

# Success factors

of the association for animal welfare education

## “Tierschutz macht Schule“

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## 1 Preface

In 2016 the association “Tierschutz macht Schule“ celebrated its 10th anniversary and is an indispensable part of the Austrian animal welfare landscape. Its wide range of teaching material and training programmes are unique in Europe.

This paper examines the success factors of “Tierschutz macht Schule“, which significantly support the founding and further development of this initiative – and maybe even enabled it in the first place. Furthermore, it shows the importance of Section 2 of the Animal Protection Act and highlights the broad political consensus of all four national parties when creating the Animal Protection Act.

This paper should be an inspiration for similar initiatives on an international level as well as for the European legislation – particularly as the success factors, learnings and tips, which can be derived from the experience in developing “Tierschutz macht Schule“, can certainly have helpful suggestions for other initiatives.

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Thomas “Tom“ **Kletschka**, office manager, working full-time for the association since 2008

Mag.<sup>a</sup> Daniela “Dany“ **Lipka**, head of Education and Innovations, working full-time for the association since 2007; former consultant and author for environmental education at WWF Austria and for the Environmental Education Forum

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Prof. Dr. Helmut **Pechlaner**, President of the Association from 2006–2009, director and manager of Schönbrunn Zoo from 1992 - 2006

MinR. Dr. Günther **Pfaffenwimmer**, advisory board member, head of the department for environmental education at the Federal Ministry of Education

Dr.<sup>in</sup> Cornelia “Conny“ **Rouha-Mülleder**, advisory board chairwoman, official veterinarian at the Upper Austria state government office, former animal welfare ombudsman in Upper Austria, former research associate at the Institute for Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

Mag.<sup>a</sup> Marie-Helene “Marli“ **Scheib**, association manager from 2006–2015, former zoo educator at Schönbrunn Zoo, nature educator, landscape and nature guide, author of publications on imparting knowledge about animal welfare and nature conservation

Dr. Erik **Schmid**, advisory board member, expert veterinarian for animal husbandry and animal welfare, former federal state veterinarian and former animal welfare ombudsman in Vorarlberg, initiator of the project “Tierschutz im Unterricht“ by the Federal Chamber of Veterinarians

Prof.<sup>in</sup> Dr.<sup>in</sup> Dagmar **Schratter**, president, director and manager of Schönbrunn Zoo

## 2 Introduction of “Tierschutz macht Schule“

### 2.1 Mission statement

“The association for animal welfare education ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’, aims to improve the living conditions of pets, farm animals, laboratory animals and wild animals within our society.

Animals, our fellow creatures, should be kept and treated according to the needs of their specific species. The association acts on a tolerant and respectful basis towards animals and human beings.

Critically evaluating all aspects of animal welfare, avoiding radical attitudes as well as seeking to educate ourselves are fundamental aspects of our work.

Therefore ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’ is a platform for people, institutions and organisations that represents a balanced and reputable education of animal welfare, that relies on scientific findings. ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’ is also an important mediator in sharing knowledge of research findings with the general public.”<sup>1</sup>

*“Animal cruelty begins with disregarding the natural needs of animals. This disregard is based on many animal owners’ lack of knowledge about the animals’ natural needs. I see it as our role to guide young people to have a human-animal bond based on respect and personal responsibility towards the animal.”*

*Prof. Dr. Helmut Pechlaner  
(founding president)*

### 2.2 Legal conditions

The national Animal Protection Act came into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 and according to Section 2 obligates “The federal, provincial and municipal authorities [...] to create and deepen the understanding of animal protection on the part of the public and in particular on the part of youth”<sup>2</sup>.

“With the implementation of this Animal Protection Act, Austria became a pioneer and role model within the European Union in the area of animal protection.”<sup>3</sup>

Section 2 is of particular importance to the association “Tierschutz macht Schule”, as this enables and requires the funding of the association through the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, as well as through provincial and municipal authorities. Without this legal basis, the formation and development of the association “Tierschutz macht Schule” wouldn’t have been possible in this form.

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<sup>1</sup> Tierschutz macht Schule (2017): Leitbild. <http://www.tierschutzmachtschule.at/verein/leitbild.html>, (November 11., 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Bundeskanzleramt: Rechtsinformationssystem (2017): Gesamte Rechtsvorschrift für Tierschutzgesetz. <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/20003541/TSchG%2c%20Fassung%20vom%2024.04.2017.pdf>, (April 25, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Ministerium für Frauen und Gesundheit (2017): Das österreichische Tierschutzgesetz. <http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/Gesundheit/Tiergesundheit/Tierschutz/Tierschutzgesetz/>, (April 25, 2017).

The development of this law was a result of many incidents – highlighting all of them would go beyond the scope of this paper – among other things the animal protection referendum in 1996 and the commitment of all four national parties to a federal regulation in 2003.<sup>4</sup>

*“The association ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’ makes a substantial contribution towards sustainable animal welfare, due to the early education of children in the responsible handling of animals.”*

*Prof.<sup>in</sup> Dr.<sup>in</sup> Dagmar Schratzer  
(president)*

### **2.3 Founding and structure of the association**

In response to Section 2 of the Animal Protection Act, the association “Tierschutz macht Schule” was founded on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 – with the intention of pursuing a scientifically backed education and create better living conditions for pets, farm animals, laboratory animals and wild animals within our society.<sup>5</sup>

Today the association “Tierschutz macht Schule” consists of sixteen full members and two associate members. Together with the board, the management team runs the daily business of the association. The scientific advisory board supports the education with its extensive network of subject matter experts.

### **2.4 Association activity**

“Tierschutz macht Schule” primarily develops educational material. Teachers can order these from the association’s webpage [www.tierschutzmachtschule.at](http://www.tierschutzmachtschule.at), free of charge for the whole class, when they cover the shipping costs. The focus of the professionally substantiated animal welfare education is on primary and lower secondary school pupils. In recent years an abundance of educational material has been developed for them.

*“Children, who deal with animals a lot, or grow up with them, become compassionate and socially competent adults.”*

*Maggie Entenfellner  
(vice president)*

At the same time, the association conducts workshops in schools and out-of-school care facilities, as well as providing further teacher training and other regional, national and international projects, together with various co-operation partners. Furthermore, the association publishes brochures for adults, which are so far dedicated to the topic “pet keeping”. Subsequently only the most important activities of the association are presented.

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<sup>4</sup> Ministerium für Frauen und Gesundheit (2017): Das österreichische Tierschutzgesetz.  
<http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/Gesundheit/Tiergesundheit/Tierschutz/Tierschutzgesetz/>, (April 25, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Ministerium für Frauen und Gesundheit (2017): „Tierschutz macht Schule“.  
[http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/Gesundheit/Tiergesundheit/Tierschutz/\\_Tierschutz\\_macht\\_Schule\\_](http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/Gesundheit/Tiergesundheit/Tierschutz/_Tierschutz_macht_Schule_), (April 25, 2017).

### 2.4.1 Material for children and young people

Since the founding of the association, teaching material for children and young people was developed for a wide range of topics. Most of it consists of a student's workbook and an accompanying teacher's guide.

The following statement is from a teacher and was recorded as part of an evaluation of the material, on behalf of "Tierschutz macht Schule"<sup>6</sup>

*"With the workbooks from 'Tierschutz macht Schule' you can feed two birds with one seed: You make the children happy, have something great for the lessons and at the same time contribute to animal welfare, because greater knowledge or better information is simply good."*

The two most important series are briefly presented below. Beyond that, a large number of complementary crafts and game material, support for presentations and special issues were created. Some are available online.

#### "WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP" workbook series

The "WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP" workbook series was conceptualised for kindergarten and primary school, whereby some of the workbooks are better suited for kindergarten and others were adapted for the different levels of the four years of primary school.

"WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP" is the star of the series who guides the children through the workbooks. He is a mixture of WELLEnsittich (budgie), KANinchen (rabbit), HUNd (dog), KATze (cat), MEERschweinchen (guinea pig) and a fish, that goes "PLOP". In this teaching material this funny mascot explains the desires of different animals, so children are educated about the animals' needs



in a playful and entertaining way.

<sup>6</sup> Vonach, Markus (2016): Evaluation der „WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP“-Unterrichtshefte.

### Exemplary front pages of the “WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP“ workbook series

So far, workbooks about “dogs”, “cats”, “chickens”, “crawly animals” and “rabbits” were published in this series. There is a complementary introduction workbook and an issue for language lessons, so children can broaden their German skills and playfully discover what the term “animal welfare” means.

The following statements are by teachers from different (educational) institutions and were recorded as part of an evaluation of the material, on behalf of “Tierschutz macht Schule”<sup>7</sup>

*“The graphics are appealing, the pictures are colourful and attractive – and the ending is also very imaginative. I think it’s great!”*

*“The workbooks are a good support for having a common theme throughout the animal welfare subject and it is something special that you can order the material: that is very very cool. I like the fact that there are more and more special issues and also the issue with the dogs. I will definitely use it more often and introduce it to my lessons.”*

*“The children really like them. Whenever there is something to colour, when there is a crossword to do, when something is done in a playful way: That’s what they love.”*

### “Tierprofi“ workbook series

In general, the “Tierprofi” workbook series is conceptualised for the lower secondary school, but they can also be used in the upper primary school levels and also in upper secondary schools. The “Tierprofi” workbook about “laboratory animals” was explicitly conceptualised for upper secondary schools. So far there are workbooks about “farm animals”, “pets”, “wild animals”, “laboratory animals”, “horses” and “tolerance”.

Different mascots, that derive from the logo of “Tierschutz macht Schule”, guide through the workbooks. They convey the notion of animal welfare to children and young people, by explaining the needs of animals and their living conditions as pets, farm animals, laboratory animals and wild animals.

Due to the child-oriented preparation of the topics as well as exciting riddles and attractive posters, the workbooks are suitable for lessons as well as for independent activities. They enable children,



<sup>7</sup> Vonach, Markus (2016): Evaluation der „WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP“-Unterrichtshefte.



even without prior knowledge, to have an easy starting point into the subject of animal welfare.

#### *Exemplary front pages of the “Tierprofi“ workbook series*

The following statements are from teachers and were recorded as part of an evaluation of the material, on behalf of “Tierschutz macht Schule”<sup>8</sup>

*“The workbooks went down well with the children – and I was grateful that I had them.”*

*“I thought they were well devised: for 10 to 14-year olds they are very suitable. You can really work well with them. It was a very welcome change [...] Important are suggestions, that invite children to do something, no matter what: research something, try something, using microscopes. The execution of practical things is always important. [...] these approaches are in great demand.”*

*“I have ordered a couple of times. I think it is really good – a great thing!”*

#### **2.4.2 Brochures for adults**

Since the founding of the association, scientifically based educational material was developed for adults, among other things about the popular pets, dogs and cats. They contain a lot of information for a responsible (future) pet owner or give tips on contact with grazing livestock (cows, sheep, goats and horses). These brochures for adults can be obtained for free by everyone who is interested, on



[www.tierschutzmachtschule.at](http://www.tierschutzmachtschule.at).

*Exemplary front page and inside pages of a brochure for adults*

#### **2.4.3 Conducting “Pet Buddy“**

In a “Pet Buddy” workshop, at out-of-school learning locations, school classes can learn the responsible handling of animals and become a “buddy to animals”. The underlying goal is to educate children to handle pets in a safe way and offer them an understanding of the needs and behaviour of

<sup>8</sup> Vonach, Markus (2016): Evaluation der „Tierprofi“-Unterrichtshefte.

animals, so that they can recognise them when handling animals and learn to react accordingly. The following statement also derives from the evaluation, on behalf of “Tierschutz macht Schule”.<sup>9</sup>

*“They [the children] talk especially about dogs, cats and rabbits.  
When they experience these animals ‘live’, it’s a huge thing.”*

#### **2.4.4 Expert-led animal welfare classes**

Educational institutions have the possibility to book experts for profound, appealing and age-appropriate lessons through “Tierschutz macht Schule”. These lessons are held by specially trained animal welfare experts. These sessions can also be combined with excursions and out-of-school workshops.

#### **2.4.5 Workshops for adults**

In co-operation with different teacher training colleges, the association offers further education for teachers on the subject of “Animal Welfare”. In these classes, they can further educate themselves professionally and didactically on this subject.

The training course “Tierschutz macht Schule” is a particular offer that provides detailed information about pets, farm animals, laboratory animals and wild animals. Furthermore, the foundations of animal welfare education and didactics are taught. During the course the ethical backgrounds of animal welfare and possible applications of the educational material is examined. The graduates of this training course are important propagators in their institutions and to some extent in other educational institutions, working on behalf of the association.

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<sup>9</sup> Vonach, Markus (2016): Evaluation der „WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP“-Unterrichtshefte.

### **3 Success factors**

The founding and development of “Tierschutz macht Schule” traces back to numerous people, who are very dedicated to conveying technically sound knowledge to the general public. Beyond that, there are some factors, that have benefited the success story. The order in which the following are covered, doesn’t portray a prioritisation.

#### **3.1 Concept of the association**

##### **Mission statement**

One of the most important cornerstones for the success of “Tierschutz macht Schule” is the concept of the association, which is enshrined in the mission statement. At its heart it conveys scientifically profound and current animal welfare knowledge and avoids radical viewpoints – notwithstanding difficult topics. Treating animals and humans respectfully plays another important role and should encourage an objective debate about this topic.

##### **Collaborative co-operations of experts**

Another significant factor is the integration of experts of science and pedagogy, as well as of media and politics. The work at “Tierschutz macht Schule” is relatively strictly collaborative for the different experts. An interdisciplinary project is therefore carried out with focused dedication of different people within their individual inherent field.

Correspondingly, the interdisciplinary collaboration also entails broad possibilities to network, as it is tremendously easier for a renowned expert to find someone within one’s field, to co-operate with. The selection process of external subject matter experts follows the highest quality standards.

*“One has to make sure one establishes collaborative co-operations in the field of animal welfare. It is impossible to cover everything by oneself! This topic especially is a prototype for interdisciplinary work.”*

*Dr. Erik Schmid  
(advisory board member)*

##### **Knowledge of the workings of the political system**

The knowledge of the workings of the political system is significant for an association like “Tierschutz macht Schule”, that is decisively dependent on funding. This knowledge is an important basis for building and maintaining the support system in the political field – from the respective federal minister, to the officials in charge at federal state level.

##### **Knowledge of the workings of the education system**

The association reaches the general public mainly through the education system and through propagators in the field of adult education – the knowledge of the workings of the education system is accordingly pivotal.

The aspiration, to maintain good communication with schools, attain many teachers and win them (repeatedly) over with the material, is no small one:

Due to the complexity of the school system and the wide range of services offered to schools and teachers, it is difficult to find a good way in. Furthermore, the education system is subject to constant changes.

*“One characteristic feature of the school system is, that the clientele renews itself cyclically: no later than every four years, each topic has to be repeated. This means, every year, there is a new second form in primary school, which has the right to get this information: The school’s job is to convey this to every generation.*

*And this is something an assigning ministry should also see: this is a client base, that has to be delighted year on year, cyclically. An advantage, as well as disadvantage, with this situation is, that when something is rhythmized and ‘clocked in’, they expect it to come: the school system gets used to a constant flow of information, (which can be a good thing), which teachers are then happy to use in their lessons – but as soon as it stops, it is over: this means, one has established a certain foundation, which needs to be maintained.*

*This you can expand and augment with new developments and also adapt slightly, but essentially it is a very smooth development. The school system is no speedboat: it is a cyclical, big system.”*

*MinR. Dr. Günther Pfaffenwimmer  
(advisory board member)*

### **Knowledge of the workings of the media**

Another success factor is the knowledge of the workings of the media, which enables a successful co-operation with them in the first place. The link to the media is ensured by the collaborative co-operation of experts, which is a fundamental concept of the association, and enables its effective presentation to the public.

### **Knowledge of the workings of scientific operations**

To involve external animal welfare experts, knowledge of the workings of scientific operations is very important. This includes understanding scientific principals as well as their culture and language, which are maintained within the sciences. Here, the advisory board plays an intricate role: it functions as a link to the sciences, by making its networks available and incorporating animal welfare experts into the creation of material. It also offers insight into the landscape and supports the management with tips.

### **Knowledge of the animal welfare landscape**

All of the association’s founding members have in common, that they – although to a different extent – have gathered previous experiences within the animal welfare landscape and occasionally also in

animal welfare education. Accordingly, the conception of “Tierschutz macht Schule” was built upon these experiences, but also with the knowledge of the current animal welfare landscape, its strategy and experiences.

### **Continuity of orientation and participants**

An explicit mission statement and the resulting association’s continuity of orientation promotes the commitment of all participants towards a communal action and an accordingly stable social structure within the association and the connected external experts. Because of this stability, not only the organisational effort is within limits, but also the quality can be increased every year, as the gained experiences can constantly be incorporated into further development.

## **3.2 Legal and financial framework**

### **Section 2 of the Animal Protection Act**

Section 2 of the national Animal Protection Act, which came into force on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, constitutes a substantial basis for the founding of the association: It is important to stress, that “Tierschutz macht Schule” was founded in view of funding from the federal government.

*“We have the advantage of Section 2 [of the national Animal Protection Act], which legally obliges federal, provincial and municipal authorities to do something”. This is why public bodies support the association ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’.”*

*Dr.<sup>in</sup> Cornelia Rouha-Mülleder  
(advisory board chairwoman)*

### **Federal funding**

The funding by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, on the basis of Section 2 of the Animal Protection Act, is the financial basis of “Tierschutz macht Schule”. The co-operation between the funding ministry and the association in the course of the yearly handling of funding, always depends on the goodwill of the political leaders. The respective minister responsible thereby plays a significant role.

*“It is well-functioning and to be honest: the contribution, that the republic gives to the association, and the output, is unique: relating to the diversity and especially the material produced and how it is delivered. I have seen many projects, that had more money invested in them, but they stay on the shelf! It is really impressive – what is being done here.”*

*Dr. Ulrich Herzog  
(association member)*

## **Provincial funding**

Additional to the funding by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, “Tierschutz macht Schule” receives funding from all nine provinces. This funding is also based on Section 2 of the national Animal Protection Act.

Within this co-operation with different provinces, special regional projects arise, like the Vienna “Tierprofi” workbook about “pets”, which was handed out to all third-year primary school pupils in Vienna. Special editions like these take provincial-specific particularities into account and refer to regionally relevant institutions.

## **Funding from sponsors and donors**

The associations work is also supported by sponsors and donations. These funds only form a small part of the financing, especially because financing animal welfare education through third-party-funds turned out to be more difficult than was expected. Secondly, the co-operation with sponsors in the field of educational material always raises ethical questions, as children are the target group of their purchase recommendations. Thirdly, this co-operation endangers the content-related objectivity, which, taking the long-term impacts into account, strongly questions the purpose of these funds. Therefore, the ministry’s core financing and the additional provincial funding are all the more important.

*“The question arose, how the association can finance itself. We learned a lot: the association is de facto not financeable through donations and the like. This was also a learning curve, where it was thought in the beginning: ‘There might be more in it!’ – But there isn’t. Because of the theme-setting, the preconditions are simply not met.”*

*Dr. Ulrich Herzog  
(association member)*

## **Full-time team**

A substantial factor for the success was the decision to employ the executive team full-time, even though the management board, advisory board and external experts only participate voluntarily. This had a far-reaching effect on the development of the organisational structure and the capacities of significantly involved people.

## **Voluntary efforts of the management board, advisory board and external experts**

Complementing the full-time engagement of the team is the voluntary efforts of the management board, the advisory board and the many external experts. Without it, the tasks of “Tierschutz macht Schule” could not be carried out within the limited funding. Financial framework that is made available through funding.

*“This only works, because many of the pedagogical jobs are done voluntarily and because the ‘Know-how’, which is provided for the development of these documents, is brought in free of charge by experts. If this vast number of hours, that so many different experts bring in, had to be paid, this would not be financeable. We are very grateful to those who contribute, are a really dedicated team in the background and are prepared to share their ‘Know-how’.”*

*Dr. Ulrich Herzog  
(association member)*

### **Free (printed) material**

The fact that the workbooks of the series “WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP” and “Tierprofi” can be obtained for the whole class for free (when paying shipping costs), contributes greatly to its popularity and wide use in all sorts of educational institutions. The possibility to offer free (printed) material depends greatly on the association’s funding, which makes it possible to cover the necessary costs for graphics and print as well as for storing and arranging shipment.

### **Cost-effective office space and seminar rooms**

Another factor in minimising costs, is Schönbrunn Zoo providing the association with cost-effective office space and seminar rooms.

## **3.3 Current and profound animal welfare knowledge**

### **Internal subject matter experts**

As extensive scientific knowledge is indispensable, according to the mission statement, the internal subject matter experts of the advisory board play a significant role in several ways: First of all, they check the scientific accuracy of the material during its development, or they offer suggestions for topics of new workbooks. Secondly, these members build connections from personal networks with leading figures of the Austrian scientific community for the respective animals and topics in the workbooks.

### **Involvement of external subject matter experts**

The external subject matter experts represent an important resource for the association. They aren’t association members, but – often for many years – are a reliable source for profound information and suggestions of all kinds, which significantly contribute to a high quality of further training by “Tierschutz macht Schule”.

Furthermore, these experts play an important role in the development of new material – and periodically edit them – because they provide specialist information, which should be conveyed in the workbooks. To develop “Tierprofi” workbooks, that deal with complex topics or numerous different animals, almost a dozen animal welfare experts is necessary to be able to present all the addressed

content in a profound and current way. Furthermore, at least one pedagogical expert and all the members of the management board and the advisory board, are consulted in each case.

### **3.4 Pedagogical concept**

#### **Motto “Animal welfare is fun!”**

In order for the customised addressing of different target groups to be successful, it was essential to develop an individual style of conveying the subject matter, so that the material is not only informative but also attractive for the respective target group. In this context, triggering positive emotions plays an essential role. The seriousness of the topic should not get lost in entertaining presentations, instead the presentation style should rather support the delivery of the subject matters.

*“Knowledge can only be delivered with positive emotions. There is no point at all in only conveying expert-knowledge, instead it has to be passed on with a positive emotion. This style, that ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’ has developed, is unique. I, for one, don’t know anything else that conveys science in such a playful way, without losing the seriousness, which the topic also has.”*

*Mag.<sup>a</sup> Marie-Helene “Marli” Scheib  
(former association manager)*

The motto not only relates to the respective target groups who use the material or visit workshops, but also to the association’s attitude towards their own work.

#### **Age-appropriate teaching of content**

Especially with children in kindergartens and primary schools, it is a great challenge to teach animal welfare topics in a way that makes learning fun but without trivialising the issue. “Tierschutz macht Schule“ manages to do so with child-appropriate language, stories, riddles, games, songs and craft instructions – highly versatile material, that is self-explanatory and ready to use.

*“That was practically the top priority of ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’, to inform children, according to their age, where animal welfare is tangible in their daily life and where they, already as children, can contribute.”*

*Maggie Entenfellner  
(vice president)*

#### **Attractive and age-appropriate graphics**



Attractive and age-appropriate graphics and a successful selection of photos used, are important components of an attractive brochure. To enable kids – but also adults – to easily establish a connection to an animal, a direct approach through excellent animal photography is essential.

### **Successful introduction, topic selection and structure**

The first – and probably most important – task of animal welfare education is to establish a connection between the target group and the animals. Their needs can only be met if the understanding for the animal could be established. Because many adults and most children don't have daily access to farm animals, it is especially difficult in this area to gain access to their living environment and convey a basic understanding about their way of life - unlike with the more commonly present animals such as favourite pets.

In this context, target-group-oriented topic selection, short texts, a clear outline and a logical structure is didactically important: Therefore, the texts in the workbooks are created to be entertaining and informative and of different lengths, according to the topic and age groups.

*“No child would read the Animal Protection Act! By writing about it, we can build a bridge between science and children as well as adults, it is thereby easier to understand.”*

*Mag.<sup>a</sup> Daniela “Dany” Lipka  
(Head of Education and Innovations)*

### **Education, not indoctrination**

While conveying animal welfare relevant information through the association, it should lead to an education and not to an indoctrination. In doing so, the personal opinion of what an appropriate reaction to this knowledge should look like, shouldn't matter – and under no circumstances should a certain ideology be imparted. In this respect, especially in conveying animal welfare knowledge to children, a clear position and a commitment to scientifically profound education is important, as children are particularly easy to influence. Therefore, they have to be protected from condemning attitudes and drastic depictions, which overwhelm them.

At “Tierschutz macht Schule” ethological – needs-oriented – animal welfare education is completed with ethical considerations. Ethical aspects come up in a special workbook in the “Tierprofi” series.

### **Encouragement to take on responsibility**

The encouragement to take on responsibility complements the motto “Knowledge is animal welfare”, because applying this very knowledge is significant. Especially in the domain of primary schooling, animal welfare education by “Tierschutz macht Schule” focuses accordingly on areas which matter in the everyday life of kids in this age group and where they themselves – even if only in a limited scope – can take on responsibilities.

But also the brochures for adults are conveyed clearly: As a pet owner, but also as a consumer, when buying animal products, we are (co-)responsible for the animals' well-being.

*“We offer solutions and try to convey responsibility towards animals: whether I have a pet, meet a wild animal or buy an animal product. We are all about: ‘Knowledge is animal welfare’ and ‘You have responsibility!’.”*

*Lea Mirwald, MSc  
(association manager)*

### **Self-explanatory and ready to use material**

Teachers don't often have a lot of (lesson) time to deal with the topic of “animal welfare”. This is to be recognised and considered when practical material should be developed. Therefore, it is important for all material to be self-explanatory and ready to use – but also applicable in a number of ways.

In this respect, the teacher handbooks, which are available for all teaching material, are helpful and supportive. They enable teachers a quick start into the subject matter. At the same time, they clarify the stance behind the information to be conveyed.

*“Teachers are insanely grateful when they get such prefabricated teaching material for free. Everything is prepared in a way that one can work with it! This is actually the most important.”*

*Prof.<sup>in</sup> Dr.<sup>in</sup> Dagmar Schratte  
(president)*

### **For various age-groups**

The material and workshops from “Tierschutz macht Schule” are conceptualised for various age-groups – with the main emphasis on primary school and lower secondary school levels. This way, children are not only confronted once with the topic “animal welfare” during their school career but come across it over and over again.

*“It is about conveying the subject matter of animal welfare in a target-group-oriented way and adapted for kindergartens and schools: rather playful in kindergartens, focusing on pets in primary schools – and in upper secondary level, ethics are an important topic.”*

*Dr. Erik Schmid  
(advisory board member)*

### **For various (educational) institutions**

The “Tierschutz macht Schule“ material is primarily used in educational institutions. Because the concept of the documents aren’t only intended for use during lessons or as homework, but also allows for usage in a completely different setting, the places where they are used extend accordingly. As an example, the adult brochures are used in animal shelters, to shed light on animal-welfare-relevant aspects of pet keeping.

The work of “Tierschutz macht Schule“ goes way beyond the scope of producing educational material and further educating teachers: workshops for children, young people and adults in different settings – for example, on horse riding instructor courses, and also conferences, that are open to the public, complement the offerings and tap into new target groups.

### **Diverse application possibilities**

The application possibilities of the “Tierschutz macht Schule“ material are very diverse – even with a focus on using them in a school setting. This is because the wide topic of animal welfare and the issues linked to it, can be integrated into classes of many different subjects.

To some extent, classes work their way through the material to the last page, other teachers narrow it down to using the interactive parts in their lessons and let the pupils work with the other content by themselves, or they let them use it during substituted lessons.

## **3.5. Network**

### **Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection**

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection is an essential partner of the association “Tierschutz macht Schule“ because the funding is one of the most important bases for the association’s success.

### **Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research**

The benevolent support of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research is also very important. This is because the association mainly reaches the wider public through multipliers in the field of adult education.

*“Animal welfare is a part of the teaching principle ‘environmental education’. It is mentioned in the curriculums.”*

*MinR. Dr. Günther Pfaffenwimmer  
(advisory board member)*

## **Institute of Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare**

The Institute of Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare of the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna is a significant partner of “Tierschutz macht Schule”, in many ways.

Firstly, their long-standing director, Josef Troxler, was crucially involved in the development of the national Animal Protection Act – and Section 2, which is essential for the association. Secondly, the institute plays a central role in networking with external subject matter experts. Furthermore, it is on the one hand an important mediator in sensitive issues and on the other hand a guarantor for the scientific foundation of all content published by “Tierschutz macht Schule”.

## **Schönbrunn Zoo**

The founding president, zoo director Helmut Pechlaner, as well as the current president and zoo director, Dagmar Schratter worked on the national Animal Protection Act beforehand, and there has been a long-standing, close link between the association and Schönbrunn Zoo. Furthermore, the first treasurer, Ana Haschka as well as the first association manager, Marie-Helene Scheib, were also (former) staff members of the zoo.

## **“Kronen Zeitung”**

As Austria’s highest circulation daily newspaper, the “Kronen Zeitung” is an important player in the political landscape and in creating wide-ranging attention. Furthermore, the association’s vice president, Maggie Entenfellner, who is simultaneously one of the most famous faces of the animal welfare scene and “Kronen Zeitung”, has sustainably advertised this idea even before the association was founded.

## **Other cooperation partners and international networks**

“Tierschutz macht Schule” is continuously co-operating with numerous organisations and throughout the association’s history it has worked with many more either once or several times.<sup>10</sup> Not only does this enable the association to use the infrastructure and networks of numerous establishments, but it also aims at integrating the knowledge and expertise of the people working in these institutions, in the spirit of a collaborative co-operation of experts.

When co-operating with international animal welfare organisations, which are partly operating in a similar area as “Tierschutz macht Schule”, the sharing of experiences and the collaboration of international projects are in the foreground.

## **Situation-related involvement of important players**

Involving important players relating to the situation, as compared to involving subject matter experts or co-operation partners, doesn’t primarily happen to improve the offer of “Tierschutz macht

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<sup>10</sup> Some of the most important cooperation partners of “Tierschutz macht Schule” are listed on its webpage <https://www.tierschutzmachtschule.at/partner-und-netzwerkpartner>

Schule". Rather, the aim is to maintain a good consensus with organisations, whose efforts in animal welfare – and therefore also the association's actions and material – can be linked to economic losses. They are invited to active conflict prevention, in order to avoid political or medial headwind and to timely and adequately react to social changes.

### **3.6. Marketing and public relations**

#### **Media presence**

Media presence for "Tierschutz macht Schule" is an important factor to reach the general public – especially when advertising adult education.

In this context, the co-operation with "Kronen Zeitung" is obviously a great advantage. At the same time, the support of the respective ministers, by visiting press conferences and other events of the association, is of vital importance.

#### **Figureheads as driving force**

For an initiative like "Tierschutz macht Schule", it is exceptionally helpful, when a famous personality presides over it. Respectively, different figureheads for media, politics, scientific landscape and the education sector, act as a driving force for the association within these fields.

In this respect, within his role as founding president and as an Austrian-wide well-known face, Helmut Pechlaner, director of Schönbrunn Zoo and moderator of ORF TV-series on animals, was an invaluable figurehead and driving force for "Tierschutz macht Schule". The association's vice president, Maggie Entenfellner, also has the opportunity to significantly effect media and politics for the association, due to her fame and network. The personal network and the scientific integrity of the advisory board's chairwoman Cornelia Rouha-Mülleder, is vitally important when it comes to gaining subject matter experts for voluntary collaboration.

#### **International pioneering role and role model effect**

Section 2 of the nationwide Animal Protection Act, which "Tierschutz macht Schule" is based on, is unique in Europe. Furthermore, the collaborative co-operation of animal welfare experts from the fields of science, pedagogy and the media, combined with federal funding is unprecedented, which establishes the association's special position as an international flagship project.

And as an international flagship project, the association regularly presents itself in the context of conferences and other internationally visited events about the topic "animal welfare" and inspires further efforts in animal welfare education in the European region through its pioneering role.

*"'Tierschutz macht Schule' is a flagship project in Europe: Austria had a good nose there, we should really stay on it! For one thing, because one can show something, but also because one can maybe give an impetus somewhere else – and then being able to learn from each other on a European level."*

*MinR. Dr. Günther Pfaffenwimmer  
(advisory board member)*

### **Avoidance of extreme positions**

Avoiding radical viewpoints is already enshrined in the mission statement of “Tierschutz macht Schule”. This guideline is complemented by the motto “Knowledge is animal welfare!” and the idea to encourage responsibility but not striving for indoctrinations. The objective acquisition of neutral and profound animal welfare contents is in the foreground.

### **Turning away from negative emotionalisation**

The exaggerated presentation of facts, using shocking pictures and aiming to trigger strong negative emotions, draws attention to a topic – which can be helpful to generate attention via the media.

“Tierschutz macht Schule” completely turns away from using shocking pictures and negative emotionalisations of topics. On the contrary, the factual approach to animal welfare topics is in the foreground, which correlates to an age-adequate education of scientifically profound content. Furthermore, the association strives to point out solutions, that can be put into practice by the addressed target group.

*“Animal welfare is a topic that sparks emotions and has great potential, but it can also go in a direction you don’t want: There were animal welfare organisations, who went into schools with ‘catastrophe-pedagogics’ and left behind some scorched earth, because children went home and said, ‘Everyone, who eats meat, is a murderer!’ From this, ultimately conflicts remained, so it was said: ‘There is great potential there, but if you only conduct it with catastrophic messages and disturbing images, it results in something neither parents or children, nor the teachers or school officials, nor the students themselves want – because they realise, that this is something they can’t really implement in their actual lives or they can’t find a sustainable way of dealing with it.’”*

*Dr. Martin Janovsky  
(advisory board member)*

### **Teachers as the association’s ambassador**

The wider public is reached by “Tierschutz macht Schule” through the education system and propagators in the field of adult education. The focus in the field of adult education is on further education of (future) teachers, who are then active ambassadors for “Tierschutz macht Schule”. They use the material in their classes, they show it to their colleagues and they work for the association at fairs in their respective federal province.

### **Mascots, logo and the name “Tierschutz macht Schule”**

The child-appropriate and attractive mascots – especially the “WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP” – are well received by younger children and have a high recognition and identification factor. The memorable logo and its catchy name ‘Tierschutz macht Schule’, are also effectively communicated representatives of the association.

*“Our wish is, to especially offer children and young people, profound – but also amusing, fun and attractive – educational material.”*

*Lea Mirwald, MSc  
(association manager)*

### **3.7. Human factor: the right people**

#### **Personal concerns and enthusiasm**

Possibly the most important factor for the success of “Tierschutz macht Schule” is the people, that have dedicated themselves to the association – whether it is political representatives, association members, external specialists or the executive forces of the team. They all have in common, that they follow the agenda of “Tierschutz macht Schule” with passion and make it their personal concern.

#### **High work motivation**

The enthusiasm for animal welfare education and the great identification with the association, lead to a high work motivation of the involved. This relates to the meaning behind what they do becoming noticeable – which contributes greatly to the motivation.

#### **Patience, perseverance and transparency**

Patience, perseverance and transparency play an important role in this success story. In the case of “Tierschutz macht Schule”, these qualities are essential when, for example, submitting funding applications and for handling funding with the different (political) institutions.

#### **Social competence and consensus of people involved**

The broad consensus of all people involved, in compliance with the mission statement, was the foundation of the successful co-operation and possibly also pivotal for so many people subsequently dedicating themselves in an extraordinary way to the association. Reaching and maintaining this consensus is a question of social competence, but also of the readiness of the people involved to negotiate and compromise.

*“Animal welfare has many faces, it has a lot of concerns and therefore it is very, very important to find a consensus, that is shared by experts extensively and Austrian-wide.”*

*Maggie Entenfellner  
(vice president)*

### **Willingness to innovate and needs orientation**

A consequent needs orientation and the necessary willingness to innovate are central qualities of “Tierschutz macht Schule”. The successful needs orientation and active innovation that appears in various factors, become very clear with one current example: The latest workbook of the “WELL-KA-HU-KA-MEER-PLOPP” series is conceptualised as required innovation for language-sensitive lessons. With this workbook, children can expand their German skills and in doing so, discover what the term “animal welfare” means in a playful way. A significant foundation for further development of the association and what it offers are (amongst others) sociological evaluations of the association’s offerings and surveys amongst teachers.

*“For a few years, there have been brochures for adults about dogs, cats and the safe handling of grazing livestock. Approximately 60,000 adults have been reached in the last ten years – as compared to 600,000 children and young people, who have read our teaching material. This is highly satisfying and shows, how great the demand for information is.”*

*Lea Mirwald, MSc  
(association manager)*

### **Creativity and open-ended work**

A great strength of “Tierschutz macht Schule” is fostering a culture that promotes creativity and desires open-ended work when creating new offers. This is an essential foundation for playful and attractive formats, that make the conveyance of scientifically profound animal welfare knowledge possible in the first place.

### **A sense for organisational processes**

The association’s development is linked to forming organisational structures and establishing organisational processes. While essential structural conditions have been clear ever since the founding of the association and the defined roles of management, advisory board, team and external subject matter experts haven’t changed, the organisational processes were subject to extensive transitions. Not only because the executive team has grown, but also because of the ever-growing offer and the large scale of orders nowadays.

### **Prior experience in animal welfare education**



The prior experience, that the founding members have gathered before their commitment to “Tierschutz macht Schule”, were of significant importance for the concept of the association and have proved helpful during the course of the association’s history.

### 3.8. Timing: the right time

#### Social awareness

Animal welfare has a long tradition and a great societal relevance in Austria. In the more recent past, on the one hand this became apparent in the Animal Protection Referendum of 1996, and on the other hand it is reflected in the development of a national Animal Protection Act, which was preceded by the commitment to a nationwide regulation of all four represented parties in the National Council in 2003.<sup>11</sup> It’s Section 2 obligates “federal, provincial and municipal authorities [...], to create and deepen the understanding of animal welfare on the part of the public and in particular on the part of youth [...]”.<sup>12</sup>

*“The opportunity is here, in the whole development of society’s consciousness, to trigger a thought process regarding the approach to animal welfare, to create a broader understanding, to inform – on the one hand children as animal owners and on the other hand as a consumer of tomorrow. It is an ethical topic, that practically no one can evade, with a great challenge for society to find a differentiated approach – and not only to chase any headlines. I believe that the demand to deal with such topics on a factual level is still great, because empirically emotions are not very beneficial for a factual approach. And animal welfare awareness in society has developed greatly in recent years: Animal welfare is a topic that concerns everyone, and partly even affects them.”*

*Dr. Martin Janovsky  
(advisory board member)*

#### Demand at schools

Animal welfare was already an important topic in educational institutions, even before the founding of “Tierschutz macht Schule”. The acquisition of extreme positions and using shocking images was the core of many animal protectionists’ educational material and workshops at the time of the association’s founding. Consequently, the range of material “Tierschutz macht Schule” offered, was a

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<sup>11</sup> Ministerium für Frauen und Gesundheit (2017): Das österreichische Tierschutzgesetz.  
<http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/Gesundheit/Tiergesundheit/Tierschutz/Tierschutzgesetz/>, (April 25, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Bundeskanzleramt: Rechtsinformationssystem (2017): Gesamte Rechtsvorschrift für Tierschutzgesetz.  
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/20003541/TSchG%2c%20Fassung%20vom%2024.04.2017.pdf>, (April 25, 2017).

fundamentally new possibility for many teachers to inform their students about the topic of “animal welfare”. Both teachers and students were accordingly impressed.

*“The main argument [for the founding of the association] was Section 2 of the Animal Protection Act and above all, that there repeatedly were problems in many federal provinces with self-proclaimed animal welfare teachers, who went into schools with very radical material. Where parents are upset, because the children suddenly all want to be vegetarian or vegan – and this was always an argument for politics and the education boards, to say: ‘We bring profound, neutral material, which doesn’t burden the children with radical pedagogy.’”*

*Dr.<sup>in</sup> Cornelia Rouha-Mülleder  
(advisory board chairwoman)*

### **Political will**

As the legislator had commissioned animal welfare education as a governmental task just before the founding of the association, there was a will and a possibility within the respective federal ministry to fund animal welfare education. Subsequently, this opportunity was successfully grasped by the founding members of the association.

## **4 Conclusion: Learnings and Tips**

The successes of “Tierschutz macht Schule” are undeniable. In its own right, the fact that within 10 years, more than 600,000 students and approximately 60,000 adults have been reached through animal welfare education brochures, is a reason to celebrate.

As an international flagship project, the association regularly presents itself in the context of conferences and other internationally visited events about the topic “animal welfare”. And its pioneering role inspires further efforts for animal welfare education in the European region.

During the course of these appearances, the question legitimately arises again and again: What can other initiatives learn from the experiences of “Tierschutz macht Schule”?

The factors mapped out within this paper, answer this question – and show how many people and factors are involved in the success. A prioritisation of these collected factors is difficult – as many of them are interdependent. In fact, it can be said: It is precisely the aggregation of the factors, that does the complexity of this effort justice.

### **Financial and legal framework**

Nevertheless, Section 2 of the Animal Protection Act and the resulting funding through the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, plays a particular role, because this is the financial basis of “Tierschutz macht Schule”. It has also proven helpful that it was possible to obtain funding for the first three years: this seems to be a period of time, that is needed for the initial development of the organisation and to produce the first range of material – and after which it became very clear whether the concept is viable.

For funding through the ministry, enshrining to forgo negative emotionalisations into the mission statement and committing to factually approach animal welfare topics, again plays an important role. Without a clearly neutral, factual and scientifically profound orientation of the association, such a funding through the ministry would not be possible.

### **The right people at the right time**

Besides the financial framework, the human factor doesn't play an insignificant role. Especially with regard to the often-emotional topic of “animal welfare” the importance of a broad consensus of all involved parties needs to be stressed.

Accordingly, it is pivotal for an initiative like this to find the ‘right people’ who, like no other factor, make the difference between success and failure. This applies both, to the executive team and to all those people more or less actively involved\_– whereby in the case of “Tierschutz macht Schule”, a thanks need to go out to many people, both in politics and the educational system, in media and in

scientific operations. With them – and their skills, their commitment and not least, their enthusiasm – an idea has been turned into a success story.

The factors outlined don't in fact provide a panacea for the successful establishment of an animal welfare association. But in order to gain proposals, they can be an invitation, to reflect one's own or another's concept with the respective resources and frameworks and compare it with the ones of "Tierschutz macht Schule". So, one can derive and convert one or the other idea to become helpful in a similar or completely different situation – and a new idea becomes a future flagship project.