

ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

DEGROWTH
VIENNA 



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1. DEGROWTH VIENNA

Degrowth Vienna is an association for the common good that is advocating for a socially just and ecologically sustainable society and economy since 2018.

Degrowth Vienna brings together research and activism centred around the perspective of degrowth and in particular around strategies for a social-ecological transformation. Thus, aiming at restructuring the current societal and economic systems towards a good life for all within planetary boundaries.

The degrowth movement especially addresses the Global North, which is currently dominated by an imperial mode of living (cf. Brand and Wissen 2017) fostering ecological and social injustice on a global level. Degrowth Vienna cooperates with different actors, NGOs, universities, and unions up to other self-organized collectives.



The members of Degrowth Vienna are very much embedded in the Viennese context around social-ecological transformation, which has developed into a hotspot in Europe for research and activism. We consist of students, young academics and professionals with backgrounds in a diversity of academic disciplines including Social Ecology, International Development, Ecological Economics, Political Science, and Sustainability Sciences. Further, most of us have experience in social movements, self-organized projects, and alternative initiatives in the city. Moreover, an advisory board of researchers and professionals supports us regularly with advice and occasionally resources.

Our purpose can be described via two greater goals, that are pursued within different projects. First, Degrowth Vienna, as a part of the greater degrowth movement, has the objective to introduce the degrowth perspective to the political and societal discourse around responses to the multiple crises. This objective is considered on different scales, from international academic discourses, to political spaces and organizations in Vienna. Specifically, we aim to bring forward a degrowth perspective on societal and economic systems centred around climate justice, democracy, and solidarity. Second, our objective is to contribute to the scientific and activist discourses within the degrowth movement by focussing on the role of strategy.



2. DEGROWTH AND STRATEGY - THE PUBLICATION PROJECT



The publication project, which was initiated in 2020, started with the goal to bring together the key contributions of the 2020 Degrowth Conference on Strategies for a Social-Ecological Transformation.

However, the group's ambition quickly exceeded this initial goal, and instead aimed to create a comprehensive collected volume on the topic of degrowth and strategy. It includes contributions from the conference, and importantly builds upon them to advance this important topic.

The collected volume, titled "*Degrowth and Strategy: how to bring about social-ecological transformation*" consists of twenty chapters with forty authors contributing.

The authors are from diverse backgrounds, including academics and activists, and their contributions include theoretical to concrete applications of strategies in specific fields. An editorial team of eight people was formed to collectively create a red thread, select authors, and edit the publication.

dissemination
of the book's
contents in
different
formats

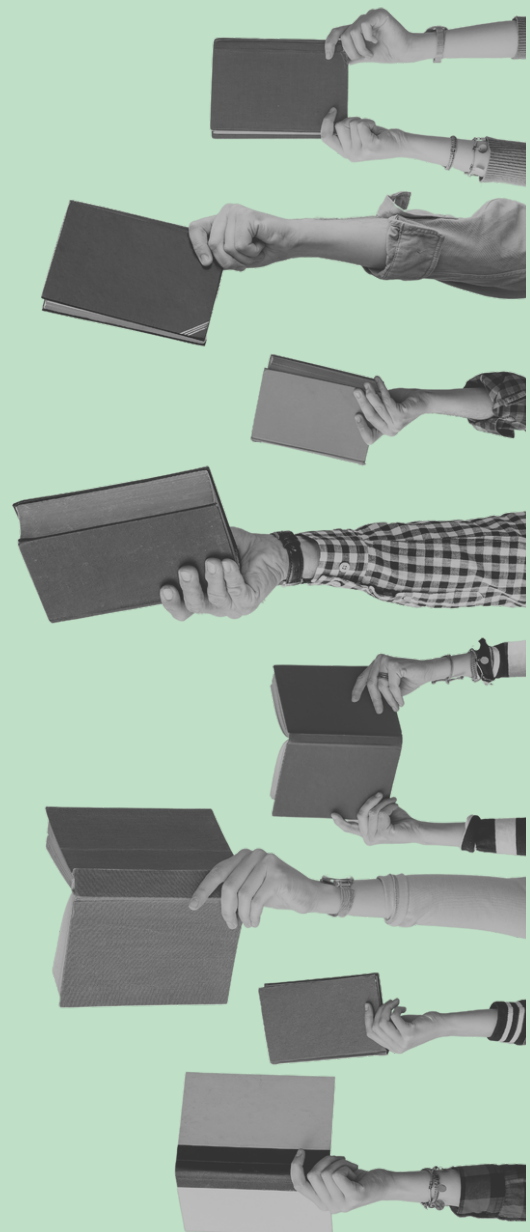
contribution
to the
scientific
debate

publishing
with MayFly
in 2022

The book's aim is to bring forward the central claim that degrowth's plurality alone is not enough for strategic action, and instead an intentional consideration of the role of strategy and how this plurality of approaches is necessary. Thus, it is a substantial contribution to the scientific debate around possible and practical strategic pathways towards a socially and ecologically just society. Furthermore, analytical tools and perspectives are part of the book, that help to evaluate and categorize strategic approaches. Case studies of provisioning sectors (mobility, care, housing, food etc.) and economic institutions (labour, money and trade) complement the more conceptual aspects of the book.

The project group is now finalizing the manuscript for a planned spring 2022 publication with the publisher MayFly. MayFly is an alternative publisher that took a significant interest in the book and was chosen for its accessibility (free digital version) and affordable paperbacks. The team behind the project is now transitioning to a new phase, the post-publication project, which focuses on the dissemination of the book's contents to wider audiences in a variety of planned formats. These include interviews with authors on different podcasts, a blog summarizing each chapter, and a reading circle with activists, editors and authors.

In summary, the book project has kept alive and vibrant the focus on strategy within the degrowth movement, which has been a key focus and contribution characteristic of Degrowth Vienna starting with the conference. You can read more about the book [here](#).



3. SOLIDARISCHE POSTWACHSTUMSSTADT WIEN



The project “Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt Wien” started in the beginning of 2021 with the aim to relate the degrowth critique and the strategies for social-ecological transformation discourse to Viennese politics, its urban planning approaches and the different social struggles. In the first few months the project group used the “Doughnut City” concept, which gained attention in other European cities. However, after first content-wise exchanges with actors from these initiatives from other cities and feedback from the advisory board, we decided that the doughnut economics concept is not the ideal concept to express the form of critique and visions that Degrowth Vienna members are affiliated to. We then decided to relate closer to the discourses and activities on degrowth municipalism or “Postwachstumsstadt” (Conference and book on Postwachstumsstadt in 2019, network municipal degrowth).





Within this project we aim at relating the degrowth discourse to spatial and social struggles in Vienna's urban planning development, like housing, energy use, mobility, public space, social infrastructure or culture. Hence, the group is asking what Vienna could look like if the good life for all within planetary boundaries was put at the centre of urban politics. We used the degrowth perspective to analyse current politics and identify major leverage points for a social-ecological transformation in Vienna. This includes criticizing administrative policies and municipal strategies, like STEP 2035 (city development plan) or the Smart City framework strategy of the City of Vienna. Further, we aim at forming alliances with other groups and people, that are currently working towards a transformation.

In 2021 the project did not only form itself and found its main purpose, but was able to realise manifold small tasks. This was also enabled by funding for scientific work by the city of Vienna. The main accomplishments were:

01 Deciding on the perspective of “Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt” in an iterative process, through workshops with inputs from similar groups.

Successful funding application at MA7 (Culture Department) of the city of Vienna.

02

03 Publication of an article in *dérive - Zeitschrift für Stadtforschung* on strategies for a social-ecological transformation in Vienna.

Organization of a workshop at the Urbanize! Festival, which is a yearly event in Vienna that has been established as a hotspot for emancipatory discourses on urban development issues and social struggles.

04

05 Organisation of our workshop-series “Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt” and realization of the first workshop on the “Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt” with Anton Brokow-Loga from Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and a huge number of local and international participants ranging from activists to practitioners.

Networking activity with different groups and collectives, which put forth new collaborations.

06

With the beginning of the year 2022 the workshop series is still ongoing. We are also working on a small publication that will include not only knowledge co-created in the workshops, but also our perspective of a “Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt Wien”. The project formed and set the ground for the continuation of the project as a platform in Vienna, which brings together urban struggles with strategies for a social-ecological transformation.



4. PUBLIC RELATIONS

The PR Working Group is responsible for creating content for the association's social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The team is composed of volunteers in charge of one or more of the social media channels, following its activity closely and interacting with our followers and other associations.

During the year 2021, the PR Working Group created social media posts which increased outreach by 25-50% compared to the previous year before. Additionally, the working group provided support to the Publication Project by developing a social media campaign focused on promoting the book and started a fundraising campaign, to gather donations for financing the publication of the book itself.

In 2022, the PR Working Group aims at increasing the visibility of the association, aiming to attract new members, and reach out to potential supporting members for support and donations. Since late 2021 there is also a blog on our website which is managed by different projects. You can find information and reflections on our recent activities [here](#).

increased
outreach
through social
media

support of
fundraising
campaign

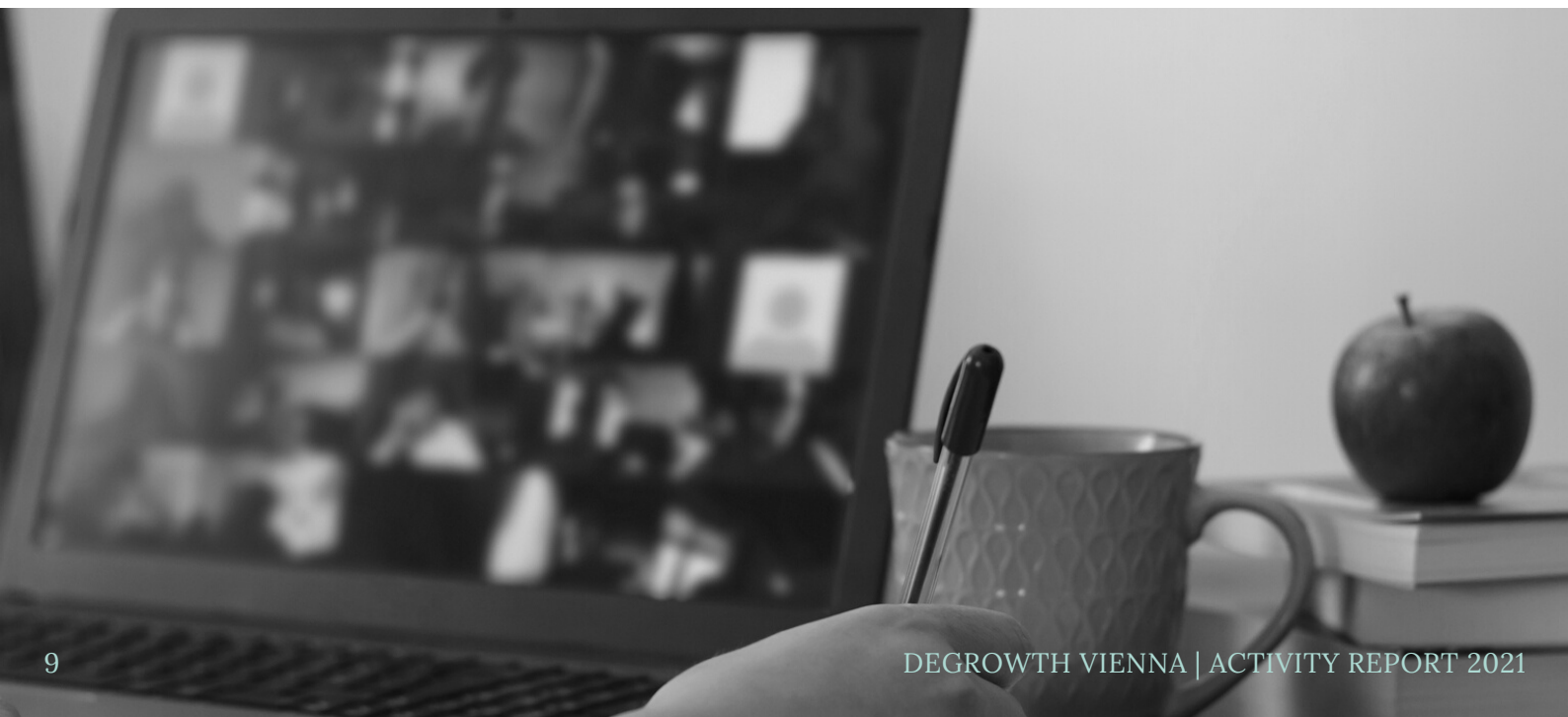
great
interaction
with
members and
associates

5. PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSES IN AUSTRIA



DISCUSSION SERIES: DEGROWTH – FUTURE PATH OR ILLUSION?

Together with the department on Environment&Traffic of the Arbeiterkammer Wien (AK Wien; Vienna Chamber of Labour) and Ulrich Brand (University of Vienna) we organized a closed discussion series in the first half of 2021. In this series of online events we continued some discussions in the area of labour and work that were started in collaboration with the AK Wien and the Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB; Austrian Federation of Trade Unions) at the Degrowth Vienna 2020 conference. In the five workshops the concepts and transformative potentials of ideas as well as proposals like time wealth, decoupling, circular economy, the urban metabolism of Vienna and a social-ecological contract were presented and discussed among participants from AK Wien, Degrowth Vienna and affiliated institutions and organisations.



THE ROLE OF DEGROWTH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTORS IN VIENNA - A PANEL DISCUSSION @KLIMACAMP

On 26 May 2021, various climate justice groups that are active in Vienna gathered in a panel that was co-organized by Degrowth Vienna and Students for Future, and explored their relation to the critique of economic growth and the degrowth movement. Together with the audience, the participants exchanged on their positions towards the degrowth movement's core ideas, and reflected on possible future collaboration as well as the incorporation of degrowth thought in their activist communication. The panel consisted of representatives of KlimAttac, Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Klimavolksbegehren, System Change and Climate Change and was moderated by a person active at Attac and Degrowth Vienna.

The panel revealed that degrowth ideas are already widely shared in the climate activist community; however, a translation process, including the development of a common but differentiated communication strategy, has not yet occurred. Communicating economic growth as the root cause of the escalating climate crisis is yet a task to be adopted by most movements. Nevertheless, there seems to be the wish and openness for closer collaboration across the movements despite the movements' pursuit of somewhat differing goals, within different time horizons and with different role perceptions. In order to benefit from this labour division, to find a shared identity and common communication strategy, spaces for exchange and reflection are required and have been welcomed by the panellists.

In order to follow up on the wish for further connection/exchange and create a space for reflection and an opportunity for movement cross-fertilization, we plan on hosting a follow-up event to the panel in 2022.



SUFFICIENCY PANEL @ PRE-SYMPOSIUM "KONSUM NEU DENKEN"

Amongst representatives of Austrian institutions and organizations (the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Labour and SOL), Livia Regen from Degrowth Vienna participated in a panel discussion on sufficiency at the Pre-Symposium to the event „Konsum Neu Denken - Die Bedeutung von Suffizienz für die Zukunft von Konsum“ hosted by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU). In her arguments, she stressed that while a reduction of consumption and sufficiency at a societal level is necessary - especially in the Global North - the focus on individual consumption carries the danger of disregarding the role of production systems. These play an essential part in the perpetuation of the growth-centered imperial mode of living, which structures consumption practices. At the same time, the idea of a good life needs to be decoupled from consumption through the reorganization of societies and mental infrastructures.

The panel discussion was recorded and is available [here](#).

PANEL ON UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME @ WIENER FESTWOCHEN

On June 3, 2021, Degrowth Vienna had the opportunity to speak at a post-performance discussion panel at an event of the Wiener Festwochen. We were invited by the artist who organized the performance, Anna Rispoli. The performance, entitled “Einkommen. Die Bedingungslose Rede” (Income. An unconditional speech), featured 15 citizens of Vienna from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Since several members of the group were actively engaged with an EU-wide referendum for a UBI (‘füreinander.jetzt’), the speech also invoked different proposals for how to design a UBI and discussions about how to get such a policy implemented. On the evening of the performance, the speech was to be read collectively by the 15 participants in the presence of an audience.

After the performance, Anna, the researcher Lukas Schlögel from Uni Wien and a member of Degrowth Vienna (Merle Schulken) were asked to discuss about reasons why ideas like UBI may be important, the future of work, and how to bring about transformation. Some topics that were discussed during the after talk included how to combine Nowtopias with non-reformist reforms to get transformations done, the importance of involving people in activist efforts and ‘do ground-work’ and to also learn from older generations of activists. Merle further took some time in the beginning of the talk to introduce degrowth Vienna and degrowth in general. The performance was recorded and is still [available here](#).



EDUCATIONAL WORK: WORKSHOPS ON DEGROWTH (GRÜNE JUGEND AND ATTAC SOMMERAKADEMIE)

Last summer, we were invited to facilitate two introductory workshops on degrowth. This gave us the opportunity to on the one hand bring degrowth into new spheres, and on the other hand to learn from the different perspectives and experiences of the participants. The first workshop “Degrowth & the social-ecological Transformation” was part of the yearly summer seminar of the youth organization of the Austrian Greens (Grüne Jugend). With the 15-20-year-old participants we had a whole day to talk about the relevance of degrowth, degrowth proposals and the obstacles and contradictions that come with it. We held the second workshop “Degrowth- a concrete utopia- shaping a future for all” at the ATTAC Austria summer academy. Here we had the chance to engage with people that have been part of the ATTAC network for a long time, among them political representatives from rural municipalities.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS OF APCC SPECIAL REPORT ON STRUCTURES OF CLIMATE-FRIENDLY LIVING

Degrowth Vienna was invited to participate in the stakeholder process that is accompanying the APCC Special report on structures for climate-friendly living. This APCC (Austrian Panel on Climate Change) Special report is an assessing summary of the status quo of the research on transformation towards structures that enable climate-friendly living for all.

Iris Frey from Degrowth Vienna was participating in the co-production workshop where transformation narratives were developed and put into the context of theories of change and current developments. Those narratives focused on structural conditions that are barriers to climate-friendly living, on visions for climate-friendly living of typical persons and desirable transformative structural changes.



6. TRANSREAL

Since December 2021 Degrowth Vienna is a project partner, together with the Department of Socioeconomics of the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien) and the Environmental Agency Austria (Umwelbundesamt), in the Klimafonds Austria funded research project TRANSREAL - “TRANSformative REALism for effective climate action”. The project has a duration of 24 months. Two of our Degrowth scholar-activists have a part-time job position during this period to work for the project.

TRANSREAL explores innovative ways to combine radical with incremental and feasible action to achieve climate-neutral and climate-resilient practices and policies. The most promising strategy for incremental action to have transformative outcomes (and potential) is the key concept we explore in this research project, namely Transformative Realism (TRANSREAL). It is a strategy that brings together transformative long-term and necessary short-term considerations for action, thereby linking pragmatic necessary actions with radical ambitions.

transformative
realism in two
Austrian rural
micro-regions

concrete
experiences
with locals,
professionals
and policy
makers

closing
research gaps
by designing
innovative
forms of
knowledge

TRANSREAL will explore the potential for transformative climate actions (TCAs), which are actions that contribute to transformative realism in two Austrian rural micro-regions in the field of land use and socioeconomic aspects of housing, like countering splintered development, providing affordable housing, contributing to village revitalization and local job creation, and sustaining basic provisioning.

TRANSREAL will contribute to closing research gaps related to the necessary shift from pragmatic incremental climate interventions to radical TCAs by designing innovative forms of knowledge production and dissemination. Thereby offering conceptual and practical lessons for multi-level governance in climate policymaking and for the institutionalization of research guided by transformative realism.

The project supports regional change agents and climate-active local decision-makers by providing concrete knowledge on TCA on land use and models of local co-design processes, thus translating the often too abstract academic debate into practicable policy options. It helps local citizens, professionals and policy-makers to widen their horizons on climate actions by better understanding the rationale for radical change and the necessity of innovative approaches. TRANSREAL offers degrowth scholar-activists concrete experiences with local citizens, professionals and policymakers to enrich their understanding of desirable and feasible practices and policies, while at the same time challenging and fertilizing deliberations of established actors with radical ambitions.

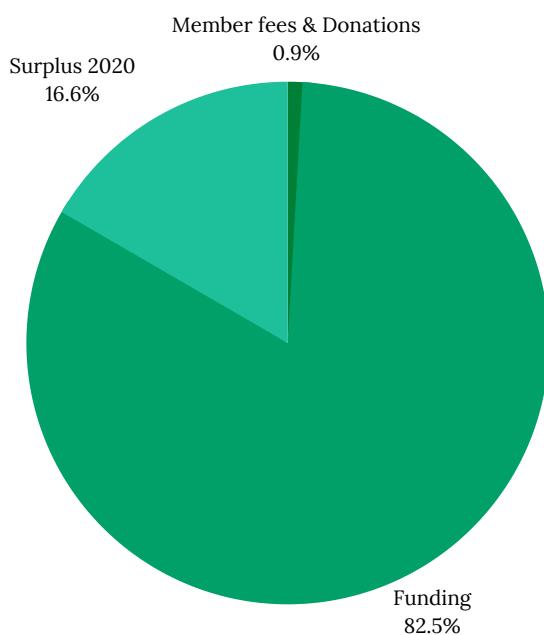


7. FINANCES

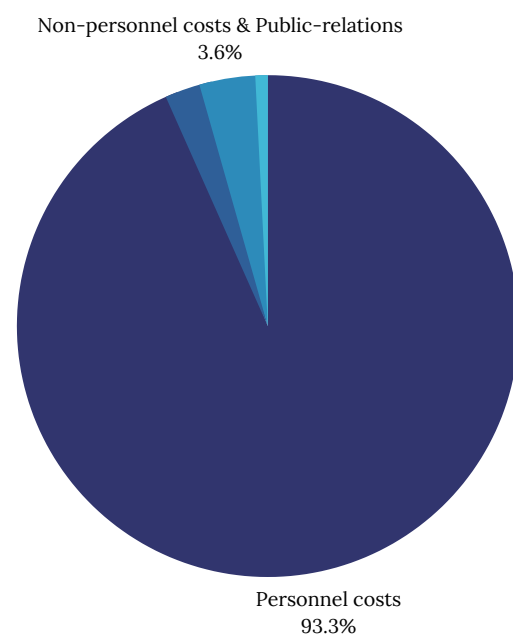
This year we generated a big surplus of 30.207,34 €. The largest part of that money comes from funding for the first year of the TRANSREAL project by Klima- and Energiefonds Austria. This gives us the great opportunity to fund two small paid positions over the time span of the project!

We have also received funding this year from the City of Vienna- MA7 and from the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung for our projects. In addition, we launched a crowdfunding campaign for the publication and have started to ask for (supporting) member fees. Thanks to everyone who is supporting us and our projects - and that not only in financial ways!

**Distribution of Revenues
2021**



**Distribution of Expenditures
2021**





SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Since Degrowth Vienna is mainly a voluntary based association not affiliated with any political party, we are continuously searching for support to bring the idea of degrowth into political spaces, social movements, and organizations in Vienna. We are dependent on grants (both public and private) as well as private donations. To continue our work, decrease the uncertainty of irregular funding, and thus enhance our resources and playability, we are currently calling for regular financial support to make our vision a closer reality.

The call for supporting members is aimed at raising some funds to cover the costs of the remunerated coordination positions and ongoing costs for the IT infrastructure like the website and e-mail accounts, printing material for events, etc.

Our supporting members, in addition to helping us stay active and alive as a self-organized association, do receive regular updates on our activities via our newsletter, are invited to our annual holiday party every December, and receive a discount on the forthcoming collected volume entitled “Degrowth & Strategy”.

If you would like to make your part and support us, visit [our website to find more information](#).

REVENUES & EXPENDITURES 01.01.2021-31.12.2021

Revenues	54.827,73 €	Expenditures	24.620,39 €
Member fees & Donations	5.245,50 €	Personnel costs	22.998,06 €
Member fees	509,50 €	Werkverträge	13.342,00 €
Donations	4.736,00 €	Remunerations	650,00 €
		Wages	1.224,06 €
		Allowances for volunteers	7.782,00 €
Funding	47.895,72 €	Administration	558,72 €
MA 7	14.000,00 €	IT	459,25 €
Klimafonds Austria	24.963,20 €	Account management	99,47 €
Crowdfunding	953,32 €		
Surplus 2020	9665,71 €	Non-personnel costs & Public relations	886,79 €
		Food	89,49 €
		Travelcosts	181,30 €
		Accommodation & Rent	596,00 €
		Others	196,82 €
		Refunds Sponsors	196,82 €



8. OUTLOOK



In the first half of 2022 Degrowth Vienna plans to continue with the ongoing projects that advance degrowth as an idea more broadly and specifically advocates for an emphasis on strategies for social ecological transformation, also in the context of Vienna. In march 2022 we will have a strategy workshop with the aim to define our focus for the second part of the year. Furthermore, the association is preparing a shift of internal structures, with the aim to form a stable core team within the association amongst other things by generating funding for a stable income for some members. Another promising new development is the collective search for a space with other groups and the group Althangrund für Alle at the centre. The current plan is to rent vacant spaces at the old location of the Vienna University of Business and Economics, which facilitate many uses. All the groups participating are concerned with emancipatory struggles for social, political, cultural or spatial issues. The space would allow to work, hold meetings and bigger workshops, have festivities and it includes a food coop. The relevance lies especially in the relation and collaboration of many like-minded groups, to form a new non-commercial space for emancipatory practices in Vienna.



9. TEAM



Lisette von Maltzahn



Pedram Dersch



Nathan Barlow



Max Hollweg



Giada Papi



Suanna Scheck



Hannah Lucia Müller



Iris Frey



Livia Regen



Tina Leonhard



Ruth Falkenberg



Peter Nitsche-Whitfield



Jarmo Kikstra



Dario Feliciangel



Ella Karnik Hinks



Bianca Klein



Thomas Neier



Halliki Kreinin



Sophia Kratz



Daniel Gusenbauer



Noémie



Merle Schulken



BECOME A SUPPORTER!
PRIVATE DONATIONS ARE AN IMPORTANT SOURCE
FOR OUR WORK ON A SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUST
SOCIETY.

DEGROWTH VIENNA

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BIC: RZOOAT2L129

BANK: UMWELTCENTER – RAIFFEISENBANK GUNSKIRCHEN EGEN.

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:

[HTTPS://WWW.DEGROWTHVIENNA.ORG/EN/SUPPORT-US/](https://www.degrowthvienna.org/en/support-us/)

