

1. Schöneberg: An idea is taking shape at Schöneberger Island which should become a groundbreaking pilot project: „Building and integration with and for refugees“

The idea came from Syrian refugees themselves. Before the civil war broke out, a vocational training center was planned in Aleppo by Horst Renziehausen. Today he is retired and living in Schöneberg. Together with a few co-workers in the initiative "50 Plus Kompakt", he developed a concept for a special village which is now not just to be built near Aleppo but in Berlin.

It includes workshops and training facilities, 218 apartments for three to six residents, recreation rooms, 2500 square meters of roof space for raised beds for self-sufficiency. In the middle, an integration café would be a "cheap event locations". The project would solve many problems, say the agents. There would emerge worthy accommodations. The refugees received training and further education in order to be able to rebuild their homeland after the end of the civil war and to cushion the shortage of skilled workers in this country.

Due to the modular design, Horst Renziehausen promises a short construction time and a cost efficiency of up to 20 percent. "Building cheaper and integrating more cost-effective in an unprecedented way," he sums it up.

Meanwhile, the project has found many supporters. They come from all over Germany, but most of them from Schöneberg Island: educators, police, students, electricians, architects, artists, bricklayers and carpenters. The circle of active volunteers has expanded. Recently, Horst Renziehausen welcomed these in his office in the Gotenstraße 76 to get to know them and to discuss the next steps.

While interior designer and artist Christine van Beveren feels a great desire to build a studio with refugees, advertising businessman Ulrich Esch says the project is brilliant because refugees are given a task. "The acceptance of refugees in Germany is higher if you know that they return well educated in their homeland," says Esch.

For refugees, it is difficult in the current situation in Berlin to find work and an apartment, as Stephanie Siegmund well knows. The commercial school teacher has taught a welcome class and experienced how motivated her students are. "They wanted to go to work alongside to the school."

"Totally motivated and committed" refugees who "want to achieve something" have also met Parastoo Taghizadieh. The native Iranian has taken care of unaccompanied minors in the past two years. Taghizadieh says about "Build and Integrate": "A fantastic project."

This must now convince the Senate administrations involved in the integration process. There were already hopeful informal contacts among others with Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH (BIM).

Foto:

Horst Renziehausen and co-workers during an icebreaker session (Picture: KEN)