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## Building a More Maker-Friendly City: Focus on Berlin



The Berlin Kreativ Kollektiv Team

At Etsy, we believe that creative entrepreneurship has the power to change the world. It can provide meaningful opportunities for individuals, and can help build stronger local economies.

We also believe in the power of collaborative community efforts. That's why Etsy's Maker Cities grant program supports local creative communities by investing in innovative projects to help marginalized groups participate in the creative economy.

Take one of our 2017 grantees as an example. The Berlin Kreativ Kollektive (BKK) was co-founded by weaver Emma Wood of EmmaWoodTextiles, who saw an opportunity to bring creative people together in her adopted home of Berlin, Germany.

“Many makers struggle in valuing their work, and in feeling like their contribution to the local community is valued and acknowledged,” Emma told us. “One of the key things that draws people to the BKK is that so many independent makers share the same struggles, but because they work in isolation they don’t get to share their experiences.”

Through BKK, Berlin’s independent maker community gets access to a support network as well as business education opportunities. In just a year, it has grown to more than 70 members.

“Help from Etsy has made it possible to unite this community and give them a shared voice, and to help makers realize that no matter how alone they may feel, there is a wealth of support around them,” Emma said.

Here are some of the ways BKK is working to make Berlin a more maker-friendly city:

## **1. Understanding the Creative Community**

Before pushing for change, BKK first wanted to better understand their community. With grant support from Etsy, they are conducting bottom-up research that aims to quantify the creative community in Berlin. Their research has a specific focus on the challenges faced by multinational creative entrepreneurs, many of whom are new to Germany, and came to the country with impressive craft skills.

### 3. Bringing Creatives Together

In May 2018, BKK hosted the second Berlin Kreativ Konferenz—a two-day conference dedicated solely to independent creative businesses in Berlin. Sponsored by Etsy Germany, it drew about 80 attendees for over 20 talks and workshops led by some of Berlin’s leading experts.

“The Konferenz brought the creative community of Berlin together under one roof, and provided the hands-on information and resources the maker community so desperately needs,” Emma said.

### 4. Building Bonds & Sharing Knowledge

According to Emma, the strength of the organization stems from the strong bonds and friendships that members have formed, and from recognizing the value of working together to share knowledge, experiences and advice.

“Since the BKK founded and since the Maker Cities programme began, I have seen an increase in confidence amongst the Berlin maker community, and a willingness to self-organize, communicate, and find shared solutions to problems,” Emma told us.

“I can’t stress enough how much it matters to the maker community here in Berlin to know that organizations like Etsy see their potential and are willing to invest in them. There’s an abundance of third-party platforms that claim to be supportive of maker communities, but Etsy stands out in its willingness to give back to the community, and to help see it grow. Without programs like Maker Cities, the BKK would struggle to do its work in improving the business life for Berlin makers.”

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