

PRESS RELEASE

NEW KASSEL SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTS STUDENTS IN DIFFICULT LIFE SITUATIONS

- Student support groups in Hamburg and now Kassel offer unique scholarship programmes
- Wintershall Dea Foundation for Democracy and Diversity provides initial funding
- Programme will foster exchange, learning and networking

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Kassel. For the upcoming winter semester 2023/2024, the Studierendenwerk Kassel (student support) is introducing its own scholarship programme for students whose academic performance is outstanding despite the special challenges they face.

In the first funding period, support will go to five students at the University of Kassel with a refugee or migration background. The scholarship of 200 euros a month should ease their financial burden to allow them to concentrate more on their studies. At the same time, the Kassel Scholarship will bring them into contact with the regional economy, and allow them to network and make use of additional educational opportunities. The Kassel Scholarship runs for a year, but scholarship holders can also reapply for it.

The fact that the new Kassel Scholarship could be launched quickly and easily is thanks primarily to the Wintershall Dea Foundation for Democracy and Diversity. With a funding commitment of 36,000 euros, it is securing the



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three-year start phase and supporting the Studierendenwerk Kassel in implementing the programme.

The role model for the Kassel Scholarship is the **Hamburg Scholarship** of the Studierendenwerk there. It means that both universities in Kassel and Hamburg are now the only universities in Germany to offer a special scholarship programme for students with a refugee or migration background. In Hamburg, Wintershall Dea is one of the participating companies and was therefore able to establish contact of both Studierendenwerke.

Wintershall Dea Foundation welcomes new programme

Michael Sasse, member of the Wintershall Dea Foundation board, is convinced that supporting students with a refugee or migration background to allow them equal opportunities is not only a socio-political requirement but also of great value for local companies.

“The scholarship holders have already demonstrated through their special journey in life that they can deal with difficult situations and be focussed on working towards their goal. They are motivated, have intercultural skills and are multilingual – all skills that are extremely important for the German economy in times of a skilled worker shortage,” says Sasse. Both sides, the economy and students in Hamburg, and now also in Kassel, could only



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benefit from getting acquainted and working together within the framework of the scholarship programme.

Studierendenwerk Kassel wants to extend the programme

“We are delighted to have the Wintershall Dea Foundation for Democracy and Diversity by our side,” says Julia Thonfeld, Deputy Managing Director of the Studierendenwerk Kassel. “At the same time, we do of course also hope that we can expand the programme in the future through the help of other companies in the region.”

In 2022, Wintershall Dea’s company foundation was already involved in a joint aid programme set up by the General Student Council (AStA) and the Studierendenwerk Kassel. The programme supported students from third countries who had fled from Ukraine to North Hesse after the Russian attack on Ukraine began, and who are now continuing their studies here. “Now, as then, the Kassel Scholarship is about supporting brilliant minds who have ended up in extremely difficult life situations through no fault of their own,” says Julia Thonfeld. “With the scholarship we can make it easier for them to achieve their academic goals.”

More information on the Kassel Scholarship can be found here: www.studierendenwerk-kassel.de/geld/kassel-stipendium

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Photo:

The first collaboration between the Wintershall Dea Foundation for Democracy and Diversity and the Studierendenwerk Kassel: these students from third countries, who had to flee from Ukraine to escape the Russian war of aggression, were able, also thanks to the partners' support, to continue their studies at the University of Kassel. In September 2022 they met with representatives of the AStA (Student Council), the Studierendenwerk Kassel and the Wintershall Dea Foundation.

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