



GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO BERLIN



Inclusive Growth: Bridging Communities in Berlin 2024 Annual Report



COMMUNITY
HUB
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN



OPEN
LANGUAGE
CAFÉS
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN



OPEN
HEARTS
SPACE
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN



OPEN
KITCHEN
GIVE SOMETHING
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OPEN
MUSIC
SCHOOL
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN



OPEN
MUSIC
LAB
GIVE SOMETHING
BACK TO BERLIN

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About Give Something Back to Berlin

Give Something Back to Berlin (GSBTB) brings together newcomers and locals to build a more open and inclusive Berlin. We run over 80 weekly activities, engaging around 17.000 participants and volunteers annually from more than 60 countries.

Everybody has a skill to share, and our city will become a better place when we learn from and with each other. Each week, our community comes together to cook, create music and art, explore new languages, and share their skills with one another.

**All our activities are free and accessible to all. Everybody is welcome!
Together, we can make Berlin an even more vibrant and welcoming place.**

Foreword from the Co-Directors

Dear Friends and Supporters of Give Something Back to Berlin,

As we reflect on 2024, a year of significant political and social change in Germany, we are proud that our organisation has remained a steadfast force for civic engagement and social cohesion in Berlin and beyond. But what truly inspires us are the people—the moments of connection, support, and shared purpose that have grown through our work. Seeing these relationships take shape reminds us why this community matters so much.

We experienced multiple challenges throughout the year: Monitoring organisations report growing anti-LGBTQI+ violence, an increase in hate crimes against ethnic and religious minorities, and rising far-right extremism. Amidst these challenges came budget cuts to Berlin's cultural and social institutions that foster communal spaces for societal unity and resilience. Behind these numbers are our friends, neighbours, and community members whose sense of safety and belonging has been shaken. We've listened to their stories, stood alongside them, and witnessed both their fear and their resilience. Their experiences are a powerful reminder of why spaces for connection, support, and solidarity are more important than ever.

Our commitment to fostering an inclusive Berlin remained unwavering. We adapted our programs to address the evolving needs of our community, particularly as discussions around minority communities and migration took center stage in the debates leading up to the 2025 parliamentary elections. In 2024 alone, our monthly activities grew to over 80, bringing 17,000 Berliners together in a celebration of diversity and solidarity.

As we look ahead, GSBTB will keep working to build connections and bring people together. We will keep adapting and finding new ways to make sure Berlin remains a welcoming place for everyone, no matter where they come from.

Thank you for your ongoing support and involvement. Together, we are making Berlin a more inclusive and stronger community.

***With gratitude,
Mine Nang and Ragıp Zık
Co-Directors***



2024 in Numbers

15.000+

Participants

2500+

Volunteers

5200+

**Participants in
German
language café**



400+

**Volunteer hours in
Open Art Space**

44

**Electronic Music
Workshops
and DJ Sessions**

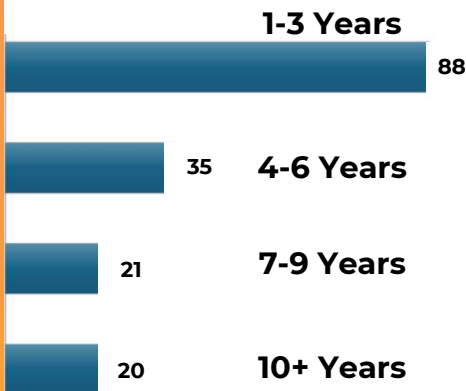
41

**Open Kitchen
Evenings**

3

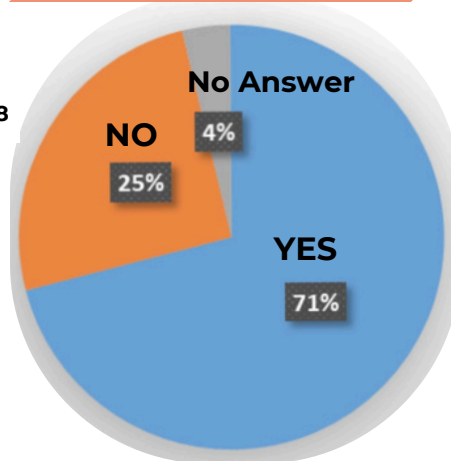
Bands Coached

Time in Berlin



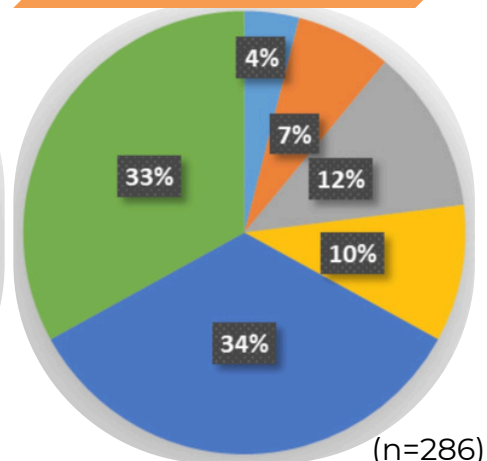
(n=164)

Migration Background



(n=166)

Participants per Project



(n=286)



2024 in Numbers

86%

of the community members

**Gained new skills /
Improved my skills**

85%

of the community members

**Made new friends/
Met new people**



87%

Feel secure in terms of
gender, age, social
backgrounds...

81%

Gain a sense of
Belonging

71%

Activities are useful for
their daily life / work

79%

Can express themselves freely
during the activity

65%

Join the activities
weekly

Programs and Highlights

Open Language Café



The Open Language Cafés create relaxed, welcoming spaces for people to learn and practice languages through real conversations. Rather than traditional lessons, participants chat in small groups over tea, coffee, and snacks, guided by volunteers and shaped by the topics that matter to them.



2024 Highlights

- We launched our first-ever **Language Café Performance Night**, where participants shared stories and poems in a beautiful mix of Sorani, Kurmanji, Tibetan, Arabic, English, German, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, and Portuguese. With support from The Poetry Project, the night was filled with honesty, creativity, and connection.
- **The Arabic Choir** was born out of our Arabic Language Café sessions, offering participants a chance to connect through music and language, and turning shared conversation into shared song.
- Our **German Language Café** reached a new milestone, welcoming over **5.200 participants** throughout the year — a sign of just how many people are looking for informal, supportive spaces to practice language and feel part of a community.

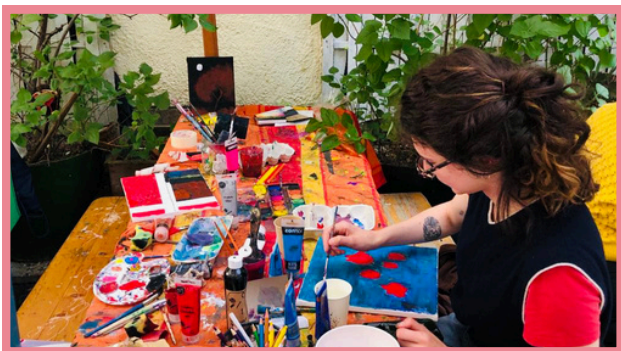
Programs and Highlights

Open Hearts Space

The Open Hearts Space is a creative and caring community that brings people together through shared experiences, mutual support, and artistic expression.



- We organised a joyful Open Hearts Space **summer picnic**, where participants from different initiatives gathered to enjoy food, conversation, and community in the sunshine.
- The Open Art Space went on a boat! In collaboration with **Unkraut Kollektiv's Dreamsplatform** initiative, we spent a day on the water creating art together — from crocheting and painting to bracelet-making and just being present. Even when the rain came, it only added to the experience.



- We ended the year with an exhibition at **Kulturschöpfer**, showcasing works created by participants of the Open Art Space. The exhibition celebrated the spirit of togetherness, while each piece reflected their personal take on the subject.

2024 Highlights

- We strengthened our three core activities, including creating a more sustainable structure for the **Open Dance Space** and building a stable team around **Frauensprachcafé**, giving the group a stronger foundation for regular meetings and mutual exchange.



- We started a collaboration with **Just Go For It**, an initiative supporting women with refugee experience in navigating career paths in Germany — opening up space for knowledge-sharing and empowerment.
- We also began a new **Müttersprachcafé** activity, creating a space for parents to connect in their mother tongues while their kids are nearby.



Programs and Highlights

Open Music Lab

The Open Music Lab empowers people to create music and supports a more inclusive and equitable music scene in Berlin. Through accessible workshops, collaborative projects, and open sessions, the program helps people gain the skills and confidence to shape their sound.

2024 Highlights:

- We launched regular **DJ sessions** in August, giving participants hands-on access to equipment and space to explore mixing, track selection, and technique. With six people per session, everyone gets time to play, learn, and support one another.
- We received the **Tag der Clubkultur award**, a recognition that celebrates our ongoing efforts to make Berlin's music culture more open and diverse.
- As part of Tag der Clubkultur, we hosted a rhythm workshop with **Kimia Bani**, where participants explored Iranian rhythms and the Daf using everyday objects — creating shared soundscapes and new ways of listening.
- We also hosted a celebration at **Kwia**, bringing together our community and supporters in a space that reflects the values we stand for.
- We offered a new 6-week Ableton music production beginner course, hosted by **Nathan Micay**.
- We offered more specialist workshops throughout the year, including sessions and mini-courses on **sampling, Rekordbox, Pure Data, recording, improvisation, hardware-synth**, as well as a DJ peer-networking all-day event in partnership with the collective Un:seen.



Programs and Highlights

Open Music School

This free, volunteer-led program offers instrument lessons, workshops, and performance spaces where people can learn, play, and grow — together.



2024 Highlights:

- Three new bands formed through our Band Project — **Ananas and Her Bananas**, **Summer Sky**, and **Mozzarella Kick** — each shaped by the unique mix of people, sounds, and stories that make up our community.
- Our End-of-Year **Open Music Night** took place at the House of Music in Friedrichshain — the first time we hosted this event outside of our usual Neukölln spaces, and a great chance to share what we do with a wider crowd.



- In October, we hosted a two-day **hip-hop workshop** for teenagers aged 13 to 19, where participants wrote and recorded their own track — a space to experiment with music and express what matters to them. Listen to their song here:
- We ran a summer camp for **youth aged 14 to 18**, giving 13 participants time and space to explore music, meet new people, and have fun making noise together.



Programs and Highlights

Open Kitchen

The Open Kitchen brings people together through the simple, meaningful act of cooking and sharing meals. Each week, participants gather to prepare dishes from around the world, creating space for connection, cultural exchange, and conversation over good food.

2024 Highlights:

- We hosted a series of **Thematic Nights**, where participants shared dishes and stories tied to meaningful cultural occasions — from a Hong Kong-inspired evening to shared meals during Ramadan and an Eid celebration.
- In October, we launched our **Community Cakes** series, a monthly recipe post led by our baking-loving Program Manager, Ricarda. Each recipe comes with a story, starting with the Baklava Orange Rosewater Cheesecake, a sweet fusion of tradition and creativity.
- We took Open Kitchen outside of our regular space, including a hands-on momo cooking session at the **Brücke Museum's Sommerfest** and a discussion as part of Wahlheimat talks — bringing our community spirit into new settings.



Programs and Highlights

Community Hub

The Community Hub is a free platform for anyone to organise and join workshops, classes, and activities to share knowledge and connect with others. Whether it's a one-time session or a long-term offering, GSBTB provides the space, support, and materials to help people bring their ideas to life—no formal qualifications needed, just the willingness to engage.



2024 Highlights

- Weekly **yoga sessions** continued as the Community Hub's most consistent offering, drawing a growing and diverse group of regular participants.
- Nine workshops were hosted throughout the year, covering a range of **creative, practical, and community-focused** topics.
- A four-part workshop series on social engagement was introduced to support and empower community members and volunteers:
 - **Civic Responsibility**
 - **Working in an Intercultural Setting**
 - **Activism and Community**
 - **Better Together: Facilitating Diverse Groups**
- In collaboration with **Mediationszentrum Berlin**, GSBTB facilitated a six-week conflict mediation training open to both community members and staff.



The People of GSBTB

GSBTB is what it is because of the people who shape it every day. The welcoming atmosphere is created by each participant, volunteer, and community member who shares their time, energy, and care. With over 2,000 volunteers involved this year, it's clear that community is at our core. And it's also at our core to listen because we're most proud of how people describe GSBTB and its impact on their lives. So we're handing it over to two community members to tell you in their own words.

Şevval Dilber Yılmaz ***Open Kitchen Volunteer***

Born in Kurdistan/Türkiye, Şevval moved to Germany three years ago and joined GSBTB in February 2024, shortly after relocating to Berlin. Seeking an inclusive, immigrant- and queer-friendly space, she found the Open Kitchen. Her love of cooking and the warm welcome drew her in, and she's since become a regular and also joined guitar classes through the Open Music School.

What is your favourite part about GSBTB?

I would say that it lives up to the promise of inclusivity; it really is a space for everybody. I love how people from different ages, backgrounds, and lifestyles can come together peacefully and share special connections. It is a place where everyone can contribute and receive in different ways and cycles. One can learn a lot from others, cultivate their own fields of interest, and thrive in the community.

What does GSBTB mean to you?

GSBTB, for me, is a safe space, which is something I feel was missing in my life for so long. I think the first time I ever felt the power of community was by joining the queer and feminist solidarity groups in Türkiye. Life can get really tough, especially for people from marginalized groups. A community does not solve your problems, but it makes the process much more bearable. The amazing community in GSBTB made me smile on the days I felt it was not possible to do so. Open Kitchen sessions, music courses, community gatherings, events, etc., have become something to look forward to in the last year.



The People of GSBTB

Vanessa Morrison

Open Music School Participant

Vanessa, born in Boston, Massachusetts, joined GSBTB in September 2024 through the Open Music School. She began her musical journey with guitar and bass, later expanding to piano and drums. Discovering OMS was one of her biggest surprises of 2024.



What does GSBTB mean to you?

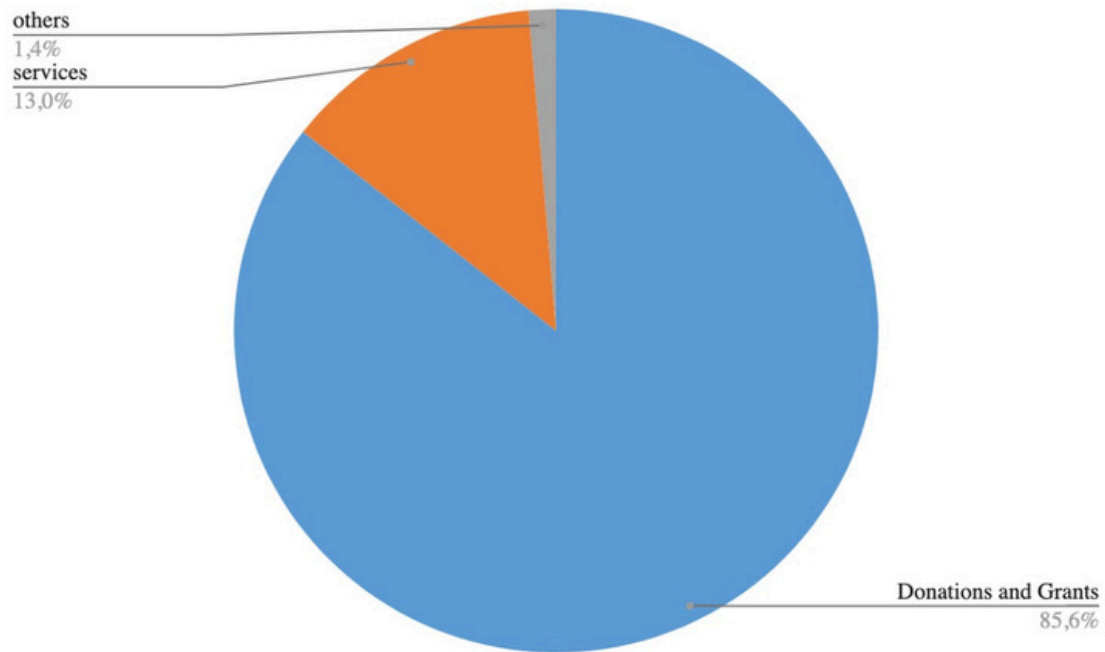
GSBTB means so much to me, since Berlin can be a difficult city to navigate and to find a community of belonging. I feel GSBTB allowed me to find something special and meaningful, something that clicked with what I didn't know I was searching for. It means a place to learn a new instrument, reacquaint with former ones, meet new people, and be somewhere without worrying about being judged for who I am, surrounded by people who practice the invaluable skill of trying, searching, and learning.

I feel the impact through the organisers, teachers, and volunteers who contribute their time, energy, and expertise to the classes I take. Their encouragement and enthusiasm are infectious, it makes me want to keep coming back, discovering, and learning. The programs attract people who care about your progress and are putting something positive out into the world. We all come from different backgrounds and experiences, but we help one another, share knowledge, and come together in a way that's truly inspiring.

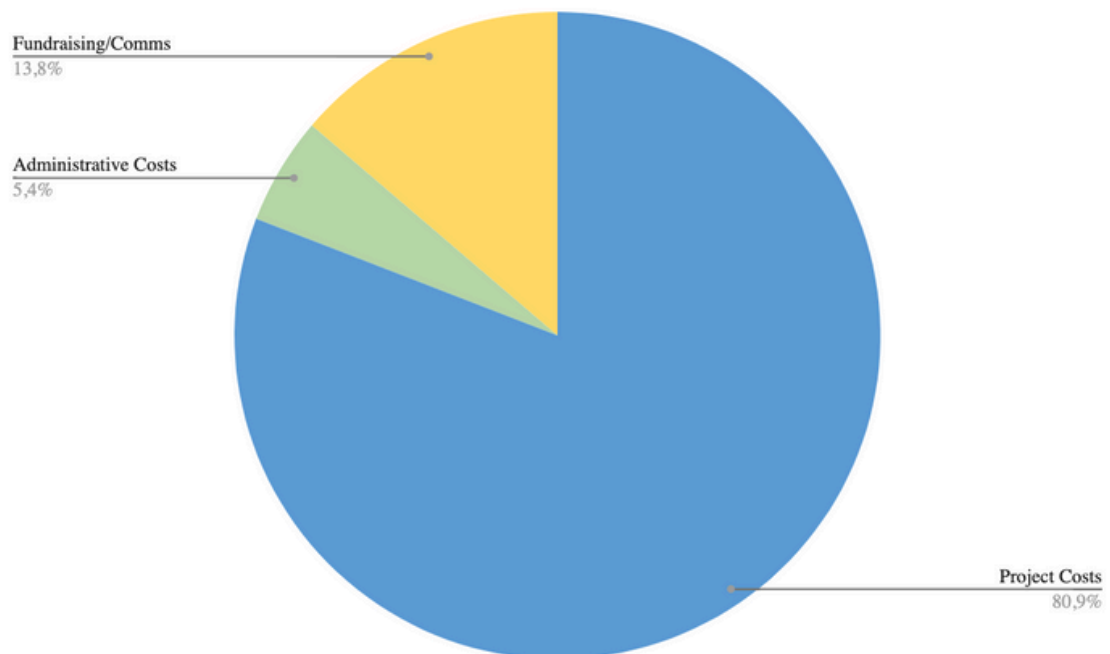
Can you share a moment when you truly felt the impact of GSBTB's work?

Financial Overview

In 2024, we had an income of 628.118,39 € and expenses of 564.629,92 €. Our income is coming from:



Our expenses are divided into:



As a signatory of Initiative Transparente Zivilgesellschaft, we ensure transparency on how donations support our activities and programmes.

Partners

In 2024, we worked with partners from various sectors to secure and scale our work. From financial support to volunteering opportunities, booking a workshop with us, or engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives, there are many ways to get involved with our work.

We thank our donors, partners, and community for their support. We couldn't do this without them!

24 Gute Taten	Kreuzberger Kinderstiftung
7Mind	Kulturschöpfer e.V.
Ableton	Kwia
Aga Khan Foundation	TBB-LKMO
Aktion Mensch	Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung
Allianz Kinderhilfsfond	Lottostiftung Berlin
Anna Lindh Foundation	Lululemon
Anschutz Hilft e.V.	Martin Roth Initiative
Ashoka	Mediationszentrum Berlin
Audible	Migrationsbeirat Neukölln
BAMF	Migrationsrat Berlin e.V.
Bard College	Native Instruments
BeKi	Noisy Rooms
Bezirksamt Neukölln	Novation
BGZ	Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband
Brücke Museum	Refuge
Buddy Bear e.V.	Refuge Worldwide
Candy Crush	Refugio/Berliner Stadtmission
Claussen Simon Stiftung	RTL Stiftung
Club Commission / Tag der Clubkultur	SAP
Deutsche Stiftung für Ehrenamt und Engagement	Social Impact
Duolingo	SPI
EUSBSR	Stiftung Berliner Sparkasse
Fernsehlotterie	Stiftung Hardegen
Fonds Soziokultur	Terre des Hommes
Fritz Henkel Stiftung	The Poetry Project
GLS Bank	Thomann
Goldmann Sachs Gives	Unkraut Kollektiv
ICJA	Volksbank
Just Go For it	WahlheYmat e.V.
Kammergericht Berlin	WithCompany
	Worcester Polytechnic Institute

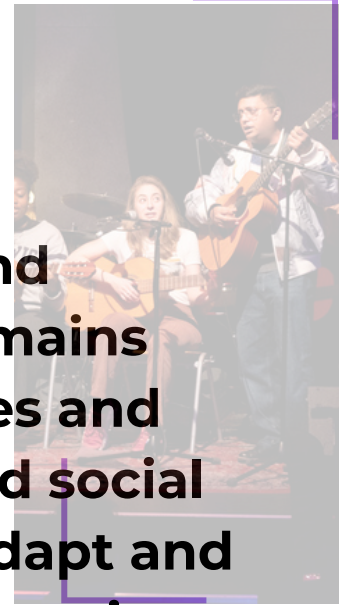
Thank you also to the individual donors from our community. Your support means the world to us.

Looking Ahead

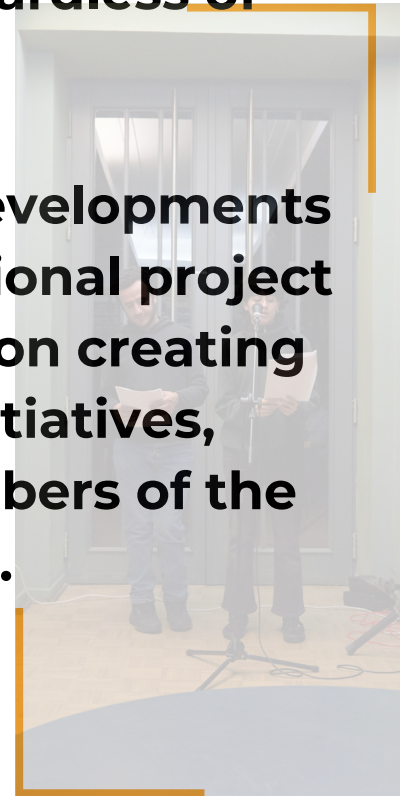


GSBTB in 2025 and Beyond

As we look ahead, GSBTB remains committed to building bridges and fostering civic engagement and social cohesion. We will continue to adapt and innovate, ensuring that Berlin remains a welcoming home for all, regardless of background.



2025 will bring exciting new developments for us. We will move into additional project spaces in Neukölln and focus on creating even more projects and initiatives, especially for youth and members of the LGBTQI Community.



***We are excited for
the future!***

Get Involved

The more exposure we have, the better we are able to elevate the voices and positions of refugees and migrants in our society.

Drop by one of our activities. All our events are free, and everybody is welcome. You can also get involved in many other ways:

Volunteer with us

Join us for a one-time event or volunteer with us long-term. Contact us at hello@gsbtb.org, and tell us about your interests and availability.

Share our message

Let people know about our work and share our events on social media or by word of mouth. Find us on LinkedIn and Instagram

Book us for a team event

Looking for a unique experience for your team? Consider booking us for a team event! Whether it's a cooking session with our vibrant community or an introductory DJ-ing class, we offer activities that foster connection and creativity.

Donate

Help us foster accessibility and equity by making a tax-deductible donation or informing us about available grants! Your contribution directly impacts our community:

€20 enables a community member to participate in one activity

€50 provides art supplies for one week

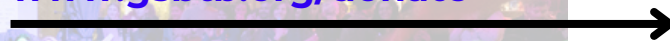
€150 purchases long-lasting equipment for our workshops, such as a student guitar.

€1.000 helps maintain a project's day-to-day expenses for a month.

€15.000 covers a project's expenses and administrative costs for three months.

€60.000 supports running a programme 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.

IBAN: DE41 4306 0967 1151 2407 00

BIC/SWIFT Code: GENODEM1GLS

Bank's name: GLS Gemeinschaftsbank

Appendix

Our Staff :

Mine Nang Co-Director Community and Programming
Ragıp Zik Co-Director Development and Communications

Antonina Bajer Project Coordinator
Antonina Stasiuk Project Manager, Open Heart Space
Joe Marshall Project Manager, Open Music School
Matheus Soares Lopes Project Coordinator
Ophélie Kauffmann Project Manager, Open Music Lab
Ricarda Bochat Project Manager, Open Kitchen

Angela Mora Communications Manager
Christin Bohnke Partnerships Manager
Felipe Sáez Riquelme Finance Manager
Maria Castrillo Communications and Partnerships Coordinator
Saber Nikzad Bundesfreiwilliger

Our Board :

Silke Georgi Head of Board
Majid Albunni Deputy Chair
Lisa Indlekofer Treasurer
Barbara Vid
Dana Dimant
Edris Vavi
Mahmoud Mandou
Muireann ní Sheanlaioich
Rahul Srivastava

Contributors to this report:

Angela Mora
Christin Bohnke
Maria Castrillo
Maddalena Tartarini
Megumi Yamada

Interviewees

Şevval Dilber Yılmaz
Vanessa Morrison

Thank you to **Uğur Elhan** for providing the research on our community on page 5.



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For questions and comments about this report, please contact Christin Bohnke at hello@gsbtb.org



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