

Active Health – A Berlin Pilot Project in Support of the Global Compact



As the world's first capital city to join the Global Compact, Berlin has been focusing on "Metropolitan Health" as part of the Global Compact Cities Programme (GCCP) since the end of September 2006.

BGZ Berlin International Cooperation Agency GmbH is an agency funded by the federal state of Berlin, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Industrie- und Handelskammer), and the Chamber of Skilled Trades (Handwerkskammer) and aimed at realizing international cooperation projects. Working with Berlin's Senate Department for Health, the Environment and Consumer Protection and the organization Gesundheit Berlin e.V., BGZ has put the topic of "Metropolitan Health" into context with the pilot project "Active Health – Strategies to improve immigrants' access to health care by promoting awareness and empowerment."

"Active Health" addresses two core issues of "Metropolitan Health" at the same time: specific health problems experienced by residents with a migration background and health care policy challenges triggered by demographic changes in metropolitan areas.

Berlin is a multicultural city with a high proportion of immigrants. "Active Health" is aimed at improving equal access to health care for all residents. The project is based on the insight that immigrants' access to the health care system is best when they themselves are part of the system and take an active role in improving health care for their community. "Active Health" aims to attract immigrants to the health professions and to promote their empowerment.

"Active Health" is being financed by EU funds allocated to the "Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (2002-2006)" and helps to raise the awareness of stakeholders in all sectors: politics, administration, business, education, and immigrant organizations. The project is working with all of these to develop strategies, exchange experience with successful practices, and carry out pilot measures. Informational events, seminars, and conferences for stakeholders are being offered. Young people interested in training, along with their parents, can consult volunteer "career advisors." These are health professionals who have a migration background themselves, making them role models for the people they are advising. The campaigns involving these volunteers, a model that was developed by BGZ, are to be continued at Berlin institutions and organizations even after the conclusion of the project.

"Active Health" contributes to upholding the Global Compact's Principles 1 and 6 in particular: "supporting and respecting international human rights within one's own sphere of influence" and "eliminating discrimination in hiring and employment."

In addition, BGZ has initiated a transnational health care network that will be making this topic a part of public debates and helping to shape public policy in Berlin in this area. Guidance for "Active Health" will be provided by a "strategic advisory board" made up of representatives from Vivantes Network for Health, the Caritas Federation, the Senate Chancellery, the Senate Commissioner for Integration and Migration, the Federal Ministry of Health, the Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Women's Issues, and the Migration Council Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.

Further information can be found at:

www.activehealth.gesundheitberlin.de and www.gesunde-perspektive.de

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