention and advocacy for all parties involved. By way of this principle, wohnpartner equally advocates for all parties involved while maintaining a special sensitivity toward disparities in power. In this way we aim to function as an instrument of mediation.

wohnpartner is community oriented. We address the issues of residents within the context of a specific area/community housing complex. wohnpartner initiates, supervises and guides open-ended processes, where people develop solutions that fit their specific needs and living situation.

wohnpartner strengthens and supports the residents' existing competencies and activates additional resources within the area/district when required (Empowerment). wohnpartner encourages residents to take responsibility and empowers them individually to reliably solve their own problems or realise their interests. In this way, we contribute to sustainable solutions.

wohnpartner is co-operative. We respect and value all people and consider their diversity to be enriching.

Strategies

wohnpartner is a learning organisation that reacts flexibly and adequately to social change and specific community developments.

wohnpartner works with existing local networks (tenant organisations, housing supervisors, maintenance staff, resident initiatives and other groups and organisations) in order to bundle initiatives and interests and to promote self-reliance. wohnpartner helps to establish these networks, when they are needed.

wohnpartner supports residents in contacting decision-makers within their districts and in city authorities and involves these decision-makers in concerns as needed.

Intensive and special effort in networking with collaborating partners ensures the sustainable effect of the wohnpartner activities, most importantly with 'Wiener Wohnen' and the non-profit co-operatives who manage community housing on behalf of the City of Vienna. Collaborating with other social and educational institutions is of equal importance in realising the goals mentioned above.

Through its activities with residents wohnpartner hopes to improve the prevailing image of community housing among the public. Effective public relations efforts aim to create a differentiated and more realistic image of Vienna's community housing.

wohnpartner teams are organised according to the principles of diversity. The diversity of

interests, needs and living situations within community housing calls for teams that bring an equal amount of diversity in knowledge, skills, experiences and so forth. Ensuring this diversity is one of the main principles of our personnel policy.

wohnpartner culture includes providing employees with professional development opportunities and constructive feedback. Our decision making processes are transparent and structured in comprehensible ways.

Basic Conditions

The following basic conditions enable wohnpartner to implement these strategies and ensure the **quality of our work:**

Organisational Structure

Nine local teams fulfil the mission to provide community work, conflict management and networking tasks within community housing.

The wohnpartner management ensures smooth operation, necessary basic conditions for the teams (i.e. infrastructure) and communicates with the contracting client and all national co-operational partners.

wohnpartner maintains its own special team of experts for professional development and quality control (FEQs)

By being a part of 'Wohnservice Wien' a supporting marketing and PR agency is available to wohnpartner.

Personnel Policies

wohnpartner teams are diverse and multi-professional regarding age, gender, cultural origin, professional background, training and language skills.

In addition to its teams wohnpartner keeps a pool of internal and external mediators available upon request.

Involving our employees in their own professional development and the quality control of wohnpartner services happens in processes such as reflection and, for instance, the development of this brochure, 'wohnpartner principles'. They also participate in professional workshops and other internal events and reflection sessions.

Individual and team supervision as well as team building, professional development, focus groups and peer consulting ensure the professionalism of our work as well as professional exchange about our work and the challenges that our staff meet in their day-to-day work.

wohnpartner creates possibilities for employees to meet outside the work environment to network and informally discuss their experiences. Spare time activities include group activities such as retreats, meet-ups and so forth.

Internal and External Transfer of Knowledge

wohnpartner develops and uses many instruments for internal and external transfer of knowledge: reflection sessions, team meetings, internal training courses and workshops, symposia, informal talks, thematic evening events, method days and staff suggestion forums. In addition, wohnpartner contracts external consultants to ensure content quality and professional excellence.

wohnpartner processes, standards and internal guidelines such as the wohnpartner principles and policy paper or the employee manual are documented in writing and are available to all staff members via a commonly accessible server.

Infrastructure

Flexible opening hours and additional availability by phone as well as the possibility to set up personal flexible appointments make us easily accessible to individual residents.

wohnpartner maintains office locations in almost all districts equipped with office-informati-on technology systems and technical infrastructure, which enables appropriate and efficient work as well as professional documentation.

Co-operation Agreement

wohnpartner signs co-operation agreements with our most important partners; the agreements lay out the rules that govern the co-operative work and how to deal with one another.

wohnpartner Approach

We – wohnpartner staff members – are friendly and authentic. We are part of a well-functioning network and demonstrate highly communicative, social and professional competence. Integrative thinking as well as taking diverse interests and needs into consideration are our strengths. In conversations we do not judge or demand, but endeavour to create a balanced dialogue that values other perspectives. We are curious and critical, we ask questions and focus on achieving solutions.

We treat people respectfully and emphatically. We think before we act with the intent to de-escalate and sensitise. In all of our efforts we aim to be in close touch with the residents' reality and perspective.

While sharing many similarities we recognise we are all individuals and value each other's diversity.

We approach people well prepared and structured and we work toward solutions while keeping the process open-ended. We show active presence. We acknowledge peoples' needs by observation, active listening and relationship building. Before becoming active we look into whether a particular case requires wohnpartner activity.

In order to best address the residents' individual needs we choose from different methods² as needed. In this way we take on different roles and functions (observer, coach, moderator, mediator, expert or trainer).

² Refer to wohnpartner employee manual on conflict management and community outreach.

wohnpartner – the neighbourhood service for community housing is a department of Wohnservice Wien Ges.m.b.H

Wohnservice Wien Guiding Principles

Our strengths, our successes, our future

The wide variety of our service offers makes Wohnservice Wien the first point of contact and the main information centre for living in Vienna.

We are a dynamic and reliable service provider

As a private enterprise that is publicly owned we are a reliable and efficient service provider to our clients.

We approach our clients as partners

Our actions are geared toward our clients' needs and offer them a transparent service package.

We treat our staff members and resources responsibly and with the utmost of respect.

Our staff members' contribution is valuable and integral to reaching our goals; we therefore consider them the most valuable resource of our enterprise.

We are motivated, competent and flexible

We work as a team and learn from one another. Appreciation, openness, and the acceptance of other perspectives are the basis of our community work.

Our leadership is conscious that they serve as role-models and leads according to the organisation's principles and mission. They make reasonable decisions utilising efficient management techniques.



Awards

In 2011 wohnpartner was awarded the Austrian Integration Award in the field of 'enterprises and work' for 'lived diversity' by the Association for Economy and Integration.