

Bookeneers

A different kind of girls' book club. This is where literature meets political engagement and Saudi Arabia meets Dortmund.

Ten girls, a comfy sofa, warm tea, a few pretzel sticks, biscuits, and the TV is off. The reason for this unusual girls' night in isn't so they can watch "The Bachelor" or "Germanys Next Top Model", but rather so they can talk about the book "Wadjda".

Story: 10-year-old Wadjda (pronounced Wodzhda) lives in Saudi Arabia and dreams of having a green bicycle. She doesn't care that girls aren't even allowed to ride bikes. She plans to buy the bike with her own earnings, until her strict headmistress finds out about it...

The girls from the housing group for UMFs (unaccompanied minor refugees) in Dortmund-Asseln chose this book for a reading session with us at youngCaritas. There were other books about strong, insubordinate girls available, like "Ronja, the Robber's Daughter", "The Diary of Anne Frank", "Me and My Sister Clara" and "Island of the Blue Dolphins". The "Mayersche Buchhandlung" bookshop in Dortmund donated the books to us, so that everyone could have their own. Three times a month, from 6–8 pm, the "LiteraTourists" meet up – the name likens reading to travelling to another world.

The girls, aged 12–18 years, who fled Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea, now go to school in Dortmund. None of them had ever read a whole book before. So reading the book "Wadjda" was a major milestone for them.

In turn, each girl reads a page from the book. Then the question and answer session starts: "What does 'grin' mean?", "What does 'humble' mean?", "What does 'rumour' mean?". With lots of gesticulating, synonyms and pictures, the word is explained, demonstrated, acted out, until everyone has understood what it means. We've often ended up laughing ourselves under the table.

It becomes clear that just reading out loud (regardless of how fluent it is) doesn't necessarily lead to a direct understanding of the text. For this reason, we try to go deeper into the text and reach a good understanding about Wadjda, her house, her parents, etc. with the help of posters.



"What's up with her parents? Why doesn't the father live in the same house?" – these questions are of particular concern to the refugee girls. In this respect, they are little detectives who have a great nose for curious little clues.

< *the Bookeneers in February 2018*

Devrim, an 18-year-old girl who is full of ideas, will graduate from secondary school this year. She came to youngCaritas in order to support a good cause. Her own passion for reading inspired us to create this project. There is a lot of enthusiasm for the project, and soon many other young women found the involvement of refugee girls and reading together to be an exciting idea.

An imperturbable girl.
A big book.
A green bike.
youngCaritas Dortmund.
Lots of fun and a wonderful dream.
These are the Bookeneers.

Kristina – youngcaritas Dortmund