

Report on ACT Working Weekend Gafrenz, 18-20 March 2016 & ACT Inreach Meeting, Vienna, 7th May 2016

(ACT stands for Austrian Committee for Transition)



On 18-20th March, the Austrian Committee for Transition (ACT) held its first Working Weekend in Gafrenz, which was a successful step in working together more concretely. As follow-up from the ACT Working Weekend, on Saturday 7th May, the ACT Inreach working group, led by Anna Janssen, organised a one-day meeting in Vienna with relevant members from the areas of Inreach of the Austrian movement.

The ACT was initiated by Peter Zoehrer in September 2015, as a group of 14 young Unificationists (primarily 2nd Gen couples), with the purpose of assisting a transition process in Austria to younger leadership over the next few years. Since its inauguration, the committee has met twice, at the Austrian Leaders Meetings in September and November 2015, where time was taken for the committee to find clarification and direction in its mission. This weekend workshop in March was the first initiated meeting of the ACT, to start a working process together in separate focus groups.

The idea for the weekend was to allow time for the 3 ACT working groups (Inreach, Outreach, Structure & Organisation) to meet and make a start on mapping out the areas that need addressing and to set up a working process, in which others outside of the ACT could also be involved.

As an initial step towards working with others beyond the ACT, the working groups invited two 2nd Gen and two 1st Gen to join the meeting, which provided a valuable contribution. It was helpful for this first time that we had smaller group sizes as it made it easier to identify and discuss the main topics. The working groups intend to gradually involve and work more with others, over time.

During the weekend, as well as having 3 constructive working group sessions, there was the chance to have some shared programme as a whole group, for HDH,

discussion, fellowship, games, fresh country air, and some presentations - including inspirations from Top Gun participants, information about various communication and self-help trainings, and an overview about the Gaflenz centre, currently Austria's sole church property.

The main outcomes and actions steps from each working group were shared at the end with the whole ACT, to identify cross-over points, and to connect everyone to the bigger picture with a shared direction.

Some of the main areas discussed were:

Inreach:

- Supporting the Blessed Family department and Regional Pastors in their roles – e.g. with a greater network of mentors and counsellors, and by delegating some of the more menial tasks.
- Bridging the space between the international and local level activities – e.g. creating more national level retreats and activities, as well as a national newsletter.

Outreach & PR:

- Possibility of developing a German version of America's "dp life" which acts as an outreach website and witnessing tool for the movement
- Revitalising witnessing efforts through a national "AUTreach" witnessing campaign and a "DP Refresh" workshop
- Working more with Germany and Switzerland to strengthen PR work

Structure & Organisation:

- Evaluation of church finances, legal status, and organisational structure – with the idea to research the systems used by other faith groups to find most effective solutions
- Development of national projects such as Gaflenz and an annual Austrian Gathering (Österreich Treffen)

The Working Weekend helped the group to feel a greater sense of unity, teamwork and family spirit, and create some momentum for the working groups to do the ground work.

It was decided that the next time to meet as the whole ACT would be in Autumn, and until then the working groups would make up their own plans when, how often and in which form to meet.

Many thanks to everyone for helping to make this first ACT Working Weekend a success!



ACT Inreach Meeting, Vienna, 7th May 2016

As follow-up from the ACT Working Weekend, on Saturday 7th May, the ACT Inreach working group, led by Anna Janssen, organised a one-day meeting in Vienna with relevant members from the areas of Inreach of the Austrian movement. Namely, in the areas of Youth and Education (Small children, HARP, CARP), Blessed Family Department, and Pastors. This was the next step in including more people in the ACT working process. In total 24 people took part.

The well coordinated schedule allowed working sessions to take place within these respective areas, as well as cross-over sessions, for example, Youth and BFD (discussing Matching/Blessing curriculum), Youth and Pastors (improvement of youth involvement and engagement), BFD and Pastors (pastoral care and counselling).

This created a dynamic and highly interactive spirit which allowed fruitful sharings to take place throughout the whole day – including over lunchtime, where the whole group went together to a local Asian restaurant for a buffet lunch. For the final session of the day everyone met altogether again and each working group shared a summary of its action points.

It was inspiring to be able to involve and work with more members in the ACT work and we hope to continue this process by including the abilities and passions of even more people in the community. The next ACT Inreach meeting is planned for Autumn (Yoshiko Pammer reported)