

Klaus Lehnert
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Project Manager
Campus Rütli – CR²
030 68092242
www.campusruetli.de

Pilot Project Campus Rütli – CR² in the education landscape of Reuterquartier Integration through education in a troubled neighbourhood

The northern part of the district of Neukölln in Berlin is known nationwide as a troubled neighbourhood and it has a high media presence. Statements from District Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky and warnings against the emergence of a parallel society have a familiar resonance to the public. His descriptions of the district are confirmed in independent studies. 4.6% of the population of Berlin live in North Neukölln, but that includes 7.6% of all unemployed, 14.5% of all unemployed foreign residents, 7.1% of the long-term unemployed and 9% of all recipients of Hartz IV social benefits, who are employed.

In 2006 Federal President Horst Köhler dedicated his "Berlin Speech" to the theme of education. He chose to deliver the speech in Kepler Secondary School in Neukölln. He lamented the fact that there is an excessive number of young people from migrant backgrounds, who do not have secondary school qualifications and are not in professional training. He spoke of schools where indifference, lack of discipline and indeed violence are a part of daily life and stressed that for this reason Germany is being drained of the intellectual and social power that comes from its younger generation every year.

The district of Neukölln is taking its problems on board. In Reuterplatz' neighbourhood management department in North Neukölln preparation work for a local education association had already begun in 2005. "Strategic intervention through intercultural moderation" was developed in autumn 2005 and by March 2006 intercultural moderators were appointed to three schools, including Rütli School.

Since the beginning of 2007 the Freudenberg Foundation has committed itself to the project "A square kilometre of education – not a single child is to be overlooked" in the Reuterplatz' neighbourhood management area. This is a long-term project, which supports the quality development and professionalism of the institutions involved.

The idea for **Campus Rütli** was developed in May 2007. With patroness Christina Rau¹ and District Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky heading the project, the concept for Campus Rütli – CR² (www.campusruetli.de) had already been developed with the co-operation of all those involved in the project and the neighbourhood by September 2007. Its biggest objective is to establish a unique and sustainable model approach towards education and a common social environment. Three schools that are being merged into comprehensive schools, two day-care centres and a youth club will be integrated to form one campus under a single responsibility, that will eventually be extended. The campus is a social environment where students can follow a standard route of education starting in the day-care centre and taking them all the way to the point of entering higher education. It offers all available school leaving certificates, including that of the Gymnasium sixth form, the “Abitur” (school leaving certificate required to attend university). For the first time all institutions will combine the care and education of young people into a single responsibility. Staff members from all areas of the campus work together to provide the best support possible to parents, children and young people, who are also invited to take part in the process of developing the campus. Approximately 90% of children within the campus’ catchment area come from migrant families. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children’s education and are supported throughout the process.

Cultural diversity and multilingualism are seen as opportunities and are encouraged and developed. The idea of introducing intercultural moderators originated in Neukölln and helps different cultures to avoid prejudice and develop a mutual understanding and appreciation. The opportunity for children to maintain their native languages has proved to be an important step. In the junior years of secondary school pupils from migrant backgrounds are offered additional lessons in their native language, independently from the core school subjects. Migrant children in Neukölln are almost exclusively from Turkish or Arabic families. They can therefore take part in lessons in their own native languages, Turkish or Arabic, which are taught by native speakers. After taking an exam students receive a certificate in accordance with the European framework of reference for languages.

Directly on the campus all three schools, the day-care centres, leisure facilities, adult education centre, music school, health service for children and young people and socio-pedagogical service are committed to making the vision for Campus Rütli – CR² a reality. They are given reliable and consistent support from project officials, the Stiftung Zukunft Berlin (Future Berlin Foundation), the district office of Neukölln, Reuterplatz neighbourhood management department, which laid the crucial groundwork for the project, and finally from the Freudenberg Foundation since the campus lies within the “square kilometre of education”.

The Senate Department for City Development and for Education, Knowledge and Research have praised the project for being ground-breaking and are committed to

¹ Widow of former Federal President Johannes Rau

its success. Project Campus Rütli – CR² was presented to the public in January 2008 by Senator Junge-Reyer and Senator Zöllner, patroness Christina Rau, District Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky and Wolfgang Schimmang, Council Chairman for education, school, culture and sport. Progress is being made regarding the internal structure of the project and the framework for an integrated campus management is being developed. An urban design competition has marked the start of progress in the project's construction plans. Preparations for the first new build on the campus, a sports hall that will also serve as a cultural centre for the neighbourhood, have already begun.

Campus Rütli – CR² enjoys extensive media attention. It acts as a model for other projects but is also (still) an individual project. It is also part of Reuterquartier's education landscape, an inspiration and a project that is widely supported in the neighbourhood. Key players in the project are confident that from the strengths of this extensive network and their unified approach towards education and socialization, an environment is emerging, in which integration succeeds through education, existing potential is developed and it is this that makes social advancement possible. This is how Campus Rütli – CR² will change the perception of Neukölln for the better: This troubled district will become a model heterogeneous district of modern times.