



Made in Berlin by Female-Founded Startups & Scaleups!

Berlin has been the pinnacle for successful startups within the DACH region. Part of the recent success is because of female-led startups that have smashed the glass ceiling and are popular in their industries. Examples of this are Diana Morata (Co-Founder of Circ), Jessica Holzbach (Co-Founder of Penta) or Claudia Heim (CEO from DigiWhat).

According to the latter: 'Berlin is perfect for founding a company. The great thing about the startup scene here is that it is very international, dynamic, and diverse. Here I feel like a founder, not a "female" founder. But I still see constraints in talking with investors. They normally tend to have a very strict idea, about how a founder's team should look like. And in such a scenario, women are co-founders but never CTOs. It is good to see, that there are now a few female investors in place. However, the good thing is that even as we have to sell a B2B product to the "old economy" I do not feel that being a female founder restricts or alienates me from anything. Maybe it's because we have a B2B Product to ease and speed up the case study creation process. This is something in between sales-tech and marketing-tech, where our contact persons are 50% female.'

Even though women in tech are striving hard to establish their presence in the industry, women entrepreneurs are under-represented and do not achieve as much parity as their male counterparts. There is a lack of financing for women entrepreneurs. In a startup scene dominated by men and since most venture capital funds are run by men, getting investors to back their ideas isn't easy. With barely 16 percent of female founders and even fewer female investors, Berlin's startup scene lacks enough diversity. Bettine Schmitz, Partner at Auxxo Beteiligungen cites the lack of networks as the reason for the low level of investment in female founders.

"In our experience, many female founders make 'beginner mistakes' that prevent a later investment." There is often a lack of contacts to experienced founders who could have given tips beforehand. In addition, it is hardly possible to get an appointment for a pitch without contact to VCs or business angels, says Schmitz.

According to PwC, diversification plays an important role in a company's success, so Berlin has started more and more initiatives to change its startup scene. The Berlin-based VC, Btov Partners, and Grace- Accelerate Female Entrepreneurship initiated the Female Founders Pulse Check, 2021 survey, to address the experiences of female founders in fundraising in the DACH region. Results were that diversification in Berlin's startup scene can be achieved with better access to open office hours, role models, scouting programs, mentoring and more network opportunities will help further



Change is happening in Berlin's business and tech ecosystems thanks to people like Mali Baum, Founder, WLOUNGE. She promotes diversity with a global ecosystem network and community that supports women (and men!) with collaborations across the world, including Germany, Israel, the U.S. and China.

"Achieving diversity is so much more than only achieving gender equality. WLOUNGE is connecting people, from all over the world with a strong focus on bridging gaps for business collaborations lay on people's quality. Focusing also on female founders and female investors is the key to changing the status quo as we see it today. Closing those gaps for more success made by women, Under the WLOUNGE community umbrella, you can find partners from the US, Asia, Germany/ Europe, Israel from government, VCs, Corporates, Family offices, M&A, universities, and startups- this is what brings the bottom line - more capital! more success made by women,

In general, female founders feel more comfortable sharing with female and diverse investment teams, so it's exciting to see that the German capital is actively tackling diversification. Once again Berlin is improving its infrastructure for the benefit of all!