



10 YEAR IMPACT REPORT

A DECADE FULL OF TRANSFORMATIVE EVENTS
AND ACTS OF **KINDNESS, IMPACT, AND SOLIDARITY**





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A ten-year anniversary calls for reflection. 2012 to 2022. A decade full of transformative events, decisions, and acts of kindness, impact, and solidarity. Acts that sometimes made it into the history books. And acts that imprint on individual lives. Both are equally important to remember and celebrate.

Give Something Back to Berlin (GSBTB) began in 2012 with a viral Facebook post calling for migrant new-Berliners to get involved in their city, and create a counter-narrative against the spreading xenophobia and nationalism in Europe. We needed everyday heroes creating positive results and fighting separatism. In community we must all find ways to live together in peace with all of our differences and similarities, our stories, and our dreams.

The idea that sparked GSBTB came from the shared experience of millions of people across the globe today: of migration, the feeling of being new in a country and community. Some of us leave our countries with privileged passports, goals, and dreams. Others are forcibly displaced due to wars, conflict, economic hardships, climate change, etc. Individuals' reasons for leaving are different, but their needs are the same: the ability to create and rebuild life, access support networks, feel a sense of belonging, and be accepted in a society as equal citizens.

After years of dedication to the cause, GSBTB has had the privilege to speak about the “success sauce” in our work at some of the world’s most prestigious institutions.

Our answer to the challenges of integration work is simple: Get Involved! Meet your neighbours. Get to know whoever is considered “the other”. Work together.

Our approach has always been human-centred, and grounded in a “think global, act local” attitude. We use a grassroots method where everyone shares the skills, assets, and tools available to them. Whether this is a few hours to volunteer, a company donation, or broader foundation support, everyone can find a way to contribute.

Over the past ten years, the media sometimes lost interest in the topic of migration and refugees. GSBTB, however, always stayed true to our community and commitments. Migration has always been a part of our global history, as hard as politicians, countries, or the EU try to manage or stop it by militarising their borders or making sudden policy changes. We have advocated against such structural violence and worked to develop inclusive practices that encourage equal access for migrants in the host society.

Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Europe is currently experiencing the largest migration event since World War 2. When GSBTB was a main hub for new arrivals during the 2015-2016 refugee wave, we saw how fast a euphoric welcome movement can turn hostile when volunteers drop out.

GSBTB’s model is about establishing long-term solutions. We know that this is a marathon, not a sprint, and that the integration process can take years (sometimes decades).

This is slow, everyday work that goes beyond media trends. It’s about creating community and authentic human bonds.

We are committed to continuing this work for the next ten years and beyond. With new and repeating challenges facing us, we see endless possibilities for action and solidarity. We hope to have you on this journey.



Annamaria Olsson

Migration in Germany in numbers

1,2 M

refugees living
in Germany

233.000

asylum seekers
in 2021

>50%

of migrant applicants
are under 18 (of
which 2.632 are
unaccompanied)

190

nationalities
in Berlin

5%

of Germany's asylum
seekers are placed
in Berlin

21%

of Berlin's residents
are foreign born

1.250

recorded attacks
on refugees
in 2021

~60.000

Ukrainian asylum
seekers in Berlin
(as of Spring 2022)

>900.000

Ukrainian refugees
in Germany

Our vision

We imagine a world where migrants, refugees, and locals co-create in a spirit of solidarity.

We believe diversity forms a stronger and healthier society. We believe in people helping people to create their own success. We believe in creativity to be a connecting force for mutual understanding.

We foster innovative ideas through creative activities.

We believe we are stronger together.

Our mission

We aim to build and nurture dynamic communities in which an individual's uniqueness, sense of belonging and creativity can thrive.

Our values

Diversity

Empowerment

Creativity

Innovation

Solidarity



35.000

volunteers and participants over the past 10 years

160.000

volunteering hours since 2013

10

staff members



>1,8 million

euros in funding since 2013

>80

grants & sponsors

10

awards won



>1 million

visits to our website

>300

blog posts

>20.000

social media followers



>20

weekly activities

6

ongoing projects

>120

times mentioned in press

Give Something Back to Berlin is host to a number of different projects meant to foster expression and connection between diverse groups, bringing together migrants, refugees, and locals.

Numerous activities offer new Berliners a chance to gain practical language skills in German and English as well as explore their creative sides with music and arts classes.

These events are especially catered to refugees and migrants to provide an inclusive space for newcomers, but are also welcome to people of all backgrounds, regardless of their gender, nationality, ethnicity or migration status.

All projects are organised and run by volunteers, and are free of charge to participants regardless of their residency status.



Open Music School is a project for those interested in learning and practising at all levels. It offers classes in Guitar, Bass Guitar, Drums, Piano, Singing, Oud, Ukulele, electronic music production, and guitar workshops just for women. GSBTB connects with other organisations to help new musicians book at local gigs and festivals. Some of these events have included the Eastside Music Days Festival, Popraci Festival Rixdorf, Sommer für Alle Festival Neukölln.

Open Music School offers a place for more experienced musicians to practice with experimenting and expression, while also sharing their talents with beginners. New musicians can approach the Open Music School events as a gateway to more opportunities in the performance world, or just enjoy being in a community with other artists and collaborating on musical adventures.

Our programming



Open Music Lab supports musicians who want to produce their own music, and aids them in creating, recording, and sharing their work. The Lab offers a free, comprehensive music education programme for marginalised communities that might otherwise face barriers of entry into the music industry.

The programme includes drop-in music workshops, where a trained musician, producer, composer, or other music professional will share their music-making skills with the session group. A music production and artistic development course teaches the fundamentals of music theory to intermediate players. In the Beginners Music Production Course, a contemporary music producer guides burgeoning musicians in Ableton Live software so that they can test out their musical interests.

Finally, Open Music Lab's Radio Workshop Series trains participants in radio and podcasting. All are welcome to join Open Music Lab, which wants to offer support to refugees, asylum seekers, people of colour, people who identify as female, non-binary and LGBTQI+, and people with disabilities.



Open Kitchen is a weekly practice that follows the slow food movement, intending to bring people together around a communal meal, cooked and enjoyed by all participants. Open Kitchen works closely with Berlin's refugee and migrant community, and encourages sharing recipes from many different regions and cooking traditions. In the past their cooking group has savoured traditional dishes from Sudan, America, Syria, India, and numerous other countries. Members also celebrate sustainability, using locally sourced ingredients and cooking only vegetarian or vegan meals.

All are welcome to these group feasts, where participants will share and learn recipes that they will prepare together at GSBTB's kitchen, or at outdoor BBQs in warmer weather. The Open Kitchen group has been invited to serve food at numerous venues in the city, including Bite Club, United Street Food, and Berliner Philharmonie.



OPEN
HEARTS
SPACE
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN

Open Hearts Space is constructed to create a comfortable space for those who have experienced difficulties migrating, have vulnerabilities with their refugee status, or are dealing with related trauma. Open Hearts Space approaches trauma-healing with a number of different artistic and bodily forms of expression.

Activities include **Open Art Space**, where materials are provided for participants to paint, draw, sculpt, knit, embroider, or make collages. Volunteers familiar with these crafts can guide group members who are interested in honing a new skill, or participants may just relax with something they know, and meet others with similar interests.

Frauensprachcafé hosts women who want to hone their German language skills in a safe environment, and provides a babysitting service so that participants can learn conveniently and comfortably.

Lockerlassen is another women's group that promotes stress relief and mental health through physical movement, including dance, massage, or walks in parks.

Be my buddy is a support programme for children and teenagers who were forced to flee their country, and includes different kinds of support, from organising birthday parties to translating bureaucratic documents.

Club der Sterne is another group for teenage girls that collaborates with young women to build a space that promotes safety, co-creation, and communication. Girls in Club Der Sterne connect through various activities like painting, dance, making food, and watching movies, sometimes gathering outdoors to swim at lakes or go ice skating.

All **Open Hearts Space** activities foster connectivity between participants and volunteers, and encourage safe exploration of both inner emotions and thoughts, and urban life in Berlin.

Our programming



OPEN
LANGUAGE
CAFÉS
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN

Open Language Cafés are one of the most popular projects at GSBTB, offering a space for learning a language without the rigidity of a classroom environment. At GSBTB sprachcafés, migrants and refugees can learn and practice their German, English, and Arabic language skills with other students. Participants can grab drinks and snacks from the café and converse with others at their table about whatever topics come up.

The café welcomes those practising at all levels, and volunteers who are fluent in the target language attend to each group, answering questions and facilitating conversation. Our language cafés are a great place to hone practical language skills that can advantage migrants and refugees in finding jobs, getting into German universities, and connecting with others in the city, all for free.



COMM
UNITY
HUB
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN

Community Hub is a platform to share new ideas and bring to life creative projects at GSBTB. This programme is free to any volunteer who has an idea or skill they want to share with others in the form of a class or workshop. These courses have included educating in topics like women's reproductive health, yoga, fashion design, office software, theatre, voice activation, photography, and Persian dance.

Anyone who has something to share with the GSBTB community, or wants a space to teach about a given subject, is invited to make this objective a reality, and all are welcome to join these events and learn a new skill or hear about a new topic.

Urban Integration and Intercultural Dialogue

Conventional approaches towards migration focus only on integrating migrants into the host society, and maintain a structure of a giving host society and a taking migrant community. We reject this model in favour of a two-way process, where migrants are recognized as also givers in the community, and locals and migrants are mutually benefitting from and growing with each other.

We are interested in Berlin not just as our home, but also as a case-study to experiment and experience how two-way integration can be successful on an urban scale. At GSBTB, we use intercultural dialogue to foster connectivity and interactions between established and new Berliners.

“Other than being a well structured organisation offering a wide range of programmes and activities to integrate all kinds of newcomers into Berlin, what really stood out for me was that everyone involved with GSBTB shows a tremendous capacity to love and empathise with one another... That’s what’s making this ‘integration’ actually happen, rather than just being an overused word.” **Abrar**

“These oud classes have been a very transforming journey for me, frankly I’ve never connected deeper with a music instrument before. But it’s not just about playing oud, our little group has also grown very fondly in my heart, there’s something very special when people gather together, connect, share and pursue the same goal.” **Danny**



Ten years of community building

Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism

Berlin may be a diverse city, but diversity does not necessarily bring with it inclusion and equality. Berlin has a large migrant population, but even within the migrant population, there are groups which are treated differently by locals and other migrants. These distinctions can be based on race, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, colour, religion, belief, sex, gender, language, sexual orientation, age, health, or other intersecting identities. At GSBTB we want to develop methods that promote inclusion, and we acknowledge that people have different needs and experiences. We work to develop a platform by which migrants can have equitable access to the resources of the city.

“When I had just arrived in Berlin I wanted to get to know people and commit myself to a social cause. What I like is seeing new friendships develop. I have a small group that I know a little better than others and we also meet outside of the lessons. As a result, I might be invited to birthday parties or Syrian meals. By this I have gathered new friends and experiences that I wouldn’t have otherwise.” Silke

“German language café helped me improve my language skills. But even more important than that, I met the most interesting and friendly people here who come from around the world.” Nahia

Education and Skill-Sharing

In many traditional educational practices, the student is positioned as a passive recipient of information which will eventually naturally transform into competence in a field. While we acknowledge the value of this system, we believe that a learner-centred approach boosts individual and collective creativity. In our programmes, learners are co-creators of knowledge and skill sharing. Migrant volunteers are not simply told what to do and how to act in order to better fit in, but rather are given a space to share their ideas and talents with locals and other migrants.

“GSBTB works with refugees to understand their needs... Not only does GSBTB listen to the needs of the refugees, but they also give them the power to organise volunteers to find positive solutions to those needs... The organisation is open and flexible and learns from its clients. GSBTB then spreads awareness of what it’s learned by educating and involving the community in its goal.” Kurtis

“The Arabic Music Workshop was really interesting because we didn’t just talk about oriental music but also about how to build the instrument and which type of wood we should use. For me the response from the audience was the most beautiful thing. I didn’t expect it. I was really motivated after that to talk more about it and answer as many questions as I can.” Oudai



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- September 5, 2012**
Annamaria writes viral Facebook post that launches GSBTB.
- May 2013**
GSBTB wins first prize for innovative ideas for sustainable living together.
- June 21, 2013**
GSBTB officially launches, begins working on initiative to create a platform for volunteers– both locals and migrants– can meet and share ideas with each other.
- September 2013**
GSBTB arranges its first project at Ohlaustraße and Oranienplatz, with refugees and migrants who had self-organised to protest against EU-migration policies
- Autumn 2013**
GSBTB wins a scholarship from the Social Impact Lab Berlin.
- Autumn 2014**
GSBTB hosts its first team-ups for refugees, migrants, and locals to get to know each other and make new inroads in local society.
- May 2015**
GSBTB wins the Blue Bär prize from the city of Berlin in recognition of outstanding civic engagement.
- Summer 2015**
Europe reacts abrasively to an influx of incoming refugees from crisis areas, known as the “summer of migration”. GSBTB finds itself needed more than ever this summer, and redoubles its work of supporting and welcoming refugees and migrants coming to Berlin.
- Autumn 2015**
GSBTB begins new outreach programmes to different refugee shelters across the city, including in the Refugio centre where their new office is located.
- Spring 2016**
GSBTB receives its first institutional funding from Lotto Stiftung. It also wins first prize in the Intercultural Innovation Award, an international recognition from the United Nations and BMW.
- September 2016**
GSBTB sets up a meeting between a group of new refugees and State Secretary Aydan Özogus and Neukölln mayor Fransiska Giffey to discuss the challenges facing the migrant community in Berlin and the steps that need to be taken to ensure their issues are addressed. The Open Music Lab, focused on empowering marginalised communities through the production of electronic music, is founded.
- October 2016**
The King and Queen of Sweden pay GSBTB a call while on their Official State Visit.
- 2017**
GSBTB hosts a team-up with representatives from different political parties in the German Elections to speak with migrants living in Berlin.
- Summer 2017**
GSBTB begins Open Hearts Space.
- Autumn 2017**
GSBTB is involved with organising large cultural and music festivals, like the Fête de la Musique.

Summer 2018

GSBTB leads nation-wide campaign for LinkedIn that promoted the “power of community”. This collaboration drew millions of viewers around Germany’s four largest cities and generates an even larger online presence for GSBTB.

July 2018

GSBTB is invited to present its work at the UN headquarters in New York, alongside civil society initiatives from Bosnia, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

Jan 2019

GSBTB co-launches a newspaper in Arabic on the topic of mental health and trauma-healing to reach more isolated groups who otherwise might not hear about GSBTB’s activities.

April 2019

GSBTB is invited as Barack Obama visits Berlin for the launch of his European programme supporting young leaders and initiatives in Europe.

February 2020

GSBTB Open Hearts Space wins the Hatun Sürücü prize from the Green Party Berlin for its work empowering and supporting women.

March 2020

Coronavirus strikes in Europe, and GSBTB temporarily moves all of its activities online.

June 2020

The Open Music Lab releases its first album “Redox” with tracks produced by the students of the course.

August 2020

GSBTB introduces Senior Management Committee to use a more decentralised and non-hierarchical structure, and abolishes the executive director position.

April 2021

Amidst the pandemic, GSBTB makes a statement by turning down a 200,000 Euro grant from an organisation that wanted to ask for passports/ legal status information from GSBTB project participants.

July 2021

GSBTB launches its Agora podcast, a series of interviews with grassroots initiatives and individuals that make a difference in Berlin’s multicultural scene.

January 2022

GSBTB is invited as regular guest speakers at Harvard University’s Kennedy School semester curriculum to speak about its experiences in sustainable refugee integration.

February 2022

Russian invasion of Ukraine sparks a new wave of refugees coming to Europe and Berlin, one of the largest since World War II. GSBTB mobilises its resources to reach out to new arrivals and help them adapt to life in a new city.

May 2022

GSBTB starts a process to review the last decade’s work and build a strategy for the next ten years.

September 2022

GSBTB turns 10 years old.

Our decision-making and operational structure

GSBTB chose to pursue a decentralised and non-hierarchical model for administration and management. We have a Board of Directors, made up of Silke Georgi, Nikolaus Kohl, and Majid Albunni. These three board members meet every month to make financial and strategic decisions for GSBTB's future.

A larger Members Committee meets at least several times a year to discuss projects and collaboration. The same committee elects the board every two years. We thank our members including Alhag Ali, Ben Osborn, Chris Taylor, Dina Marquardt, Gaby D'Annunzio, Eyad Agha, Fayaz Ghaznavi, Lisa Silva Neves, Wilma Prior, and Yasmeen Almalki.

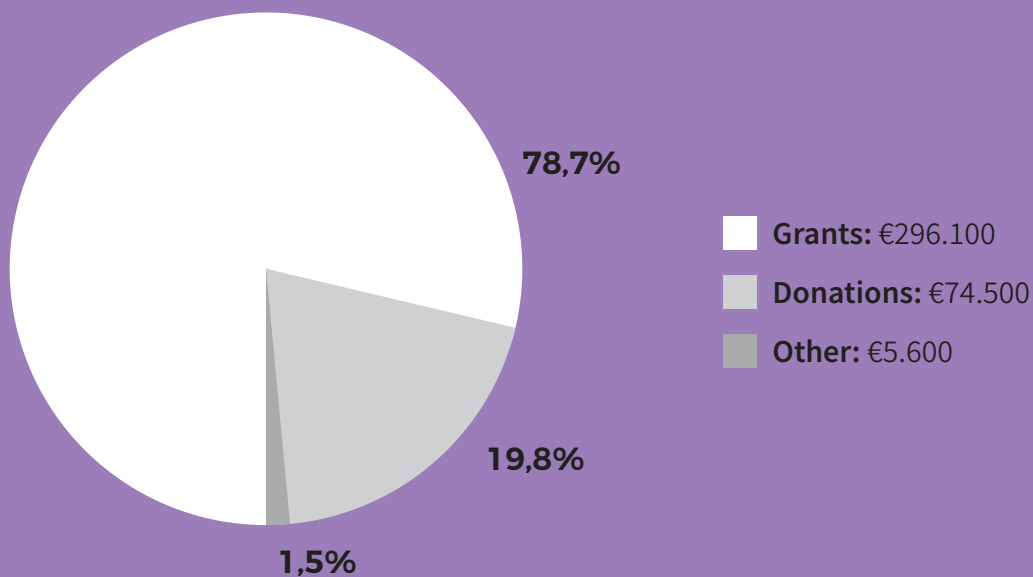
Rather than having a single director or a CEO in charge of the executive management, we have a senior management committee that shares the responsibility between department heads. They are part of the core team that runs the day-to-day operations and are in touch with community members regularly to gather and support project ideas.

Current team members include: Annamaria Olsson, Antonina Stasiuk, Böbe Barsi, Bissan Awwad, Joe Marshall, Lisa Hoffmann, Maya Tavor, Ragıp Zık, Ricarda Bochat, Mine Nang, Stavroula Valachea and Tom Young. Many thanks to all of them!

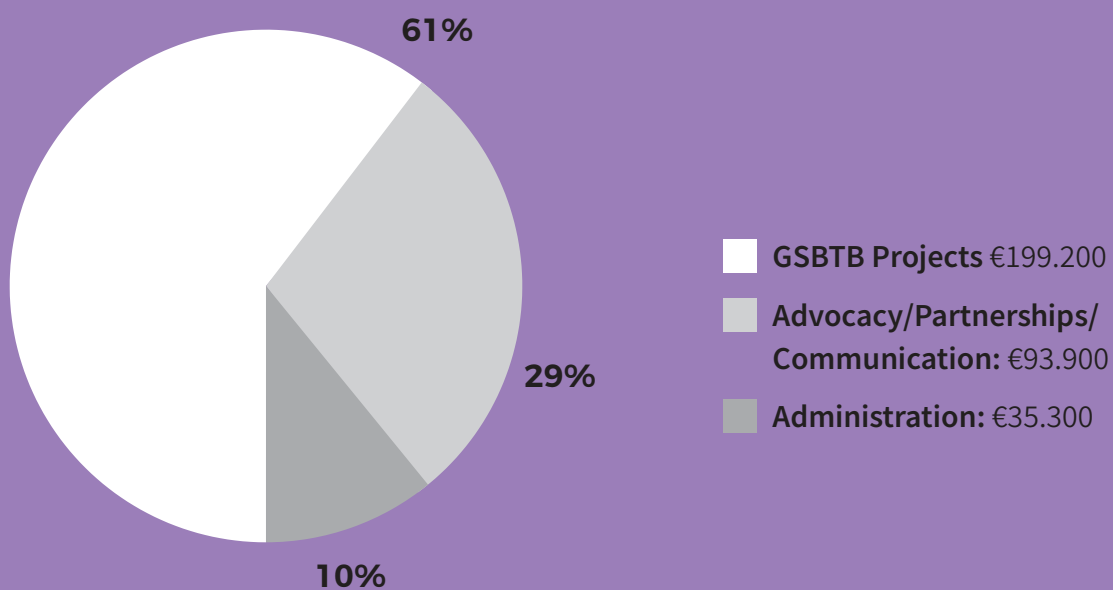
Countless volunteers have helped GSBTB flourish and grow into a resilient community organisation. You are our superstars! Thank you!



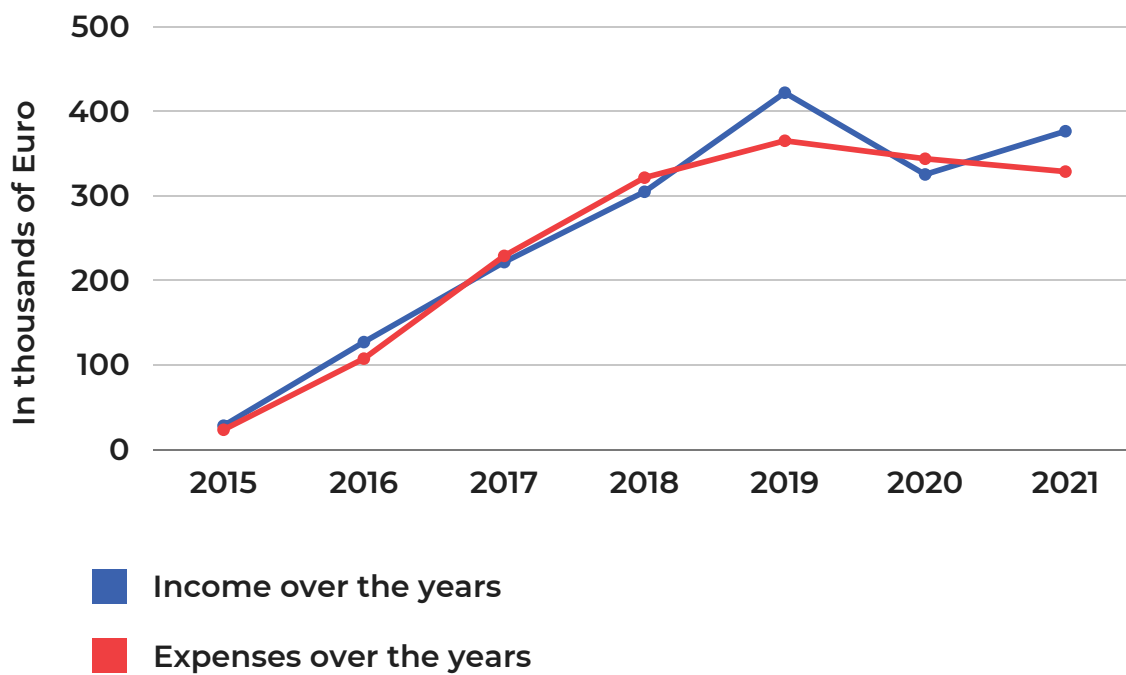
Income in 2021



Expenses in 2021



Historical Figures



Funders and donors

99 Designs by Vista	ChartMogul CMTDE GmbH + Co.KG	Muxmauschenwild GmbH
Ableton AG	Citizens for Europe gUG	Native Instruments
Aktion Mensch e.V.	Deutsche Stiftung für Engagement und Ehrenamt	Nearform Ltd
Allianz Kulturstiftung	Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Landesverband Berlin e.V.	Nike Deutschland GmbH
Amazon	dm GmbH Co. KG	PayPal Holdings Inc.
Anschutz Entertainment Group hilft e.V.	EUDIM-Stiftung für soziale Gerechtigkeit	Popsockets LLC
Apple Inc.	EU DEAR Programme	Qatar Foundation International LLC
Applitoools Ltd	Evil Greed	Refuge
Arena Berlin Betriebs GmbH	Global Whole Being Fund	Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH
B.Z. Ullstein GmbH	Good-Loop Ltd	Shuttleworth Foundation
BAC Berlin-American Club e.V.	Grant Thornton International	Small Improvements Software GmbH
Basecamp	Gwaertler Stiftung	Solidarity Drinks GmbH
Bayerische Motoren Werke AG	HiSolutions AG	SoundCloud
Berlin Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten	Immobilien Scout GmbH	Stiftung Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin
Berlin Music Corporation eG	JDC International Ltd	Stiftung Deutsches Hilfswerk
Berliner helfen e.V.	Knuepfwerk e.V.	Stone Brewing
Berliner Sparkasse	LUSH GmbH	Tishman Speyer
BKK VBU	MILES Mobility GmbH	TOMS Shoes LLC
Brammibals's Donuts van Montfort Jeworutzki GbR	Millie	Ubisoft Blue Byte GmbH
Booking.com	Monkeytown Music GmbH	United Nations Office Project
Buddy Bear Help e.V.	Musicboard Berlin GmbH	... AND the countless private donations and other types of support, big and small.
Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend		



Migrant leadership and empowerment

Beyond just feeling welcome and having a community in a new city, it is helpful for migrated Berliners to establish skill sets for working in a foreign country. We would like to support migrants in developing their confidence and personal goals pertaining to their personal and professional endeavours. There would be programmes offering leadership opportunities, honing language skills, fostering a positive self-image, and practising team-work.

Changing narratives in the corporate sector

We are building a workshop programme with Berlin-based companies who are interested in engaging with the community through collaborative and hands-on projects. Our community members will lead learning sessions for participating companies, including but not limited to: music-production, sustainable cooking, painting and sketching, and foreign language skills. All of the workshops will have a focus on promoting diversity, inclusion, and solidarity through language, art, and other forms of expression.

Expanding the board

We chose to approach decision-making at GSBTB with a decentralised structure. That means not having a single executive director or CEO. Going forward, we want to expand our board even further, and allow for more young refugee/ migrant voices to be heard. We are working with a consultant to bring a new perspective to our decision making process, and we will continue collaborating with our community members to foster their ideas.

Digital community building

Having learned from the process of building a solid network based in Berlin, GSBTB recognises that different people have different accessibility needs in a diverse community.

Besides extending our one-on-one support to those in need, we are determined to make our digital presence stronger by developing a software app and building a digital community that would stay connected and support each other.

Collaborating with partners who are aligned with UN SDGs

GSBTB recognizes that developing sustainable structures are a major factor in bringing communities together, and are a driving force for interconnection and joint action in urban environments. We would like to bring our focus to this issue even further up, and work to collaborate with partner organisations who are aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Scaling

Berlin's Neukölln has been our nest for almost 10 years and it will continue to be so. At the same time, we are considering to scale our model and ready to discuss opportunities in different geographies with good partners.



Volunteer

Contact our project managers to help out with different events or even long-term projects.

Share our message

Let people know about our work and share our events on social media or by word of mouth. The more exposure we have, the better we are able to elevate the voices and positions of migrants in our society.

Invite

Invite a staff or community member to speak at an event or run a workshop with your organisation. We are happy to discuss further collaboration opportunities.

Donate

We are a nonprofit and choose to offer all of our activities free of charge. This is an important part of our mission to foster accessibility and equity. To help us achieve this mission, you can make a tax-deductible donation or let us know about available grants!

Due to GSBTB's charity status, all donations are tax deductible.

By donating 10 euro, you support the participation of a community member to our activities for one week

A 50 euro donation would help us provide running supplies for a day's activity.

100 euro would buy long-lasting equipment for our workshops such as a student guitar.

500 euro would help us maintain a project's day-to-day expenses for a month.

10.000 euro covers a project's expenses and some administrative costs for a year.

40.000 euro would support running a project from A to Z for a year.

Scan the QR code to go to www.gsbtb.org/donate



Account for donations

Account holder: Give Something Back to Berlin e.V.

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BIC/SWIFT Code: GENODEM1GLS

Bank's name: GLS Gemeinschaftsbank

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