

mimycri – from boats to bags

WHAT

mimycri is a non-profit association based in Berlin under German Law, which tackles the challenges of migrant integration. A holistic approach offers artistic, social and economic perspectives: a diverse international team, including people with refugee status, designs and produces bags and backpacks out of broken rubber boats, which carried people to the Greek island of Chios. Common creativity and work binds strangers into teams, who transform “rubbish” into high quality design products.

HOW & WHY

mimycri’s core activities include:

- Cooperation in the design and production of bags and backpacks: mimycri is about learning from, with and about each other. We want to enable people who have just arrived in Germany to participate and contribute both economically and socially.
- Upcycling of existing and otherwise discarded material: mimycri gives new value and meaning to materials such as broken rubber boats, which are otherwise considered as waste. mimycri pieces are a collection of history that help building a future.
- Creation of space for engagement with the topics of migration and integration: mimycri creates physical “touching points” with everyday objects. mimycri products create space and context to interact and discuss the topic in the media, politics, and society at large.

NAME AND ORIGIN

The name mimycri originates from the natural phenomena “mimicry” – resemblance and optical illusions of plants and animals, which teaches us something important about the benefits of changing perspectives. Questioning instant perceptions can help us understand reality and improve our actions: Waste will be a resource, refugees will be colleagues and an everyday product will transform the communication around an often-divisive societal issue.

The co-founders Nora Azzaoui, management consultant, and Vera Günther, environmental economist started the project in December 2016 and then founded their organization in August 2017. The idea originates on the Greek island of Chios, where the women first volunteered in the winter of 2015/16. This experience motivated Nora and Vera to raise awareness and produce societal change by showcasing positive stories of migration and successful integration back in Germany. Frequent travels to Greece and close cooperation with local NGOs continue as a cornerstone of mimycri’s work.

STATUS QUO

mimycri e.V. is non-for-profit and was founded in June 2017. It is operating out of the innovation space Fablab in Berlin. mimycri is increasing its network of partners and supporters to scale up its impact on all levels. The sale of products will help to reach a state of financial sustainability and independence. mimycri has completed a successful crowdfunding competition and is currently producing the 800 pieces that have been ordered since April 2017.

