



LOGBOOK

Entrepreneurs set sail!

Guidebook for a socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub





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Ahoy, Dear Readers!

When we launched a ship three years ago with Werft 34 and set sail to explore unknown seas and oceans, we had hoped to hold such a logbook in our hands at the end of our journey. A logbook that tells our story and allows you to go on a journey with us, to discover places and experience adventures. Even if these are only metaphors, and we did not meet any real pirates, defied sea monsters, and never held gold treasures, Werft 34 still seems like a grand, exciting voyage of discovery in retrospect.

Werft 34 was a three-year start-up support project financed by the Swiss Drosos Foundation and realized by the association Plattform e.V. We launched the project in Erfurt, the capital of the former East-German state of Thuringia, located in the middle of Germany. A city with a population of 200,000 and a lively cultural scene, most of which is made up of volunteers who are barely visible in the historic, thoroughly renovated old town. The task was clear: we were to find new, alternative ways of making socio-cultural start-up projects a success. It was a challenging undertaking – after all, our entrepreneurs had a completely different understanding of their enterprises, values, and goals than is the case in traditional economic forms. To accompany a start-up, which by its very nature is not geared towards profits but rather towards idealistic values, and to set it up and secure it for the future, demanded creativity and experimental inquisitiveness from ourselves.

In this logbook, we first describe the initial situation of the project as well as the socio-cultural scene in Erfurt in 2013, when we launched Werft 34. In the central part of the book, we outline the course of the project based

on various milestones and events. We will also accompany our nine start-up initiatives on their way through the entrepreneurial laboratory of Werft 34. As the history of Werft 34 is closely linked to the establishment of an Erfurt initiative for the preservation and expansion of cultural spaces, we also show in this part how we succeeded in developing a vast inner-city socio-cultural network based on solidarity and cooperation between the individual actors in the scene. In the third and last part, we summarize the salient experiences we have made in the previous three years. Our logbook is, therefore, mainly aimed at entrepreneurial assistants who are trying to initiate similar projects in their city. We hope our experience will provide you helpful tips and guidance for your work – even if the concept of Werft 34 is, of course, not directly applicable to other places¹. We wish you and all other interested readers pleasure in reading our little logbook.

Welcome on board!

The crew of Werft 34

¹ Keep in mind that our logbook was written in 2016 and is a mere snapshot. Hopefully, some things have developed further while other things might not exist anymore or might have a new name. Even on the sea, time continues to pass.



Part One

Before the voyage

*In 2013 the young creative scene in
Erfurt found itself in a difficult situation.
For this reason, we initiated Werft 34.*



elcome to Werft 34!

Werft 34 was a three-year project realized by Plattform and financed by the Swiss Drosos Foundation. Werft 34 consisted of three pillars, which implemented the development of socio-culture² in Erfurt on different levels.

The Lighthouse

The first pillar was the project house in Salinenstraße 34, which Plattform had made available again together with youths in 2011. Known as “Saline 34”, the formerly vacant house in the north of Erfurt offered affordable premises for new ideas and projects and a meeting point in the district and, at the same time, an experimental station for youth participation. Whether as a recording studio, screen-printing workshop, or atelier, Saline 34 provided a home for many creative projects.

It functioned as a venue for events and encounters and had long since become a magnet for people interested in culture from all over the city.

² Within the framework of our project, we defined the term socio-culture as a “culture of all for all.” Socio-culture is participation-oriented and focused on commitment to the community.



Shaping socio-culture

With new impulses and projects, we wanted to enable creative people to help shape their city and become part of Erfurt's cultural life. To achieve this, the work of socio-cultural actors in Erfurt had to be strengthened. Their participation in public discourse had to be supported, and their opportunities to take action expanded. Together we developed the idea of a solidary network of local actors with a corresponding representation of interests, which soon grew into the Initiative for Cultural Space (page 34 – *The Hanseatic League*).

The socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub

At Saline 34, we opened a socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub, where we offered young creative people a location and space to implement their ideas. At the same time, we tried to improve the participants' financial conditions and create long-term perspectives so that they could continue their socio-cultural involvement in Erfurt in the future. The entrepreneurs were supported with space free of charge, start-up funds, an educational program, and ongoing coaching sessions. In addition, they had access to a creative network of designers, photographers, media educators, and filmmakers in Saline 34.

The initial situation in Erfurt

*In 2013, the Thuringian state capital wasn't
an ideal location for young cultural workers.
There were many obstacles and issues.*

Politicians and administrators focused primarily on the medieval tourist attraction of the city center, which included freshly plastered, clean half-timbered houses lined up along narrow cobbled streets, a majestic cathedral, and the epic Krämerbrücke (Merchants' Bridge) as its hallmarks.



To uphold this attractive image of our city, the majority of the funding flowed into high cultural offerings. Whether theatre, major operas at the open-air DomStufen festival, stars and fireworks at the Krämerbrücke Festival, or the considerable attraction of the Christmas Market, everything that attracted tourists was eligible for funding.

In comparison, sub- and socio-cultural projects fell by the wayside. On the one hand, inadequate funding, rising rents in the city center, and increased sales of urban real estate led to a tight housing situation. Socio-cultural actors were soon only able to settle in the peripheral areas of the city (mainly in the north of Erfurt).



Despite acknowledging the unfortunate situation by recognizing cultural work, which is often carried out by volunteers, and offering culture-friendly conditions, numerous guidelines and regulations made it difficult to organize creative activities.

The problematic availability of space and the lack of recognition on the part of the city led to more and more socio-cultural actors becoming friendly with the idea of moving to trendsetting cities such as Leipzig or Berlin.



bjective of Werft 34

The overall goal was clear: With Werft 34, we wanted to improve the quality of life for young, creative people in Erfurt. But we also had to keep an eye on smaller goals.

Based on the conviction that socio-culture should not depend solely on financial support from the public sector, we embarked on an experiment with Werft 34 that pursued the overriding goal of strengthening the long term socio-cultural commitment of young people and young adults in Erfurt. With this three-year model project, we wanted to explore the conditions for successful socio-cultural entrepreneurship.

For this undertaking, we had devised a three-part strategy with which we wanted to make the start-up initiatives successful. In addition to individual support and empowerment of the entrepreneurs (cultural entrepreneurship hub), the aim was to improve the framework conditions for their activities. To this end, we set ourselves to create Saline 34, an affordable, shared space located on Salinenstrasse 34 for socio-cultural actors, which could be secured in the long term and organized by the users. Finally, we wanted to link the existing structures in the city beyond Saline 34 to form a network of interests. Not only could it represent the young socioculture to the outside world politically, but internally it acted as a cooperative and supportive network.



Goals of the socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub

Inception of at least eight start-up initiatives from Saline 34 and from outside

Raising and securing income

Qualification through targeted coaching, workshops and mentoring program

Establishment of at least four entrepreneurial initiatives in Saline 34

Objectives of the socio-cultural lighthouse Saline 34

Ensuring the long-term socio-cultural use of Saline 34

Establishment of a self-governing and self-organized communal household

Creation of a utilization concept that provides continued operation until at least 2021

Aims of the network of interested parties

Improving public awareness of socio-culture

Creating a cooperative network of relevant actors who share and exchange resources

Establishment of a recognized, political lobby

The Crew of Werft 34

The three of us – Steffen, Rike, and Martin – are enthusiastic entrepreneurial consultants with a passion for the socio-culture of our city. Although each has a unique background, we have been united for the past years by a joint mission to make the world a better place. We showed how empowerment³ and life-long learning could succeed in different contexts with exemplary projects. When the opportunity arose at Werft 34, it was clear to us that it was only possible for us to tackle this project together.



STEFFEN PRÄGER, born in 1984, took over the project management of Werft 34. He studied communication science at the University of Erfurt and has been a freelance consultant for social management and social marketing since 2006. Together with friends and colleagues, he founded the association Plattform, a workshop for innovative solutions to social problems in 2008. Today, Steffen is the managing director of the association. He teaches the basics of project management as a lecturer in non-formal seminars and lecturer with teaching assignments at the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt. His professional focus is on participation, employability, and entrepreneurship.⁴



FRIEDERIKE GÜNTHER, born in 1984, was responsible for networking and public relations at Werft 34. She studied media culture at the Bauhaus University in Weimar and communication science in Erfurt. Besides EJECT, a student magazine for media culture, she is also co-entrepreneur and editor of HANT, the independent magazine for contemporary photography in Thuringia. She has organized cultural events, art exhibitions, and festivals and was involved in the Erfurt-based youth participation urban development project "Ladebalken" until 2014. Here she supported young people in the realization of their ideas.



MARTIN ARNOLD-SCHAARSCHMIDT, born in 1977, was in charge of the training programs of Werft 34 and served as an advisor to the entrepreneurs. He is a founding member of Plattform. He tries in many ways to make the world a better place, either as an ardent educator, as a trained psychologist linking theory and practice, as a social entrepreneur, as a consultant and promoter of initiatives and entrepreneurs, as a musician or as a father of several children. During his life, Martin has founded associations, initiatives, a band, and even a company. He teaches at the university, does research on education and impact measurement, develops new ideas, and loves his family.

³ This refers to the support of other people so that they can live their lives in a more self-determined and autonomous manner.

⁴ Often referred to in the book as "social entrepreneurship." This applies to an activity that offers innovative and pragmatic solutions to social problems.



The jury before the first pitch, from left to right: Martin Arnold-Schaarschmidt (Werft 34), Paul Jokisch (creative entrepreneur), Anja Wieland (start-up consultant), Bettina Rössger (sociocultural expert), Dirk Schütz (networker & entrepreneur)

The Jury

The jury of Werft 34 was comprised of 11 jurors who evaluated the three pitches in different constellations and advised the entrepreneurs. To make a holistic assessment of the start-up projects, the jury members drew on both their own and existing personal knowledge. Some had already successfully launched start-ups, others were representatives of socio-culture, and yet others had been supporting start-up projects in an advisory capacity for many years. Martin and Rike also brought their project-internal perspective to the selection process.

Drosos Foundation

The Zurich-based Drosos Foundation was established in 2003 from a private initiative and has been helping people in challenging life situations since 2005. The foundation is mainly involved in the health and education sectors, in fighting poverty, in environmental protection, and in supporting young people in their creative activities. Funds by the foundation made the three-year Werft 34 project in Erfurt possible.

drosos (...)



The Entrepreneurs

Of course, Werft 34 would be nothing without the nine start-up initiatives. These are presented and described in more detail in the second part of the book. But if you want to know the truth, turn to the chapters *On board* on page 30, *New sailors* on page 46, and *Embarkation* on page 52.

Plattform e.V.

Founded in 2008, the non-profit association Plattform represents a unique think tank in Erfurt for current and essential social problems and topics. With model projects, the association carries out research and is involved in the four areas of entrepreneurship, participation, culture, and media education. Plattform tries to pass on the experience gained in the individual projects in the form of publications, public presentations, contributions at specialist conferences, non-formal qualification programs, and courses at universities. Plattform was the implementing body for the projects Werft 34 and Saline 34.

 **PLATTFORM** e.V.

The Lighthouse

Saline 34

*“If you see the beacon of the lighthouse on the horizon,
then you know a safe harbor is coming.”*

Ancient seafarer proverb





Back in 2011, we laid the foundations for Werft 34 with Plattform. We forged a plan together with the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building, and Urban Affairs. Within the framework of the model project “Jugend belebt Leerstand” (Youth revive vacant properties), we wanted to prove that young people can autonomously and with our support transform an empty building into a socio-cultural lighthouse. The 100-year-old Gründerzeit building at Salinenstraße 34 was quickly found for this purpose. But the renovation was not an easy undertaking. The house in the north of Erfurt had been abandoned for quite some time and was therefore no longer in good condition, lacking electricity, heating, water, and drainage. But together with teenagers and young adults, we surmounted the task. Through a great deal of personal commitment and skilled workers, we managed to make the house habitable again after months of work. In 2012, the moment had come: the first actors moved into the socio-cultural lighthouse.

Saline 34 offered us the ideal conditions for our experimental start-up support project. It provided us with space to work and experiment, which we were able to make available to the entrepreneurs for their ideas. The fact that the rooms of Saline 34 were unfinished

was advantageous, as it allowed the users could convert and equip the rooms according to their needs. In addition, Saline 34 also benefited the network principle of Werft 34 because the entrepreneurs were gathered under one roof here and, at the same time, had access to the in-house socio-cultural community.

Today, Saline 34 offers affordable working space for young ideas and projects, but it has also long since developed into a focal point in the neighborhood. The heart of the lighthouse is the shop on the ground floor, which is a living room and event space for the household community. Small concerts, readings, project presentations, and seminars take place here. But there is more behind the doors of the shop premises. The area of almost 1,000 m² has a recording studio, a screen-printing workshop, several studios, a photo studio with a darkroom, editorial rooms, a well-equipped media seminar room with a green box, and much more. *Take a look for yourself on the next pages!*







Part Two

hree years at the sea

*Three years is a long time in which
all kinds of adventures happen. The history
of Werft 34, from beginning to end.*

Recruiting sailors

*“It takes more than a ship to set sail.
To set sail, you need a crew – hardy sailors
who are rough and wild as the sea itself.”*

From the records of the captain



Tips from the captain

For a group of actors, the key to success is being able to tell a good story! Different people need different stories.

.....

Even if it is common practice today and probably goes without saying – social networks are a must-have when it comes to public relations!

.....

And yet, social networks are no substitute for a website.

In the summer of 2013, we faced the daunting challenge of publicizing Werft 34 when the project began. After all, what good is the best project if nobody knows about it or takes part in it? Admittedly, creating publicity is not so easy at first. As a rule, news outlets mostly report what has already been achieved, and rarely on what still needs to be achieved. Our strategy was clear: we had to attract creative residents of Erfurt to Werft 34, using their ideas to draw the attention of multipliers to us.

Therefore, we invited the people from our network – whom we knew from our previous work at Plattform e.V. and from the household community at Saline 34 – to an initial information seminar. Through word-of-mouth propaganda, we succeeded in getting approximately 35 cultural workers interested in attending a first meeting. With coffee, cake, and the best weather, we presented Werft 34 to a small public for the first time on 30 June 2013. We talked to the creative minds about their future and the possibilities that participation in the project would open up for them. The participants displayed a great deal of interest in our lighthouse. A guided tour of the premises of Saline 34 and the prospect of becoming part of the household community convinced many to join the forthcoming application procedure.



Info event, September 2013

A little later, we also raised our flag on the Internet. At the beginning of August, we launched a Facebook page, where we would provide information about the project and planned events. The page quickly became very popular and grew steadily throughout the project.⁵ A short time later, our website went online with www.werft34.de. Here, in contrast to Facebook, we were able to implement detailed project presentations and documentation. In addition, the artistic design of the site increased the recognition factor of Werft 34.

Last but not least, we printed flyers based on the design of the homepage. We were able to distribute these flyers in the socio-cultural institutions of the city to attract other potential applicants. Soon after that, the advertising measures for the first months showed an effect. Our second briefing on 12 September was attended by 35 visitors interested in the Werft project, including multipliers from the cultural and start-up scene who had been invited.

Within a short period, we succeeded in making the application procedure known. For the first pitch, 26 applicants submitted their ideas. Moreover, we succeeded in attracting attention within the city: the media had begun to report on Werft 34. The beginning had been established.

⁵ By the end of the project, there were 750 followers on Facebook. (8 August 2016)

Learning how to tie knots

“The great thing about seafaring is that it takes you to the furthest corners of the world, and you learn things everywhere. In one port I met a Mongolian who offered me a saying from his homeland: ‘You can’t tie a knot with just one hand.’”

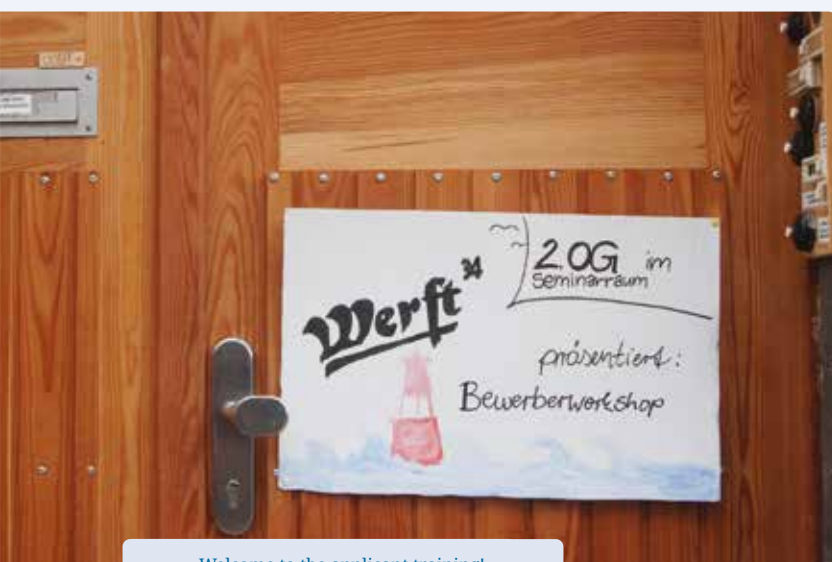
From the diary of a sailor

Not all applicants are applicants, and not all ideas are ideas. We found a wide variety of socio-cultural ideas and actors among the 26 applications that we received by the deadline of 20 November 2013. We were amazed at the creative potential that lay dormant in the tranquil Thuringian capital and now had to find a way to select eight applications. With it, there was a problem: As diverse as the start-up ideas were, so were the applicants’ prior knowledge. How could we organize a fair competition of ideas if the participants did not have the same know-how?

We therefore decided to make a pre-selection and initially sorted out ten applications that had most in common with the two fundamental ideas of Werft 34 (socio-culture and sustainability). For the remaining 16 applicants, we designed a training program that lasted several months. The aim was to fine-tune their ideas, develop a well-thought-out overall concept, and prepare a convincing presentation.

The final selection of the jury took place in May 2014. The reasoning behind the applicant training was simple: Every profession requires necessary specific skills. In shipping, for example, knotting is essential. All seafarers, whether captain, officer, sailor, or ship’s cook, must be able to “tuck” reliable knots that hold heavy loads and are still easy to untie. This was the case hundreds of years ago and still is the case today. Likewise, the basic knowledge of the entrepreneurs includes their business idea. Just like a sailor knows his knots, the entrepreneur must know his business concept in his sleep. It must be meaningful – i.e., it has to be watertight and yet easy to understand. And these are precisely the basics that the applicant training dealt with. The sailors of Werft 34 were supposed to learn how to tie knots here.

After an introductory evening in January 2014, we commenced with the training, which was an experiment for us as well as for the participants.



Welcome to the applicant training!



Tips from the captain

Get the people from where they are. Every start-up initiative has its own construction sites.

Target group analysis, business models, fundraising – these are all topics essential for a successful start-up where the creative minds broke new ground. In addition to the seminars, we offered the applicants the opportunity to work on their start-up ideas in the vacant rooms of Saline 34. Furthermore, the shipyard crew and the jury members made themselves available for feedback.

The theory of how applicants were trained is one thing; the real test came when putting it into practice. We realized that the training, which lasted several months, was well-intended but ultimately too lengthy. Only half of the 16 entrepreneurs held out until the presentation in May. While some simply lost interest, new professional or private perspectives opened up for others during this time. The premises in Saline 34 remained mostly unused; the opportunity for receiving feedback was hardly taken up, and we were forced to conclude that the training suffered from the size of the group. We found that our applicants were not looking for an elaborate training; they simply wanted to “get started.” Furthermore, the differences in know-how were no concern to the jury.

Nevertheless, they recognized the components of a successful start-up initiative. That is why we decided to abandon the curriculum-based training program in the selection processes in the years that followed. Read more in *Part 3: What we have learned*, on page 86.

Despite all the hurdles, eight of the 26 applicants who had applied held on. On 28 May, they presented their perfected start-up ideas and wanted to apply to Werft 34. The prospect of the entry fee, the further coaching and education program, and the possibility of having a working space in Saline 34 to move into was incentive enough for them to follow through to the end. Not only did the judges make their decision based on the five-minute pitch, but they also evaluated the written project outlines. They put the eight applications through their paces: Which idea has a distinct socio-cultural core? Is the idea feasible? And what about the financing options? The jury finally decided on four project ideas, which we accepted into the socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub.

We could now get started!

The work of the jury



The first pitch with Project GreenBOX

Sailors or landlubbers?

“An ocean voyage can last weeks or months. The sun rises and sets, but all you see far and wide is water. The ship becomes a little world of its own, which you share with the rest of the crew. At this point at the latest, you will find out if it was right to take individual sailors on board.”

Records of the ship's chronicler

The jury responsible for selecting the applicants was comprised of a panel of experts from various fields of socio-cultural entrepreneurship (page 15, *The Jury*). As members of the jury, Anja Wieland and Oliver Krahel accompanied our project for three years. In an interview with our ship's chronicler, they spoke about jury work, the pitches, and their three years with Werft 34.

*It took a very long time until the first pitch.
What were your tasks as a jury during this time?*

Anja: Before the first pitch, we received the submitted ideas on paper and had to make a pre-selection. Various criteria guided us that we, as the jury, had previously defined for our work. We evaluated the business concepts and the socio-cultural background of the ideas. We also assessed the financial feasibility of the projects.

Oliver: The preselected applicants then began training, in which we were only partially involved. For example, I gave a brief coaching on the topic of “business models and economic viability.”

Anja: We also wrote feedback to the applicants, which touched on the business-relevant points and showed the potential entrepreneurs where their idea still had weaknesses. We gave them tips and made ourselves available as a contact person. This, however, was rarely taken up.

How did you experience the pitches?

Anja: From the first to the third pitch, we found the atmosphere to be laid back. Often the presentations were very entertaining, as the applicants displayed a great deal of creativity.

Oliver: There were many persuasive pitches and some that were simply fabulous. For example, we all remember the pitch of “Du Lebst” (You are alive) from the second year, which was a mixture of live cooking, poetry, and theater (page 46 – *New sailors*). We even ate the result of this pitch together afterward (laughs).

Anja: The nice thing was that we, as a jury, were on a first-name basis with the applicants; therefore, there was no pressure during any of the pitches. That proved to be relaxing for the applicants and also corresponded to the character of Werft 34. It is not a typical start-up project.

How hard was it for you to make a decision?

Oliver: It is never easy, if only because the decision as a member of a jury is subjective. It's all about what impression each individual has of the respective candidate. None of us can look into the future and say, “This project will work, and this won't.”

Anja: Moreover, there is no right or wrong. If we decided against an idea, it didn't mean that the idea was terrible. We had to make our decisions based on Werft 34 and consider who would fit into the house, which applicants would best complement each other, and what options there were to finance the project. The start-up money was by no means enough to get the entrepreneurs through the first year, so we also thought about who would have staying power. In the end, you are only able to rely on your gut feeling.

[read more ›](#)

How important are the person and character for a successful start-up?

Oliver: Ideas and entrepreneurs cannot be held separate from each other. The right idea has to be implemented by the right person, which accounts for 90% of the success. Motivation plays a crucial role. Is the initiative an emergency start-up, i.e., is it by people who are self-employed in order not to be unemployed? Or is it based on their unconditional will? To put it in a nutshell: If someone has five reasonable job offers and still decides to start up a business on his own, then it's clear that he wants it too!

Anja: Motivation and passion for your idea are essential. If you want to become self-employed, you will always encounter obstacles that are not easy to overcome. It is necessary to be courageous and to see things through and not let yourself become overwhelmed. And I think that successful entrepreneurs are also good networkers. In self-employment, contacts are crucial.

How did the pitches change over the years?

Anja: I have to say that the second and third pitch were much more difficult for me because there was no more lead time. We didn't have the chance to meet the applicants beforehand and didn't receive any sketches of the ideas. There were only the pitches. Therefore, as judges, we couldn't prepare ourselves as adequately as we would have wished anymore. In general, the approach and the composition of the jury changed during the project. That didn't necessarily make it easier for us.

Oliver: Since the internal training of the applicants was discontinued after the first pitch, we had even less to do with the applicants, which didn't make the evaluation easy.

As members of the jury, did you still accompany the projects after the pitches?

Anja: Very sporadically and, unfortunately, without any logic behind it. There were individual feedback sessions, which were not well-coordinated, sadly. I had to give feedback to entrepreneurs whose pitch I didn't even see.

Oliver: I only continued to accompany the project "Du Lebst," but that was because I attended an event of this project and then began talking with them again. Apart from that, I don't know how the entrepreneurs fared and what became of them.

How do you see room for improvement for the jury work in Werft 34 or comparable projects?

Anja: First of all, I would like to say that Werft 34 is a model project, and it is okay that not everything went as planned. I would have wished that the jury as a whole would have been better involved in the project. Also, the preparation time is important. I would have liked to have had the written sketches of ideas, which were available for the first pitch, later on. As a juror, you want to take a closer look at the business concept and the applicants before the pitch. Furthermore, the jury should be made up of an established team.

Oliver: What I missed most was the possibility of being connected to the project. Therefore, a feedback round of six months would have been helpful – not only for us, as members of the jury, because we would have learned how the selected start-up ideas performed, but for the entrepreneurs, too, as it would have been good for them to assess themselves again after some time.

You accompanied Werft 34 for three years as members of the jury. How do you think the project left its mark in Erfurt?

Oliver: Well, the house was full and quite lively. Werft 34 holds a special status for me in the entrepreneurial scene. Most of the projects in this field are formalized, and here the entrepreneurs had more liberties. Moreover, the project team was able to experiment a lot. They did things that would be unimaginable in other start-up projects.

Anja: I can say that, overall, Werft 34 left a very positive impression, both in terms of the people involved and the start-up ideas. In terms of the media, Werft 34 was very, very effective. Many wonderful projects were initiated, which have also helped the district to grow. I also notice time and again that many entrepreneurs who come to me for advice have already heard of Werft 34. In any case, a socio-cultural network has developed around Werft 34.



Tips from the captain

The jury is a fixed anchor and an important means of providing ongoing feedback to the business initiatives. This is best done through regular (semi-annual) feedback rounds, where the entrepreneurs give information on their current status and discuss current work in progress.

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The quality of the jury feedback depends on precise information about the start-up initiatives. An (open) questionnaire can be useful in structuring your ideas!



Oliver Krahel

Business studies, initiator of the project “Mikrofinanzagentur Thüringen” (Thuringia Micro-finance Agency). Up until 2019, he was active at the Fraunhofer Zentrum in Leipzig in the field of innovation financing. In addition, he works part-time as a lecturer at the University Erfurt and the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt and is a business consultant.



Anja Wieland

Studied intercultural business communication; between 2008 and 2019 she was active as a start-up consultant at the “ThEx Enterprise” start-up center in Erfurt.

The entrepreneurs from the first pitch



During the first pitch



“Ahoy, you landlubbers! Welcome on board. There’s the stern with the captain’s cabin, the galley, and the wheel. Here are the masts, there’s the rigging, and there are the sails. Your hammocks are below deck. Don’t touch those rum barrels! And now grab a mop and make yourselves useful.”

Welcoming words of the first officer.

In the first pitch, eight applicants presented their ideas to the jury. The following four ideas were selected for the socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub of Werft 34.



“Progressives Bewegungsfernsehen” (Progressive Movement Television)

Behind the project “Progressives Bewegungsfernsehen” were the “film pirates” who wanted to create an interactive web platform for participatory video journalism and video activism. They prepared relevant left-wing topics in video contributions, which were selected by the platform users in interactive queries. The viewers were therefore involved in editorial decisions and could actively submit suggestions.

www.filmpiraten.org



Project GreenBOX

Project GreenBOX was a network of freelance media representatives. They offered seminars on various topics of media competence for adolescents and multipliers. Besides working in their seminar room and with their Greenbox in Saline 34, the GreenBOX project speakers traveled all over Thuringia to hold film workshops at educational institutions. This project aimed to offer low-threshold seminars that have a lasting added value for the creative and critical use of media.

www.projektgreenbox.wordpress.com



Veit Gossler

Veit Gossler came to Werft 34 as a freelance artist. His entrepreneurial concept was concerned with the development, promotion, and encouragement of each person's inherent creativity. Veit followed the simple approach of understanding art and creativity not as a luxury good, but rather as part of life itself. His concept is thus aimed at making people aware of their creativity and integrating it into everyday life through free creative work.

www.veit-gossler.de



Spirit of Football e.V.

With their slogan “One Ball: One World,” the actors of Spirit of Football have been traveling around the world since 2011, using the integrative moment of travel to question clichés and prejudices against other cultures as well as to show new possibilities for fair and social interaction with each other. Spirit of Football was aimed at promoting constructive conflict resolution in the school environment and anchoring it in everyday life. In addition, the topics of integration included all participants becoming familiar with the cooperation and the joy of football. The result was an authentic, practical, sustainable project offer for schools with plenty of movement and a broader perspective. The Spirit of Football team consisted of teachers, coaches, artists, travelers, networkers, and people involved in development policy.

www.spirit-of-football.de

Daily life on a ship

“The first days at sea are a physical challenge. The work is hard; the constant up and down of the waves makes you run around like a drunk person, and for some it hits their stomachs hard. Eventually you get used to it, but that doesn’t make things any easier. The ship seems smaller, and the ocean seems bigger every day.”

A deck-hand about his first trip

The pitch was over, the start-up ideas selected, and finally it was possible to get started! In an interview with our ship’s chronicler, Martin tells us what awaited the new entrepreneurs in the day-to-day life of Werft 34.

The applicants became entrepreneurs. So far so good, but what happened after the pitch?

After the pitch, we invited the entrepreneurs to Saline to look at the house for the first time. Of course, several of them had been there before, but now choosing a room became the topic at hand. At the first pitch, there were many rooms to select, while those at the second and third pitch had to make do with what was left. So the euphoria was at times subdued, especially since the entrepreneurs realized that they were still in the very beginning when they saw the rooms, which were still in their raw state. They still had a lot of work ahead of them.

In other words, they were free to choose their workspace at Saline 34?

That’s right. Spirit of Football, for example, already had an office in Wächterhaus I⁶ and wanted to stay there. This was not quite what we had in mind, of course, as we wanted to create a community among the entrepreneurs. But this was not feasible at times.

How did things progress after everyone had moved in?

Our naive idea was that the entrepreneurs would arrive at Saline 34, move into the rooms, begin working on their business model, test things, receive further qualifications or use the money to buy the necessary equipment, and get started. But that was not the case! Regrettably, it took several entrepreneurs a relatively long time to move in, while others needed an enormous amount of time to establish themselves legally, for example, as an association or something similar, etcetera, etcetera. Everyone had things to do. That took us by surprise and upended the procedure as we had imagined it.

So you had to rearrange everything?

Well, at least it didn’t go according to plan. I started coaching at the same time, which was quite a challenge for me at first. I would have liked to have had all the entrepreneurs under one roof at Saline 34. But since this was not the case, things were arranged at different locations. But we had also underestimated how difficult it is to make appointments with people who are at different stages in their life. The initiatives with which we supported the entrepreneurs were still heartfelt issues and pastimes that we wanted to develop so that they could earn money. Up to now, they had to earn their living differently, so there was often a lack of time.

6 Wächterhäuser (guardian houses) are empty buildings that (cultural) actors are allowed to use free of charge until a new tenant is found. In exchange for residential and/or other uses, they agree to maintain or renovate the building.

So a structured first year was not even possible?

Basically, no. The meetings between us as coaches and the entrepreneurs took place quite irregularly. And the coaching itself was met with varying degrees of acceptance. Some people approached us quite often and asked us questions, while others found the coaching rather annoying. But it was also clear to us that we did not want to exert any pressure here. If the path they take looks different from the one we imagined for them, then that's the way it should be. Starting up a business is a matter of personal experience.

But you tried to help anyway, right?

Yes, of course. Our approach was primarily to exemplify and promote what we had in mind. For example, we wanted the entrepreneurs to form a community and become a team. So we tried to encourage this at first by inviting everyone to dinner together in the hope that something like this would become established and self-sustaining. Although it didn't, it did help the atmosphere. It was a similar case with coaching. In the beginning, I tried to set it up in such a way that, at the end of each meeting, there was a task that had to be completed by the next meeting. Sometimes it worked, but often it didn't.

That sounds pretty tiring.

It was, but it always had to do with the reality of the entrepreneurs' lives. As the team of Werft 34, we had planned to be proactive in the first year, i.e., to ask, offer help, and so on, and then in the second year to help only when we are asked.

How did the workshops go?

The educational program went very well. About two-thirds of the entrepreneurs attended the workshops regularly. Here we tried to focus on individual problems and sometimes outsourced the coaching to the workshops. This is also where the entrepreneurs always exchanged ideas and gave each other support.



Tips from the captain

Consider whether you want to establish binding commitments (such as pitches, deadlines, homework) that involve the participants.

The entrepreneurs received financial support. How was the money intended?

We failed to accurately communicate the reason behind the financial support of 2,500 euro at the beginning. For us, it was clear that it is an investment and should cover start-up related expenses as well as the rent in Saline 34 or flow into our further training. However, many entrepreneurs thought they would get their hands on the money and could do whatever they wanted. Therefore, there were some inconsistencies at first. In the second and third pitch, we made this point clear.

You also received feedback on your work. What did the entrepreneurs think of the Werft 34 package you put together?

From what I've heard, the entrepreneurs enjoyed it. With personal coaching, they always had someone who took things into consideration and asked new questions. This helped them to think about other aspects and to define their goals more clearly. The educational program was well received, and many gained further qualifications. Praise was given to the open workshops where everyone spoke about their problems. There was a lively exchange of ideas here. All in all, we can be very satisfied despite all obstacles and issues. The external project evaluation also showed this (see page 84 – *The impact of Werft 34*).

The Hanseatic League

“A glance at the history of Northern Germany is enough to understand the value of cooperation: When pirates attacked individual ships, the merchants sailed in convoy and were safe. And when the port cities raised tariffs, the merchants founded the Hanseatic League and became rich.”

The Ship's Chronicler

THE PROBLEM

A lively, socio-cultural scene is not a matter of fact in any city. Apart from people who are committed and creative, what is needed above all is freedom. Artists, for example, need their studios, and musicians need their rehearsal rooms to develop. Equally important are locations for associations and initiatives as meeting points or venues. But whenever cities have problems consolidating households, selling their real estate seems to be the last resort, as was the case in Erfurt. As a result, there is a shortage of space in growing cities, and socio-cultural actors are drawn to the outskirts. But what happens when even the space for cultural workers is no longer affordable there?

Long before Werft 34, we experienced the strained working space situation as one of the pressing issues of Erfurt's independent cultural scene. Proper general conditions, such as affordable space and the appreciation of one's work, are the elixir of life for those involved in the cultural sector. Ultimately, that was the case for our entrepreneurs. One of our most important goals in creating a culture-friendly climate in Erfurt from the very beginning was to build a supportive network within the socio-cultural scene. Only by speaking

actively together and with a common cause could we stimulate public discourse on the value of socio-culture. At the same time, cooperation between the actors increased the opportunities for each individual to act. And while we were still making long-term plans on developing such a supportive network, fate stepped in. In late summer 2013, the actors of the Erfurt Wächterhaus approached us because they feared for the future of their site and sought support. That was the beginning of the Initiative for Cultural Space.



Tips from the captain

Particularly when space and money for culture are in short supply, one shouldn't jut elbows, but work together! If you see the others not as opponents, but as partners, new resources will open up for you.

.....

From the many people who convene together, a functioning network is far from being created. What is needed are several people who have the resources to organize this process.

.....

Make the added value of what you do visible and find suitable formats to communicate it.

Among other individuals, Alexander Matzka from the Stadtplanungsladen (Office of Urban Planning) in Erfurt accompanied the initial stages of the Initiative for Cultural Space. The consortium of several urban planning students had been dealing with the Thuringian capital's cultural space for quite some time and became a valuable partner. We needed reliable facts upon which we could pose arguments to the administration and politics so that we, as a cultural space initiative, could meaningfully intervene in the public discussion. The Stadtplanungsladen provided these facts: Between 2014 and 2015, the prospective urban planners worked out a cultural space study in which they highlighted the city's cultural and socio-cultural locations. "We asked more than 200 actors, places, and initiatives where they are active, in which cultural sector they are active and with whom they cooperate in the city," explained Alexander Matzka.

This produced various city maps showing where culture took place in Erfurt and how these places worked together, i.e., how they were networked. The maps proved what many of us had long suspected: The most important cultural areas of Erfurt were located in the city center, with a spur running southwest into the Brühler Garten and, of course, the northeast of

Erfurt, in particular Ilversgehofen where Saline 34 is located. But there was more: the maps also showed which places played a significant role in this network. Alexander explained: "There are places that are supporting pillars of the cultural area of our city. If a city administration approaches one of these pillars because it would like to make more profitable use of it, the consequences can be considerable. As a result, pillars break away, and a city can't often afford that." To prevent this, among other things, the Initiative for Cultural Space was formed and with the results of the study we were finally able to become politically active. In the summer of 2015, we handed the study over to the city administration and politicians and began discussions about the future spatial situation (page 56 - *Foreign countries, foreign customs*).

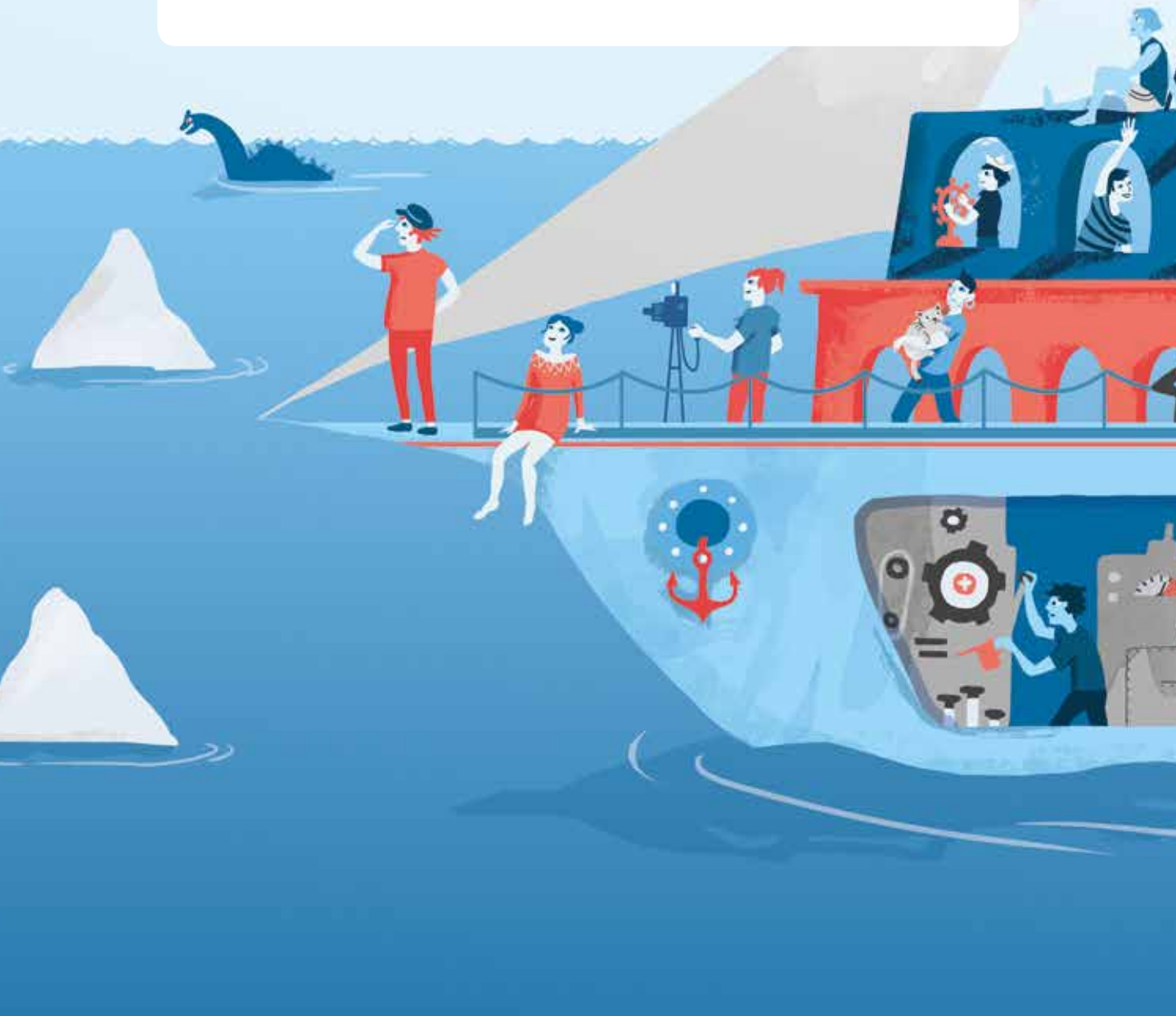
However, it soon became clear just how challenging it is to build a supportive network. Although they wanted more cohesion, we met actors who hardly had the time to build up such an interest group in addition to their jobs and voluntary work. We concluded that there had to be responsible persons who were exclusively appointed for this; therefore, we chose a body that professionally took care of the organization and development of the network.

Erfurt Initiative for Cultural Space

“The Erfurt Initiative for Cultural Space sees itself as an open, non-partisan alliance of initiatives, groups, associations, and private individuals from socio-cultural and civil society. Internally, the network cultivates tolerant, democratic, partnership-based, and fair cooperation. It acts externally as a mouthpiece to improve the situation of its actors and draw attention to their needs in administration, politics, and the public.

In particular, we are committed to the preservation and development of Erfurt’s cultural and open spaces”.

From the Initiative for Cultural Space’s list of demands





Blue deck

On the periphery of The Initiative for Cultural Space are the city's associated cultural actors who work, visit, or support the cultural spaces. They are curious about the developments of the initiative, participate in discussions at their events, and are happy to help out or bring demands to the city. They make the cultural spaces known to the public.

Red deck

The core consists of around 50 members who identify with the objectives of the list of demands and feel associated with the Initiative for Cultural Space. These are associations and initiatives, as well as private individuals. They are actively involved in large network meetings, working groups, and events such as "Kultur flaniert" as venues.

Engine room

The core of the Initiative for Cultural Space is a fixed group of coordinators, consisting of about six to nine volunteers, who come from the member associations and initiatives. In regular meetings, the latest developments and results from the smaller working groups are discussed, and events of the Initiative for Cultural Space are coordinated. The coordination group is the contact partner, both internally and externally.

Culture takes a stroll



*“Even the great discoverer Magellan said:
‘Those who stay on the shore cannot discover new oceans.’”*

The Ship's Chronicler

To continue the cooperation started with the Initiative for Cultural Space and to bestow it with relevance, we wanted to set a public example of Erfurt's cultural landscape jointly. With more than 20 initiatives, associations, and actors involved in the beginning, it was to be a big event right from the start, one that would attract attention. And so, on 19 July 2014, the Initiative for Cultural Space invited people to take time with the first-ever “Kultur flaniert” (Culture takes a stroll).



Station: Interkultureller Garten

To see one's city, anew – that was our goal. Under the motto “Come in – culture takes a stroll!”, the residents of Erfurt were able to discover new places throughout the city at the Open Day of Cultural Spaces. Throughout the Thuringian capital, numerous cultural initiatives developed different spaces in a variety of ways. However, up to now, they had hardly made any public appearances. With the help of a map, interested visitors discovered former wastelands or empty houses as socio-cultural experimental areas and were enthusiastic about a wide-ranging program.



Watch the video:
www.vimeo.com/174492183



Nordbahnhof e.V.

On a sunny day, hundreds of visitors strolled from one cultural site to the next. In the city center, the visitors could admire the Lagune's outdoor gallery, which combined culture and nature. In the Bytespeicher, technology lovers got their money's worth and marveled at a 3D printer, which they were also allowed to try out. The association's cultural quarter presented itself at the vacant theater (Altes Schauspielhaus) and recalled the house's history with an installation. Music was provided by the live broadcast of the organ concert in the Church of St. Crucis. An introduction to “urban gardening” was given at the Strandgut in the Flutgraben, where visitors could plant small flower beds to take home with them.



Saline 34



Many continued from the city center to the north of Erfurt, where our house also took part in a cultural stroll. The artists of the house opened their studios, two exhibitions were shown in the shop, and there was music as well. In the courtyard of Saline 34, the Rapcafe had the honor of playing live, and later Patrick Föllmer, the singer of Lilabungalow, unpacked his guitar. Those who strolled through the Wächterhaus I, where Günter Bayer's potter's wheel was turning, were able to get hands-on experience. The graphic designers of Greatmade also offered a printing workshop, offering visitors the chance to decorate textiles using various printing techniques. Of course, other hotspots in the north of Erfurt were Nordbahnhof and Salinestraße 127, where Kulturrausch, the independent publisher of a local culture magazine, is located. The end-of-day party took place in our neighborhood at the Klanggerüst music venue, rounding off a wonderful day.



Not only did the first “Kultur flaniert” send out the hoped-for signal of Erfurt’s cultural workers, it was also the catalyst for something greater. Together, the Initiative for Cultural Space created a festival that inspired the people of Erfurt and the local media and showed the cultural actors what was possible when working in cooperation. The magic of the day made the socio-cultural scene grow together a bit more, and everybody agreed that “Kultur flaniert” had to take place more often.

On 4 June 2016, “Kultur flaniert” was held for a third time. Once again, it was a huge success. Over 2,000 visitors strolled through the towns and let themselves be enchanted by the program of over 31 socio-cultural initiatives, associations, and actors.

eft full rudder!

“A rocky coast often holds more surprises than the deep sea, and sometimes the worst storm does not affect ship and crew nearly as much as a lull. But a good helmsman knows how to deal with all the vagaries of the sea.”

The helmsman

Because the applicant training before the first pitch ended up being somewhat suboptimal, we revised our educational offerings. We started a new attempt in September 2014 to provide our entrepreneurs with the necessary know-how. In the course of various workshops, we put together an educational program that was staggered over several months and dealt with numerous topics relevant to entrepreneurs. Since the workshops were no longer obligatory, our entrepreneurs were able to receive systematic training tailored to their project's needs.

Additionally, we made our educational offers available to the household community and other socio-cultural actors, which in turn resulted in us often having ten or more participants. Numerous experts, as well as our Werft 34 Crew, conceived and implemented the workshops.

Fundraising

One of our most attended workshops dealt with fundraising questions: How can I bring my project one step closer to the goal I have set for myself through donations, sponsoring, subscriptions, or supporting memberships? Where can I find advocates for my project, and how can I convince them to support my idea? Our expert Karoline Friebe from the fundraising team of the Halle Citizens' Foundation explained together with Martin how the entrepreneurs can raise money, gather support, or receive donations in kind.



Jan (Film pirates) at the presentation

Project Management

Success may be impossible to plan, but without planning, the chances of success of any project tend to be close to zero. In the project management seminar by Steffen, our crewmember and managing director of Plattform, participants learned to plan their projects from start to finish, from the milestones to the details, to balance budget and time optimally.



"I'm not a fan of capitalism, but this workshop opened my eyes a bit. What's the added value of my idea, who is interested in it, and where exactly does the money come from?"

Jan, Film pirates

Press and public relations work.

Multipliers are important. But how do I make editorial offices aware of my project, and how do I arouse the interest of journalists? Together with our speaker Maik Ehrlich from the regional newspaper Thüringer Landeszeitung, the participants developed press materials tailored to the way modern editorial offices work. In the second part of this workshop, everything revolved around social networks. The participants exchanged tips and tricks to reach a broad audience via their channels.

Accounting

Often the bookkeeping is the “stepchild” of the association or your project – nobody wants to deal with it! But the participants in our workshop quickly realized that these chapters of corporate accounting need not be a mystery, primarily since sensible bookkeeping not only provides an overview of one’s finances but also protects one from fines.

“I discovered many methods of how to deal with expenses and income, and I was surprised at all how there can be expenses. I had not even seen many of them on the horizon: insurance, premiums, etcetera, etcetera.”

Marie, Project GreenBOX



Moderation

The moderation of working groups, club meetings, discussions, and presentations in a goal-oriented manner is genuinely remarkable. In this workshop, everything revolved around the moderation of group processes. With helpful tips and tricks for visualizing and democratizing the discussion as well as sensible rules and methods for a goal-oriented working method, Dr. Kareen Schlangen, marketing expert and startup consultant from the University of Applied Sciences in Nordhausen, showed the participants what moderators need to consider.

Establishment of the association

Many things are easier when you combine forces. But before you can call yourself an association in Germany, you need some preparation. In this crash course, our guest speaker Brigitte Schramm, an organizational and startup consultant, explained what has to be considered in an association: statutes, non-profit status, liability, a board of directors, compensation of expenses, economical and functional operation, reserves, taxes, and insurance.

“The workshop opened my eyes to some crucial points. As a moderator, I learned that I was unable to control all processes, that preparation is essential, and that the moderator never turns his back to the group when speaking.”

Johannes, Plattform

Management

Often it is the basic things that make many creative entrepreneurs reluctant to act. But without such basics, these ventures are not possible. Therefore, guest speaker Andreas Berneck, a coach and freelance business lecturer, explained the fundamentals of management to our entrepreneurs. What is petty cash? How do I prepare a balance sheet or a financial plan? What do I need to bear in mind when I make an invoice?



Graphic recording

A picture is worth a thousand words. Graphics and symbols quickly create understanding. And even though words can be written down correctly, they say more when linked with arrows and bubbles. In the workshop of the illustrator Sandra Bach, the participants learned how to put their ideas on paper in a structured way, using simple direct techniques.

Target group

In every application and every project, the target group is what ultimately matters. No public relations work, no fundraising, no evaluation, and no impact is possible without it. In this course, our crewmember Martin talked to the participants about the specifics of target groups because only those who understand the target group can reach the people within and win them over in the end.



"Finally, taking time for something you never take time for – painting, drawing, writing. And it was worth it. Not only did I get a lot of tips on imagery, visualizations, and moderation techniques, but I also laughed a lot and had a wonderful day in a nice atmosphere."

Sebastian
"ich global" and "Lagune"

The entrepreneurs from the second pitch



New sailors

“Ahoy, you landlubbers! You may believe ‘That little bit of seafaring can’t be too hard,’ but you’re as severely tangled as a square knot at the end of the anchor. When you spit at the railing, you will be cursing the swell, and when on the thirtieth day you once again only have sauerkraut to eat, you will yearn for the coast. When you scrub the deck for the hundredth time, and the calluses on your hands already have their own names, you will know what it means to be a sailor. Now, grab a mop and make yourself useful!”

Welcoming words of the first mate.

In November 2014, the second pitch was due to be held, and out of a total of seven applicants, four presented their ideas to the jury. Since the applicants no longer had time to train in advance, they presented their projects without any clear concept. The jury primarily evaluated the ideas from a socio-cultural point of view. The following two ideas were selected for the Entrepreneurs' Program.



Art for Life

Art for Life was an art and social association whose mission was explicitly aimed at promoting cultural life, art, culture, enlightenment, and humanism. In its founding project, the association dealt with the topic of "isolation." Problems, questions, and answers on this topic were to be researched, highlighted, and evaluated – the project aimed to improve the situation of people who suffer mainly from isolation.

www.artforlife.eu



"Du Lebst" (You are alive)

"Du Lebst" connected people in many ways and offered socio-cultural events with music, words, and a feel-good character. Focusing on gut feelings, "Du Lebst" attempted to free oneself from everyday madness through music, readings, and workshops. Away from the usual commercial concepts, the project wanted to break into a world beyond artificial consumption and create events that were financially limited to the essentials and offered life sufficient room for development. Multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional, "Du Lebst" wanted to combine different styles for which there is no platform elsewhere.

www.dulebst.jimdo.com



Future Workshop

et sails, head to wind!

“A compass alone is not enough to reach your destination in a sailing ship. You must be able to read the weather, master the wind, and use it to your advantage.”

The Navigator

While our entrepreneurs in the lighthouse pressed further with the implementation of their projects, we devoted ourselves to the task of networking. Following the success of Kultur flaniert (Culture takes a stroll), more than 40 participants of the Kulturreauminitiative (Initiative for Cultural Space) met on 7 February 2015 for a future workshop. It was here that we planned our ongoing joint strategy. The aim was to identify current problems in the independent cultural scene, pursue them, and develop shared perspectives to solve them. In a creative atmosphere, we discussed in three work phases until late into the night.

In the critique phase, we took a close look at the problems of the socio-cultural scene. What doesn't work? Where is there a lack of resources or space? We gathered together all the needs and difficulties of the actors so that we could brainstorm solutions, possibilities for improvement, and wishes. Free of restrictions, we played around and imagined what would be the perfect conditions for a lively and creative socio-cultural scene. In the reality phase, we finally discussed which concrete measures we could use to improve Erfurt's cultural landscape in the long term. We realized that we had to become active in three aspects.

In the aspect of networking and public relations, the main focus was on networking with each other. To compensate for financial or spatial deficits, we decided to share resources such as knowledge, time, and space. The necessary coordination of resources among the actors, associations, and initiatives was first tested in various formats, as this exchange should not only work in theory but also practice. A second aspect dealt with the improvement of our public image. From now on, large joint events such as Kultur flaniert were the responsibility of the "Network & Public Relations" workgroup. The second workgroup, which dealt with "Space" took on the political demands of the interest network. These included the preservation and stabilization of vacant cultural spaces and taking culture into account in urban planning processes. The aim was to develop a list of demands and to become engaged in an intensive dialogue with the city.



Finally, the third group dealt with "Finance & Sustainability." It was necessary to develop possibilities and ideas on how the already limited financial resources could be distributed fairly and autonomously among the cultural workers.

We presented the results of the Future Workshop in a large group with numerous cultural actors, the city's cultural director, the chairman of the cultural committee, other city council members, and employees of the cultural directorate. It was a rather high-profile round that made it clear that everybody was curious about the results and that the interest group was already perceived as a partner.

From the lookout

“When the weather is beautiful, it’s like going on holiday. You sit in the crow’s nest with your eyes open and search the horizon for ships, rocks, and land. You bask in the sun and enjoy the quiet high above. But beware of stormy weather, because the visibility is lousy and every wave shakes the mast as if it wants to throw you off, like a bull at a rodeo.”

A sailor talking about the ‚lookout‘

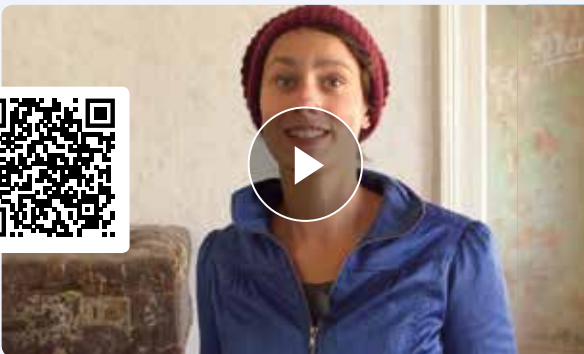
A total of five videos were produced for documentary and advertising purposes during the three years at Werft 34. After all, how more effectively could you inspire a broad group of people about your project? Well-made viral videos strike directly at the heart and transport complex issues with feather-light ease.

Tips from the captain

A good video needs plenty of conception time and money!

.....

All videos from Plattform e.V. are available in our Youtube channel:
youtube.deine-plattform.info



“Entrepreneurs set sail”

To introduce the socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub, we launched “Entrepreneurs set sail” in the first application phase. It was here where we gave insight into the house with all its opportunities for development and projects.

ENTREPRENEUR PORTRAITS

At the beginning of 2015, three videos were produced that portrayed various Werft 34 start-up projects. The two-minute videos were released to promote the third pitch in February 2015.

In addition to Veit Gossler, who had already been selected for the entrepreneurs' program in the first pitch and gave a review of his experiences with Werft 34, the films showcased the ideas of Andreas Kubitza and FOTOINIT. They were already part of the in-house residents and wanted to apply for the third pitch as entrepreneurs.



Veit Gossler

Artist



Andreas Kubitza

Radio journalist



FOTOINIT e.V.

Photo magazine



“Hello, Werft 34”

At the end of the project time, we ventured the big pitch: “Hello Werft 34” explains the complex and abstract project and is intended to whet the appetite to develop a shipyard in your city. As a team, we would like to pass on what we have learned, come by, and tell you about it.



The entrepreneurs from the third pitch



“Ahoy, you landlubbers! Look around; the deck is your new home! Your feather bed is the past; now it’s called bunk! Your toilet is the latrine, the cargo hold is your living room, and the aft deck is the balcony. And when our Smutje cooks, you’ll enjoy eating it just as much as you did at home with your mother. The captain is your father, and I am your older brother – and not the kind of person who looks after you, but the one who bullies and orders you around! This here may look like a mop, but it’s your new best friend. And now make yourselves useful!”

Welcoming words of the first officer



The third and last pitch rewarded us with three more start-up initiatives in May 2015, thus rounding off our crew at Werft 34. Six applicants presented their plans to the jury in a seven-minute pitch. The jury selected the three ideas with the alleged greatest socio-cultural potential. We welcomed the following projects:



Unicycle School Erfurt

As the name suggests, the Unicycle School Erfurt had dedicated itself to unicycling. Through workshops, training sessions, small presentations, and events, they wanted to show what can be done with just one wheel and make this sport known in the capital of Thuringia.

www.facebook.com/EinradtrainingErfurt



Andreas Kubitza

Andreas Kubitza's work mainly focused on audio and print journalism as well as its media-pedagogical communication. A further focus of his work was intercultural pedagogy in the context of Franco-German relations. He was also active in cross-genre artistic fields (radio features, radio plays, sound installations, etc.).



FOTOINIT e.V.

FOTOINIT regarded itself as a vibrant and participatory platform for contemporary photography from Thuringia. The association published the HANT magazine for photography, organized lectures and exhibitions, held workshops, and offered a creative network about photography. With this commitment, Fotoinit rejuvenated the regional photography scene.

www.hant-magazin.de

Briefing at the chart table

“Captain, we should discuss how to proceed. If we follow a southwest course, we’ll be in uncharted waters. We have no way of knowing how the wind will carry us; there may be shoals; we don’t know when we’ll reach land or if supplies will last.”

“Don’t be a coward! To quote the great Mark Twain: ‘Twenty years from now you’ll be disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.’”

Navigator and Captain

Even though we had already found plenty to talk about with the Initiative for Cultural Space, we did not want to rest on our laurels. To stimulate public discourse further, we invited political and socio-cultural stakeholders in July and November 2015 to impulse talks in which we wanted to examine the situation of the socio-cultural scene.

On 22 July, we organized a discussion round about the topic “Perspectives of young socio-culture in Erfurt: straddling idealism and earning cash.” The podium was chaired by Alexander Grüner, chairman of FOTO-INIT and entrepreneur of Werft 34, Dietmar Schwerdt, the new cultural guide and representative of the city, Katja Großer, consultant in the field of cultural industries, and Margot Schaper, the external evaluator of Werft 34. The latter drew up mid-term evaluation

about the one and a half years at Werft 34. In the talk that followed, it was possible to discuss the difficulties faced by young cultural workers caught between their much-loved voluntary work and the need to build a career perspective.

The second impulse talk in the old Erfurt Braugold brewery on 5 November focused on the aspect of vacancy and interim use in rural areas. As a result of the rural exodus, many spaces in the rural regions of Thuringia were also vacant and could be used for socio-cultural purposes. The podium was prominently occupied by Thuringia’s Minister of Economic Affairs, Wolfgang Tiefensee. In addition, Daniel Schier from the Zwischenzeitzentrale Bremen (Interim Headquarters Bremen), a speaker with a wealth of experience in the brokerage of “dormant buildings,” joined the panel.



Second impulse talk with Thuringia's Minister of Economic Affairs and Science Wolfgang Tiefensee

The discussion was rounded off by Thomas Meier (Atelier Intervention, Tonndorf Castle), Marcus Bals (Head of the Public Relations Office in the district of Sömmerda), and Matthias Schwarzer, a property owner himself. He presented a model project from Apolda. The impulse talk, which took place in front of more than 50 audience members, was a great success. Among other things, approaching solutions such as a digital platform that could provide rooms in the countryside were discussed. Minister Tiefensee was enthusiastic about the ideas and appealed: "I expect from the municipalities and districts the following: organize interim uses – allow them to happen! Support those who are creative! The most important thing is that you get people who act as a motor and win back others in concentric circles, revitalizing a small and medium-sized city".



Tips from the captain

Impulse talks with panel discussions are an excellent opportunity for an open exchange of views straddling politics and culture.

Foreign countries, foreign customs

“Today, we entered the harbor of a country completely foreign to us to replenish supplies. The natives, however, are strangely wayward people. When we dropped anchor, we had to apply for entry. Instead of a handshake, people here give each other documents and seals to close a deal, and everything is debated and voted on and debated again. It is an orderly country full of laws and rules. Life here seems to have absolutely nothing to do with life on the high seas.”

Captain's log

Several months had passed since the Future Workshop (see page 48), during which the “Space & City” workgroup had been discussing the political dimensions of our initiative. Over the course of many meetings, the workgroup agreed on a series of proposals with which we could give political emphasis to our interests as a network. In November 2015, we presented the Initiative for Cultural Space together with the proposals to the Cultural Committee of the City of Erfurt.

The city councilors welcomed the delegation with open arms, and their proposals were met with broad approval. Prof. Dr. Alexander Thumfart from the Green Party was genuinely enthusiastic: “You are an asset for Erfurt.” But even though the city councilors present were full of praise for our ideas, they also made it clear to us that the wheels of politics and administration grind slowly. Wolfgang Beese, the chairman of the cultural committee, asked us to persevere: “You need to tread on our feet properly.”

The demands were, therefore, only the first step. Although we had now also sparked a debate at the political level, we now had to make sure that it would not be just a harmless flash in the pan.



Tips from the captain

By being consistent, you win the trust of politicians and administrators.

.....

If you want a comprehensive discourse in the city, consider the various community relations and channels through which you can best reach them.

It was clear to us that the changes we demanded would only occur if our efforts to persuade people continued and if we kept the discourse on the value of socio-culture alive. In the coming months, we needed to consolidate the Initiative for Cultural Space.

Therefore, we started to “step on the toes” of the city councilors and managed to bring several requests for socio-cultural topics into the city council meetings. We succeeded in doing this thanks to direct citizen inquiries from our actors as well as through city councilors who stood up for our topics in the city hall. Almost all of our requests were referred to the Cultural Committee, an indication that the majority in the city council considered these demands so vital that they should be further negotiated in the panel. In this way, we were able to make our presence felt in city politics.

To underline our political demands and to draw attention to the critical situation of cultural actors due to the precarious budgetary situation, we also took to the streets. In May 2016, the cultural funeral march with about 350 demonstrators went straight to the city hall. With the symbolic “Funeral of Queen Culture,” we even attracted nationwide attention and proved that the Initiative for Cultural Space could mobilize people for socio-cultural issues.

A seat on the city’s cultural committee was to be won to increase the political scope of the initiative. Also, the working group discussed what the future organizational structure of our political lobbying could look like. To this end, it planned to seek advice from others who were already successfully organized as interest groups. In three planned exchange events, representatives were invited to Erfurt to discuss the initiative’s potential transferability with the actors of the Initiative for Cultural Space.

Maritime trade

“It is said that ‘the craft of the merchant is this bringing a thing from where it abounds, to where it is costly.’ The occupation of the sailor, on the other hand, is to show the merchant where these two places are.”*

Records of the ship's chronicler – *Quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson

From the outset, the primary focus of the Initiative for Cultural Space has been to promote solidarity-based cooperation between socio-cultural actors in Erfurt. In this way, we wanted to make a constructive contribution to counteract the prevailing financial and spatial problems. Unlike cultural individualists, who, if anything see each other as competitors for the few public resources, the Initiative for Cultural Space strives for mutual solidarity. To this end, the “Networking & Public Relations” workgroup collected ideas on how such a form of cooperative collaboration could be implemented in the future. When the Federal Cultural Foundation's became aware of this project and assured us support, we pooled our ideas into a project proposal, which was accepted in December 2015. This was a massive success for the entire Initiative for Cultural Space, which has now been able to test cultural exchange over a funding period of three years since the beginning of 2016.

There are three principles of cultural exchange:

1 NETWORKING

The first stage is networking, which was already initiated through the Initiative for Cultural Space and is to be further improved as a result of the cultural exchange project. Here, “Kultur flaniert” and other cooperative events such as the Culture Funeral March play an essential role. They attract attention and set strong public signals. This is how we make collaborative action perceptible and show the actors what joint effort can achieve.

2 QUALIFICATION

Whether as a start-up or as a cooperative collaboration, elaborate plans require knowledge and skills. To increase the chances of success of cultural exchange, we are testing new formats intended to create sustainable incentives for networking and cooperation. In networking events, current issues are to be examined, and problems in peer-to-peer will be clarified, and the ongoing roadmap for cultural exchange will be discussed. Also, best practice examples will be presented in various events and discussed in regard to how they can be implemented in Erfurt.

3 COOPERATION

Finally, the third stage is active cooperation and exchange to share resources. The transfer of knowledge and information is to be made possible by a virtual platform. Furthermore, resources should be offered and searched for at events, so-called “cultural panels.” Additionally, a “treasury” will be set up where shared material resources can be stored and used as needed.

To initiate this process, we organized a preliminary event on this topic: the culture camp. On 26 February 2016, more than 40 actors from Erfurt’s cultural landscape to discuss their own identity as a cultural space initiative and the expectations associated with such cultural exchange. The positive mood enabled a lively exchange of thoughts and ideas to emerge on how the project could be sensibly structured and put into practice.

In four workgroups, the participants discussed the planning of further publicity campaigns, talked about the implementation of cooperative formats on a digital

platform, founded a cross-media cultural editorial office and considered further strategies in the urban policy dialogue in the working group the political representation of interests.

In this sense, the cultural exchange project is based on the already initiated processes of the Initiative for Cultural Space. It follows up on these processes and tries to ensure that the cooperation of socio-cultural actors on the political level is matched by cooperation on the material and media level.

Further information on the continuation of the cultural exchange project can be found at:

www.kulturtausch.de

www.staendigekulturvertretung.de



The household community of Saline 34

Life in a lighthouse

“No captain on all seven seas has ever saved as many ships from certain doom as I have, even though I can neither read a chart nor tie a knot. I can’t even swim. I just sit here on land and twiddle my thumbs.”

The lighthouse keeper

One of the basic requirements of Werft 34 was to transfer Saline 34 to the custody of the household community. To do this, the household community had to decide how they wanted to manage themselves. After a one-year process, the users chose to establish a non-profit association. In an interview with our ship’s chronicler, Alex from HANT magazine spoke about the development of personnel at Saline 34, the household community, and the challenge of establishing a non-profit association.



The shop as a public part of Saline 34 is both a venue and a popular meeting place

Alex, you are a first-time resident. You helped make Saline 34 habitable again. In 2012, you moved in. What was that like back then?

That's right. Paul (also at FOTOINIT) and I made Saline 34 habitable. Of course, we didn't do it ourselves; many of those who helped back then are no longer here. Renovating the building was rather complicated and exhausting. We knocked out walls, dragged ovens back and forth, and did much more. And when that was halfway done, we moved in too, because we needed the workspace. At that time, HANT magazine did not even exist. The idea for the magazine was only developed here.

When Werft 34 started in 2013, there were still many vacancies. Today the house is full. How has the community developed since then?

A lot has changed internally, of course. Almost no one from the initial crew with whom we renovated the house back then is here. Many people have joined us, and some have already left. Therefore, the social life that some wished for has never occurred. However, the atmosphere has never been bad, and people have always launched projects together and worked together. In the meantime, the household community has become more constructive. People today understand Saline 34 much more as their workplace. The house is full. There were often moments where I was utterly alone in the house during the day, which is no longer the case. There is almost always someone there. The household community has become more lively.

Would you say that a sense of community has been created here?

Let me put it this way: things could be better, even if it can't be forced. An individual level that people build up with each other is needed, and that takes time. But I don't believe that it is due to the personalities here in the house per se. They are all open-minded and positive. With every joint action and event, where people are also acting together, we move closer together. The last bit of community spirit is still missing, but it will work out.

At the moment we are trying to establish Saline34 e.V., an association which will be responsible for the building. How difficult is it to establish such an association?

Establishing an association is not all that difficult. However, establishing this association has taken long, and it is far from being finished. Saline 34 e.V. has to bring together many people and a correspondingly large number of opinions. It usually is the other way around. You establish an association and then pursue your ideas. But we have already realized the idea of a socio-cultural lighthouse, and now we have to see how we can set up an association to maintain this lighthouse.



Alex presents the editorial offices of HANT-Magazin during a guided tour

This means that the association needs to take responsibility.

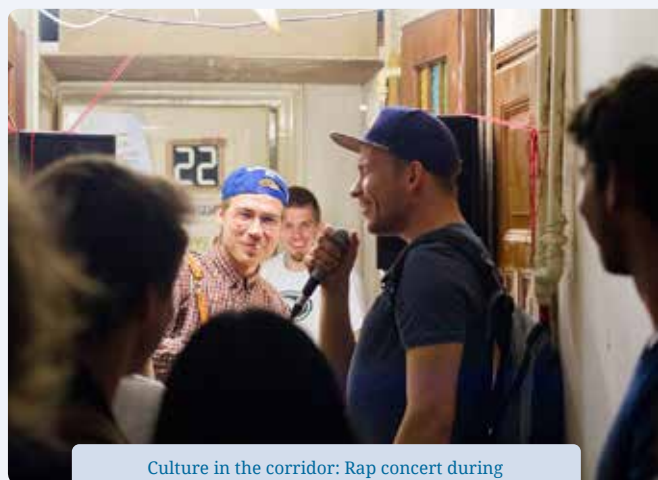
Exactly, and this is something that first needs to be realized. The chain works like this: the house does not exist if the club does not exist, and the club does not exist if the people are not there. So the people have to join in. If Plattform withdraws at the end of the year, we will be on our own and will have to manage Saline by ourselves. So we have to take responsibility. Currently, the inhabitants are tending to commit themselves to join the association Saline 34.



Entrepreneur Veit in his studio



Domo at the HANT magazine pitch



Culture in the corridor: Rap concert during "Kultur flaniert" (Culture takes a stroll)

What is particularly important is obtaining a non-profit status. This means that you have to develop a social idea for the association.

Indeed. Here too, we are looking at how to formulate the statutes of the association and what this means in the end for each individual. The non-profit status is necessary because then the association receives tax benefits. But I think it is natural for the socio-cultural lighthouse to be established as a non-profit association. So we can't refrain from coming up with something cool. "Kultur flaniert" (Culture takes a stroll), an open house, and a Christmas market have already been held here, but that's not enough for non-profit status. We'll see what we do. Internally, we are discussing this right now. In any case, I can well imagine that Saline 34 will be even more impressive as an association.

Because an association can create identity?

It has to. I think it could also be the essence of the entire thing: people realize that much more can be achieved together. Especially since Saline 34 already has a certain appeal in Erfurt. Sometimes we are not even really aware of that yet. The house is a unique project in Erfurt and beyond. People from all over the world come here to see Saline 34. We should always remember that. Saline 34 is more than just a cheap place to work, and the association should be conveying that.



Recording studio – before



Recording studio – after





HANT editorial office – before



HANT editorial office – before



HANT editorial office – after

ome port

“Anyone who’s been at sea for such a long time almost becomes alienated from his home port. The once-familiar streets, houses, and pubs seem transformed, and people who were once familiar have changed. When you step ashore, you discover something new in all that is old. At this moment, you realize your journey was simply to return home.”

From the diary of a sailor

On 30 June 2016, the three-year project phase of Werft 34 came to an end, marking the conclusion of a successful project period in which we helped nine founding initiatives get on track. Moreover, we played a significant role in the Initiative for Cultural Space and handed over Saline 34 to the house community. On top of that, we strolled through Erfurt three times with culture and launched a new project with the cultural exchange. Since the aspect of sustainability has always been important in our work, we would like to take this opportunity to provide insights into the things that will have a lasting impact.

THE ENTREPRENEURS

It is necessary to note that none of the nine start-up projects failed or gave up. On the contrary, Werft 34 helped in developing the entrepreneurs, who fulfilled the prerequisites for being active in the future by gaining qualification and creating networks. All entrepreneurs have increasingly become financially independent, and some of them can make a living from their projects. In some cases, full-time structures have been created in the associations. Seven founding initiators have found a home in Saline 34 and are in residence here.

THE HOUSEHOLD COMMUNITY

Together with the entrepreneurs, the household community has grown over the last three years so that there are currently (as of June 2016) no more empty rooms. Many residents have joined together to form the Saline 34 association, which will take over the self-administration of the socio-cultural lighthouse in the future. It is also expected that renovation work will be carried out before the end of 2016, strengthening the building's structural substance. This renovation work is being financed by subsidies earmarked for the long-term, socio-cultural use of Saline 34. Negotiations on a further usage agreement with the city are progressing well.

KULTUR FLANIERT (Culture takes a stroll)

The socio-cultural street festival has been growing and is perceived as a source of enrichment by those involved and the citizens. "Kultur flaniert" will likely be held once again in 2017.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

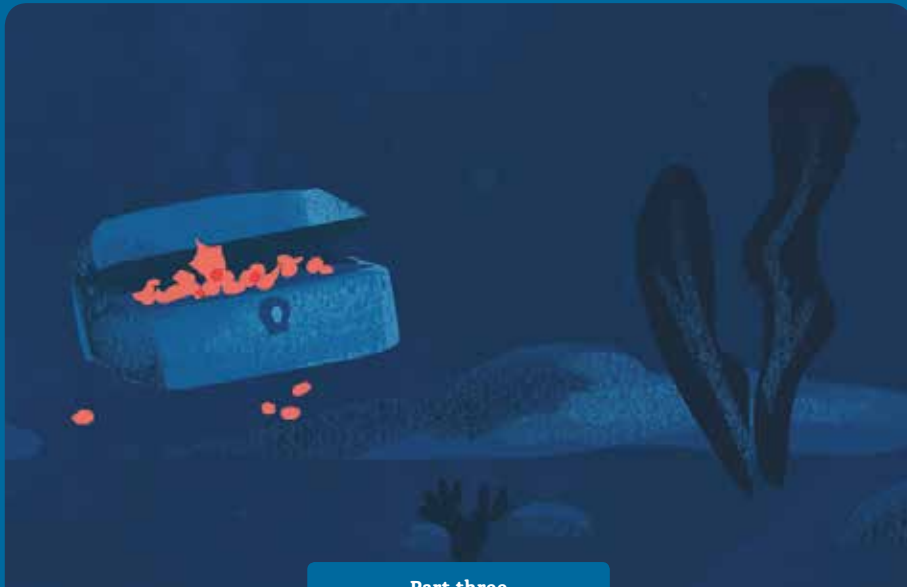
After the Werft 34 project has been completed, the educational program for socio-cultural actors and founders is planned to continue. Workshops will continue to be offered and used thanks to cooperation and income.

NETWORKING

With the Initiative for Cultural Space, the socio-cultural scene of the Thuringian state capital has created a relevant political lobby that will continue to work with the city's political decision-makers. The initiative has formulated clear goals for its future work in its list of demands. In recent years, joint activities and events have created a sense of togetherness that offers the best conditions for the cultural exchange project. With this, the Initiative for Cultural Space wants to improve the cooperative action between the socio-cultural actors through conventional forms of resource exchange.

THE WERFT 34 CREW

Through Plattform, we will continue to operate in the Thuringian capital's socio-cultural environment, be active within the Initiative for Cultural Space, and provide advice to the entrepreneurs. We are also currently working on transferring the Werft 34 program to other municipalities and training the participants.



Part three

xperience

*We have learned, experienced and tried out
a lot during this time: Things that we
and others can take away from Werft 34.*

After three years

Resume of the Werft 34 CREW

*Three years at sea: Together, the Werft 34 CREW looks back.
What successes and unexpected turns were there?
And how will things continue?*

In the interview, Steffen, Rike, and Martin answer the questions of the ship's chronicler.



STEFFEN PRÄGER
Project management



FRIEDERIKE GÜNTHER
Networking
and public relations



**MARTIN ARNOLD-
SCHAARSCHMIDT**
Education and training

Let's go back to the beginning: How did the idea for Werft 34 come about back then?

Steffen: Two things acted as a catalyst for Werft 34. Initially, we supported small socio-cultural projects with the Ladebalken (progress indicator) project, with which we supported small socio-cultural projects at that time. A network of people who wanted to professionalize themselves through socio-cultural work was quickly established. So we knew that there were people in Erfurt who were interested in developing their ideas further. At the same time, the project for Saline 34 created the spatial conditions to make this possible. When the Drosos Foundation became interested in our previous projects, we saw this as an opportunity to add another project that pursued a network and development-oriented plan to support socio-culture.

And the foundation was immediately enthusiastic about the Werft 34 concept?

Steffen: The foundation was very open-minded about our concept. However, we quickly realized that they wanted to do more than just build up a welfare structure in Erfurt. So we had to think in broader terms and recalled an idea that had been at the back of our minds for quite some time: the entrepreneurial hub – a laboratory where people could try out and research intriguing start-up ideas.

Martin: We incorporated this idea into the existing concept, which ultimately became Werft 34 with its three pillars (entrepreneurial hub, network, lighthouse).

The thing that makes the Werft 34 concept special was that you also took the entire socio-culture of the city into consideration. Why?

Steffen: For us, we needed not to just stick to helping entrepreneurs get back on their feet. Saline 34 had grown dear to our hearts, and we wanted to ensure its continued existence. Space is a very decisive factor for socio-cultural developments; therefore, maintaining Saline was linked to the success of the entrepreneurs. But the house, being part of the socio-cultural scene in Erfurt, was also part of the neighborhood. And to safeguard the house, we realized that we also had to do something for this scene. This is where the idea of networking came from.

Rike: Solidarity makes sense: If everyone fights together to maintain Saline 34, the Wächterhaus, or any other location, it is more effective than if each place and all actors fight alone.

Why was the Drosos Foundation interested in supporting such a project in the first place?

Steffen: As far as I know, the foundation was looking at how to stimulate sustainable development, which should be about increasing the income of the protagonists. But the idea of doing this here, in such a run-down building with artists was very controversial. However, we were also a model project that had never before existed in this form in the foundation. The complex approach we developed here was also relevant to the foundation as an experiment. But when I look at the projects that the foundation has implemented since then, I see that we were absolute pioneers.

Three years have now passed. Be honest with yourselves – were you successful?

Steffen: Yes. I would say that the project was indeed very successful and that the main objectives have been achieved.

Rike: But as is always the case after such projects, you end up wiser in the end. We may not have achieved everything one hundred percent, but wherever we felt more time was needed, we took care of structures and financing that could carry it forward.

Steffen: Of course, it was naive to believe that the three of us could turn Erfurt's socio-culture around. But we have made a strong start and, indeed, the project has initiated so much that everyone involved profited from it – both the community here and as well as the foundation.

How did Saline 34 develop together with the entrepreneurs?

Rike: Before Werft 34, we had a loose group of people who had moved in to work cheaply. Although the users had already discussed about the house for some time, it was only within the last few years, and with the arrival of the entrepreneurs that a sense of cohesion has developed. The house community has grown together to some extent through joint events, even if there is still room for improvement.

Do the people identify themselves with Saline 34?

Rike: Yes, I think many people have grown fond of Saline 34. Nevertheless, all the residents have their projects, jobs, and a life outside the house. Therefore, the last commitment to the house is missing.

But this commitment will be necessary when the house community becomes autonomous in the near future.

Rike: Absolutely. But that's yet to come. The building has several structural flaws; the basement needs to be reinforced and the roof is leaking. The occupants of the house have noticed these flaws and you can see now that they are more concerned about getting the building back into shape.

Steffen: And because a new sponsor needs to be found with the expiration of the current lease – as Plattform e.V. is withdrawing from the tenancy – the house community began to take self-administration into consideration. They have agreed that there should be a Saline 34 association that takes care of everything in the future.

Rike: We have been closely monitoring this process over the past year and are now at the point where this association will be founded.

What will this association change in the house?

Rike: Of course, the users have discussed this a lot, and there is some give and take. Everyone wants to stay here, but at the same time, a new association means additional work for each individual. So there is no way around the fact that everyone is becoming more involved in the house and the community.

Steffen: What is currently still missing, however, is an operating concept that sees Saline 34 as a brand in its own right, and that doesn't have everyone offering their little bit on the art and culture market. Instead, the various works that we have here in the house establish a joint product that is much more substantial.

What is the current status of the negotiations on the user agreement?

Steffen: At the moment, the owner, namely the city of Erfurt, is aware of the structural flaws and the renovation measures that need to be made. Urban development funds will be used for this purpose. It was a hard fight to convince the city administration that they should maintain the building in its current function. However, the agreement is currently being delayed due to the tight budget situation. The use of the subsidies will also mean that the building will remain in existence for the next 15 to 25 years as a low-threshold cultural and creative center. As soon as this is signed, we will have ensured that the building will be maintained regardless of who operates it.

And how do you envision the handover from Plattform, as the tenant, to Saline 34?

Steffen: We still have to organize that. Currently, Plattform is negotiating with the city. As soon as the household community has founded its association, we will only act as intermediaries and accompany the final negotiations between the city and Saline 34.

It is no coincidence that the city has agreed to maintain Saline 34 as a cultural and creative center. What image does the building have in the city?

Steffen: Its image has changed. Thanks to the Initiative for Cultural Space and the various projects that emanate from Saline 34, a general sense of awareness has grown in the scene and among city decision-makers. Saline 34 has become a hub where many people come together and take action to cultivate cooperation. Saline 34 has become a house that has no equal in Erfurt.

Rike: That is also the reason why numerous groups of visitors have come to visit Saline 34 in the past years. They don't merely come to see a dilapidated house; instead, they are interested in the model of cooperation. There have even been people from Morocco and India, which shows the relevance of this institution here.

Let's talk about the entrepreneurial hub, with which you wanted to enable the entrepreneurs to become independent. Is a successful laboratory synonymous with the financial success of the entrepreneurs?

Martin: The choice of the term "hub" was not arbitrary. The idea behind the term is about developing ideas in an innovative way that offers the perspective of becoming financially independent. We wanted to change the actors' framework conditions so that they would be willing and able to continue at the end of Werft 34. So financial aspects are not the only factor in the evaluation of the laboratory, improving working conditions also play a role. We succeeded in both.

I would like to be even more specific. How has Werft 34 changed the financial situation of its entrepreneurs?

Martin: To answer this question better, we have to take into consideration the fact that we took on both individuals and organizations (associations, for example). For individuals, of course, the entrepreneurial project is much more linked to their income. Organizations, on the other hand, only wanted to cover their costs and generally improve their opportunities. All in all, the financial situation has improved for everyone. Some people even make a living from their idea now. The organizations' finances have developed to such an extent that their structures have been bolstered, and they can continue their activities in the future.

How were the workshops structured?

Martin: It varied, of course, depending on the topic and the speaker. But there were also commonalities. It was important to us that the participants got to know each other and gave each other feedback, which then new input for their ideas and enabled us to create networking opportunities.

You were also personal coaches for the entrepreneurial hub. How did this go over with the entrepreneurs, and with which problems did they approach you?

Steffen: The entrepreneurs were all very different and had various issues to deal with. However, it was good for all of them to have their project reflected in ongoing discussions. Many simply came to us and described what they were working on at the moment, what they intended to do, and which next steps they were planning to take. And then we tried to give them tips and advice without being schoolmasterly. That helped them set priorities. If there were start-up-specific questions, we helped out with our expertise or established useful contacts. I think this was especially true for Jan (film pirates), who at times was so unbelievably busy with the FPÖ lawsuit⁷ and his series of films. Our conversations were such a moment during the week where he could sit back and tell me what considerations he was making. It allowed me to help him structure his approach.

7 FPÖ lawsuit: With its financial resources, the right-wing populist and national conservative Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) filed a lawsuit against the film pirates in 2015. A decision regarding the lawsuit, which will be heard in Vienna, has not yet been made (as of June 2016). Through a crowdfunding campaign to cover the legal costs, the "Film pirates" were able to avoid financial ruin, which the right-wing populist party was aiming for. Further information can be found at www.filmpiraten.org.

Martin: At first, I thought it would be good to have a roadmap ready for the entrepreneurs and then move forward incrementally with each progressive meeting. This didn't work because most had not done the necessary "homework" for one reason or another. So I switched to providing acute care. The entrepreneurs came to me, explained their problem, and together we discussed possible solutions. Often I ended up not being the person who was taking questions, but who was asking questions. It made me realize that coaching has a lot to do with asking the right questions.

The Werft 34 project was also about the larger picture. From the very beginning, the idea of acting not only for individual entrepreneurs or for a cultural location, but instead of understanding socio-culture as a network, was anchored in the project. However, the Initiative for Cultural Space, which now relays this idea, came about somewhat by chance didn't it?

Rike: Yes, the first impulse came from outside, when the actors from the Wachterhaus approached us because they feared that their rental contract would not be renewed. That's when the idea first came up to both work and stick together in the future, not only to preserve the Wachterhaus but also to stand in solidarity with all participants of the socio-cultural scene in Erfurt. After all, space was and still is the burning issue. The first Future Workshop was a veritable "clean sweep" back then, where everyone involved spoke up and said what annoyed them about Erfurt. And then we thought together about what we could do to change that. From these collective wishes, a large association emerged, which we now call the Initiative for Cultural Space.

How has the Initiative for Cultural Space developed since then?

Rike: The Initiative for Cultural Space made great leaps in its development during this time. It is now an association of about 50 individuals, initiatives and associations who have added their signature to the list of demands. Within three years, we have succeeded in mobilizing a mass of actors committed to ensuring that socio-culture is noticed. We have succeeded in building up political pressure in the city council. In the meantime, a festival such as "Kultur flaniert" (Culture takes a stroll) has established itself in the city and is becoming more prominent and more diverse every year. From a loose alliance, the Initiative for Cultural Space has developed into a network that is starting to establish permanent structures.

And you – Rike in particular – have become a linchpin for the initiative. How did that happen?

Rike: To build such a network, you need people who have the time and capacity to take over the organization. You have to invite people to meetings and prepare them. You have to cultivate and maintain contacts, and you have to make sure that processes that have been started don't fall to the wayside. Since I was responsible for this network within the framework of the Werft 34 project, I had the time to take over the organization. This resulted in the fact that I poured all the ideas that were developed during my time within this network into a project that started as a cultural exchange in January 2016.

Steffen: An important aside: The Federal Cultural Foundation approached us with this project, not vice versa. They noticed that we had become an important hub and asked us how they could support us.

Does this cultural exchange project now allow you to consolidate and continue the processes that were initiated?

Rike: Yes, although it's important to note that with the new project, this network is to be provided with new hubs. I'm still here, but a larger group of actors soon needs to be involved in the organization. The network needs to be able to support itself and not depend on individual persons; otherwise, everything might collapse like a house of cards.

The Initiative for Cultural Space should, therefore, be broader in scope. But how will the exchange take shape?

Rike: There will be various events and platforms to lend encouragement and to exchange and share resources actively. To make this possible, several posts will be held within the project by people who will manage the organization in the individual sub-areas. In other words, they will ensure that the exchange can take place.

Steffen: The exciting thing about it all is that we are trying to implement this with a cooperative model. You could also set up something like a branch office to manage everything. But then you have the problem that if the money for the office is no longer there, you are back on unstable ground.

Rike: Let's take the example of "Kultur flaniert." True, a person is needed to promote it to the public, but actually, the event is being held by the more than 30 cultural venues. They create the program, and the day itself is only the framework. It will be a similar case with the planned Kulturtafel (cultural round table). Actors will come together to exchange, make offers, share, and of course, get to know each other. Here, too, the Kulturtafel is only the framework, and individual locations invite each other to this event.

Finally, a personal question, what are you taking with you from three years of the Werft 34 project?

Martin: Many good experiences and also friendships. For me, the three-year-long Werft 34 project personally enriched my life greatly because it was also a happy time. For three years here, I was able to do what I love to do most. That's quite a lot.

Steffen: I can only agree. Dealing with change without becoming unruffled is one of the most valuable experiences we made here. In general, I believe that with the Werft 34 project, we have shown how socio-cultural entrepreneurship can work with creative people. That is a great achievement.

Rike: I learned that it's okay when things don't go according to plan and change. I have become much more relaxed because I know that a solution can always be found. Additionally, I built up a network for the first time through the Werft 34 project. I am proud of that.

ntrepreneur feedback from Jan (“Film pirates”)



How did you end up at Werft 34 back then?

I have been involved in video activism for the past ten years. My problem was that, although it is a very time-consuming project that I would enjoy pursuing further, I wasn't earning any money with it. At some point, the idea struck me that I could do the whole thing based on donations, but I didn't know whether the concept was realistic. Coincidentally, I heard about Werft 34 a little while later and saw it as a chance to put my idea through its paces. So I applied (together with the film pirates) and luckily I was chosen.

So the idea as such was already there. Did Werft 34 change it?

The idea hasn't changed fundamentally, but it has become much more detailed, shifting from donation-financed video activism to user-based video journalism.

What is the difference?

Simply put, while the first format aims to make films and perhaps get donations, the second model asks users which film they want to see before setting out to acquire the donations. Therefore, people can influence the type of film they want to see and are more motivated to contribute.

Target group analysis was an essential topic in the workshops and the applicant training. Is Werft 34 making an impact here?

Yes, absolutely. It certainly opened my eyes, because it's quite naive to assume that people will come up with the idea of co-financing what you do. The Werft 34 Program questioned every start-up idea. Who is it actually for? What interest do people have in my idea? Does this idea already exist? What is the unique selling point? And much more. Questions that make absolute sense, but that you don't necessarily come up with on your own when starting out.

How was the submission phase and the pitch for you?

For me, it was amusing to see the wide variety of ideas submitted. In retrospect, I didn't experience the pitch itself as being stressful. What was good in any case was that you had to focus on the essentials. To present your idea from start to finish within five minutes is a real challenge.

After you were accepted, you were given a room where you could do work at Saline 34, which was also very important for your project, wasn't it?

There were two essential aspects for us when it came to applying at Werft 34. First, we wanted to put the idea through its paces, and second, we needed an inexpensive space to work as a basis for further activities. Having your own space is vital in that you have a separation between your private life and your work. When I am at Saline 34, I work, and when I'm at home, I am free and don't have to think about the current film project always. That increases efficiency.

Werft 34 has placed great emphasis on the fact that the physical proximity in Saline 34 between the entrepreneurs also generates synergy. Did that work?

It worked well at the workshops. We all discussed the various start-up ideas together and lent support to each other. Furthermore, I can say that Simon, who is also from the house, helped me immensely with the graphics while working on a major film project in 2015. He also produces films, but they are much more aesthetically pleasing than my documentaries. He was able to show me a lot, particularly design. We have also already decided to do joint projects.

What did you think of the assistance provided by the Werft 34 crew?

The project management was significantly based on the division of labor. At least I had that impression. Martin took over the workshops, and Steffen took care of the actual supervision, acting as a mentor. At least in my case, I could always speak to him, and he helped me plan the next steps. I didn't experience Rike very much, as she was more concerned with public relations.

Would you have wished things differently?

At times more pressure would have been good. But the financing didn't allow for that either. Other start-up projects promise you much more financial support, but then expect you to deliver. With the almost two and a half thousand euros that we received from Werft 34, we were able to develop ourselves further, but that was only a drop in the ocean when it comes to the fact that you still have to live on something while you are starting things up.

The third year of Werft 34 is coming to an end, and you have been there as an entrepreneur from the start. Where did Werft 34 and your idea take you?

Well, so far, we haven't been able to realize our idea the way we had hoped. "Progressives Bewegungsfernsehen," which is now "ComMed TV," was intended as an online video portal that is not yet ready. Because of the big film project that has been put off until 2015, we simply didn't have the time. There was a lot of money available for us, and if you have to decide between earning money and realizing ideas, the money comes first. But I am very motivated to continue with ComMed TV now.

What is your conclusion?

For me, it was an excellent decision to be involved in Werft 34 because I learned a lot. Especially the entrepreneurial knowledge that I took with me has often helped me to assess my value when doing contract work. I would recommend it to others.

Foundress feedback from Marie (Project GreenBOX)



What exactly do you do here in GreenBOX?

GreenBOX is based on an idea that works both here at Saline 34 and in schools. You take a green cloth, hang it somewhere and then let students or teachers pose in front of it. You take lots of pictures of it, add different digital backgrounds, and create fun little films. GreenBOX allows you to give kids a basic understanding of media, in particular, real and animated movies.

With this idea, you applied to Werft 34. How did you find out about it, and why did you get involved?

In the beginning (at that time, I still had a project partner) I was hoping to find a location to work. We wanted to set up a green box and experiment with it to learn what was possible with this technology. We then looked around to see where we could rent a room at a reasonable price. At that time, Saline 34 had just been completed. So we moved in here and learned about Saline 34 from Werft 34. It quickly became apparent to us that we would apply because we already knew the Werft 34 crew and knew that we would be in good hands.

How did you experience the pitch and the applicant training?

The wonderful thing about Werft 34 is that everything here is very relaxed. Even though the pitch was a bit nerve-wracking, because our idea suddenly became “real” and we were now supposed to present it, I never felt uncomfortable or under pressure. The pitch taught me something valuable, namely, getting to the point. After the pitch, we received positive and constructive feedback, which brought the idea forward again.

How did you experience the entrepreneurial hub, in particular the individual coaching and workshops?

Martin’s coaching helped me a lot because he posed many relevant questions. As a result, I was forced to ask myself: Where do I stand right now? Where do I want to go? And what are the next steps? Unfortunately, I took too little from the educational program itself; I had to work to earn a living on the side and simply did not have time for all the workshops. That was very unfortunate because the workshops I attended were excellent. Sure, sometimes, you didn’t feel like attending for a whole day, but at the end of the day, I always found it very rewarding. In the workshops, you dealt intensively with your project, reflected on it, received feedback, and learned a lot.

How has your concept developed as a result of Werft 34?

At first, we (my project partner and I) were only focused on inviting teachers to GreenBOX and offering them ongoing training in film and film analysis. However, through the needs assessment, we found that there is not so much money for further training in Thuringia. Instead, projects at the schools are self-financed. So we redesigned the concept. That's why my project partner withdrew from the GreenBOX concept. He wanted to do film analyses and didn't want to do the student-related project work I am doing now. So we parted ways amicably. I continued on my own. Martin helped me a lot in this phase and regularly offered me help. He was the reason why I was able to establish many contacts, which finally led me to bring my ideas to the schools.

When all of a sudden, you find yourself going at it alone, you have to rethink your resources and, therefore, budget differently. How did Werft 34 help you with this problem?

It's a complicated process. Here too, I talked a lot with Martin to clarify things with him: What do I need, and how much can I charge for my work? What is the actual value of what I do? As a self-employed person, you often tend to sell your work below value at the beginning. But everything counts – preparation, travel time, insurance, travel costs, wages, follow-up work, even the costs for technology, advertising expenses, or customer acquisition. All this is work and must be reflected in what I end up earning. That would undoubtedly have been difficult for me without Werft 34. Time is also a vital resource. In the meantime, I have found that bookkeeping is too time-consuming for me, and Werft 34 has helped me find someone who knows about it and takes care of it for me.

Can you now ultimately earn your living from GreenBOX?

Yes, I can. I still have a small side job, but for me, it is more a safety net. All in all, I can say that I have founded a company, I make a living from it, have jobs and always have a lot to do and, to be honest, I'm already thinking about whether and how I could develop it even further.

What is your conclusion about Werft 34?

Werft 34 has helped me to identify the common thread and follow my path to the point where my business was established. I especially liked the fact that the Werft 34 crew took serious interest in me and my idea. You could see that the three of them do it with their heart and soul.

It sounds like everything went smoothly all around. Wasn't there anything that you wanted to improve or that you wished for?

I don't think I would have wished for anything to have been different. Instead, I wish I had made better use of Werft 34. I could have taken advantage of the coaching and the workshops much more intensively, which angers me now. If something like this happens again in the future, I would advise everyone to do so: Take all that you can!

he public perception of Werft 34

Interview with Tobias Knoblich, Cultural Director of Erfurt



Mr. Knoblich, you have been the cultural director of Erfurt for the past five years. How is the city's socio-culture today in 2016?

I believe it is doing better than one would expect in terms of urban involvement. The city does not have an adequate framework of support available, because it is currently also not within its financial means to do more. Nevertheless, a great deal of socio-cultural involvement can be observed here, which has led to considerable growth in recent years. I am always surprised at the diversity of the people involved, their locations, and the great ideas they come up with. Erfurt has a very vital socio-culture that, at times, resists and fights with the public view of order. The difference between other sizeable cities is that it suffers from institutionalization. Unlike Werk 2 in Leipzig, there is no large socio-cultural center in Erfurt. But there is an active network that also advances the formation of critical opinion.

What does it mean for a city to have such a “vital socio-culture”?

First of all, it means that it goes beyond what is established and has existed for decades or even centuries – be it libraries, theatres, or museums. It means that there is something else. These are young people who find alternative forms to express themselves and who often change public perception. Socio-culture is also a political and civil societal process that does not rely on what already exists. Socio-cultural actors create a lot out of nothing. Just take the Retronom on Johannesstrasse as an example: they have little or no budget and are opening a gallery without first having someone present a museum to them. Socio-culture is small-scale; sometimes, it's a bit grubby, but it is also has a creative charm that is very alternative. And socio-culture is also something that established institutions are not; it is relaxed and cool.



1st cultural camp, February 2016

The approach of Werft 34 was to make socio-cultural actors free of being dependent on municipal funding. It follows the motto: "Where there's nothing, there can't be anything, so let's make ourselves autonomous!" What do you think of this approach of developing socio-cultural ideas into a business model?

I believe very strongly in it because the original socio-cultural idea in the old federal states was not to take any state money. To a certain extent, the state was the enemy that had to be fought against because it had become lazy and prejudiced. It simply was not possible to rely on government funding to establish something new and alternative. Accordingly, the approach of Werft 34 is trend-setting.

That sounds very idealistic. One could also interpret it differently: Werft 34 has made a virtue out of necessity because the city has abandoned socio-culture and prefers to take care of high culture.

Indeed, one can also spot tendencies that many decision-makers have a distorted socio-cultural perspective. But the main problem is that our resources are limited, and the freedom to act with these funds is minimal. It is often due to the local economy's pragmatism that the necessary tasks are taken care of first.

Isn't it necessary to question these essential tasks precisely and consider whether it makes sense to support this or that institution financially, for example, the theater or the Kaisersaal? Meanwhile, socio-cultural entrepreneurs must think about how they can realize their ideas while making ends meet.

True, but even these large institutions are already in deficit and are by no means overfinanced, especially since such institutions have to meet completely different qualitative and quantitative demands. The theater has to cover a specific repertoire, pay collective agreements, and so on. These are obligations that socio-cultural actors are not required to fulfill. But basically, you are right; institutions would have to be approached simply to create room for new ideas. But that does not happen overnight and the decision is political. In Erfurt, you would need a city council that dares to make a decision and say: "We'll cut this one, but we'll create a funding pot for this and that." But that is a political act, and what we have left as an administration is to use the few free resources at our disposal to do our best and try not to put unnecessary obstacles in the way of socio-culture.



Let's go back to Werft 34. How much of what has been happening here has been noticed at the City Hall?

Not too much, I guess. Sure, few people are relatively familiar with it, and the mayor (Tamara Thierbach) and the other officials have only just heard about it. But such structures have to grow and need time to become known. In my opinion, however, I believe Saline 34 has become a center of excellence, and this in a district that has a slightly negative image. It has become a focal point and has a certain aura. Of course, it is not a large institution that, like our new stadium, is being built with a great deal of ado, money, and publicity. Saline 34 is more of a grassroots revolution and is literally just growing out of the grass, getting bigger, and making itself felt. For me, it is an antithesis to a society shaped by media hype, stupidity, and entertainment. It is a smart educational venture, where young people can produce good texts, photographs and make films, where intermedia work is done, and social networks are created in the real world. These are not immediately apparent, but which do emerge here and there and have an effect.

The Initiative for Cultural Space was established to make a political impact, to which Werft 34 has made a significant contribution. Among other things, the initiative calls for the implementation of the municipal cultural concept. Is this the kind of pressure needed to get the city moving?

This pressure is both good and necessary. The Initiative for Cultural Space has to regard the concept as a serious issue. It shows that we have put one or two ideas down on paper that are good and desirable for the independent scene. We are happy to conduct the discourse on how we can implement it with the Initiative for Cultural Space because that is part of a healthy democracy. I think it is particularly good that the Initiative for Cultural Space is committed to a great holistic idea and is not dealing with small-scale issues. This is often the case in politics and among citizens, who stand up for their particular interests and are very egocentric in their actions. The independent scene in Erfurt, on the other hand, is allying and has its sights set on larger contexts.





More than 50 cultural editors discussed the future of cultural spaces

A vital prerequisite for socio-culture is space. As far as Saline 34 is concerned, the city has made space available. But how much longer will this continue?

I am not able to say anything conclusive here, as I cannot decide on that alone. I certainly hope that Saline 34 will remain like this for a long time to come. Still, I also know that the real estate market is experiencing a lot of pressure at the moment, as we sell real estate as expensively as possible to consolidate the budget. At the same time, we try to rent out properties to the most appropriate agency if we want them to be used for cultural purposes. This is the case with the Engelsburg, the Stadtgarten, the Altes Schauspielhaus, and Saline 34. I think it is undisputed that the city wants Saline 34 to be used for socio-cultural purposes. How this will play out in the future is questionable.

Perhaps one final thought: what kind of impact will Werft 34 have in Erfurt?

A very positive one, and I'm not just saying that. I think it is a great achievement to set such a project in motion and find a foundation partner who has confidence in the actors. We felt this confidence as well, by the way. Everyone from the cultural directorate who has dealt with the Werft crew reflected on me that these are the right people. They have the know-how, they have the energy, and they are networkers who are open to ideas. This is important for the entrepreneurs whose personal success was, to a certain extent, connected with the success of Werft 34. In any case, it has become clear that Werft 34 can be a catalyst for creative and entrepreneurial processes. They have proven this here in Erfurt. And that is not a given, because we are not a city like Berlin, where a creative center has been established over many decades. In this respect, it can be said that the work carried out by Werft 34 in Erfurt was pioneering.

The impact of Werft 34

Interview with Werft 34 evaluator Margot Schaper



Ms. Schaper, you are in charge of the evaluation of Werft 34; your task is to find out whether the project can be deemed a success or a failure. How do you proceed when evaluating such a project?

The question is fascinating because Werft 34 is not “such a project.” While it seems like a project, it is more like “culture in progress.” At first, I wanted to treat and examine Werft 34 like a regular structural-developmental or start-up program. However, in consultation with the Werft 34 team, it quickly became apparent that a more sophisticated approach was appropriate. So I designed a grid based on the given framework conditions, against which we reviewed the developments and results in a total of five evaluation phases roughly every six months.

And I have spoken to many of the actors personally. I have kept an open mind about what is happening. I think one or the other eventually became slightly irritated because I kept asking questions. On the other hand, I was often positively surprised by the spontaneity and openness of the people. It worked out very well, and I am incredibly grateful to all participants in the evaluation for their generosity and willingness to cooperate.

Your evaluation is not fully completed, but you might be able to offer a little preview. Is the concept of Werft 34 a success?

I think you could say that. It depends a bit on the perspective and the expectations, however. I think everyone involved has learned from it, and that in itself is a great success I would postpone the rest until the end of the evaluation; otherwise, I will get ahead of myself.

There were three pillars of Werft 34: the entrepreneurial hub, the network, and Saline 34. Did the implementation of one of these pillars work particularly well or poorly?

Yes and no – all three pillars had their strengths and weaknesses in their implementation, but one shouldn't forget that they are pillars, and they support the entire program. The program has benefited equally from all three parts, even if not always as planned. For example, the “socio-cultural entrepreneurship hub” had to go through several rounds of applications to bring together the intended number of participating projects and, in the end, could not fully support as many projects as planned when the program was implemented. However, it was possible to compare projects at different stages of development directly. This in turn resulted in a much broader spectrum of experience and action, which is useful for all projects involved or to come.

What effect did Werft 34 have on the entrepreneurs?

I would say that they all made progress. Some noticed this development quite intensively because it brought about significant personal changes for them, and others are still actively involved in the process. Especially the projects or main actors who were involved from the very beginning seemed to be quite taken with the participation in Werft 34 and the effect it had on them and their projects.

Indeed, the evaluation of the interest network is especially difficult. How can the success or failure of this pillar be determined?

Two years ago, we assessed the initial status of several actors in Erfurt's socio-cultural and independent cultural scene and have since then regularly asked questions about the development of the network. This enables the basic structure of the networking process to be understood very well. And of course, there are now also results and accounts of this process, especially the work of the Initiative for Cultural Space and the reception of the initiative by actors and stakeholders. So there are a lot of questions that need to be asked, answered, and evaluated.

For the Werft 34 crew, the aspect of sustainability was particularly important. In your opinion, will Werft 34 have a lasting effect in Erfurt?

It will, and I know this because, among other things, some of the actors already drew my attention to it during the previous evaluation phase in personal contact through interviews or group discourse. The self-confidence of young people with ideas and confidence in the feasibility of innovative concepts in the independent cultural scene has noticeably increased. This was also evident in the comprehensive survey conducted in spring, both in response to inquiries and what many of the answers offered “between the lines.” And quite a few members and interested parties of the independent Erfurt cultural scene see a connection to Werft 34. I think you could call it the “living spirit of the Werft 34 crew”; in other words, the “Werft 34 spirit,” if you like, and it will undoubtedly have a lasting effect. I would wish that it continues for the Werft 34 team and all interested players in the alternative Erfurt cultural scene. That there is a Werft 34-B. Then the effects that have occurred could be further developed and made known to a larger circle.

hat we have learned

In three years of experimenting with lending support to start-ups, a wealth of knowledge was gathered. Plans were thrown overboard, changed, and adapted. Much of what we had initially considered worked – sometimes well, sometimes more poorly than adequately. Since we saw the Werft 34 crew as an experiment from the very beginning, problems did not deter us but instead encouraged us to find solutions. Our findings at a glance:

First the entrepreneurs, then the entrepreneurial idea!

The individual is in control of the entrepreneurial idea. It is crucial to empower and stabilize the key persons so that they can then take action.

Think about resources!

Socio-cultural entrepreneurs have limited resources. Too little time, money, space, and much more can stand in the way of a successful start-up project. A start-up support project like Werft 34 should try to assist and show the entrepreneurs ways to budget resources.

Avoid long application training!

Due to the long training before the first pitch, unfortunately, we lost many applicants who did not have the staying power, were unable to start their career, or realized that the Werft 34 crew is not for them. As a result, many entrepreneurial ideas were lost.

Caution: Start-up money!

Start-up money is an excellent incentive for entrepreneurs to participate. However, it should be clearly defined from the beginning what the money is to be used for or whether it is freely available.

Generate publicity!

It is essential to provide professional public relations work that is geared to the target group. To achieve this, multipliers and advocates within the target groups must be convinced of the project, which creates reach and the attention that socio-cultural entrepreneurs need.

Communicate know-how!

Socio-cultural entrepreneurs have ideas and ideals, but not necessarily an idea of how to start a business. Knowledge is important and needs to be conveyed. Joint workshops and individual coaching have proven to be very useful. A course in project management should be obligatory and should be seen as a basis for future workshops. In general, it is essential to establish common standards.

Bookkeeping is essential!

A surprisingly complex task was the accounting of the start-up initiatives, some of which did not comply with rules and deadlines. To improve this, they were to be helped at an early stage to acquire a basic understanding of accounting. This will be of great benefit to them in the future.

Offer personal support!

Creative entrepreneurs need procedural and personal support. Ready-made schedules do not work if there are multiple entrepreneurs at different points of the start-up idea, and they have different experiences and needs. Lean educational programs and personal support are the keys to successful entrepreneurial support.

A transparent approach to structures and tasks!

The environments of socio-cultural actors and entrepreneurial project workers are different. What one person finds self-evident is a mystery for another. Ensure that the entrepreneurs know what they have to prepare for, what they can expect, and what is expected of them. It is also essential to clarify the point where experimental work begins.

Include regular feedback cycles

We advise the jurors not only to see themselves as a once-off evaluatory instrument but as an accompanying expert committee. Through regular meetings with the entrepreneurs, they always receive essential impulses. However, it is not always easy to agree on dates with a fixed group of jurors, given their busy schedules. Perseverance is required here!

Develop and use synergies!

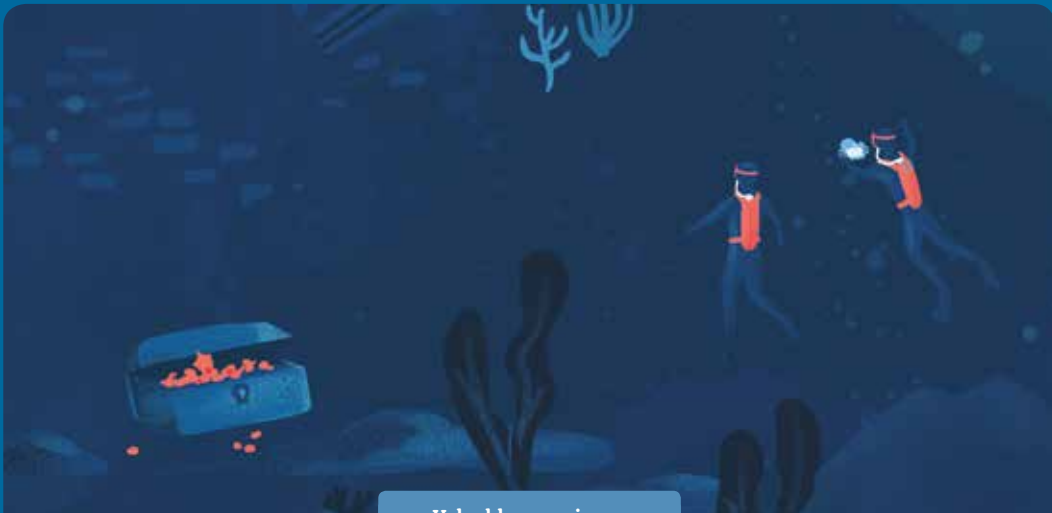
Entrepreneurs can help each other move forward if they cooperate. This cooperation is not a given but can be assisted from outside. In our case, this has been achieved by the spatial proximity in Saline 34.

Working space is essential!

Adequate space is the prerequisite for giving one's own desire for self-realization a place. It must be usable, affordable, and low-risk. An empty room provides identity and helps one to take responsibility. In our experience, rooms should nevertheless be ready for occupancy as soon as possible. For some entrepreneurs, it took them an extremely long time to move into the rooms at Saline 34. Given the sustainability of the founding ideas, the space should be available for as long as possible or even become the property of the entrepreneurs. That said, rooms are not a given. An investor (city, company, or private) is needed who believes in the people and ideas and is willing to invest in them.

Self-participation and self-organization!

When Saline 34 was handed over into the house community's hands, we transparently communicated our intentions from the very beginning. The house community had to learn to organize itself early on. Collaboration can be learned through joint activities and events (e.g., "Kultur flaniert"). Political interest groups can later develop from such structures.



Valuable experience

Manual for your shipyard

Werft 34 was a model project aimed at improving the overall conditions for creative artists in the Thuringian capital of Erfurt. Despite the regional focus, we have gained a considerable wealth of universally valid experience over the past three years, which we would like to make available for similar start-up projects. This chapter of our logbook provides an overview of the basic needs of socio-cultural entrepreneurs, some essential tips for dealing with decision makers in municipalities or institutions, and a manual for establishing your own shipyard.

Building your own Werft

Are you now interested in setting up your own place and program, where others can make their dreams a reality and create an impact? Great! Are you asking yourself how it would work, where you should begin, and what you would need? Indeed, because the sea is stormy, and there are plenty of routes to follow, allow us to draw up a guide to assist you, one set up in four phases and five building blocks. Follow this guide, and you will find your answers and a route while planning your entrepreneurial hub, and again while you and your stakeholders and crew adapt the course to the sea, with its monsters and treasures.

To build your own entrepreneurial hub, you need the following five building blocks:

1.

Space

An easily accessible location is the starting point. It is the harbor, the coworking space where people meet, get to know each other, find partners, share knowledge and resources, work together, and develop ideas. “Easily accessible” means that it is a welcome to all – a place without physical barriers, offering orientation for new guests and free space for its users.

2.

Training

A start-up is a series of challenges. Prepare your entrepreneurs for them. Organize activities and opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and approaches and to find fellow partners.

3.

Consulting

The journey of developing an idea from a concept to its implementation is long and full of risks. Help your entrepreneurs stay motivated and keep on track with milestones, prototypes, interaction with each other, and contact with mentors. Let them explain their idea and business model until you understand it, and consult experts if necessary. And finally, make sure that your door is always open and have fresh coffee at hand when they approach you with their concerns and questions as well as the recognition they need.

4.

Marketing

Set up channels, procedures and opportunities to make people understand what your Werft offers to whom and why, when and how to get involved. Tell stories, facilitate self-assessment, invite people to workshops and consultations. Inform and activate multipliers.

5.

Stakeholders

The prospects of your entrepreneurial hub and every business idea will improve when you bring the relevant stakeholders on board. Make each person who is willing to invest in the project, either financially or through unpaid work, a shareholder! Allow them to participate and become involved in developing and testing ideas and shaping and building the business.

The four phases

Each entrepreneurial hub can be developed in four phases: preparation, incubation, foundation, and establishment. However, you need to adapt each phase – what you do, when you do it, how you do it, and how long you do it – according to your specific conditions. This map shows a rough example of the Werft building plan. It is possible to see the five building blocks and the four phases, and how they relate to each other.

The activities of the five modules are marked in color:

 **Space**
  **Marketing**
  **Stakeholders**
  **Training and consultation**

 stands for a short oral or video presentation of a business model.



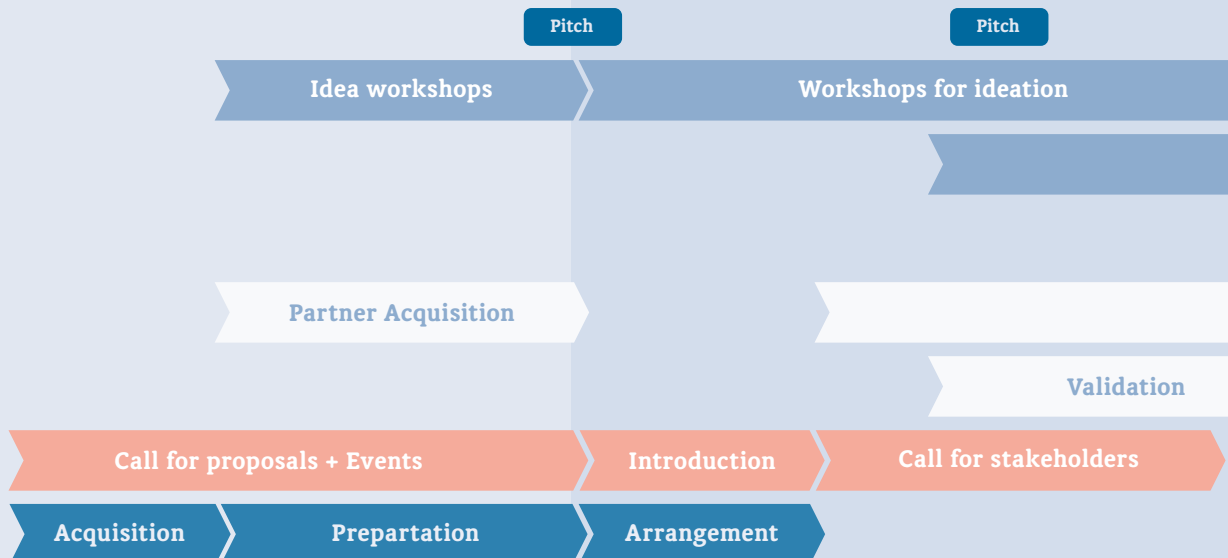
1. Preparation

Space and infrastructure ready, entrepreneurial learning program planned, all partners and resources safe, and enough promising applications.



2. Incubation

Admit participants, arrange work space, emphasize ideation, give workshops and consultation, and involve prospective users. Startups validate their products, services, business model.



Phase 1 – Preparation

Objectives: Before you can open your entrepreneurial hub, you need to have the necessary space and infrastructure. You also need to have your partners and resources on board, a plan of your entrepreneurial support program, and enough promising applications from the onset. The first phase is focused on pulling everything together. Don't start any of the activities in phase two if you can't offer your entrepreneurs a workspace and a program.

SPACE – For your coworking space, you need enough space and infrastructure to accommodate the number of people and teams you want to take on. Discuss with potential users what they would need to work, and find out when and how they would work in your entrepreneurial hub! Think, for example, about an Internet connection, electricity, kitchen facilities, toilets, lockers, printers, scanners, a room for training and meetings, a space to relax and chat – in other words, everything necessary for work, dialogue, meals,

community activities, and leisure. But don't forget that each person has different priorities. Some may need a studio, a workshop, or a large warehouse. You can also set up other valuable services, such as low-cost accounting, tax services, marketing opportunities, or meetings with stakeholders and investors. You can either do this on your own or with an entrepreneur or partner in the entrepreneurial hub. Try to keep things low-budget and straightforward; it will be an advantage that your entrepreneurs will appreciate.

[read more ›](#)

3. Foundation

Startups compile their business plan. Emphasize organisational development, financing and founding the startup based on validation. Facilitate a deliberate decision whether to found or not or restart.

4. Establishment

Evaluate and refine lab program, back your graduated founders, secure or advance your stakeholder support, funding and resources, and start the next cycle with repeating phase one.

Pitch

Workshops for founding

Consulting & coaching

Open qualification and network offers

Matching startups with mentors if requested

Partner Acquisition

Validation & Funding

Call for proposals + Events

Call for stakeholders

Success stories

Removal

Rearrangement

MARKETING AND STAKEHOLDERS – The potential participants for your entrepreneurial hub program should understand that you are on the lookout for them. They need to know what they have to do for the program, how they can profit from it, and how they can apply. Use info material that is both easy to understand and attractive, and distribute the material via multipliers and media channels suited to your target groups⁸. Invite your target groups and multipliers to events in your coworking space⁹. This will allow you to meet participants, fans, future applicants, and stakeholders of your entrepreneurial hub early on and find out about their needs and what they would be able to offer. Explain your vision to them and the terms of participation. And allow them to present, discuss, network, and develop ideas in your space. They should discover the potential of your entrepreneurial hub so that they ultimately become part of the project. You may need different events and methods for different target groups.

TRAINING AND CONSULTATION – Finally, invite people to idea workshops. They are perfect for attracting entrepreneurs, getting consultants and mentors involved, allowing everyone to become acquainted with each other, receiving applications, and selecting the participants of the lab. Such a workshop can last two hours in the evening, during which ideas are developed and discussed. Or they can last several days, during which elaborate business models with prototypes are created, teams are formed, and stakeholders are involved. Many useful and documented methods exist that you can use. Stakeholders, consultants, and partners are often willing to participate in such events free of charge. In addition, these workshops offer examples, the chance for self-assessment, and the consultation necessary to help your target groups find out if they are interested in your offer, whom you are searching for, and how they could participate.

Phase 2 – Incubation

Objectives: *First, it is essential to get your participants on board and agree on the workspace and how it is to be furnished. After that, they have to develop and test their products and services and business models. The entrepreneurial hub supports them with workshops and consulting and brings users and customers on board. Some entrepreneurs manage this quickly, while others may ultimately give up. Never take anyone into phase three without tested prototypes and plausible business models.*

SPACE AND ADMISSION – Allow the participants to set up their workplace. For example, they can bring furniture, decorate walls, or buy a coffee machine. It is essential to find a balance: The more time they put into the interior decoration, the more the room becomes theirs and they feel comfortable there. And yet the less they invest in working on their idea. The more time they spend together shaping common resources and rules, the stronger the cohesion. Group activities such as peer coaching and presentations in the group, as well as eating together, watching a movie, or playing sports, helps in creating an atmosphere of openness and trust. The participants will use the rooms and services at different times, in different ways, and with varying intensity. Some of them will want to work for many hours

each week in the collaborative space, while others would instead work from home. Some need silence, while others are looking for extensive dialogue. Some will want to participate but hardly have the time or resources to become actively involved. Meet up several times with your entrepreneurs during the first weeks to become acquainted with each other, learn about each other's expectations, needs, resources, and opportunities for the time in the entrepreneurial hub. Work out together the conditions, possibilities, and obligations in the entrepreneurial hub program and agree to these conditions in writing. Taken into account are, for example, a minimum attendance requirement for the coworking space or participation in workshops or a deadline by when prototypes should be tested, and stakeholders

⁸ Short facts flyer example (in German): www.werft34.de/?timeline=gruender-setzen-segel. Video teaser example (in German): <https://youtu.be/kCfcCNw6s0I>

⁹ See www.werft34.de/?timeline=eroeffnungsveranstaltung for an example (in German).

need to be involved. The rules can apply to everyone or be adapted individually. And think about what happens if the rules are violated. Is there an increase in the cost of space and services, or a reduction in access? Find out what each is offering to be part of the entrepreneurial hub. Everyone must understand that the entrepreneurial hub is more than just a cheap place to work and act accordingly. They have all been selected, and you and your crew are working to make their projects and the entrepreneurial hub flourish.

TRAINING AND CONSULTATION – In this phase of the entrepreneurial hub program, all entrepreneurs need to review their business model and determine if their idea will take off. Achieve this by setting goals with each team right at the start. Together, decide and agree upon what they need to learn about as well as create and test. This incubator agreement does not require any details and can be changed if necessary. It is meant to help all parties focus their efforts and form the legitimate basis for your assistance and support of the entrepreneurs. Start with workshops where your participants develop a common and more in-depth understanding of idea development, business models, stakeholders, and other basic concepts you want to use. Ensure that all topics and methods are adapted and translated to the ideas, experiences, and culture of your participants. In additional training activities, the entrepreneurs should learn techniques for developing ideas and new products and services, understanding and co-creatively involving users in the development process, creating prototypes, and verifying measures and learning quickly. The entrepreneurs must then test their ideas and underlying measures with prototypes and with people who can provide relevant feedback. The aim is to get the maximum possible feedback using a minimum of time, work, and money. Typically it takes several rounds of testing and revisions until a model or design proves itself.

In this phase, the entrepreneurs should present their findings and their progress at least two or three times in front of the other participants as well as to stakeholders – for example, a jury or the experts who selected them for the entrepreneurial hub. This can be done in

person or by video. The discussion with the audience opens up intensive feedback as well as new perspectives and a chance to attract new supporters. Public or published pitches are opportunities and material for gaining valuable contacts, drawing attention, and winning support from the target groups. Furthermore, it trains your entrepreneurs to explain their ideas and be persuasive to others.

Meet regularly with your participants during the entire phase. Reflect on their process with them, help them sort out their tasks, and approach them in a focused manner while keeping an eye on their goal. Be there for their questions and problems. Give answers and suggestions and involve others as needed. They need encouragement and methods for persistently pursuing their goals.

MARKETING AND STAKEHOLDERS – When your entrepreneurs embark on the entrepreneurial hub program and get to know each other, you have an excellent opportunity not only to introduce them to the public but also to your entrepreneurial hub and mission. With each event, pitch, and crowdfunding, you will tell a real story about the plans, results, and goals of the entrepreneurial hub and your entrepreneurs. Use the opportunity to create role models, attract attention, and find other stakeholders. Think of your participants and your crew as your attractive marketing content and as authentic information carriers and multipliers. Address them as such. All of the pitches and prototype tests make it possible to involve several stakeholder groups and their perspectives. Therefore, it is best if different groups participate. You can plan several sessions with stakeholders and help your entrepreneurs with the implementation. But it is better to invite them early on so that they can come.

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Phase 3 – Foundation

Objectives: *Help your participants plan the implementation of their business idea and see whether their start-up is worthwhile. Value propositions, business models, resource acquisition, costs, and revenue planning should be considered here. Concentrate on the organizational development, financing, and targeted preparation of your entrepreneurs. It is better to involve specialists in the consulting process. If required, organize activities and meetings to help your entrepreneurs find investors and opportunities to finance their projects. Until the end of this phase, some of your entrepreneurs will be able to establish themselves, while others will delay the process or drop their projects altogether. This is a decision they will need to make on their own. Your task is to make sure that they can reach this decision in a competent and well-thought-out manner.*

TRAINING AND CONSULTATION – The educational activities gain a new focus. Your entrepreneurs now need to learn how to sell their products and services, how to master the necessary tasks at hand, how to build up their organization and network, and how to share and cooperate with others. Moreover, they need more input and exchange on their respective fields of interest. And they need to become prepared to get started. Peer-learning workshops are a great way to do this, in which not only your participants but also other initiatives such as yours and those of stakeholders participate. All participants can learn from each other and pose their questions and contribute their experiences. Decide with your entrepreneurs which of their current challenges should be the workshop's topic, for example, financing of personnel costs or pricing. Convince several of them to present their case with their thoughts and observations. The cases are then discussed in small groups and are linked to similar cases, while suggestions and experiences are shared. Such formats do not need paid speakers and lead to a surprisingly broad exchange of ideas, as well as self-confidence, an understanding of abilities, and the chance to find new partners.

After your participants have found out in the incubation phase that their offerings attract real interest, they need to find out whether their business plan is feasible and if they can acquire and afford the necessary resources and activities. Make sure that they examine this thoroughly and make well-considered decisions. Coaching and consulting now becomes more of a service, an offer on demand. Specialist experts – such as finance, tax, and legal advisors – become more important. Such experts often come to meetings or workshops free of charge out of interest of your entrepreneurs and potential customers. Formal consultations are costly, which the entrepreneurs will have to commission and pay for themselves.

MARKETING AND STAKEHOLDERS – With your participants now preparing their start-up, stakeholder groups become relevant. The products and services are clearly defined, which means that the entrepreneurs now need to get in touch with their customers and other market players, understand them, and assess the prospects. They need co-founders and employees who are a good match and are enthusiastic about the start-up. They need to attract investors, supporters, and partners and to bring together the necessary resources. Your efforts can be a great help to them in achieving this. Present your entrepreneurs and their offerings to the press and the media; involve them in your networks, and contact potential supporters. At the same time, you can show that your entrepreneurs have developed solid business models and that your entrepreneurial hub has been successful. It is a clear recommendation for the next round.

SPACE – Again, your participants will be using the space differently and more proactively. They will begin setting up meetings with their partners independently, making the atmosphere feel like an office community. Since the program will start again from the beginning in the next phase, you will have to decide whether your current entrepreneurs or graduates will have to move out or whether space needs to be provided for new start-ups. Some graduates will want to stay or continue to rely on your support. If you're going to hold on to them as local customers or partners, you should quickly find and clarify options and conditions.

Phase 4 – Establishment

Objectives: Evaluate the last round with all stakeholders. Lend support to your graduates during the first months to ensure that their business survives and involve them as mentors and role models in the next round. Secure or expand support through stakeholders and access to necessary resources. Revise your program according to all findings and available resources and start again with phase one. Each new round establishes your entrepreneurial hub internally and externally.

All in all, you need to gather solutions and resources (physical, social, intellectual, financial, human, etc.) to keep your entrepreneurial hub going. This can mean that you hand over parts of the entrepreneurial hub program to partners, reduce costs through standardization, or

bring new supporters on board through adjustments. It would also be conceivable to link the scope and offers to sponsor or donations or to enable graduates and stakeholders to participate financially. Their interest and success would, in turn, benefit the entrepreneurial hub.

Five golden rules for offering support to entrepreneurs

A project like Werft 34 is not just a challenging adventure for the entrepreneurs but also the project team. When offering support, it is essential to stand by and support your entrepreneurs, even in turbulent times. To avoid getting off course during the long journey, we have established five golden rules, which we took to heart while lending support to the start-ups.

1. Maintain an open-door policy!

Always be available for your entrepreneurs. Take time for their problems and needs and be genuinely interested in their start-up projects.

2. Work at eye level!

Regard your entrepreneurs as equals; be reliable, and stick to your word. Unlike classical start-up programs, which are often perceived as cold and unapproachable, this approach will create a trusting partnership.

3. Common language!

Find a common language that both you and your entrepreneurs understand. The classic business language, which is used in many start-up programs, often builds more barriers than bridges for many people.

4. Individual approach!

Always be available for your entrepreneurs. Take time for their problems and needs and be genuinely interested in their start-up projects.

5. The people are more important than the idea!

When supporting entrepreneurs over several years, the start-up projects will inevitably change. Some will even reverse course. Remember that a start-up idea is only as strong as the person who implements it in the end. Therefore, don't focus on specific ideas, but on the entrepreneurs themselves.

What do entrepreneurs need?

Socio-cultural start-ups are complicated undertakings, and not every good idea will necessarily lead to success. The personality of the entrepreneur plays a crucial role, as does the environment and the timing of a start-up. In addition to these influences, some of which are impossible to change, the chance of success can be considerably increased through projects accompanying the foundation, such as Werft 34. To pave the way for entrepreneurs, however, it is essential to know their needs. An overview:

General conditions applicable to business start-ups:

To be able to embark on the adventure of entrepreneurship, low-risk framework conditions must be created. Ensure that your entrepreneurs have access to affordable workspace, further training opportunities, and materials.

Recognition and interest:

Successful start-up support lives from your attitude. Affirm your entrepreneurs' intentions; make it clear to them that mistakes are part of it and are even positive if there is a willingness to learn from them. Always put in a good word for your entrepreneurs.

Exchange and networking:

A piece of entrepreneurial wisdom: If you want to achieve your goals, surround yourself with people who also want to achieve their goals! Make sure that your entrepreneurs network with like-minded people and exchange ideas with them.

Access to services or experience:

Some things are so complicated that it is often better to get help from experts in the beginning. In the case of a start-up, this often involves accounting and legal matters. Offer your entrepreneurs reliable support.

Uncomplicated and individual solutions:

With every start-up, there are many different problems that you can help to solve. Always use short communication channels and look for individual solutions. Your entrepreneurs are more than busy with their start-up, so everything else should be as easy as possible.

How do I deal with local authorities and institutions?

Sooner or later, authorities and institutions surface wherever new companies are established. Not only do entrepreneurs and their projects need to accept that reality, but also you as an accompanying project team. Do you have a workspace? Are you planning an event? Do you need funding? Welcome to the administrative jungle! Even if it may initially seem otherwise, officials and clerks are not there to make life difficult. Here are our tips for dealing with administrations and institutions:

You are partners, not opponents or solicitors:

Always regard administrations and funding agencies as partners. Make it clear to your counterpart that you are interested in a cooperative collaboration and that both sides can benefit from each other.

Gather support:

Administrative authorities consist of a large workforce in which all employees carry out their functions. Find internal supporters who are not only able to put in a good word for you but can also explain and mirror administrative processes. These do not need to be decision-makers, but can be mediators and translators who shape the flow of information within the administration.

Familiarize yourself with structures:

Get an overview of where decisions are made and how information travels. This will help you to identify key people.

Personal contact:

The much-vaunted vitamin B not only helps with job applications but also with administrative matters. In the course of our project, we invited many people for coffee and cake. Personal contact is essential in creating empathy, which can help open the door to your project.

Continuity and reliability:

Be reliable at all times, because you will be working with many partners on a long-term or recurring basis. Every good impression you leave behind will be worth its weight in gold later on.

Self-marketing:

Make it explicit which success your cause promises. Try to connect with the interests of your counterpart in conversation.

Financial viability:

Municipalities are much more willing to negotiate and compromise when they know you will incur little or no cost. It is always a good idea to acquire a large part of the funding for your project elsewhere.

Transparency for funding agencies:

Your donors must know what is happening with their money. Integrate the sponsors into the discourse at critical moments and make decisions together. This helps overcome detachment. Keep them up to date on the status of the project.

AFTERWORD

What remains to be said at the end of a long story? First of all, it is not the end of the story, even if the narrative ends on this page. What we had set in motion with Werft 34 over three years has only just learned to walk. The stories of our entrepreneurs, Saline 34, and the Initiative for Cultural Space have only just begun and will perhaps be continued in other books.

During our journey, we repeatedly met brave sailors who were following a similar course, working at their shipyards, bringing vacant buildings back to life, and thus offering creative minds a place to work on their ideas. Some of them came from foreign countries, smaller towns, or rural areas and listened eagerly to our adventures. This gave us hope that our experiences would be of help elsewhere and that we could successfully transfer the successful Werft 34 approach. Thus we opened a new chapter with the Kulturhanse (Cultural Hanseatic League): In the scaling initiative, we are helping initiatives in the federal states of Thuringia, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt to set up their entrepreneurship hubs, thereby creating economic prospects and an improved quality of life in rural areas. In addition to the scholarship-based qualification program, we also provide support and advice to start-up organizations in the running of their entrepreneurship hub. We are also sharing the findings of Werft 34 on an international level. In the Taskforcome program, we are developing and testing learning instruments and training packages together with 12 partners from five countries, with which the (social) entrepreneurial skills of migrants are systematically advanced. For this purpose, all project partners open regional start-up entrepreneurship hubs, i.e., their own “shipyards,” in which people with and without a migration background can find support, train their entrepreneurial skills, and develop and test their businesses.

We would also like to take the opportunity to appeal to you, dear readers: Take control and put yourself at the helm! In every city, creative people, with their heads full of ideas, are waiting for someone to get a ship ready and take it on a journey. This requires more entrepreneurship hubs that develop innovative approaches and open up long-term financial prospects for creative people. Socioculture takes place everywhere, and it is worth preserving and promoting everywhere. It forms the basis for every city's cultural microcosm and is a characteristic of a society worth living in. And when you set sail, do not allow yourself to be diverted from your course.

Even if this logbook may inspire you to embark on a journey, there is no guarantee of success. Every ship and every project has its unpredictable adventure ahead of it. In stormy situations, you just have to keep a cool head, concentrate on the essentials, and ask yourself, “What do I need to do to reach my destination?”

Last but not least, our thanks go to the Drosos Foundation for financial support, especially to Thomas Villmow, the person responsible for the program in Germany, whose partnership, suggestions, and trust helped keep the project on track. Many thanks to the many people involved in the project: first and foremost, the entrepreneurs and the community in and around Saline 34, who embarked on this adventurous journey with us, the volunteer jury members, and many network partners who never tired of reporting about Saline 34. We wish you a prosperous journey.

Ahoy!

The crew of Werft 34

More information:



www.kulturhanse.org



www.werft34.de



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