



Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

ISI project, Berlin

Introduction	The project ISI, 'self-employment for female immigrants' aims to help immigrant women to become economically independent in order to enable them to move out of family dependence and state support.
Approach	The project offers a one-year training course which consists of: business studies (in particular entrepreneurship), development of a business plan, accounting, IT, business German, strengthening social and intercultural competencies, training with female experts, visiting companies, two-month internship, career's advice and advice on self-employment. The participants gained basic knowledge about setting up a business.
Geographic focus	The participants must come from Berlin North, South-West and South. There is a particular focus on the Kreuzberg district of Berlin.
Partnership	None
Activities	Most activities are being explained in point 2. Results are: 15% of participants have become self-employed, 75% have found a job in the formal economy or have begun vocational training. 10% are at home due to family circumstances.
Successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The immigrants gained basic knowledge about setting up a business. They were also supported in developing their abilities and competencies which has led to new ideas about career paths.- The project participants have gone to run businesses in the fields of IT, retail and catering amongst others.
Lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Every year the curriculum is adapted upon reflection on experiences. Independent work within the training was extended, hurdles resulting from the combination of training and family (e.g. child care during school holidays) were addressed. Other issues concerned the different educational and language level of course participants as well as financial difficulties.- Offering women from migrant communities training in entrepreneurship can be extremely successful. Training women together allows the development of a shared approach to obstacles and problems, and provides a situation of trust and solidarity which can be important in building confidence.- Developing strong and sustainable relationships with local businesses can lead to ongoing work experience placements which provide valuable on-the-job training.- The project is a good example of the transferability of local employment development models from one city to another, from one country to another: The original idea for the project came from Birmingham in the UK. ISI has adapted it to the circumstances in Berlin. ISI's know-how has now been transferred to a new project in Milano in Italy. The project was set up at a time when the political climate was very favourable for female immigrants.

Tools

Education and training work with female immigrants, adaptation of an educational concept for entrepreneurs to reflect local circumstances.

**Political
background**

The project was set up under the coalition of social democrats and greens. The political climate at the time was very favourable for female immigrants. A climate favourable to entrepreneurship is being encouraged. ISI e.V. is represented in district administrations.