



Thursday morning, I am reluctant to go out under this slushy mix of rain and snow. I am cold inside, and I know my shoes will not last more than a winter if this goes on longer. But I am on my way to meet the lovely Jeannine Villinger at Intermezzo in Zug Altstadt, and this is a motivation boost.

Since we moved to Zug earlier this year, we've been on the hunt to find a nice coffee place we could use as a "den" to read, eat, drink coffee and let our kid play in peace. Intermezzo has been the one, and Jeannine nicely agreed to meet and answer a few questions regarding the place.

\*\*\*\*\*



Intermezzo is one of the 5 establishments managed by the organization [zuwebe](#) which provides, amongst others, education, work and housing to people with mental and psychological special needs in Kanton Zug.

Opened in 2014 it is a lovely café centrally located by Kolinplatz and the Zytturm. It serves a nice choice of beverages, crepes, soups, pasta and salad dishes which are not only tasty but also well priced (for Zug standard, I mean).

It is also one of the only places actually opened on weekends and serving breakfast/brunch, which makes it a unique gem in the city. And last but not least, unlike the other cafés around in Zug, it has a small but rather efficient kid corner that will allow you to eat and chat in peace for a while.

The welcome at Intermezzo has always been nice and warm; this feeling is reinforced by Jeannine's heartfelt way to talk about zuwebe and the various projects to integrate people with special needs within the local community.

\*\*\*\*\*

## “What I love with my job is being in touch with different kinds of people.”



As part of the “Gastronomie” field and one of the available work and training opportunities that zuwebe offers, 6 people with special needs are working at Intermezzo, under the supervision of 2 leading chefs that are specially trained to teach and manage them. They support all tasks that make a restaurant business successful, from management of delivery, food preparation and service. On the building’s top floors, 8 members live together in semi-independence.

Jeannine is working as PR and Communications officer for zuwebe. Around a nice cup of coffee, we talked about the great stories around such a project. She mentioned for example the event covering the 50th anniversary of zuwebe which was attended by more than 1,500 guests, demonstrating the overall interest and positive image of the organization locally.

She also mentioned frustrations and challenges, with a smile. Like any co-living and working space, there can be some tensions, and because emotions can be expressed a lot stronger when they are not filtered, you need to showcase patience to bring things back to normal. A restaurant with the size and cosiness of Intermezzo provides however a secured space for staff to develop their skills, confidence and independence.

\*\*\*\*\*

## “It is not a regular office job. I see a lot of people and it is full of life and fun.”



Zuwebe is organized as a Kanton-funded organization which supports national-wide objectives of social integration. Along with public funds, the organization also runs thanks to the support of local companies, the association’s membership fees, and direct sales from the various establishments.

Apart from the Gastronomie field, zuwebe also enrolls people in technical and mechanical workshops, mailing platforms, pharmaceutical infrastructures and logistics. It also provides artistic activities such as painting or theatre.

When I asked Jeannine about the involvement and response from the private sector, she welcomed the social responsibility involvement of local companies which increases awareness and direct participation, for example through volunteering events or “site exchanges” (i.e. when company staff come to visit and work at zuwebe establishments for a day, and vice-versa).



On the long term, zuwebe provides also professional coaching to its staff, in order to first assess their skills and interests, then guide them towards the right activities and structures. Depending on the chosen area of professional activity, zuwebe can serve as training platform with an official state-approved certificate at the end.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the end of our meeting, I left with a smile and warm heart despite the cold rain that had earlier affected my mood. Jeannine's heartfelt words and positive vibes were contagious: it feels good to work, live and eat at Intermezzo.

And for sure I'll go back again.



*Intermezzo, Grabenstrasse 6, Zug Altstadt (Kolinplatz).  
<http://www.intermezzo-zug.ch/de/>  
To be found also on [Facebook](#)*