

## **Association for intercultural families and partnerships**

***Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften, iaf e.V.***

### **National profile**

The association represents the interests of binational families and partnerships throughout Germany. We support the social and legal equality of people regardless of their skin colour or their cultural origin. We work as a non-profit organization in more than 20 cities in and outside of Germany. Counselling women and men regarding all issues of binational marriages and relationships is one focus of our work.

We use legal restrictions and the various forms of disadvantage and discrimination as an opportunity to inform the public and to provide a basis for dialogue between the organization and the federal government.

One of our most important tasks is to highlight the chances and possibilities that arise when people of different cultures live together. In doing so, we rely on the experience of our members and pass on this knowledge in the form of publications, events and training courses. We want to contribute to a culture of acceptance with various projects on intercultural topics. The association of binational families and partnerships is a member of the German nondenominational welfare association (DPWV), the German women's council (DF), and the European Conference of binational / bicultural Relationships (ECB). We are represented in the European Coordination for foreigners' right to family life (ECFRFL) and in the German national coalition for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Profile of the Leipzig branch**

Since 1992, within the nationwide Association, we have been the only counselling and information centre for intercultural families in the new federal states in eastern Germany. We offer the following professional services:

- psychosocial counselling,
- legal advice,

- psychological counselling,
- advice on multilingualism,
- empowerment training for teenagers and adults.

#### **Other services and projects:**

- play group for children
- monthly Sunday brunch
- an intercultural radio broadcast „Zwischenraum“, (takes place every two weeks on *Radio BLAU*)
- Further education opportunities for intercultural competence and other themes of interculturality
- Exhibitions, for example: *Abu, Mama und Bébé* - Photos, Texts and audio clips

Through a national membership structure we represent the interests of people of different cultural backgrounds and of all age groups, independent of religion, language and social status.

Our target groups are, for example, singles, couples, families, parents, teenagers, children, day care staff, teachers, speech therapists and counsellors. We offer counselling in a complex world with an increasing need for specific services. At our association people seeking advice find support, training opportunities and counselling. They can also learn about possibilities to get involved in projects.

#### **Mission**

Independent of background, religion, sexual orientation and social status, we empower and create opportunities for children, youths, single people and families with intercultural backgrounds.

We recognise our clients, permanent employees and volunteer workers as valuable contributors to our organisation. Each has a significant role to play within their various divisions and we recognise their equal footing within the organisation. We

oppose any form of racism, discrimination, paternalism, exploitation and infantilization.

Our work with intercultural families places us in an important strategic position to address, on the one hand, the intersection of mainstream society and immigrants and, on the other hand, the intersection of migration and family, which is often neglected in public discourse.

Migration and family go beyond a sense of ethnic and religious belonging.

We encourage the social change from a mono-cultural West European traditional family to intercultural, diverse lifestyles and family structures.

We consider all lifestyles and family structures to be equal. We support children and families, along with their respective languages.

We advocate for society to have a higher regard for all spoken languages and that children and youths should be supported in educational institutes in their respective languages. We strongly oppose discrimination on grounds of language.

We attempt to make intercultural daily life more perceivable, through active participation in its framework. We endeavour to support and empower intercultural and migrant families, so that they may have long term prospects in the new federal states in Eastern Germany. We support and promote political participation as well as equal co-determination of immigrants.

Questions of interculturality form a consistent, integral part of all aspects of our work. Concepts and experiences from the field of diversity management, as well as intercultural receptiveness, are the points of departure for the development of our organisation.

In the context of a learning organisation we continually adapt our approach. Our understanding of culture is broader and more flexible than certain perceptions of static ethnic cultures. Additionally we take legal, economic and social circumstances into account.

We are able to identify our own world views and respond appropriately to them. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination against the rights of, for example, women or children. We respect all people, but do not permit the behaviour of an individual to infringe upon the human rights of others, even if his or her actions are culturally justified.

Our teams are made up of intercultural, multilingual individuals with interdisciplinary competency and the ability to develop their own projects.

In particular we work with the following empowerment approach:

- we promote and encourage responsible behaviour,
- we assist disadvantaged youths and grown ups to find a path out of a position of discrimination to one of self-determination,
- we facilitate teenagers, along with their parents, to participate in society, as prerequisite for inclusion,
- through multimedia we attempt to create public awareness of all our perspectives.

**Counselling** if you need to deal with one of the following topics:

- Family reunion
- Visa / residency issues
- Marriage
- Separation & divorce
- Support when dealing with public authorities
  
- (Intercultural) education and parenting
- Plurilingualism
  
- Relationship conflicts
- Assistance in improving partnerships
- Parents' rights for custody and access to their children
- Feared parental child abduction, threat of child abduction, or child abduction

Phone this number: (0341) 6880022 or e-mail us: [beratung-leipzig@verband-binationaler.de](mailto:beratung-leipzig@verband-binationaler.de)

- Furthermore, we offer a general counselling for social issues
- One to one psychological counsellings
- Systemic counselling for families and couples
  
- Legal counselling

All counselling services are confidential and can be offered in several languages. Just call by!

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### **Trainings** for the following key issues:

- Specifics of multinational lifestyle concepts as well as counselling
- Broadening the intercultural horizon and improving intercultural competences
- Empowering immigrant youths
- Plurilingualism

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### **Empowerment Training for Immigrant Youths**

The training is strengthening the resources of immigrant youths. Furthermore, each individual's personal skills are developed through practical activities. Associated to the youth training, workshops for immigrant parents are being offered.

Trainings are run by intercultural teams.

(0341) 6880022 or e-mail us: [leipzig@verband-binationaler.de](mailto:leipzig@verband-binationaler.de)

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### **Project: "Stark für Kinder" – Väter in interkulturellen Familien - Fathers in intercultural families**

In this project we offer:

- Confidential and free counsellings
- Contacts and sharing experiences in an intercultural group
- Regular father-child trips or activities
- Information sessions on legal or parenting issues

We are looking forward to meeting you!

[Stark-fuer-kinder@verband-binationaler.de](mailto:Stark-fuer-kinder@verband-binationaler.de)

Blog: [binationale.wordpress.de](http://binationale.wordpress.de)

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