City report: Social innovations in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (Berlin)

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1.   LOCAL BACKGROUND OF THE SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Social innovations do not come "out of the blue" but capitalize on different resources, e.g. human capital and public support, available at the locality where they are developed and put into practice. Moreover, social innovations, perceived as indicators and messengers, respond to social problems occurring at a particular time and place. They point to local areas and issues blocked off from change and inform about local opportunity structures to tackle social problems and needs. Hence, new routine-breaking services or approaches of addressing users say a lot about the specific nature of a location, e.g. whether its political system is open and participatory instead of being a closed shop driven by elites or whether certain policies are realized by collaborative working and networking instead of uncoordinated action. By applying this perspective on social innovations to the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg in Berlin, one gets a rather mixed image of a locality that describes itself as young, multicultural, creative and "always on the move". Indeed, Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg represents a unique mixture of different historical legacies, streams of thinking, social movements and communities that overlap, intermingle and collide with each other at the same time.

Merged into one district in 2001, Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg is characterized by the East-West-divide that brought along different groups of residents, neighbourhoods and urban planning approaches. Friedrichshain was East Berlin's workers district with industry premises alongside the Spree river and huge (classical old-style) housing stocks. Kreuzberg, having traditionally also a proletarian character, became the assigned home of West Berlin's guest workers and a homeland of creative bohemians pursuing an alternative subculture much distant from the "normal" labour market. From these colourful histories emanated (at least) two discourses that still have an impact on today's local policies. First, a discourse on solidarity, social coherence and a fair share of opportunities for everybody in the district which leads to a simple question: What holds a diverse, both in terms of origins and capabilities, urban society together? Second, an economic discourse that centres on the question how to re-industrialize the district and how to spread an entrepreneurial spirit among its residents.

Today's answers of these challenges are manifold. With regard to urban coherence, many local pundits conjure the integrative strength of the *Kiez*, a German synonym for well-functioning neighbourhoods based on reciprocal solidarity. In order to preserve those "social habitats", policymakers attempt to spread an attitude of "togetherness" and cooperation among local stakeholders and inhabitants. When it comes to the economic development of the district, hopes emanate from companies, symbolizing the spirit of a new creative industry, such as *Universal Music* and *MTV* that based their headquarters in Friedrichshain's old factory sites. Other strategies focus primarily on an upturn of the local economy, e.g. those that stimulate entrepreneurial skills among migrants and job seekers by combining the issue of (social) integration with local trends such as tourism and gastronomy.

A key reference point for social innovations in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg is the concept of spatial policy interventions dividing the urban space in manageable units and areas of coordinated action. Four of our six social innovations introduced below conceptualized their services by taking the particularities of certain urban and social spaces – housing blocks, quarters and neighbourhoods – into account. However, for an analysis of this approach two different dimensions have to be separated: First, the professional dimension at the level of social workers and administrators after which spatial policy interventions, involving all local stakeholders, are a panacea against urban decay that is more promising than uniform programs administrated single-handedly by the authorities. Second, "spatial

policies" are combined with debates of public self-assurance. By addressing local identities and strengthening people's local patriotism (e.g. through campaigns such as "We in Kreuzberg") a sense of belonging to the district should be enforced.

However, in order to avoid a simplistic picture that portrays Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg euphemistically as a dynamic breeding ground for social innovations it is worth to notice that there is a growing social division among its residents. On the one hand, there is an ongoing influx of well-educated better-offs, such as cosmopolitans, young professionals, silver agers and double-income households. This clientele, having little or no interest in local politics and social problems, choose the district for life and living due to its central location in Berlin and its cultural richness. On the other hand, there are native residents and rather ordinary people – immigrants, bohemians, single parents and GDR-socialized seniors – with low income who are becoming ever more marginalized in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. This diverse clientele of vulnerable people, being hard to reach by traditional social policy programs, is increasingly addressed "in a different way" by innovative projects and service arrangements as we will show in this report. Of course, this differs according to policy fields and groups. However, certain target groups, e.g. single mothers or youngsters without a school degree, have cumulated problems and therefore need comprehensive support packages.

By and large, we found many routine-breaking service arrangements and projects in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. We thereby confirm the self-image of many local activists describing their scene as Berlin's "spearhead of an active civil society". However, actual contributions of "active citizens" and third sector organizations concern foremost the issues of labour market integration and childcare but lack innovations dealing with the most urgent problem of the district: the scarcity of social housing. This imbalance goes back to the fact that in Germany housing policies are determined by the federal government, whereas the Berlin Senate (state level/*Land*) and the districts (local level) have merely some leeway to decide how to allocate and manage existing housing stocks. Structural developments such as substantial investments in new (social) housing stocks are beyond the power of Berlin's government (Senate and district). In this respect, the housing market differs much from other policy fields that leave space for decentralized solutions. As a consequence, potential innovators, e.g. initiatives of residents or neighbourhood groups, are so far limiting their activism to creative forms of protest and public presence. To put it in a nutshell: Rising rents and the gradual replacement of the poor (immigrants, single parents, the unemployed) are hot public issues in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg that have triggered an ongoing debate on urban development and social cohesion but have not yet led to innovations in social housing policies.

The six innovations introduced below were chosen according to the following criteria: First, we applied a broad and neutral definition of "innovation", indicating merely new ways to deal with social problems while abstaining from predefined (normative) goals. Second, we distinguish between different drivers, such as managerialism, participatory governance and/or forms of progressive professionalism, e.g. schools opening up to the community or social workers bridging their services with local support networks. We are convinced that innovations in the realm of local social policy consist necessarily of both, a certain project and an underlying background approach. The respective scale of innovations and their future developments depend yet on another factor: the implementing power of the stakeholder(s) who put(s) them into practice and the relationship to the dominating policy coalition. This tension is (very often) reflected in practical and symbolical levels of innovations. On the one hand, innovations are about looking at concrete offers and services; on the other hand, they are also about being engaged in the dissemination of messages about the wider meaning and visions of their practices and offers.

2. WELFARE INNOVATIONS IN THE THREE POLICY FIELDS

The six social innovations to be presented in this report were chosen on the basis of background interviews with local stakeholders and own investigations of available resources (newspapers, websites, policy documents). The choice of innovations, ranging from urban revitalization programs and new forms of vocational training to family-minded policies, remains exemplary and incomplete. Each example stands for similar innovative projects in the district that we cannot introduce for reasons of space. The portraits of the six innovations, introduced by a comprehensive description, are organised around three basic themes: 1) types of services and ways of addressing users; 2) internal organisation and modes of working; 3) embeddedness of the project in the local welfare system. For each case study, we draw on at least two interviews – one with the respective social innovator and one with experienced users and/or local observers of the innovation. The innovations are presented in the context of policy fields. We start with two innovations in urban revitalization, continue with two projects in the field of labour market integration and finish with two cases of family-focussed policies. In practice, however, most of our examples pursue integrated actions plans. They thus belong to more than one policy field and address more than one group we focus on, for instance by bridging urban renewal with the stimulation of entrepreneurialism.

2.1. Neighbourhood Management (NM)

2.1.1. Short description

The innovative core of NM is combining spatial and urban planning with sectorial policy interventions in a defined territory (see above). Hence, the background approach of NM is mainly about networking among stakeholders and the pooling of local resources within districts with special development needs. The project is financed by a federal-regional program called "Socially Integrative City". We have studied NM by a concrete example in *Kreuzberg Zentrum*, an area that is home to some 8,000 inhabitants. The majority of people have immigration background. In this area NM treats persisting local problems in a new way – such as high numbers of youngsters without a school degree, immigrant quotas in kindergarten and schools of up to 90 percent, and a milieu that lacks overall access to decent education and jobs. The NM team, consisting of a full-time manager and two employees, facilitate contacts and exchange between local authorities, service providers (TSOs), cultural associations, and residents in order to support informal cooperation and non-bureaucratic help. For instance, the NM invites headmasters from local schools and kindergartens on a regular basis, in order to nudge a discussion on comprehensive educational concepts for the district. However, it is worth noting that NM does not follow blueprints or best practice models that are prescribed top-down but sets its own agenda in each neighbourhood.

2.1.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

As a low-threshold, neighbourhood located and participative project Neighbourhood Managements invite everybody – inhabitants, communities, professionals and the local economy – within a locality to contribute to urban revitalization and social cohesion. By providing the infrastructure (rooms, resources, etc.) and organisational guidance, NM teams address inhabitants of social hotspots such as *Kreuzberg Zentrum* as "owners of their neighbourhood" and encourage them to participate in local projects. Many different levels of involvement exist though. For instance, "being involved" may merely mean to

take part in a photo competition searching for powerful pictures of living together in the *Kiez*. More commitment is asked from youngsters experiencing themselves as graffiti artists or residents devising a campaign to keep the neighbourhood clean and safe. Beyond such creative-practical hands-on-offers, locals are addressed as people who associate and develop their own small-scale offers. To realize promising ideas such as a workshop on intercultural learning or the planting of flowerbeds in concreted backyards, the NM has an ad-hoc fund at its disposal (up to 1,000€ per project). Furthermore, local inhabitants are called to become part of the actual management of the neighbourhood. As elected members of so-called neighbourhood boards they have a say on the issues to be dealt with and how budgets are distributed. All in all, the NM approach addresses people as volunteers and co-producers for the common public good in their neighbourhoods. In practice, however, Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg's NMs struggle to find sufficient people competent enough to participate in boards or in conceptual workshops. "People in the neighbourhood need consultancy and support to master their life. Only a few are able to contribute something to the community", states Werner Oehlert, a local expert for urban planning.

2.1.3. Internal organisation and modes of working

If one looks at NMs staffing levels it becomes clearer how dependent they are on volunteer contributions. The NM *Kreuzberg Zentrum* has only three employees: a fulltime manager and two half-time office workers. Other NMs in Kreuzberg, responsible for larger areas, operate with up to five employees. The core of the management work is to find the right balance between three main tasks of the NM: to be a well-known, low-threshold meeting point in the *Kiez*; to support residents with daily-life problems through easy-to-access-services ranging from after-school homework supervision to consultancy for various social and bureaucratic problems (employment, housing, care etc.); and to build up networks among local stakeholders. Local people – kids, youngsters, adults, families and women – who visit the NM at its friendly, café-like office receive bundled information about existing service offers in the neighbourhood, of which only few are provided by the NM. "We don't need more offers but more knowledge on services that are already there", says Laila Atrache-Younes, manager of the NM *Kreuzberg Zentrum*.

Networking activities include also exchange and time for reflection with (bordering) NMs in Kreuzberg. However, the real challenge for NM staff is to keep up an infrastructure where all stakeholders are in regular contact and learn from each other through mutual exchange. In this respect, good networking means e.g. to facilitate exchange between the biggest local housing company and a parents initiative or organizing coaching for pupils with learning deficits. In this real case, the housing company provided free office rooms in order to support the initiative. In other cases, though, an effective steering of networks is more difficult, particularly collaboration around issues such as childcare, schooling and the composition of classes. So far, solutions do not exist how to avoid so-called "left-over-schools" where up to 100 per cent of the pupils are immigrants and where the quota of dropouts without school certificate is out of proportion. "Headmasters of those schools have more urgent things to do than reasoning about a problem that needs foremost structural reforms in the allocation of school places", reports Ms Atrache-Younes.

2.1.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

Despite having a "good grip on reality" in the neighbourhoods, NMs' impact on the governance of local welfare systems is limited. NMs are in an odd situation: as junctions of thematic networks they accumulate detailed knowledge about social problems such as segregated schools or long-term unemployment. Nevertheless, NMs are not "real players" in the local governance system able to change structures that do not work in practice.

Instead, they are "add-on institutions" working parallel to traditional authorities and welfare providers. While the latter mostly still operate alongside sectors and policy fields, NMs are insulated counterpoints to the pillarisation of welfare and urban planning. They provide non-bureaucratic support, work in cross-sectorial networks, and involve citizens at eye-to-eye level. The crux of this innovative approach is that NMs, being not fully recognised by politics, lack big-scale results and are practically not allowed to take up hot policy issues. In this respect, the problem of increasing rents in Kreuzberg is a telling example: NMs, financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), the federal state and the *Land* Berlin, lacked the clout to bring the burning issue to the agenda. Instead, a group of protesting tenants, camping permanently at the *Kottbusser Tor*, has become a political player in the debate on social housing. "NMs are determined to help-out where traditional social policy has failed. Political recommendations or even critical comments are not requested by the contracting entity", says Werner Oehlert, missing in particular a stronger interlocking between NMs and sectorial policies: "Cooperation among schools is good but without support from the competent authority it is nothing." In summary, the innovative character of NMs is weakened by their low impact on the local political system that forces NMs to leave out issues that move people. Vice versa, NMs' actual work becomes neither evaluated nor benchmarked while public claims concerning the approach are not communicated effectively.

2.2. Princesses Gardens

2.2.1. Short description

The so-called Princesses Gardens in Kreuzberg offer a complex project that attempts to change people's mindsets on a broader scale than most of the pragmatic solutions in the realm of welfare. As a part of the international urban gardening movement, the highly attractive project pursues an alternative approach how to use urban space ecologically and sustainably. Without having concrete short-term goals (such as lowering unemployment among youngsters or caring for certain people in need), Princesses Gardens' activists make a difference on the symbolic level. By creating a huge urban garden area on former waste land in the centre of the district, the project demonstrates that cooperation and common learning among a heterogeneous urban citizenry is possible. Since July 2009, the Princesses Gardens community accomplished a.o. the farming of agriculture crops, the building of greenhouses and the creating of flowerbeds. According to this approach, raising public concern, attention and deliberation is of key importance. Therefore, Princesses Gardens, despite its superficial emphasis on manual labour in the urban locality, succeed also in building bridges to major global discourses such as climate change and sustainability. Hence, participants get strengthened practically by making their neighbourhood a greener place to live in and as citizens who claim a say in the usage of their urban environment. From a social policy perspective, the project contributes to (local) measures of vocational training: the activists attempt to develop new job profiles in cooperation with employers in the fields of gardening and farming.

2.2.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

According to Robert Shaw, manager of the Princesses Gardens, the project aims at informal education of people through empowerment. Looking at Princesses Gardens' relationship to users in practice, though, value-loaded terms as "empowerment" or "education" are slightly misleading. Instead of building a movement of urban gardeners, the project pursues a rather soft approach. Residents' interest in questions of ecology and sustainability should be attracted while engaging in more pleasant activities such as visiting the garden café or chatting with gardeners. Princesses Gardens are a green recreational oasis where "visitors" should come in contact with each other easily.

Characterized by a hustle and bustle of activities, however, they are a classic hands-on project in need of volunteers. Therefore, the "hard core" of the project team, consisting of nine employed workers, continuously involves visitors in small-sized manual activities such as watering plants or sowing seeds. With the help of those "feeding" strategies and the wish of many visitors' to contribute to the garden in one way or another, an extended group of around 70 urban gardeners emerged. "These are the people who take responsibility for the garden", says Mr Shaw, describing his own task as "bringing different people together". For Mr Shaw and his team it is the art of matching volunteers that guarantees success. Therefore, they combine volunteer's different strengths and assets in order to facilitate a situation of mutual learning. In practice, work groups that consist of unequal team mates such as an older Russian woman with a lot of gardening experience, an ecologically interested unemployed hippie and a designer are not an exception but the rule. "Ideally, the old Russian woman learns German, the hippie a more structured way of working and the designer some basics about gardening, while they all create, more or less as a side effect, a vertical plant-bed", states Mr Shaw. Such an approach of "common learning without a teacher" requires intrinsic motivation and pleasure from volunteers, something that Princesses Gardens evoke by providing a relaxing and stimulating environment. Additionally, the project offers a range of practical learning events for kindergartens, schools and universities to teach practical knowledge of seeding and growing plants. Thereby, international discourses on ecological food and healthy lifestyles become easily combined with various do-it-yourself activities such as harvesting different kinds of potatoes and using them for cooking meals.

2.2.3. Internal organisation and modes of working

The idea of the Princesses Gardens goes back to Robert Shaw and Marco Clausen, today's managers of the project. As self-declared "non-experts" in the field of gardening, the founding fathers of the project cultivated an approach of cooperation, unconventional action and continuous learning (Clausen 2012: 17). Shaw and Clausen did a lot of lobbying in the district for their idea which they had presented in a detailed business plan. They finally got the opportunity to lease an unused 6,000-squaremeter-area in the middle of Kreuzberg. Until today, three key convictions have been driving Princesses Gardens: first, the garden should be a "vehicle for social processes" (ibid.); second, activists should develop an experiment-friendly do-it-yourself-mentality; third, the garden should be a non-profit project. According to these guiding principles, modes of internal organisation and working have been developed. Backed by *Nomadisch Grün*, a non-profit limited liability company, Princesses Gardens have emerged through a number of consecutive projects involving up to 2,500 volunteers per year since June 2009.

In retrospective, it is the project's finely tuned balance between hands-on activities, educational and cultural events in cooperation with local partners that turned Princesses Gardens into a Berlin-wide innovation. In addition to the step-by-step expansion of the garden (up to more than 400 beds and a potato field), the project team successfully spread the concept of urban gardening to the local public and beyond through workshops such as "Urban farming and local empowerment". Princesses Gardens' mixed structure of activities is also owed to its organisational form: as a non-profit-organisation, *Nomadisch Grün* is obliged to invest 51 per cent of its resources into public education and nature protection, while 49 per cent may go to business activities such as the garden café or the selling of vegetables. Since recently, Princesses Gardens' employees have been offering their skills to schools, companies and public institutions interested in courses about urban gardening or concrete actions to green-up their premises. All in all: the whole endeavour is a good example for a social enterprise in practice.

2.2.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

After three years of existence, Princesses Gardens have become "everybody's darling" in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. The project managers succeeded in cultivating the image of a "hip location" where a cosmopolitan Berlin-feeling, a good degree of non-conformism and common ecological learning come together. Hence, cooperation and joint ventures with Princesses Gardens, e.g. cooking workshops for school classes, are much requested. Moreover, the project gains much attention from local politics and authorities. Before local elections in November 2011 major politicians visited the location, praising its contribution to the liveability and social coherence of the district. However, social-cultural acknowledgment did not pay off in terms of real material support. So far, the lease with the local property fund (*Liegenschaftsfond*) is limited to five years. An extension of the contract is uncertain, due to the fund's interest to sell the lucrative area most profitable – a common practice in the face of Berlin's enormous public debts. Currently, a local campaign called "Let it grow!" gathers signatures for the maintenance of the garden. Activists, mostly stemming from the wider community of Princesses Gardens, argue that the project has a "pilot character" for innovative urban development policy, and demand a public debate on who owns public space and how it should be used best. In this vein, Princesses Gardens have a strong implicit impact on local politics: they put an issue on the political agenda that was neglected by the mantra of budget consolidation. Mr Shaw's expectations concerning local authorities' commitment to support Princesses Gardens' future are low, however: "I am realistic enough for not claiming money. I only ask for a long-term perspective for projects like ours that are exploited by the city council in terms of city marketing but neglected in practice."

2.3. Job Explorer

2.3.1. Short description

The "Job Explorer" project aims at the creation of new ways of job orientation of youngsters by paving personal links between pupils and employers instead of between schools and companies. Hence, the project claims to establish a lasting, trust-based dialogue between tomorrow's jobseekers and potential employers that could be regarded as innovative. A multiphase concept introduces pupils aged 13 to 17 step by step to the working world, starting already three years before they finish school, aiming to replace the currently common obligatory internships that quite often represent merely a desultory attempt to bring pupils closer to the job market. Instead, "Job Explorer" invites young people to discover a certain job practically, while local companies have the opportunity to voice their specific demands to career starters. Thereby, the project avoids explicit references to stigmatizing issues such as "precariousness" and/or "underclass". Youngsters are not a priori perceived as "the jobless of the future". Instead, mutual prejudices should be eliminated, e.g. those youngsters might have towards employment in general and those employers might have against young people from less educated or long-term unemployed backgrounds. Participating pupils need a gentle introduction to possible fields of work and labour virtues; otherwise they may end up as lifelong clients of job agencies.

2.3.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

Job Explorer addresses pupils aged 13 to 17 in secondary schools. Core of the project is an early introduction of youngsters to different jobs, vocational training schemes and the labour market. Thereby participants pass a multi-stage program starting from scratch. In the first phase, Job Explorer teams ask pupils which jobs they know and where they want to work in the future. This "reality check" takes place in a playful manner that encourages

participants to discover job opportunities in their local environment. By exploring "real jobs", e.g. bus driver, baker or car mechanic, helps pupils to uncover partly unrealistic expectations (e.g. concerning potential earnings). In short, the first phase serves as an introductory course to the working world – a new territory for many pupils due to the lack of employment of their parents.

The second phase addresses participants more directly as "future workers". Employers visit schools and brief youngsters on what they ask from their trainees (e.g. reliability and persistence) and give them the opportunity to get to know a job in practice. Due to this strategy of "sticks and carrots" pupils feel taken seriously and may develop a "post-school" perspective. In the third phase things become even more concrete: during so-called "experience days" participants visit different companies for two hours after school once a week. According to a local car dealer who supports the Job Explorer project this phase is indicative for companies searching for trainees: "Whether somebody shows commitment and fits for a job becomes obvious very quickly." Finally, pupils in tenth grade pass a final phase: they complete a four-day-traineeship at a chosen company during their vacations. All in all, the Job Explorer project attempts to reduce pupil's distance from the labour market due to consecutive phases of discovering and learning. Thereby, local employers play a pivotal role by co-addressing youngsters as future employees.

2.3.3. Internal organisation and modes of working

The Job Explorer team consists of three people responsible for the "Job Explorer Academy", "Job Explorer activities" and "public relations". Three guiding principles make up the core of the project's work philosophy: generating trust and mutual understanding as well as sustainable relationships between youngsters, schools and local companies. The Job Explorer team started their work with an extended assessment of needs by profiling a good amount of local schools and companies in advance. Based on this groundwork, cooperation with 9 (out of 17) schools and the local association of entrepreneurs were established — something that has not existed before in the district. "Every school and every company is different", states Michaela Westphal from Job Explorer, describing her own job as "translation work" and "match-making" between schools and the local economy. Particularly companies searching for trainees but lacking resources to acquire them appreciate support to improve their relationships with schools. In this respect, support provided by the Job Explorer is much welcomed. Services comprise of the coordination of contact between schools and employers and of precise recommendations how to treat pupils with respect and effectively strengthen their self-esteem — an issue to which the Job Explorer approach is in particular sensitive. Participating schools, obliged to offer courses for job orientation, value Job Explorer's support free of charge. However, the project's key partners, playing a decisive role for its success or failure, are the pupils themselves. Therefore, modes of working concern also pedagogical and didactical aspects. Here, finding a sound balance between an attractive format and the much needed teaching of competences turned out to be the main challenge — even more in face of competing offers such as "speed dating events" for applicants and providers of vocational training.

2.3.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

Since its start in 2010, Job Explorer has been embedded in the local welfare system in two different phases. Within the first phase (2010-12), the project team enjoyed the privilege of being relatively autonomous due to its pilot character. Sponsored by a special funding instrument of the job agency, Job Explorer was seen as an experimental investment in new ways of vocational orientation. The project's impression on local stakeholders during this test phase was extraordinary strong, precisely because Job Explorer was born out not by

authorities but in cooperation with the local economy that voiced their demands on future employers while the project was conceptualized. Hence, support for maintaining the project came from all sides and across parties. As a result, the district council was forced to take action. Since July 2012, the project is financed as an "economically beneficial measure" by the Economic Development Agency (*Wirtschaftsförderung*) of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. However, Job Explorer has to pay a prize for its survival. Owed to the new sponsor, a much tighter cooperation with district authorities concerning project aims and ways of achieving them has become necessary. Nowadays, the project competes with other vocational programmes sponsored by public money. Hence, the question concerning "measurable outputs", e.g. numbers of mediated trainees, and the "scale of the project" (e.g. number of involved schools) is gaining importance. However, so far job explorer is in a good position: the project takes advantage of its solid cooperation with the local association of entrepreneurs. "There is a constant demand for trainees among our members", says a speaker of the association, adding that it has been in many cases Job Explorer's merit "helping to find the one right person (for an apprenticeship) out of the mass". Nevertheless, the District Council for Labour and Economy wants to extend Job Explorer's range of action. In the mid-term, a tool kit promoting apprenticeships provided by the local economy should be developed.

2.4. Kreuzberg Acts

2.4.1. Short description

"Kreuzberg Acts – entrepreneurship in the district" pursues a twofold approach towards social inclusion. On the one hand, jobseekers and local entrepreneurs, half of them migrants, receive comprehensive consultancy to explore their entrepreneurial potentials or rather stabilize their business. For instance, those interested in founding a start-up are coached by local mentors how to apply for public subsidies and how to launch an effective marketing campaign. On the other hand, the project is simultaneously striving for street-credibility by building bridges to the local economy. Through the strengthening of local networks processes of gentrification are counterbalanced that go along with a rather one-sided settling of cafés, restaurants and luxurious stores at local in-places. In order to maintain a sound mix of local businesses the project eases cooperation of retailers, grocers and social services providers (e.g. physicians and carers) that also evoke a sense of belonging to the district. Moreover, project leaders and participants develop strategies how locals may benefit from the districts' booming economic sectors such as healthcare or tourism. Inventions are thought of in a neighbourhood-friendly way, e.g. by devising small-scale business ideas that fit the local social ecology.

In short, members of the local economy should do both — get together and become profitable. During all these activities project leaders are constantly both facilitators and lobbyists for their clientele. The innovation results in the intertwining of two activities that are usually separated: on the one hand, individual consultancy for (future) entrepreneurs; on the other hand, a kind of concern with community development and urban planning addressing different local groups. Thereby, Kreuzberg Acts also bridges economic and social concerns.

2.4.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

According to the concept and vision of Kreuzberg Acts, social inclusion is thought of as something that inevitably takes place in the local environment and depends strongly on the plurality of people's opportunities to unfold their entrepreneurial potentials. Therefore, service offers are two-fold: on the one hand, people are encouraged in their decision to become self-employed by receiving various support to improve their skills as entrepreneurs

before applying for a start-up financing grant; on the other hand, individual consultancy and coaching is accompanied by collective support for the local community of (future) entrepreneurs. Among other things, the collective dimension of the project comprises of devising of common marketing campaigns, facilitating of networking activities and the boosting of joint ventures between local businesses. "We are not only helping local entrepreneurs individually, bringing the best out of their potentials, but feel responsible for the long-term development of the district's local economy", underpins the project manager. Perceiving project users as social beings, embedded within a local context, asks for an approach that is sensitive to people' multiple ties and requires complex ways of addressing users. For instance, one experienced user of the project, a 25-year-old owner of an American Diner restaurant, reported that she has been visited continuously by someone of "Kreuzberg Acts" who addressed her from the beginning as a member of the local community of entrepreneurs – a dimension of belonging she had not been aware of before. In short, due to strong local references, Kreuzberg Acts addresses their clientele as entrepreneurs within the local economy, (social and active) citizens, and community members. In all these roles, project addressees learn that their entrepreneurial success depends not only on individual competences and sufficient incubation time for their business idea but is also inseparably linked to the overall development of the district.

2.4.3. Internal organization and modes of working

From September 2009 until October 2012, Kreuzberg Acts operated in three neighbourhoods with special development needs. All of them belong to the so-called neighbourhood management programme (another innovation we focus on above), combining spatial and urban planning with sectorial policy interventions. The project is funded by a federal program of the European Social Fund (ESF) called Education, Economy and Labour in the Neighbourhood aiming at "innovative interventions in managed neighbourhoods". Currently, the project employs four people from LOK.a.Motion (see below), responsible for public relations, marketing, social media and communication with local companies. The main task of project coordinator Luna Weineck is building networks by contacting politicians, local authorities, the chamber of commerce, job agencies and neighbourhood managers. Since affordable flats and sales floors have become scarce in the district, housing companies have become pivotal partners, having a huge impact on the social and economical structure of neighbourhoods. In doing lobby work, Ms Weineck generates trust among all relevant stakeholders while tracing opportunities for the project to connect. Kreuzberg Acts is one of several projects by Lok.a.Motion, an organisation that operates at the crossroads of European and federal labour market programmes and the local level.

Within the last three years Lok.a.Motion has run four major projects and has initiated several forms of cooperation with local stakeholders. Starting as a non-profit-organisation for "youth welfare and local economy", Lok.a.Motion turned towards an entrepreneurial approach and now holds the legal status of a non-profit limited liability company. With respect to working relations in the organisation Lok.a.Motion presents a sharp contrast to public administrations where the size of staff is stable and jobs are socially protected. Operating with few permanent staff Lok.a.Motion has sufficient leeway to decide whether a certain project actually suits their key professional principle, stating that any engagement must pursue the development of its social environment. The flip side of the agency's flexibility is that Lok.a.motion is not a good employer in traditional terms by benefitting from unsecured precarious jobs.

2.4.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

In terms of local embeddedness Kreuzberg Acts is a hybrid. Even though the project has cultivated solid relations to most of the relevant stakeholders, it remains to a certain degree an alien element, disturbing routine patterns of local welfare governance. Being both embedded and dis-embedded at the same time constitutes the innovative character of Kreuzberg Acts. This ambiguity is mirrored by the project's relations to job agencies and local authorities, the two most important welfare providers at the local level. Although both institutions acknowledge (and partly depend on) the work of the project, Kreuzberg Acts (as similar projects too) is mainly perceived as an "ad-hoc consultant" for vocational training while lacking the status of a normal service provider funded on a regularly basis. It hence coexists with the local welfare system, rather than interacting with it frequently. As a result, Kreuzberg Acts fills a rather unsteady intermediate position depending on the respective situation of available projects. As a response to the challenge of coping with uncertainty the project team has developed a cooperative manner and invests much in trust-generating activities for acquiring new orders. However, this approach has its limits due to the competition with other project providers.

Defending the project's design and modes of working against the theft of innovative ideas is of utmost importance. This is a dilemma, given the fact that close cooperation and a steady knowledge exchange is both a precondition to have a stake in the local landscape of service providers but also a risk to lose its own competitive advantage. "We have to prove to be innovative otherwise we cannot develop new projects", says Ms Weineck, who argues for a patent law that protects project concepts as it does commercial products. In comparison to established welfare institutions tensions concern in particular the driving mission and the underlying working culture. Foremost, the way of addressing users differentiates Kreuzberg Acts from established policies in the field of labour. Especially in comparison to the job agencies its logic of integrating people is poles apart. Job agencies pursue a fairly sequential approach where every minor support depends on jobseekers' compliance in advance – be it with regard to reveal their financial situation or to take any job they are offered. In sharp contrast to job agencies' verdicts of employability, Kreuzberg Acts follows a process-orientated and tightly-structured approach, encouraging people to realize their entrepreneurial potentials according to their interests and personal skills in a gently way.

2.5. Neighbourhood Mothers

2.5.1. Short description

The project Neighbourhood Mothers bridges gaps within a multicultural but fragmented society, both pragmatically and symbolically. Based on blueprints from the Netherlands and other German cities, the innovative approach is strictly resource-oriented and neighbourhood-related. Basically, the project developed further the idea of intercultural mediators and mentors helping immigrant families with educational and also family-related issues. Kreuzberg's Neighbourhood Mothers, mostly immigrants that completed a special qualification phase, are dealing with a wide range of topics such as health promotion, language support and child protection. By pursuing a two-way approach, Neighbourhood Mothers make existing support structures better known and accessible and also translate their clients' needs and concerns in order to improve district authorities' awareness towards them. Being a low-threshold service in practice – Neighbourhood Mothers are easily identifiable by a red scarf in order to get directly addressed on the street – the project attempts to establish informal support networks and trust by building bridges among (multicultural) communities and authorities. If requested, Neighbourhood Mothers give advise to families through regular home visits free of charge.

The project, that has received several awards for successful integration work, may also be a springboard to the labour market: neighbourhood mothers can combine their voluntary work (a small monthly allowance is paid) with a professional training in order to become a social assistant for intercultural family care. However, this real job perspective makes it difficult for the management of the project (the *Diakonisches Werk*) to provide continuity as it requests a steady recruitment of new neighbourhood mothers. Hence, non-bureaucratic support by the job agency and the responsible district council department are preconditions for future success of the project.

2.5.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

Neighbourhood Mothers offer a bundle of outreach services for migrant families. Families using the offer are addressed as neighbours and community members – instead of bearers of multiple (social) problems. In contrast to local authorities, pursuing a rather directive style of user interaction, Neighbourhood Mothers strengthen families in a friendly and cooperative manner. As multipliers of knowledge and mentors, Neighbourhood Mothers' services are "family-minded", including not only individual users but also people with links to their families and community networks. However, it is worth to say that in practice it is mostly mothers who accept support by the project, while fathers (despite first attempts to establish neighbourhood fathers too) are difficult to reach. Moreover, acute problems and conflicts are rarely the reason of contacting neighbourhood mothers who built up trust to families via informal meetings, e.g. at the family café of the *Diakonisches Werk*, on the play ground or during little chats in the street. "First of all, we are helping companions for daily life matters rather than being experts for severe family problems", states a neighbourhood mother who migrated with her parents from Turkey 30 years ago.

The range of daily life matters where Neighbourhood Mothers offer support and consultancy is rather broad, comprising issues such as basic knowledge on children's development and needs, basic competences on health promotion, nutrition and sports, linguistic development, the German childcare and educational systems and problems in family networks (e.g. drug abuse, divorce, violence). What differentiates Neighbourhood Mothers most from professional services concerning these issues is its peer-to-peer approach. Most of the neighbourhood mothers went through similar situations as the families they care for. They have a better understanding of feelings of alienation and particular needs than professionals, literally speaking "another language". Therefore, Neighbourhood Mothers take "real problems" (e.g. missing knowledge about the German school system) as starting points for support – instead of adapting their services to the structures of silo-like service departments.

2.5.3. Internal organization and modes of working

Neighbourhood mothers pass a six-month qualification course before working with clients. For instance, Kreuzberg's first generation of neighbourhood mothers (30 women) has been trained with a curriculum comprising of ten modules such as children rights, health promotion and transition from kindergarten to school. The comprehensive qualification has two important effects: on the one hand, it facilitates identification and team building among neighbourhood mothers; on the other hand, neighbourhood mothers gather various contacts with local institutions during this introductory phase through visits at the job agency, district authorities (e.g. child and youth welfare aid) or birth houses which are valuable resources for their later work. After the qualification, quality management takes place once a week via exchange and reflections about work experiences. "Recurrent issues in those meetings are for example families' problems to subscribe their children to preferred schools", states a neighbourhood mother, appreciating especially the opportunity to simulate courses of conversation with clients before going into practice.

Furthermore, during reflection rounds neighbourhood mothers learn "what is going on elsewhere in the district". Being informed about other projects, e.g. sewing courses for immigrant women or mother-child language courses provided by family centres (see below), is central for neighbourhood mothers who also function as switchboards for various learning and leisure time offers. The project is coordinated and further developed by two managers of the *Diakonisches Werk*, responsible for recruiting, qualifying and accompanying neighbourhood mothers. In addition both managers are in regular contact with similar projects in Berlin in order to cultivate professional exchange and evaluation. The project managers established strong links between Neighbourhood Mothers and other services provided by the *Diakonisches Werk*. Thereby sustainability concerning the work with families may be strengthened, as Ulrike Koch, one of the two managers, hopes: "The *Diakonisches Werk* has been providing social work in Kreuzberg for more than 30 years. Due to its temporary financing scheme the future of Neighbourhood Mothers remains future uncertain. Families cannot count on them alone."

2.5.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

Similar to the Princesses Gardens, neighbourhood mothers are a publicly recognized and well-known social innovation in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. After a good degree of initial scepticism and profound reservations on behalf of established welfare institutions and services providers, Neighbourhood Mothers is now welcomed as an early protection intervention against severe social problems of immigrant families that are hard to reach. In this respect, Neighbourhood Mothers' excellent public relations work paid off, especially in relation to kindergartens and schools but also to the job agency. According to the coalition agreement of Berlin's government of Social and Christian democrats, Neighbourhood Mothers should be financed on a regular basis. So far, however, this political intention and the large amount of public recognition have not spilled over into a secure future of the project. Started as a test run in 2008, the project has been financed by different sources: the job agency, the local youth welfare office and ESF. "We are constantly re-calculating our budget and make provisional solutions instead of far-reaching plans", complains Ms Koch.

After five years of existence, the project is in a somehow odd situation. Practically, Neighbourhood Mothers are part of the local welfare system and there is no doubt that their services for families are very much needed. On the other hand, the project is still far away of being a regular offer, at eye-to-eye level with established services providers, even if some local partners have a strong interest in the maintenance of its contributions to local welfare. For instance, the local youth welfare office in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg has already created five part-time positions for neighbourhood mothers who additionally passed a professional training to become a social assistant for intercultural family care. Other institutions and local employers may follow this example. Therefore, project managers keep repeating demands of regular funding, in particular to cover the costly qualification of neighbourhood mothers.

2.6. Family Centres

2.6.1. Short description

Family centres are a complementary offer to kindergartens and day-care institutions pursuing a more holistic approach. Their innovative feature is to empower families by strengthening their competences instead of providing merely services to them that claim to substitute what the respective families cannot provide. This complementary and holistic approach of „family-minded services" represents a paradigm shift by offering support not only to one group (children) but also to parents. Another innovative aspect of family

centres is to perceive of families as partners to be (re)empowered and not as communities unable to perform. Currently, eight centres have been installed in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, mostly initiated by parents and sponsored by the Berlin Senate. Centres provide multiple family-related services and activities on a small scale, starting from giving families the opportunity to share leisure time together, receiving advice and participating in various courses that strengthen (e.g. linguistic and self-help) competences of children and parents up to regular working groups where service provides and families join in order to develop new service arrangements for the respective neighbourhood. As well-known contact points and low-threshold places to drop-in, family centres also support the work of the Child and Youth Welfare Office, e.g. by forwarding feedback from the 'grassroots level' to the district department.

2.6.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

As all-in-one service hubs for the whole family, family centres represent a counterpoint to services organised in separate "silos" for singular groups. Family centres do not exclude classic childcare services to support families with their caring duties. However, according to their "family-minded" concept, parents are as well addressees of family centres whose competences should be strengthened. Which kinds of services are included in such a comprehensive approach strongly depends on the neighbourhood where the family centre is located. In short: bundles of services are offered, tailored to respective families' needs. For instance, the intercultural family centre *Adalbertstraße*, a rather segregated area in Kreuzberg with a high number of immigrant families and transfer payment recipients, puts emphasis on helping families under stress. Owing to their main clientele, regular offers comprise of issues such as identifying and supporting families' resources and self-help potentials, developing alternatives for families' everyday live tasks and improvement of families' language skills. Contrary to this, the family centre "*Das Haus*" in Friedrichshain, catering to a mostly middle-class clientele, is much more perceived as a place where families can spend their leisure time, e.g. by socialising and cooking. Furthermore, parents are invited to create their own support networks while having coffee in the family café or they may participate in the conception of new professional service offers. In both examples, family centres are meeting point and forum of support for families, parents, children and local multipliers dealing with all kinds of family issues.

2.6.3 Internal organization and modes of working

Since 2006, two types of services provided by family centres coexist in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg: on the one hand, traditional kindergardens that revised their conceptual orientation by developing family-minded services; on the other hand, new established centres that were built with the help of neighbourhood initiatives and/or third sector organizations. In both cases the focus on families was combined with a much stronger focus on the social and urban space. This two-fold approach is mirrored in organisational terms: in order to address families, instead of children only, family centres need to capitalize on local resources and networks. Hence, cooperation is key, be it with existing parent-child-groups, consultancy agencies of welfare associations or, of course, the Child and Youth Welfare Office. However, family centres are not merely a point of information about family-minded services in the district but services are also offered directly in the centre. This requires much acceptance by professionals and authorities, as family centres as embedded instead of competing institutions, where exchange, education and consultancy take place. Perceived this way family centres may also function as local "think tanks" for networked family care services, as Birgit Bosse, manager of "*Das Haus*" in Friedrichshain describes: "We established an expert forum, organized and steered by us, for kindergarden, day-care centres, schools and parents in order to facilitate the transition from childcare to schooling." Internally, Ms Bosse works together with a team consisting of

three employees (in charge of parent and psychological counselling and conflict management) and a pool of flexible external specialists on a freelance basis. Additionally, the local job agency provides the centre with so-called "one-euro-jobbers", in chargeofr maintenance activities. In formal terms, family centres make so called "service level agreements" with the district council on a yearly basis, stating exactly which specific offers are demanded. As in turned out, family centres have much leeway to propose innovative offers — e.g. theatre and artistic projects in cooperation with freelance artists — due to their practical knowledge of developments and needs at grassroots level.

2.6.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

Family centres in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg have full support and backing by the local Child and Youth Welfare Office. The latter pursues a spatial approach that divides the district into eight social environments to be vested with (at least) one family centre. "Our aim is to establish close contacts with families under stress. In this respect, family centres are a standard offer", states Thomas Harkenthal, manager of the Child and Youth Welfare Office. Despite their rather short time of existence, family centres succeeded to become local role models concerning child and family care. Now, Mr Harkenthal and his team attempt to scale-up family centres' role as hubs providing services and networks. "There is much unmet need for additional educational offers tailored to the respective neighbourhood structure", reports Mr Harkenthal. Moreover, the number of so-called family meeting points, conceptualized as small branches of family centres cooperating with huge kindergarten with 300 to 400 children, should be extended. Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy between the public support for (and belief in) the family centre approach and its effectiveness in reality. Anchoring family centres in the social and urban space needs much more commitment in terms of permanent positions and long-term planning security. Furthermore, authorities tend to underestimate the cultural change and practical re-learning that is needed to let family centres blossom. "Cooperation means sharing of responsibilities. Some huge service providers are still used to top-down chains of commands", says Ms Bosse. In addition, she refuses to call family centres a "best-practice-approach" because she fears that such a perspective could easily turn into a one-(best)-model-fits-all approach. Instead, Ms Bosse insists on the need to give room for a profile that corresponds with the specific social environment of every family centre.

CONCLUSIONS

The description of innovations presented here can be discussed and developed further in various directions and within various frameworks. Three possible ways – all to be dealt with in the WILCO-project - will be sketched here in the conclusive remarks.

Social services research: innovations as illustrative examples for a new generation of social services

Obviously, the innovations we have sketched are marked by the specificity of time and circumstances – the special situation in Berlin with its mix of innovative traditions but likewise rather stable traditions of how to handle social inclusion issues by local welfare administrations, the more general problem of new attempts in times of austerity and pressing household depths. However, it can be assumed that behind the diversity of single innovations in Berlin and in other cities and countries, there are *recurrent patterns of how to handle service issues differently*, to be found across cities and countries. While there are obviously national and local specificities, many traits of these innovations are inter-national in character:

- Innovations entail *approaches and instruments* that enrich and change the classical tool kits of social welfare and service policies, e.g. moving from fixed entitlements to flexible support budgets and ad hoc support; developing services that give personalized bundles of support; creating new forms of social investments into people's capabilities;

- Innovations entail *innovations in public governance*, at least to a certain degree. Some innovations have a governance focus; groups organize and present themselves and their concerns in new ways; networks and coalition building across departments and sectors are part of many innovative projects and sometimes even "meta-governance" takes new forms of deliberation and consent finding in search for the public good;

- There are shared features that point to the *links between these innovations and post-traditional welfare concepts*: services that address the strengths and not merely the weaknesses of their target groups are examples for enabling welfare concepts; the focus on critical transitional stages rather than standard situations links with the debate on new risks and a life-course-orientation in welfare; the ways new services are more family minded, personalized, but yet tying in people's support networks contributes to an upgrading of the role of communities in mixed welfare systems; finally, the ways many innovative projects in local development link concerns of economic and social development exemplifies a social investment perspective on public welfare.

Researching innovation and change on the local level: The importance of the local context

A second line of making further use of our findings is to look at the inter-connectedness of innovations with the local context. As far as this context has been mentioned here our analysis underlines the central importance of four issues at given stages in the development of innovations:

- *Plurality of discourses*. In order to understand the interplay of context and innovations it is important to see them in a tension field structured by the juxtaposition and rivalry of different discourses, e.g. about classical welfare issues, more managerial approaches to welfare and one where concerns with autonomy, participation and pluralism prevail.

- *The impact of history*. Practices and values that guide action and politics are very much shaped by historical developments, experiences and the ways they crystallize in a locality. A deeper analysis of the dynamics of local innovations must take historical underpinnings into account.

- *The welfare system, encompassing more than the political administrative system*. We understand a welfare system as a large and mixed one, that comprises the fields of family and community, the business sector and the third sector of associations – looking at all of them from the perspective of welfare developments and their role as parts of a mixed welfare system. In such a perspective, a welfare system encompasses more than the field of professional politics and welfare administrations, even though the latter usually plays a dominating role. Social innovations should be understood in relation to this wider environment and not solely with respect to one of the sectors of the welfare system

- *Differences by policy fields*. Often innovative ideas, while restricted by the locally prevalent general discourse, may get much endorsement by a community of experts in a special policy field. Then, the overall impact of a productivist discourse for

instance (as it has been sketched for the city of Muenster) may set less limits for innovative concepts in child care, compared to labour market politics; vertical (policy-field related) differences can be as important as horizontal (locally prevailing values and concepts) ones.

Researching the role of innovations in local politics and governance

Most innovations, like those presented here, are small scale and located at the margins of the political administrative system (PAS). However among the many context factors that have an impact on their upcoming and moreover their further development, the strategies and value orientations of the local PAS are of special importance. Local politics and governance increasingly include interactions with partners, reaching from casual arrangements and agreements in networks over to cross-sector partnerships and corporatist frameworks. What role can innovative organisations play within these forms of governance and policymaking? We assume pointing at the 'innovative' quality of organisations and projects can give additional support for developing the kind of policies that give social innovation a place in the overall changing architecture of welfare governance.

Therefore, rather than only looking at special programmes in support of special innovation projects it might be preferable both in analytic and policy terms to look at the range of ways in which public policies already make use and take up new approaches from partners, developing policies that support innovations without explicitly using this label.

While our paper has just traced some ways found in Berlin, the real picture will be much wider. Since decades one finds an increasing role of time-limited social programs, pilot schemes and targeted support-schemes for 'new' services, professional practices or rules of the game. In many of these programmes and their governance schemes one finds a mix of actors from different sectors: state, business, the third sector of associations, hybrid organisations, and groups that represent community action and family concerns. It is this increasingly pluralist character of projects and policies that can favour the entrance of innovations into political and governance concepts. What do we know about the achievements and limits of these forms of linking change agents and mainstream stakeholders? What about their selection as forms of scaling up social innovation? Do they just support what works in short-term measurable forms or do they work as social investments where one is ready to take a risk? Into what kind of overarching discourse do the respective partners and participants get involved?

Bringing concerns with social innovations and their scaling up into this context may enrich the already ongoing debate about new "welfare mixes", divisions of responsibility "paradigms of social interventions" and respective "mixed" and open forms of governance. The degree to which an outspoken reference to innovation makes a difference, depends on two critical issues: one must acknowledge what spills over in social innovations in terms of prospects and visions beyond immediate practical issues; there must also be a degree of readiness to put the wider context of institutionalised practices and policies at disposal. Otherwise a kind of new dialectic between small-scale innovation and wider ranging reform will not get into motion.