



helfende wände

Background and challenge

Over 1.2 million people sought refuge in Germany in 2022 – more than 1 million of them from Ukraine. Over 70% of the refugees from Ukraine could be accommodated in private housing. This shows a new form of solidarity by the civil society and was a major relief to state systems. Scientific studies¹ show that a large number of people in Germany remain willing to provide private housing for refugees. However, the lack of easily accessible information on private housing, concerns about financial burdens, fear of bureaucratic red tape and a lack of support too often stand in the way of prospective landlords.



The project „Helfende Wände“

In order to meet these challenges, the **Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI)**, the non-profit organization **ProjectTogether** and the flexible-housing platform **Wunderflats** have joined forces and launched "Helfende Wände" (Helping Walls).

Helfende Wände connects refugees with private landlords and expands the potential of private accommodation – initially for **people seeking protection from Ukraine**, and in the future, for refugees from all countries of origin. Housing can include private apartments, shared apartments or individual rooms in family homes. The project helps to accommodate those seeking shelter in private housing in order to strengthen a humane form of accommodation, to take into account the individual needs of the refugees as well as to create encounters and promote mutual understanding.

Helfende Wände is supported by three pillars:

1. A safe, secure and automated **matching platform** for private landlords and refugees.
2. **Support structures** for landlords and refugees before and throughout the process of living together.
3. An **information campaign** that motivates new landlords to offer a home to those seeking refuge.

www.helfendewaende.de

In partnership with



project
together

¹ Storz, Nora (2023): Selective solidarity? What willingness to help refugees depends on. SVR-Policy Brief 2023-2, Berlin.
DeZIM.insights Working Paper (2022): [New platforms for engagement: Private accommodation of forced migrants from Ukraine](#).
ProjectTogether & Civey. (2022): Representative nationwide survey with 2,517 citizens in November 2022

The three pillars of Helfende Wände

A safe, secure and automated matching platform

The matching platform enables private housing offers from all over Germany to be brought together and clearly presented in one digital place. An automated verification system, clear matching criteria, and a regular feedback system ensure the safety of both refugees and landlords. A standardized rental contract enables the uncomplicated and reliable reimbursement of rental costs to the landlords. Helfende Wände aims to create a nationwide standard for private accommodation.

Support structures for landlords and refugees

In order to support private landlords and privately hosted refugees before and during the housing relationship, and to assist them with questions, support structures are being established. These include, for example, digital exchange formats, information and Q&A events and individual psychosocial counseling. These support services are implemented by Ipso - International Psychosocial Organisation and prospectively other civil society organisations. A mapping of existing support structures in the area of housing in Germany is currently in development.

Information campaign for new landlords and interested parties

The lack of information about the possibility and support of offering private accommodation to refugees prevents many people from doing so. Our information campaign in digital and traditional media, on the websites of project partners and directly on www.helfendewaende.de, aims to provide facts to people interested in getting involved, in order to reduce their reservations, and inspire them to offer private accommodation. The campaign is a source of information and helps to strengthen social cohesion.



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