

# Activity Report 2022

**DEGROWTH**  
VIENNA 

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# 1. About Us

Degrowth Vienna - *Verein zur Förderung der Degrowth Bewegung* (Association for the Promotion of the Degrowth Movement) is a collective of about twenty members in Vienna and elsewhere in Europe who work together on advancing the transdisciplinary debate on social-ecological transformation. Most members are young scholar-activists from fields such as social ecology, socio-ecological economics and policy, international development, ecological economics, political science, sustainability sciences; but

backgrounds also range from activist organisers to political advisors.

Vienna is one of the centres for degrowth research and civil society engagement in Europe. This has allowed the association since its foundation in 2019 to work both on a scientific research level, in collaboration with the many Viennese universities and research institutes, and on a practical level, through its activism and involvement in cultural projects.

## Why Degrowth?

Despite growing awareness of the destructive effects of inequality and climate change, both phenomena have worsened in the last decades. More and more scientific studies and reports identify continued economic growth in the Global North as the root cause of both crises and call for post-growth alternatives.

Degrowth stands for the restructuring of the economy and of society towards social and ecological justice. Central values of such a restructuring include democracy, participation, intra- and inter-societal solidarity, a revalorisation of care work and a decolonial approach. Degrowth presents a transition discourse that critically accompanies the path towards, and creates visions of, a socially and ecologically just future.



## 2. Our Activities in 2022

2022 marked the gradual return of our activities to the in-person mode after two years of hard online meetings and virtual social events. We now regularly meet at Kulturzentrum 4lthangrund for meetings, workshops, seminars, and co-working sessions. This movement back to in-person allowed us to host series of events, to directly engage with varied audiences, and to accept invitations to speak at conferences.

Much of our collective energy in 2022 was put in three major and quite distinct

projects: the publication and dissemination of *Degrowth & Strategy*, Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt Wien, and TRANSREAL.

It is the last time we report about the first and second, as we are phasing out of them to work on a new collective strategy for 2023 that will bring the team together and avoid having too many sub-groups. The remaining of this section further expands on activities we carried out in 2022.



*Some of Degrowth Vienna active members at our seminar weekend in October 2022.*

## 2.1 Projects

### 01 Degrowth & Strategy

In summer 2022, after two years of hard work, we finally published the anthology *Degrowth & Strategy: how to bring about social-ecological transformation*. *Degrowth & Strategy* asks about the “how?” of degrowth and creates a dialogue between degrowth theorists and practitioners worldwide. The book has already generated a lot of attention and positive feedback, as evidenced by its central position in various courses, like in the Online Master on Degrowth (UAB) and the Master Social Ecological Economics and Policy (WU). *Degrowth & Strategy* has also become the best-selling work of our publisher MayFly Books.

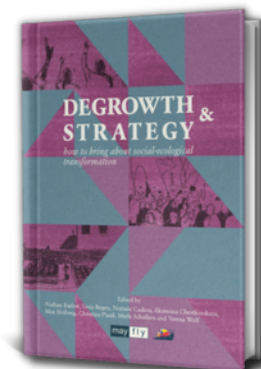
Just before the publication and following up on it, the dissemination working group met on a bi-monthly basis to organise a campaign around the book and help spread the degrowth strategy dialogue further. A range of events was thus organised, including an in-person book launch in Vienna that brought together authors, editors, and readers. It was followed by a two-part online launch in collaboration with the youtube channel Degrowth Talks, where authors and editors engaged with critiques of the book and with the questions of our international readership. *Degrowth & Strategy* also received chapter-specific coverage with a series of podcasts

organised in collaboration with different podcast hosts and authors.

During the autumn, the dissemination working group organised a reading circle composed of six seminars, each led by a different editor or author. Chapters were grouped and brought in dialogue for this occasion. We were grateful to receive additional funds from Erasmus + to contribute to material our costs. The series saw a good turnout and a consistent engagement, especially from students of the SEEP master at WU.

We also received a number of unsolicited invitations to panel discussions, interviews and workshops. A few devoted team members took on these offers and brought a strategic perspective to various places in Austria and Europe: at the University of Amsterdam, the Sustainable Design Centre Berlin, Oikos Wien, Attac Salzburg and even in interviews with ORF and Ö1 Radio.

Besides still organising some book orders and dispatches, Degrowth Vienna is busy collecting academic and activist reviews of *Degrowth & Strategy* and keeping the book's website up-to-date.



### 02 Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt Wien

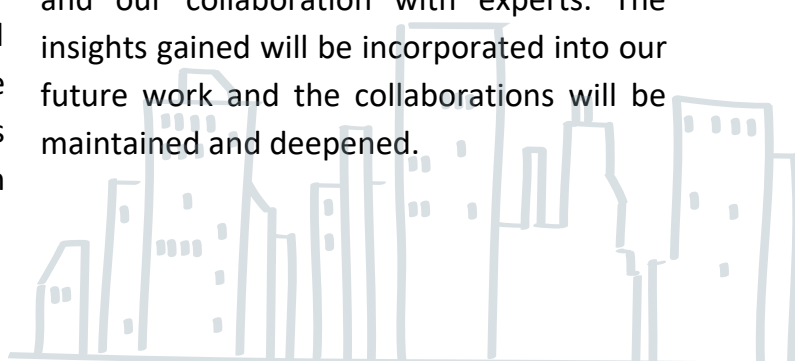
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With the working group “Solidarische Postwachstumsstadt Wien” (“Solidary Postgrowth City Vienna”), we looked at Vienna's urban development policy from a degrowth perspective and approached the concept of a solidary postgrowth city. This concept allows placing degrowth issues on a city level and in relation to different sectors (housing, mobility, public space, urban policy, etc.) and thus participating concretely in socio-political debates. In particular, we dealt with the topics of care, neighbourhoods, social metabolism of Vienna, and the Viennese climate strategies.

After an introductory workshop with Anton Brokow-Loga in winter 2021, we developed three thematic workshops which took place in spring 2022. The following three topics were addressed: care in the post-growth city, together with Mehr für Care and

Care Revolution; neighbourhood in the post-growth city, together with Kollektiv Raumstation, Lobau bleibt! and Hirschstetten retten; and the social metabolism of Vienna, with Nina Eisenmenger from BOKU. Furthermore, an article was published in the German urban planning magazine Común in early 2022, and following a request, a workshop was organized at the SOL Symposium 2022 “Growth in Change” on the topics of neighborhood and care work.

The project will conclude in spring 2023 with the summary publication of a set of new narratives building on the workshops and our collaboration with experts. The insights gained will be incorporated into our future work and the collaborations will be maintained and deepened.



### 03 TRANSREAL

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TRANSREAL is a collaborative research project, whose acronym stands for “transformative realism for effective climate action”. TRANSREAL explores ways to combine radical with pragmatic measures in order to enable effective climate actions. As unsustainable land use in the built environment and forced mobility patterns are perceived as key drivers of climate change and

biodiversity loss, TRANSREAL focuses on transformative climate actions in the field of settlement structures.

To better counter developments such as urban sprawl, exhaustive soil sealing, unaffordable housing, vacancies in town centres, car dependencies and greenhouse gas emissions related to settlement





## 2.1 Projects: TRANSREAL

structures, the project has three core aims: (1) to explore innovative ways to combine radical with pragmatic actions to achieve climate-friendly and climate-resilient practices and policies; (2) to define transformative climate actions in the field of settlement structures; and (3) to co-design transformative climate actions in and with two Austrian rural micro-regions – St. Johann in Tyrol and Pöllau (Hartberg) in Styria. The project is based on a common understanding that reduction of land use and unsustainable transport patterns are necessary conditions for climate-friendly settlement structures.



*“Der Traum vom Haus im Grünen” - The dream of a single-family house in nature - great for some, unreachable for many, unsustainable for us all (picture taken in St. Johann).*



*Workshop in November in St. Johann.*

The project started in early 2022 and will last throughout 2023 thanks to funding from the Austrian Climate Research Program. Its attempt to combine radicality with pragmatic actions is reflected in the consortium which resembles three different institutional logics: research, with the WU Institute of Multilevel Governance and Development (lead organisation); policy with the Environment Agency Austria (Umweltbundesamt); and activism and civil society with Degrowth Vienna.

Both its organizational structure and its radical critique of the dominant political-economic system enable Degrowth Vienna to contribute to the project's overarching aim of developing transformative climate actions. This task is relevant both within the project consortium and in the regions where Degrowth Vienna is responsible for connecting with young people.

Three members of Degrowth Vienna have been working on the project. In collaboration with the other team members, they designed and planned the participatory research processes and organised two series of workshops: the first one focussed on participatory problem scoping in order to define the thematic research focus and to ensure its regional relevance; the second one brought together decision makers and young people in St. Johann and Pöllau to develop common visions towards climate-friendly settlement structures. Currently, Degrowth Vienna is conducting a systematic literature review on settlement structures for climate-friendly living.

A discussion paper on Transformative Climate Actions (TCAs) was also published in May in *Social-ecological Research in Economics* as part of the project. The paper presents six characteristics for transformative climate actions, which the further process of developing such actions will be based on.

### Transformative Climate Actions aspire to ...

- 1 broaden climate targets to social-ecological goals
- 2 shape framework conditions for climate-friendly living to transform forms of life
- 3 link pragmatic and radical actions
- 4 ensure basic provisioning and limit overconsumption
- 5 prioritise avoiding harm
- 6 operate on multiple levels.





## 2.2 Events

### 01 Summerschool at Klimacamp

From the 22nd to the 29th of May 2022, the Viennese Klimacamp took place at the Lobau Bleibt protest camp in Hirschstetten. At the Klimacamp, activist groups and individuals come together to learn, network and live out an alternative society. Degrowth Vienna was present with a four-day summer school on the basic concepts of degrowth and a workshop on including degrowth when communicating on climate justice. Erasmus+ funding enabled the attendance of young participants from all over Europe, including Portugal, Estonia, Poland and Belgium.

The participants had backgrounds as diverse as biology, dance, political science and animal rights. All of them brought a strong personal connection to the values of degrowth, and a longing for a slower, more caring, interhumanly connected and decommodified life. Therefore, besides the introductory inputs, the summer school contained exercises and games that helped participants gain an understanding of the entrenchment of the growth paradigm in their lives and presented them alternatives already existing.



The summer school consisted of various inputs, exercises and games, intended to familiarise participants with the core ideas that guide degrowth. Many participants had already read into the topic a little bit, and were interested to learn how they could put it into practice in their own lives.

At the end of the summer school, participants were encouraged to draw a vision of the lives they desired, as a way to reflect contents of the preceding four days. They were also stimulated to remain in contact and create a shared database of literature and media that could help them learn beyond the summer school.



### 02 Seminar Weekend

For our annual seminar weekend we again left Vienna and headed to the beautiful Mühle Nickitsch in Burgenland, Austria. From October 7th to 9th we spent time together, reflected on our year, discussed plans and strategies, sat around the camp fire and had many conversations. On Friday we settled in and did team building activities. In the evening we got an exciting book presentation by Alexander Behr and his newly published book *Global Solidarity*, followed by a discussion on its content. An external moderator guided us throughout Saturday, which was all about "Where are we now?" and "Where do we want to go?".



In order to concentrate our capacities again, we decided to wrap up the projects on Degrowth & Strategy and Postwachstumsstadt at the turn of the year and to work together on a new focus topic in 2023: Daseinsvorsorge/Krise (Services of General Interest/Crisis). For this purpose, more concrete ideas were collected, such as developing policy proposals, organizing workshops and co-organizing events, or working with local communities in Vienna on this topic.

We used Sunday to clarify open points and to set concrete next steps for our future planning. All in all, the seminar weekend was again a good opportunity to get to know each other better as a team and to take enough time for our strategic planning.



## 2.3 Partnerships

### 01 Kulturzentrum 4lthangrund

Since June 2022, the former cafeteria of the Old University of Economics has been repurposed as a space for the Kulturzentrum 4lthangrund, a location for more than twenty groups and associations to meet and organise. Being an active part of the development of this space is a great occasion for Degrowth Vienna to learn and connect. It is inspiring to see how many groups use the space together with us: from the ones concretely working on food distribution and provisioning, like the Food Coop and the Solidarity Kitchen, to those with an environmental focus, like System Change Not Climate Change, from those active on migration issues and migrants' rights, like FlüWi and SeeBrücke, to those concerned with workers' rights like Riders Collective.

And the list goes on, expanding the possibilities for collaborations and interactions.

The Kulturzentrum is run through a bottom-up and egalitarian approach. The collective 4lthangrund plays a very important coordination role, but main decisions are taken during plenary assemblies. Moreover, many events have been collectively organised at the Kulturzentrum in the past few months, like the Opening Party in June and the Herbsfest in November. The space also needs maintenance and renovation, which are carried out with the help of all the groups involved.





As Degrowth Vienna, we have been using the space to co-work and host our gatherings, like plenaries, working group meetings, and strategy assemblies. Moreover, the Kulturzentrum served as a great location to organize our public events, like the *Degrowth & Startegy* book lunch in June and the related reading circle that took place between October and December. Having the possibility to rely on the facilities of the Kulturzentrum, while at the same time sharing the space with many other collectives and groups with similar or related political focuses, has become a great resource for our association and a great way to embed our activity and spread our political vision in the Viennese and the

neighbourhood contexts.

Yet, it has not only been a one-way interaction. Using this space has allowed us to learn from other groups and expand our point of view on social and political struggles and concerns. Finally, it allowed to test our theoretical background in practice, following the thread of concrete activities related to the realisation and the maintenance of this collective and inclusive space. In this context, we see our participation to the management, and our use of the space as an important initiative to link our theoretical political background with concrete practices and communities that foster and embody change.

## 02 Akademie für sozialen und ökologischen Umbau

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In April 2023, the Akademie für sozialen und ökologischen Umbau (Academy for Social and Ecological Restructuring) will bring together representatives of trade unions, the Chamber of Labour, the environmental justice movement and academia. For three days, they will learn from each other and discuss what a socially just and ecologically sustainable restructuring of the economy can look like. Together with the Chamber of Labour, trade unions, scientists and representatives of the climate justice movement, Degrowth Vienna is involved in the steering and organisation of the Akademie.

The Akademie offers a framework for more systematically linking social and ecological issues and for developing cooperations and strategies. The focus is on mutual learning, strategy and coalition skills. Through the Akademie, participants are to broaden the knowledge necessary for social and ecological transformation in their contexts, and to become multipliers.

Further information can be found [on the website](#).



AKADEMIE FÜR  
SOZIALEN & ÖKOLOGISCHEN UMBAU

### 03 Es Reicht!

In September 2022 we became part of the newly founded platform Es Reicht! ("It's enough!"). The platform was founded in the face of the worsening cost of living crisis, as we saw a tremendous spike in inflation and especially energy prices. It became clear that many people would suffer and that there was a huge need for broad mobilisation and organising. Expecting also many protests from different political actors on the streets we were convinced that it needed a new independent platform of progressive groups, organisations and actors to articulate transformative political demands. Es Reicht! consists of more than more than 20 activist groups, civil society organisations and two leftist parties (extra-parliamentary) that agreed on seven basic demand with a common understanding: our basic needs must be secure, heating or showering must not be a luxury, a warm apartment, a full refrigerator, affordable care and a secure income are our right.

With the launch of the campaign came a petition whose demands below are very much in line with our degrowth principles. One main aim was to push for transformative reforms in social as well as ecological terms.

We started our activities with a medium-size demonstration on the first of October in the center of Vienna. Afterwards the platform organized two street festivals in the 20th and 2nd district of Vienna, before which the organising group of Es Reicht! had many doorstep conversations in the areas. At the street festival, Es Reicht! provided a space to exchange about issues and political demands. People heavily affected by the cost of living crisis we invited to get active on, and receive immediate support from, the platform.

The platform has now started a new round of doorstep conversations to organise people around the topic of the energy crisis. They were invited to a first so called "Energiestammtisch" to discuss ways out of the energy crisis that include demands for basic energy guarantees, a reduction in overall energy consumption and the end of overconsumption, the possible collectivisation of energy corporations, and a just transition towards a fair and ecological energy system without fossil fuels. More will follow.



*Guarantee basic energy needs!*

*Good food must be affordable!*

*Ensure affordable housing!*

*Increase wages, pensions and social benefits!*

*Realise free public transportation!*

*Secure care, education and supply!*

*The corporations must pay!*





### 3. Social Media

The Social Media working group is responsible for creating content for the association's social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon 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 groups.

During the year 2022 a Mastodon account was set up, our Facebook account gained 124 new likes, our Instagram account gained 433 new followers, and our Twitter account gained 799 followers. Facebook reach increased by 119.4% and Instagram

reach increased by 88.3%. Additionally, the working group played a central role in promoting the Degrowth & Strategy book by posting information on the launch, reviews and related events.

This social media rise was in part achieved by posting content more often and more regularly than in the previous year. But it is also due to the simple fact that degrowth is growing in popularity.

Key long-term members of the Social Media working group moved on from the group, but we have re-established a steady team in 2023 and continue raising awareness about degrowth and Degrowth Vienna.

### 4. Finances

All Degrowth Vienna members are infinitely grateful for the funding that MA7, the Austrian Climate Research Program, Erasmus+, supporting members, and book donations provided us. This allowed Degrowth Vienna to give a small remuneration to three members and a more

significant one to a main coordinator. This team of paid coordinators were able to undertake most of the association's reproductive work, allowing Degrowth Vienna to safely pursue its productive work on degrowth and social-ecological transformation.



### Einnahmen-Ausgabenrechnung 2022

1.1.2022-31.12.2022

Überschuss aus 2021	30.207,34 €
<b>Einnahmen</b>	<b>21.947,27 €</b>
<b>Mitgliedsbeiträge und Spenden</b>	<b>5.137,27 €</b>
Aktive Mitglieder	368,00 €
Unterstützende Mitglieder	450,00 €
Spenden	4.319,27 €
<b>Förderungen</b>	<b>16.100,00 €</b>
Stadt Wien Kultur	14.000,00 €
Lush Foundation	2.100,00 €
<b>Einkünfte aus wirtschaftlicher Tätigkeit</b>	<b>710,00 €</b>
Honorare	710,00 €
<b>Ausgaben</b>	<b>46.352,55 €</b>
<b>Personalkosten</b>	<b>39.783,74 €</b>
Personalkosten	32.970,49 €
Honorare	3.200,00 €
Aufwandsentschädigungen	3.613,25 €
<b>Sonstige Kosten</b>	<b>6.568,81 €</b>
IT Infrastruktur	367,53 €
Kontoführungen	102,98 €
Gebühren Vereinsführung	22,10 €
Verpflegung	229,17 €
Reisekosten	932,80 €
Sachkosten für	
Vereinstätigkeiten	3.426,63 €
Raumnutzungsgebühr	920,00 €
Lohnverrechnung	567,60 €
<b>Überschuss 2022</b>	<b>5.802,06 €</b>



## 5. Outlook

Degrowth Vienna is now moving on to a new, common focus. In 2023 we are looking at the various interlinked social crises that Europe is facing - rising cost of living, energy prices etc. We strive to bring a systemic perspective in the Viennese debate. We will be active on three fronts: (1) we will design social-ecological

proposals to come out of this crisis, (2) we will be present at events where we will make our voice heard and engage in co-creation with partners, and (3) we will work at a very local scale to start a conversation with those most affected by the crisis.

We will also remain active in the TRANSREAL project which will continue until the end of 2023.

## 6. Meet our Team



Suanna Scheck



Dario Feliciangeli



Lisette von Maltzahn



## 6. Meet our team

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Livia Regen



Peter Nitsche-Whitfield



Maie Klingenberg



Saskia Brikkenaar van Dijk



Noémie Cadiou



Hannah Lucia Müller



Sophia Kratz



Pedram Dersch



Tina Leonhard



## 6. Meet our team

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Nathan Barlow



Max Hollweg



Christian Hüttman



Ruth Falkenberg



Christopher Wong



Mario Díaz Muñoz



Halliki Kreinin



## Become a supporting member!

Degrowth Vienna depends on private donations and project grants. We are mainly volunteer-based; however we have some remunerated coordinators and ongoing expenses for rent, material costs and IT. Your yearly financial support can decrease the uncertainty of irregular funding and thus enhance our work on a socially and ecologically just society.

[degrowthvienna.org](https://degrowthvienna.org)

DEGROWTH  
VIENNA



Stadt  
Wien

Kultur