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Description, background and evaluation of the WIRwerden program. A research-based intervention supporting the social integration of refugee children in primary school

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WIRwerden is an after-school program designed to foster refugee children's social integration and belonging in school. Since November 2016, 37 scholars aged 9-12 from so-called Welcome Classes of eight primary schools in Berlin participated in this research-based intervention. One important key element is the formation of dyadic peer relations (tandems) between a refugee child and a child brought up in Germany to ensure close contact and cooperation over the intervention period. Sixteen trained prospective teachers or psychology students supervised 8 intervention groups. In 9 (bi-)weekly sessions with different thematic topics children were encouraged to establish common activities and identify common interests with their tandem partner. Aiming to strengthen each child's resources, the intervention program combines various techniques and topics that have already proven to be successful in comparable educational settings. In this presentation, we will describe exemplary sessions including their theoretical background and focus on first results of the programs longitudinal evaluation.

Keywords: Intervention, social integration, peer-tandems, refugee children