



BEST

Berlin Development Agency for Social Enterprises and Neighbourhood Economy

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Objective and key actors

The BEST Agency was founded to develop a **community economic strategy** for the neighbourhood, and to establish **social enterprises** in Eastern parts of Berlin.

Partners: Network for Social Enterprises and Neighbourhood Economy, Berlin (NEST), including the regional TUC, a federation of training and employment companies, a university department, and two community forums.

BEST is working closely together with the corresponding **neighbourhood managements and local authorities of the Berlin administration**, with **relevant alliances and local communities**.



Context

In the course of the preceding years, the **social texture has changed** in some Berlin neighbourhoods caused by increasing economic problems, impoverishment, and the moving away of wealthier households.

In order to **improve the situation in these areas sustainably**, in 2002, *BEST* was set up in the framework of the ESF Art. 6 Programme and the 'Social City' Programme of the Länder and the Government. The pilot project BEST with the Berlin Senate was finalised in 2004 and the work now is continued in the large district of Berlin Pankow.



Problems and responses

The BEST approach is an attempt to combat social exclusion and unemployment by applying **local economic strategies**. The OECD stated that there was no coherent policy supporting the local economy in Berlin.

During the pilot phase, social enterprises were set up and / or developed by the development agency **in three multi-deprived neighbourhoods** in the Eastern part of Berlin. The work is still focused there.



Aims and approaches

- **The aim is to create new additional jobs** by founding **social enterprises**, facilitated by the intermediary work of the Development Agency BEST operating at local level.
- The development **projects** are based primarily on **employment effective ideas, initiatives and projects** which could not be implemented yet or were not successfully enough so far because of their high need of development and a shortcoming of equity capital or access to resources.



Benefiting from the Advantages of Social Enterprises



Social Enterprises

- are businesses with **social objectives** whose **surpluses are reinvested** for that purpose **rather than for private profit.**
- reduce the risks of individual bankruptcy because they are set up **collectively**;
- are able, as **multi-stakeholder-enterprises**, to attract external resources;
- are able, as **community enterprises**, to cover various needs existing in the local neighbourhoods.



BEST Approach of Setting up Social Enterprises

Mobilizing Method of analysis and action:

Support to carrying out...

- Deficit analyses / Development of an Ideas and -Resources Pool
- Resources streams analyses / local forums
- Feasibility studies / Installing founders' initiatives
- Social Enterprise (Business) Planning / Setting up of social and / or community enterprises



Model of a Community Enterprise

Falkplatz & Helmholtzplatz





Conclusions

1. The multistakeholder / **local partnership approach** is critical for the sustainability of the enterprises (local NESTs + Social Enterprise Coalitions)
2. National and regional **authorities** have a key role in supporting the Social Economy:
 - Financial support for the provision of support, consultation and training for social enterprises;
 - Improvement of the legal and political framework conditions
 - Public procurement
 - Seed funding and
 - Evaluation