

## **"New project kicks off in Leipzig", by Gitta Keil, *dpa*, 25 August 2014**

The German news agency *dpa* published an article about our project "Arzt mit Humor" (Physician with a sense of humour), whose goal is to teach medical students and physicians how to use humour in communication, be it with patients or within the team.

The original German article was, for instance, published in *Online Focus*, the online edition of the well-known German news magazine *Focus*: [http://www.focus.de/regional/leipzig/gesellschaft-neues-projekt-am-deutschen-humorinstitut-speziell-fuer-mediziner\\_id\\_4082453.html](http://www.focus.de/regional/leipzig/gesellschaft-neues-projekt-am-deutschen-humorinstitut-speziell-fuer-mediziner_id_4082453.html)

The English translation is published curtesy of the German news agency *dpa*, [www.dpa.de](http://www.dpa.de).

*Mit freundlicher Genehmigung der dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH, Hamburg, [www.dpa.de](http://www.dpa.de).*

### **New project "Arzt mit Humor" kicks off in Leipzig**

*Laughter is the best medicine. With their new project, the coaches of the German Institute for Humour in Leipzig want to bring more joy into daily hospital life.*

"The project is called 'Arzt mit Humor' (Physician with a sense of humour) and is primarily directed at medical practitioners," says Eva Ullmann, director of the institute. The coaching agency's project is partly a cooperation with the physician and cabaret artist Eckart von Hirschhausen. "The point is not to make fun of patients but rather to find out what the right combination of seriousness and humour is," Ullmann emphasizes. On its web page, the institute promises "new impulses for physician-patient-conversations". It also invites those interested to a weekly round of regulars – to promote an exchange about humorous experiences among medical practitioners.

Hirschhausen not only addresses the topic on stage but also with his charity foundation "Humor hilft heilen" (Humour helps to heal). It offers humour workshops for the staff in hospitals and care facilities. Additionally, the foundation supports clowns visiting hospitals. There are quite a number of local projects for hospital clowns. Currently, the charity is working together with about 50 of these projects, says Sandra Paule from the press office.

Ullmann, a certified social pedagogue who wrote her diploma thesis on humour, thinks it's exciting to introduce humour into everyday business life, too. For instance, in seminars for executives. "Many people know how to tell jokes and produce humour at someone else's expense", says Ullmann. "But how do you de-escalate difficult situations with the help of humour? – Not many people know how to do that."

In a way, humour training is a form of communication training, she explains. Today, the coaching agency is popular even internationally. They were, for instance, recruited abroad for a quality manager conference in Oslo and by a large bank.

They organize about 150 events every year. Three to five coaches work in the institute in Leipzig. They come from various backgrounds: theatre, pedagogy, magic or illustration. Ullmann started her own business with the institute in 2005.