



Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V.

Club Profile

As at 29 August 2026

About us

“Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V.” was founded in November 2022 with a clear mission: to establish sailing as an instrument of social inclusion. As a registered non-profit association we are active throughout Germany, with our inclusive sailing courses concentrated in Hamburg. We work to open up the connecting power of sailing to people with disabilities and to socially disadvantaged groups, and we deliberately dissolve the traditional divide between para sailing and “regular” sailing: everyone sails together. With women and people with disabilities making up more than 50 % of our membership, we practise inclusion within the club itself. We also run our own racing squad for children and young people with disabilities.

Sailing is one of the most inclusive sports there is: it gives almost everyone access to the water, regardless of the nature or severity of their impairment. That quality makes sailing an ideal medium for inclusion in practice. Our activities are currently attracting exceptional attention and a remarkable influx of participants – a sign that inclusive sailing has struck a chord and is increasingly seen as a model for genuine participation.

An honour for our co-founder

In May 2025 Clemens Kraus (66), one of the founders of “Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V.”, received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (Cross of Merit on Ribbon). Minister-President Michael Kretschmer presented the award at a ceremony in Dresden in recognition of Kraus’s outstanding commitment to inclusive sailing. For more than four decades the sports administrator has worked tirelessly to enable people with and without disabilities to sail together. His commitment to children and young people is particularly noteworthy: together with successful Paralympic athletes he regularly visits rehabilitation centres, schools and children’s homes to encourage young people to take up sport and pursue their dreams despite physical limitations. At the ceremony Minister-President Kretschmer said: “In what you have achieved and set in motion, you are a role model. In many different places you have made something truly special possible.” The award underlines the social significance of the club’s inclusion work and is recognition for the entire team.

An honour for the club

In December 2025 “Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V.” received the renowned Annemarie Dose Prize. The award, endowed with 6,666 euros and presented jointly by MenschHHamburg e.V. and the Hamburger Tafel, honours our pioneering inclusive sailing project with the Bugenhagenschule Alsterdorf. At the ceremony in Hamburg the prize was accepted by Iris Marschal (Bugenhagenschule), Claudia Langenhan (NRV) and Sven Jürgensen (Chair). The laudatory speech was given by actress Andrea Gerhard, with the award handed over by Arne Platzbecker, Member of the Hamburg Parliament. The project gives around 50 children and young people with a wide range of impairments access to sailing every week, and is set to expand to some 100 children and young people in 2026.

Flagship projects with lasting impact

“Inklusive Alster” Hamburg

“Inklusive Alster” is a network of seven water sports and sailing clubs – unique in Germany – that has established inclusive sailing, paddling and rowing on Hamburg’s Alster lake. Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. initiated and coordinates the network and supports the Hamburg clubs in developing their inclusive water sports offering. The seven partners are Ruder-Club Favorite Hammonia (Fari), Hamburger Kanu-Club (HKC), Hamburger Segel-Club (HSC), Hamburger Segel-Verband (HSgV), Ruderverein an den Teichwiesen (RVT), Segel-Verein Altona-Oevelgönne (SVAOe) and Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing (WsW). Together they create an offering that gives people with and without impairments equal access to water sports. Weekly courses for the Bugenhagenschule Alsterdorf, the Werner-Otto-Institut, Campus Uhlenhorst and Schule Elfenwiese reach more than 150 children and young people with a wide range of impairments. Particularly important is our one-to-one support for children and young people with severe and multiple disabilities, who receive individual coaching on the water.

On 5 May 2026 the network hosted an inclusive open day on the Alster together with Hamburg’s state sports authority and Hamburg Active City, marking the European Protest Day for the Equality of People with Disabilities. In March, Aydan Özoğuz, Chair of the German Bundestag’s Committee on Sport and Voluntary Engagement, visited the Hamburger Segel-Club and discussed the “Inklusive Alster” initiative with us.

Helga Cup – the world’s largest women’s regatta, made inclusive

Since 2018 the Helga Cup has grown into a genuine movement in women’s sailing and is one of the City of Hamburg’s top ten events. Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. is the organiser and an official partner of the City of Hamburg; the host club is Norddeutscher Regatta Verein (NRV). The Helga Cup’s patron is Olympic track cycling champion Kristina Vogel. At the 9th Helga Cup from 11 to 14 June 2026, around 360 women from eight nations took to the water – women with and without impairments sailing together in the J/70 class and in the inclusive RS Venture Connect class. What makes it special: we provide the boats, so that cost is never a barrier to taking part. The event combines competitive racing with an inclusive supporting programme and shows that women with visual impairments, women who use wheelchairs and women with other impairments can race on equal terms. 2026 also saw the premiere of the new Change Makers Race, which is set to become a

permanent part of the Helga Cup, under the patronage of Member of the Bundestag Aydan Özoğuz. The Helga Cup has become an international model for inclusive sporting events and attracts considerable media attention. From 10 to 13 June 2027 it will celebrate its tenth anniversary.

Heinz Kettler Deutschland Cup – a globally unique inclusive racing series for crews

The Heinz Kettler Deutschland Cup is a joint project of Yachtclub Möhnesee and Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. In 2023, with the support of the Heinz Kettler Foundation, we launched what remains the world's only inclusive racing series for crews; 2026 marked its fourth season. The series comprises three event weekends and brings together club teams from across Germany and from other European countries. Racing takes place on accessible RS Venture Connect boats donated by the Heinz Kettler Foundation and made available to all teams free of charge. The format allows local sailing clubs to build inclusive teams and compete without having to invest in specialised boats of their own. The Deutschland Cup acts as a catalyst for inclusive sailing across Germany and encourages participating clubs to build inclusive structures themselves. With the third event weekend in Belgium in September 2026, the series goes international for the first time.

Event weekends 2026

- Round 1: 14 and 15 May – Hamburger Segel-Club
- Round 2: 18–20 August – alongside SailGP in Sassnitz, with 15 crews from four nations
- Round 3: 18–20 September – Royal Yacht Club Warche, Belgium: the first international venue in the series

RS Venture Connect European Championship 2026 in Travemünde

The European Championship of the inclusive RS Venture Connect class, held from 18 to 21 July 2026 as part of Travemünder Woche, brought 27 teams from eleven nations to the start line – among them several Wir sind Wir crews, who held their own in an international field. That our sailors can compete at this level is thanks to our strong partnership with the Heinz Kettler Foundation, to the RS Venture Connect training facilities at the Hamburger Segel-Club on the Alster, and to our work within the “Inklusive Alster” network.

SailGP Inclusive Sassnitz – a world first, successfully continued

In August 2025 Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V., together with the Germany SailGP Team presented by Deutsche Bank and its shareholder Sebastian Vettel, made sailing history: for the first time anywhere in the world, an inclusive regatta was successfully integrated into a SailGP event. From 12 to 14 August 2025, under the motto #AlleAnBord, Sassnitz on the island of Rügen hosted the International German Championship in inclusive sailing – simultaneously round two of the Heinz Kettler Deutschland Cup.

Sixteen international crews from seven nations competed for three days in Sassnitz city harbour. The event was held under the patronage of Minister-President Manuela Schwesig and supported by the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the Germany SailGP Team, the Heinz Kettler Foundation and the Vorpommern Fund.

A moment none of us will forget

The emotional high point: the prize-giving in the Germany SailGP Team's TECH Area was led by Sebastian Vettel, Formula 1 legend and co-shareholder of the Germany SailGP Team, together with Sports Minister Stefanie Drese and Katrin Adloff, Vice-President of the German Sailing Association. As numerous international SailGP teams joined the host nation in giving the inclusive sailors a standing ovation, the moment became unforgettable for every crew and for more than 30 volunteers.

The story continues in 2026

The premiere exceeded all expectations. Tim Krieglstein, CEO of the Germany SailGP Team, said: "This partnership with Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. is a milestone for our work on diversity and inclusion. As the first SailGP event worldwide to integrate an inclusive regatta, we set new standards in Sassnitz."

Those standards were carried forward: from 18 to 20 August 2026 we again staged an inclusive regatta alongside SailGP in Sassnitz – running in parallel with the ROCKWOOL Germany Sail Grand Prix and serving as round two of the Heinz Kettler Deutschland Cup. The patron was Stefanie Drese, Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Sport of the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. was the organiser, together with four co-hosting clubs: Verein Seglerhaus am Wannensee, Berliner Yacht-Club, Yachtclub Möhnesee and Inklusives Segeln für Alle e.V.

Fifteen crews from Belgium, Germany, Norway and the Czech Republic took to the water – every crew inclusive, sailing eight accessible RS Venture Connect boats provided by us as organiser. For three days they raced in Sassnitz city harbour, right alongside the fastest boats in the world. The prize-giving took place in the TECH Area of the Germany SailGP Team presented by Deutsche Bank – the very place where the F50 catamarans are prepared during the day. Before around 100 guests, Minister Stefanie Drese presented the prizes together with Heiko Miraß, Parliamentary State Secretary for Vorpommern and eastern Mecklenburg. The event was carried by more than 50 volunteers from six German states, who brought and built the accessible infrastructure themselves: a floating accessible boarding pontoon, ramps, the event site, a campsite and six safety boats.

A few days before the regatta we met the volunteers of KinderLachen 009 Rügen e.V. at the Sassnitz harbour festival and invited them to our opening ceremony on the spot. There we handed over a donation of 1,000 euros – and two private donors spontaneously added 500 euros each.

New in 2026: accompanying race trips for wheelchair users

For the first time, we offered daily accompanying race trips for wheelchair users alongside SailGP – from 18 to 23 August, across the regatta days and the entire SailGP race weekend. Anyone using a wheelchair rolls straight aboard the "Henk de Mol" and is immediately secured in place; there is no transfer into a special seat. And this is not a sightseeing boat but a modern, sporty sailing yacht right at the race course – with wind, waves and speed at close quarters. Among the guests from Sassnitz, Binz and the surrounding region were people with high support needs for whom sailing had until now been out of reach: not for lack of interest, but for lack of access.

This is made possible by the wheelchair-accessible conversion of the “Henk de Mol” – a BENTE24 rebuilt with an open deck, developed together with BENTE Yachts and Inklusives Segeln für Alle e.V. and co-financed by the Herman van Veen Foundation. The foundation’s deputy chair, Steffi Nerijs, gave a welcome address at the opening evening and joined the trips on board herself. The programme is supported by the Deutsche Postcode Lotterie – funded by its participants – and by a large team of volunteers. We run the trips together with Inklusives Segeln für Alle e.V., in Kiel as well as in Sassnitz. All partners intend to stage the inclusive regatta alongside SailGP again in 2027.

Being part of SailGP means global media reach and an international stage for inclusive sailing. This partnership shows that inclusion and competitive racing belong together – and that what succeeds on the water resonates far beyond sport.

Heinz Kettler Inclusive Youth Sailing Team Germany

The Heinz Kettler Inclusive Youth Sailing Team Germany is a joint project of the Hamburger Segel-Club and Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. The initiative trains young sailors with impairments to become competent, independent crew members who race as experienced members of inclusive crews.

The team was officially launched on 12 October 2025, when all participants, their parents and the coaching team came together to mark the start of the project and agree the way forward.

Our vision

Since sailing left the Paralympic programme, young people with impairments have lacked professional training structures in competitive sailing. That is precisely the gap we want to close: a platform for qualified, ambitious racing education – not within para sport, but within mainstream competitive sailing.

Our team members

Our starting squad currently consists of four children and young people aged ten and over with a range of impairments; two of them already raced actively in 2026. The pilot project is set to grow in the medium term.

The training concept

The structured training programme rests on three core elements:

- Theory sessions in autumn and winter in the youth room of the Hamburger Segel-Club, covering the fundamentals of sailing
- Weekly practical sessions on the Alster from April to October, combined with theory
- Intensive weekend sailing workshops for in-depth training – in 2026 across five training weekends at the Hamburger Segel-Club plus a special workshop during Kieler Woche in June

Training is delivered by a committed and highly qualified coaching team of paid and voluntary coaches with experience in inclusive sport. The programme also brings in prominent and successful sailors as guest coaches: they contribute their experience from national and international racing and serve as role models for the team. Olympic sailor Susann Beucke, for example, supports the team as a co-coach

Regattas in 2026

In the 2026 season the team competed in the following events:

- Wednesday evening races at the HSC
- Helga Cup
- Heinz Kettler Deutschland Cup
- SailGP Inclusive Sassnitz 2026

Sophia stands for what this is about: ten years old and severely visually impaired, she has been training with us for around eighteen months, opened the inclusive youth sailing season on the Alster in April, and sailed at the Helga Cup in June and in Sassnitz in August – as the youngest competitor in the fleet.

“These regattas are not only sporting goals. They are important milestones for the confidence and independence of our young sailors.”

— Bernadette Zipfel, Hamburger Segel-Club

A strong partnership

The Germany SailGP Team presented by Deutsche Bank is an important and valued partner of the project, working with Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing to promote inclusive sailing. The patron of the Heinz Kettler Inclusive Youth Sailing Team Germany is Anna Barth, tactician of the Germany SailGP Team. As a successful sailor at the highest international level she is an inspiring role model for the young team.

Together with the Heinz Kettler Foundation, the association Allianz für die Jugend Nordwest supports the pilot project and makes the training of the starting squad financially possible.

“Our aim is not for these children and young people to simply be ‘taken along’. We want to enable them to take on responsibility on the water in their own right – as competent members of the team.”

— Clemens Kraus, founder of Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing

BAT Sailing Team – inclusion in practice on the race course

The BAT Sailing Team is a joint project of Norddeutscher Regatta Verein and Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. Its patron is Susann Beucke, Olympic silver medallist in the 49er FX in Tokyo. As a pioneer, our inclusive team – blind, visually impaired and deaf sailors as well as wheelchair users – competes in the German Sailing League and is the only team with blind and visually impaired sailors in regular league competition. It proves that inclusion works at the highest sporting level. In 2026 the team celebrates its fifth anniversary and is sailing its third season in the second division of the German Sailing League. Eighteen people with and without disabilities currently race together – for the first time including two children with visual impairments – and the team continues to grow. It is both a national ambassador for inclusion in competitive sailing and Germany’s centre of expertise for training blind and visually impaired sailors: we run sailing courses for blind and visually impaired people for Rotary clubs, for the City of Kiel during Kieler Woche and for other organisations nationwide, and hold regular sailing workshops in cooperation with Rotary Deichtor.

[Recent video about the BAT Sailing Team, produced by our partner Pantaenius](#)

Kieler Woche Inclusive

As an official partner of the City of Kiel and of the organisers of the sailing competitions, we deliver extensive inclusive sailing programmes at Kieler Woche – one of the largest and most prestigious sailing events in the world. Under the banner “Kieler Woche Inklusiv”, a varied programme is offered every year in late June that makes sailing accessible to everyone, regardless of physical impairment.

The programme, funded by the City of Kiel, rests on four pillars:

- Inclusion on the race course: in 2026 our BAT Sailing Team competed at the event for the fifth time – with two crews in the competitive J/70 class, made up of visually impaired, blind, sighted, deaf and hearing crew members.
- Sailing trips for wheelchair users: together with Inklusives Segeln für Alle e.V. we offered free accessible race-accompanying trips every day on the Kiel Fjord off Schilksee – aboard the “Henk de Mol”, our wheelchair-accessible sailing yacht.
- Sailing workshops for blind and visually impaired people: free courses on J/70 and RS Venture Connect boats, delivered under the professional guidance of the BAT Sailing Team
- The “Little Dream” project: on two days of Kieler Woche the crew of the “Little Dream”, a 70-foot sailing yacht, offered exclusive trips under the motto “Front row – right in the middle of it”. Setting out from the Olympic harbour in Schilksee into the Baltic, guests experienced the racing at close range and could take an active part in sailing the boat according to their abilities.

Kieler Woche Inklusiv 2026 (20 to 28 June) was a great success: almost 40 wheelchair users went out on the fjord aboard the “Henk de Mol” – among the guests on board were Kiel’s Mayor Gerwin Stöcken and multiple Paralympic champion Kirsten Bruhn.

[Watch the film “Kieler Woche Inklusiv 2026”](#)

“Kieler Woche Inklusiv” is intended as a model to be copied, showing that adaptive equipment, accessible harbour facilities and professional support make real inclusion in sailing possible – a sailing scene that is diverse and open to everyone.

Further sporting highlights in 2026

Alongside our flagship projects, the club was active across the board in 2026. The school sailing season on the Alster began on 22 April with more than 150 children and young people from the Bugenhagenschule Alsterdorf, the Werner-Otto-Institut, Campus Uhlenhorst and Schule Elfenwiese. At the end of May two of our crews competed at the International German Championship of the RS Venture Connect class in Prien am Chiemsee.

Academic research and publication

Since 2021 the BAT Sailing Team has been studied by the universities of Hamburg, Berlin (Humboldt University) and Lüneburg. What makes the project distinctive is that sighted, blind and visually impaired athletes compete together, with a shared focus on performance.

The research followed Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation approach over three years (2021–2023) and included interviews with athletes, coaches and organisers. At its heart was the question of how inclusive sailing can succeed at a competitive racing level.

One central finding: communication between sighted and blind sailors developed into a particular strength of the team. The athletes learned to communicate explicitly and precisely – a skill that the sighted team members in particular described as enriching for all areas of life, and which they now apply on other boats outside the inclusive context.

The findings were published in June 2025 in the international journal *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*. The study "Sailing together: challenges for an inclusive team of visually impaired and sighted athletes at Kiel Week" is available open access and documents the development of the BAT Sailing Team as a model project for inclusive competitive sailing.

[Read the study at Frontiers](#)

[Read the news article at wir-sind-wir.org](#)

Strong institutional partnerships

In many of its inclusive activities, Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. works as a partner and organiser alongside major public institutions:

City of Hamburg

Together with the City of Hamburg we have developed the Alster into the most inclusive sailing water in the world. In cooperation with Hamburg's sailing clubs we deliver numerous inclusive projects and contribute substantially to positioning Hamburg as a leading city for inclusive sailing.

State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

Under Minister-President Manuela Schwesig, the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has established itself since 2022 as Germany's frontrunner in inclusive sailing. We are a privileged partner of the state in pioneering projects:

- Inclusion World Championships for Sailing 2022 and 2023 in Rostock
- Inclusive Sailing State Cup 2024 in Schwerin, marking German Unity Day
- SailGP Sassnitz 2025 and 2026, with the historic integration of inclusive sailing

Minister-President Manuela Schwesig has repeatedly acted as patron of our projects, underlining the importance of inclusive sailing for social participation. The motto of her 2023/24 presidency of the Bundesrat, "Setting sail together", is brought to life through our joint projects. The inclusive regatta alongside SailGP in Sassnitz in 2026 was held under the patronage of Stefanie Drese, Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Sport of the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

City of Kiel / Kiel Sailing City

For four years Wir sind Wir Inclusion in Sailing e.V. has delivered inclusive sailing activities at Kieler Woche on behalf of the City of Kiel. The partnership with Kiel Sailing City underlines the importance of inclusive sailing at one of the world's largest sailing events. Together, our "Kieler Woche Inklusiv" programme sets

standards for accessible sailing and shows that inclusion and competitive racing belong together at the very highest level.

These strong institutional partnerships allow us to establish inclusive sailing for the long term and to make it visible, nationally and internationally, as a model for inclusion in practice.

Our infrastructure and funding

Support and commitment

Our work rests on two pillars: the support of foundations, funders and sponsors – and the commitment of a great many volunteers, without whom none of our inclusive events could take place. We currently have more than 50 members and two supporting members (Hamburger Segel-Club and Germany SailGP Team). Our charitable status was reconfirmed by the tax authorities on 14 August 2025.

Funders, foundations and partners in 2026

Our funders, foundations and partners in 2026 include the Heinz Kettler Foundation, the Viessmann Foundation, the Deutsche Postcode Lotterie – funded by its participants – the Alexander Otto Sports Foundation (20,000 euros for an accessible sanitary unit at the Hamburger Segel-Club), the Herman van Veen Foundation, the Reinhard Frank Foundation and the association Allianz für die Jugend Nordwest. On the public side we are supported by the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania with the Vorpommern Fund, the City of Kiel, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the City of Sassnitz. Our corporate partners include the Germany SailGP Team presented by Deutsche Bank, Pantaenius, Elvstrøm Sails, Code Zero, the Otto Group, Torqeedo, Zhik, akquinet, REWE, Port Mukran, ELLETEC, Salzbrenner and Fleisch Großmarkt Hamburg. Our partnerships with Elvstrøm Sails Heiligenhafen – which supplied a new J/70 racing sail wardrobe for the BAT Sailing Team in 2026 – and with Pantaenius were extended for 2026.

An accessible fleet – inclusion without boat transport

One of the cornerstones of our work is our own fleet: for our inclusive regattas we maintain a complete RS Venture Connect fleet of eight boats, supplemented in special cases by further RS Venture boats from partner clubs or from our members. On the Alster in Hamburg, two RS Venture and one J/70 are available for training our children and young people.

Looking ahead, BENTE Yachts is developing the BENTE25 open.i, a production-ready inclusion boat – the “i” stands for inclusion. People with impairments, wheelchair users in particular, are involved from the outset and help shape the cockpit. Our part is to get boats like this onto the water: together with Inklusives Segeln für Alle e.V. we are looking for partners, foundations and funders so that, under the guiding idea “Sailing for ALL – in series” (#wirallesegeln), accessible boats are permanently available at many locations – in Hamburg, in Kiel, on Lake Constance and wherever the need exists. Support for a single boat at a single venue already makes a difference. So that the “Henk de Mol” does not remain a one-off.

What makes our approach distinctive: we provide the boats at every regatta we run. People with impairments should not have to organise complex boat transport on top of the challenges of everyday life. This creates genuinely low-threshold access to

inclusive sailing – an essential condition for real participation, because many people with impairments are also socially disadvantaged.

On the Alster we train our children and young people with professional coaches. This qualified support is essential in developing young sailors into competent, independent competitors.

A funding model for sustainable inclusion

Acquiring and maintaining the boats, running our many inclusive regattas and paying our coaches all require substantial resources. We finance our activities through a diversified model:

- Foundations providing the core funding for our programmes
- Grants and sponsors for major events such as SailGP Inclusive and the Helga Cup
- Partnerships with clubs, associations and companies
- Private donors supporting our work with individual contributions

This funding structure allows us to keep access to inclusive sailing deliberately low-threshold and to avoid creating financial barriers to participation. It is how we make sure that sailing really is open to everyone – regardless of their physical, cognitive or social starting point.

Contact

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Board: Sven Jürgensen (Chair), Beate Spyrou (Deputy Chair), Clemens Kraus (Managing Director and founder), Michael Malz (Treasurer), Silke Basedow (Sport), Claudia Langenhan (Membership and internal contact point for sexualised violence).

Full information on our website

www.wir-sind-wir.org

As at 29 August 2026

