

Deutsch-Ausländische Begegnungsstätte St. Pauli

Around 1980, St. Pauli was strongly characterized by labour migration. Up to 45% of families in the district did not have German citizenship. After a pilot project on the initiative of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs in Seilerstraße in 1978 was unsuccessful, the Deutsch-Ausländische Begegnungsstätte (“German-Foreign Meeting Center”) St. Pauli (DAB) was established in 1981.

Festivals, social counseling and support for women and girls

The DAB was located in a building of the former Israelite Hospital in Talstraße, sponsored by the Nachbarschaftsheim St. Pauli. During this time, a total of eight German-foreign meeting places and three international women's meeting places were established in Hamburg.



Exterior view of the DAB St. Pauli in Simon-von-Utrecht-Straße 1987.
Photo: Hinrich Schultze

International Women's Meeting Centers were established in Hamburg.

The DAB's services were primarily aimed at migrant families from the immediate neighborhood. Festivals with international cuisine and music promoted cohesion. Social counseling and German and literacy courses were also offered. Over 60% of the children and young people living in St. Pauli in the 1980s and 1990s had a migrant background. The predominantly Turkish children and young people took advantage of the leisure activities, swimming courses and support with homework.

The new concept included additional services for women and girls. In the following years, women's stores were set up in the immediate vicinity, such as AIZAN for girls in Wohlwillstraße. Here, support was offered primarily with career and training issues.



The „Frauenladen AIZAN“ at Clemens-Schultz-Straße 26, 1987.
AIZAN is a German abbreviation for exchange - information - cooperation between foreign and non-foreign women.
Photo: Hinrich Schultze

Closure despite numerous protests

In the summer of 1999, the responsible authority put the sponsorship of the German-foreign meeting places out to tender again. As a result, the number of sponsors was reduced from ten to four and DAB St. Paul was surprisingly slated for closure in 1999, despite numerous protests. Most recently, AIZAN for girls in Juliusstraße had to close in 2011.

The question of the “success” of the DAB in St. Pauli cannot be answered unequivocally. As a meeting point and advice center in the immediate neighborhood, the DAB has undoubtedly played an important role for migrant families in the district. However, it should be noted that the demand for anti-discrimination efforts by the authorities and the German majority society were not met. The non-migrant population has hardly been reached.

In the meantime, St. Pauli has become an almost thoroughly gentrified district with a largely changed social structure. Since the end of the 1990s, support and advice for migrants has also been provided by self-organized migrant institutions.

“ ... I can only remember one German boy in the DAB, Christian ... That was pretty strange, since it was actually a German-foreign meeting place...”

Interview on 11.12.2024 with Birol B., born in 1980 in St. Pauli and grew up in Schmuckstraße near the DAB.



Flyer for the winter party of the DAB on 7.12.1990. St. Pauli-Archiv

Program note of the DAB, 1990. St. Pauli-Archiv



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